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**Negotiating Authority and Epistemic Humility: Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* I, 65-74  
as a Propaedeutic Training in the Reverential Reading of Patristic Texts**

By

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PhD in Classical Studies

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## Abstract

Aquinas' treatment of the Creation narrative (Genesis 1:1-2:4) within QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* of his *Summa Theologiae* (ST) has long been and remains neglected, virtually unread, within the community of the readers of Aquinas. This neglect is born of a mistaken expectation of this section of the ST as a quest for theological or philosophical truth. Those reading his parallel treatments of the same material have deemed ST I, 65-74 insufficiently robust, shallow, even embarrassing for those who see him as a theological touchstone. But the readers of Aquinas in general and of the ST in particular have not asked why Aquinas elected to engage in this apparently simplistic treatment of a Scriptural passage which addressed issues that were foundational to his philosophical and theological project. Drawing upon Aquinas' historical context and through comparison with his other treatments of the same biblical material this thesis argues that within these QQ Aquinas deliberately shaped his use of patristic sources to create both a primer on the use of these patristic sources for his students and, in so doing, also made a necessary appeal to all his readers that they embrace Augustine's epistemic humility. Read through this lens, ST I, 65-74 provides important insights into Aquinas' use of ideas and authoritative texts and once more gives voice to his still relevant call for epistemic humility.

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Soli Deo Gloria!

## Introduction

In 1266 the Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas began to compose what would become an important element of the classic theological canon – the *Summa Theologiae* (ST). Nearly eight centuries later, in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century many continue to read this work and appreciate both its theology and philosophy. Members of the scholarly community frequently cite the ST authoritatively in far-ranging discussions of ethics, Christology, ecclesiology, ontology, epistemology, and much more.

This state of affairs marks a transition in the reading and use of Aquinas.<sup>1</sup> Since the Reformation and until the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Aquinas was frequently considered a purely Roman Catholic voice, the articulator of the controversial doctrine of Transubstantiation and hence inappropriate for most Protestant theologians.<sup>2</sup> Roman Catholics, for their part, cheerfully embraced Thomas as a weapon in their battle against the Protestants, but rarely ventured outside the manuals and other devices of Neo-Thomism. Reading Aquinas in this post-Reformation, Tridentine polemical context constrained Aquinas to be read through a particular hermeneutical lens. While such generalizations are never entirely true, most readers of Aquinas up to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century tended to read Aquinas as a source of theological and philosophical truth statements. His massive treatment of theology in the ST was either articulating a position against which one argued or for which one propounded over against an opponent almost exclusively defined by Reformation categories. But that hermeneutical

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas J. White, O. P. "Thomism after Vatican II," *Ordo Praedicatorum*, accessed 12.1.2013. [http://www.op.org/sites/www.op.org/files/public/documents/fichier/white\\_thomism\\_after\\_vatican\\_ii.pdf](http://www.op.org/sites/www.op.org/files/public/documents/fichier/white_thomism_after_vatican_ii.pdf) 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> In this author's own seminary experience, (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1987-1991) Aquinas was rarely mentioned unaccompanied by a reference to Luther's estimation of him in *The Babylonian Captivity* in which Luther considered Aquinas to be somewhat pitiable. WA, 6:508, *Longe enim aliter Aristoteles de accidentibus et subjecto quam sanctus Thomas loquitur, ut mihi dolendum videatur pro tanto viro, qui opiniones in rebus fidei non modo ex Aristotele tradere, sed et super eum, quem non intellexit, conatus est stabilire infoelicissimi fundamenti infoelicissima structura.*

lens has largely been replaced in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So complete is this transformation that one occasionally reads scholars wistfully yearning for a return to the Thomism against which many of their immediate predecessors struggled.<sup>3</sup>

The works of Thomas Aquinas first gained a re-assessment and fresh reading outside the polemical context of the Protestant/Catholic debates within the scholarly community of Catholicism. A leader among the proponents for this re-reading of Thomas was a fellow Dominican, the French scholar, Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990). In his influential *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, Chenu, argued for a historically contextualized reading of Aquinas and rejected the ahistorical, polemical reading which he felt distorted Aquinas' works and ideas by removing them from their immediate context and forcing them to address problems which Aquinas did not have in mind.<sup>4</sup> Part of the larger movement within Catholicism which included elements of liturgical renewal, social justice, and intellectual revitalization which together culminated in Vatican II (1962-1965), Chenu occupied a place within the reform-minded Catholic intellectual community.

#### 1. The Observed Neglect of ST I, 65-74

It is no accident that I begin this thesis with Chenu and his attempt to return to a more authentic and fruitful reading of Aquinas. The author of this dissertation is convinced by the argument which Chenu put forward in regard to the inauthenticity of the ahistorical reading of Aquinas and therefore uses Chenu's claim that Aquinas must be read in his context as the methodological foundation of this author's own thesis.<sup>5</sup> But there is another and more specific reason why we begin with Chenu. Within *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, Chenu pleaded that more careful attention should be paid to three exegetical sections of the ST: I, 65-74, the exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis which this dissertation examines; I, 98-105, Aquinas' treatment of the ancient law codes; and III, 27-59 in which Aquinas examined a harmonized account of Christ's life

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<sup>3</sup> Gregory F. LaNave, "God, Creation, and the Possibility of Philosophical Wisdom: The Perspectives of Bonaventura and Aquinas" in *Theological Studies* 69 (2008), 813-814.

<sup>4</sup> Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P., *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*. Trans.: Albert Landry O.P. and Dominic Hughes O.P., (Chicago: H. Regnery and Co, 1964), 298-301.

<sup>5</sup> White, 7, makes a similar argument.



drawn from the New Testament Gospels. Chenu argued that the modern reader could not truly understand Aquinas' thought until these passages were comfortably integrated into the framework of the entire ST. To see them as anomalies within the ST or as digressions was to misunderstand Aquinas the theologian and the nature of the entire work. In Chenu's estimation, Aquinas clearly held that this material belonged in this document and was central to Aquinas' thought. Chenu himself does not articulate a thoroughly convincing argument for why he believed this material was important to the ST, but thought it had something to do with Aquinas' understanding of the very nature of theology. I do not seek to quarrel or wrestle with Chenu's suggestions for why this is vital. I rather want to observe that he made this statement at all. Chenu would not have written such things if he did not observe that these passages were being neglected in his time. Chenu's contemporaries clearly were not reading them for he thought it necessary to urge his audience to read them.<sup>6</sup> We will note later within this introduction that while contemporary scholars have heard Chenu's broader appeal to pay greater attention to Aquinas the exegete, they have not embraced his exhortation that they integrate QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* into their understanding of Aquinas the theologian.

This thesis pays attention to the motives, content, and message of one of these three sections of the ST which Chenu noted and for which he pleaded an audience, namely I, 65-74. We have engaged in an examination of the content of these QQ in comparison with other treatments of this Scriptural material, both within the corpus of Aquinas' published works and in comparison with his medieval peers. That examination has led us to conclude that Aquinas' use of Scriptural and patristic sources, particularly Augustine, is the critical element which explains this anomalous section of the ST. We contend that only in consideration of his use of these sources are we able to construct a cogent model which explains the rationale and content of these QQ and which provides a viable hermeneutic for reading these QQ profitably.

In making this assertion we also must wrestle with the opinions of the many scholars who read Aquinas today. As noted above, the community of scholarly philosophers and

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 259-262. Chenu's estimation is also borne out by a survey of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century theological scholarship. Consider Philip J. Donnelly S.J., "Saint Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation" in *Theological Studies*, 9:2 (1941), 53-83. While the subject of his article has multiple points of intersection with the content of QQ 65-74, he never once cites them, but cites extensively in the *prima pars* and *secunda-secundae partis* throughout his article.

theologians who respect and consider Aquinas' ideas have been largely unmoved by Chenu's plea for a more careful and thorough integration of these passages of the ST into their understanding of Aquinas. Rarely do scholars quote these QQ from the ST. Indeed at times it appears that some have not even read this section of the ST. This thesis asserts this neglect on the part of scholars is due to an errant expectation of this material. Ellen Charry observed that since the Enlightenment the discipline of theology has undergone a significant transformation. She contends that generations of Locke's readers have failed to observe his own nuanced understanding of knowledge and have therefore come to screen all theological truth claims through a filter of scientific methodology.<sup>7</sup> Charry posits that much of pre-Enlightenment theology was in fact seeking not a scientific but a sapiential truth. This theological project was far more interested in the development of the reader than in establishing a universal or falsifiable claim.<sup>8</sup> While Charry does not cite this section of the ST in support of her contention, she considers Thomas Aquinas to be one of her primary and clearest examples of a theologian who is best read in this pre-enlightenment reading of theology which she labels "aretegenic" or, in her own definition of that term, a reading "which results in virtue."<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. White, O. P. concurs: "Reading Aquinas teaches one how to think theologically."<sup>10</sup>

This thesis concurs with White's and Charry's reading of Aquinas in so far as it notes that he is, at least in these QQ, questing after a different goal than the assertion of a truth claim in a post-Enlightenment sense. Reading these QQ as a quest for theological or philosophical truth has obscured a more likely occasion and thus also a more profitable reading of these QQ. Aquinas did not use this section of the ST on a quest for a theological truth; rather, these QQ are better explained as pedagogical exercises which seek to inculcate skills which we will reference as reverential reading and epistemic humility. In Charry's language this is an aretegenic exercise. In saying this we acknowledge that a large number of scholars have noted the pedagogical nature of the

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<sup>7</sup> Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 6-9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 6, 19-23.

<sup>10</sup> White, 7.

ST.<sup>11</sup> We do assert, however, that while this understanding of the ST has been acknowledged widely, it has not governed the reading of many, especially when attention has been given to the subject matter found within I, 65-74, namely the Creation narrative of Genesis 1.

The foundation for this reading has been widely acknowledged for some time. In the 1947 Aquinas Lecture delivered at Marquette University, Etienne Gilson presaged's point. Under the title *History of Philosophy and Philosophical Education* Gilson noted the difficulty of teaching a student to be a philosopher. His preferred technique was to eschew the secondary literature, put the original source material, in this case Aquinas himself, into the hands of the student and, under the guidance of the mentor, lead the student through the questions of the text. This process, he thought, would result in more than students who knew about philosophy but rather resulted in students who were on the way to becoming philosophers themselves.<sup>12</sup> Gilson suggested that this is the normal practice which has been present in philosophical education for millennia. As we shall see later, Gilson did not observe that Aquinas employed exactly the pedagogical process Gilson himself outlined in 1947. Like Gilson's ideal professor of philosophy, Aquinas was making theologians by that same time-tested and reliable method, putting the essential data of the theological discipline, Scripture, into the hands of his students and in a controlled environment letting those students develop the skills of the theologian. Rather, Gilson, looking for theological and philosophical truth assertions, along with almost every other reader of Aquinas, turned from these questions in frustration and perplexity.

The errant expectation that Aquinas is propounding a truth claim has caused modern readers of Aquinas to miss several elements within these ten QQ. Frustrated by the relatively simplistic treatment of the days of Creation, most have turned instead to Aquinas' first systematic work, the *Scriptum super libros sententiarum* (*Commentary*) and the *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia* (*De potentia*), the record of a series of

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<sup>11</sup> See Leonard Boyle, *The Setting of the Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas*. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval studies, 1982), 17-18. Thomas O'Meara *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian*, (Notre Dame: Univ of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 50-53, articulates the same argument.

<sup>12</sup> Etienne Gilson, *History of Philosophy and Philosophical Education*, (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette Univ. Press, 1948), 29-32.

disputations which Aquinas conducted in preparation for writing this section of the ST.<sup>13</sup> As we concede later in this introduction, this choice on the part of his modern readers makes a certain amount of sense. Those earlier treatments are far more satisfying for the person who reads Aquinas seeking what he believed and thought about matters of philosophy and speculative theology with regard to the Creation narrative. This inattention to ST I, 65-74, however, has obscured his treatment of Scriptural and patristic sources within these ten QQ, especially the complex interplay between the interpretation of Genesis 1 which was made by Basil and another, quite different interpretation which was made by Augustine. In addition, we assert that this neglect of Aquinas' treatment of patristic sources has resulted in many missing the more significant point which Aquinas made regarding epistemic humility, a humility which is essential for hearing some of the more daring assertions he will make later in the work, but which is also necessary for all who would come to the questions raised for the readers of Genesis 1 today.

We will heed Chenu's appeal for reading in context. This neglected context of the ST is also important for reading this section of the ST. This thesis has devoted its first and second chapters to an examination of the broader situation of these QQ. The first chapter situates these QQ within Aquinas' other works and his own life. The second chapter examines the use of Augustine in light of a surging movement contemporary to Aquinas. In order to differentiate this movement from other movements related to Augustine, we employ the label "Augustinist", a term which we borrow from James Weisheipl, one of Aquinas biographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> Asserting the primacy of Augustine's ideas over all fields, this Augustinist movement was, at the time of Aquinas, threatening to quash intellectual inquiry. Briefly stated, those chapters argue that these QQ reflect Aquinas' devotion to the Dominican Order, particularly as he sought to fulfill a charge laid upon him by that Order to revise the Order's internal educational system.<sup>15</sup> We also argue that Aquinas did so with a sense of urgency, for hostile elements were mounting increasingly strident and aggressive attacks on the mendicant

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<sup>13</sup> James A. Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington DC: Catholic Univ. Press, 1983), 358-359, 363.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>15</sup> C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society*, (London: Longman, 1994), 84-85.

friars of the *Ordo Predicatorum* whom the priories educated and equipped for the preaching task. The nature of this attack upon the mendicants, however, due to its Augustinian underpinnings had ramifications for all fields of inquiry, especially the speculative theological work which occupied Aquinas.

The third chapter of this thesis begins to construct the hermeneutical lens through which we will re-read these QQ. We note a series of patterns within Aquinas' handling of sources. Within these QQ, Aquinas manipulated his sources, often narrowing the focus of an Article, but more importantly giving the reader occasion to notice not the conclusion reached but the principle which was applied to the patristic resource under consideration. Building on the historical context and Aquinas' unusual treatment of sources, the fourth chapter will complete the process of constructing this hermeneutic and propose and identify a pedagogical movement and progression within these QQ.

Having constructed a hermeneutical lens by which these QQ might be read, the final section of this thesis embodies these conclusions with a detailed and fresh re-reading of ST I, 65-74. This reading argues that Aquinas manipulated his sources and presented his material in such a way that a reader/student who encountered this material would have developed a theological *habitus* essential for medieval preaching. In a second, apologetic movement which is also discernible within these QQ, Aquinas urged an epistemic humility, both upon his students and the larger theological world in which he lived and wrote.

## 2. Contemporary Scholarship's Neglect of ST I, 65-74 More Closely Examined

This thesis has already observed that current scholars of Aquinas are not reading or are misreading this section of the ST. This assertion needs further demonstration and examination before we proceed to the recasting of these QQ.

- a. Recent renewed interest in Aquinas as an exegete does not extend to these QQ.

As noted earlier in this thesis, one of the early leaders in the current scholarly reassessment of Aquinas, M.-D. Chenu, pleaded with his contemporaries in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to read and integrate this section and two others of the ST into their reading of Aquinas. Chenu argued at this point that one had to see the whole of

Aquinas' exegetical labors as integral to his more speculative and philosophical works. While Chenu was rather vague in describing exactly what the fruit of such an integration of Aquinas' textual commentary might be,<sup>16</sup> his successors in Aquinas studies have broadly followed his advice. Recent attention focused upon Aquinas' commentaries has been particularly robust. Momentarily setting aside the vigorous conversations which take place in the various theological and philosophical journals, a survey of recent book-length treatments reveals efforts to expand the audience via translation; e.g., The American Academy of Religion commissioned a translation of Aquinas' commentary on Job and published it in 1987.<sup>17</sup> So robust was this interest in the exegetical works of Aquinas that the publisher T. and T. Clark offered the scholarly community a book-length survey of the various exegetical works of Aquinas in 2005, noting in the introduction to the work a "somewhat belated recognition that his commentaries are part and parcel of his theological work."<sup>18</sup> Another indicator of the growing influence and authority of Aquinas the exegete is seen in the fact that these works have been put to use in answering contemporary debates, e.g., Stephen Boguslawski waded into the frequently explosive debate on the medieval roots of anti-Semitism armed with Aquinas' commentary on Romans in 2008.<sup>19</sup> In perhaps the most obvious indicator that a significant community of scholars takes Aquinas seriously as an exegete, Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais compiled a book-length collection of essays from a wide variety of authors reflecting exclusively on that same commentary on Romans by Aquinas in 2012.<sup>20</sup> Aquinas' more systematic/philosophical readers have also increasingly paid attention to his exegetical work and the foundational role of Scripture within his thinking. Joseph Wawrykow in *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas* under the heading of Scripture wrote:

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<sup>16</sup> Chenu, 308-316.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Literal Exposition on Job: a Scriptural commentary on providence*, Trans.: Martin Yaffe and Anthony Damico, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> Thomas G. Weinandy O.P.C. Cap., Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum, Eds.: *Aquinas on Scripture*, (London: T and T Clark International, 2005), Intr. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Boguslawski, *Thomas Aquinas and the Jews* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais, *Reading Romans with Thomas Aquinas*, (Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 2012).

“To say that Scripture is the principal source of Aquinas theology is to risk understatement, perhaps even distortion. Aquinas draws on a wide range of writings in constructing his theology. But in insisting that Scripture is the principal authority (ST I.1.8 ad2), he means more than that Scripture is to be counted among the written sources on which he draws, or that it is the first among these sources. Rather, Scripture is authoritative in a unique way, which distinguishes from his other sources.”<sup>21</sup>

This activity in the field of Aquinas’ exegetical work renders the almost complete neglect of these ten QQ puzzling. The numerous recent publications which have been focused upon Aquinas’ exegetical works do not include his treatment of Genesis 1 in these ten QQ.

b. The rationale for this neglect.

The most reasonable explanation for this neglect may be found in the estimation of the advocates and proponents of Aquinas. In his brief introduction to his translation of this section of the ST in 1967, nearly 20 years after Chenu made his appeal for the study of this section, William Wallace noted that these QQ were considered “antiquarian” and had been neglected for some time. He further suggested that this was not a new development but simply the continuation of an assessment which had roots in the first manifestations of Thomism during the Renaissance. The treatment of these QQ by the great Reformation era commentator on Aquinas, Cajetan, was “briefer and more perfunctory than...any other.” Wallace noted that even Aquinas’ own fellow Dominicans were not studying these QQ in the Dominican *studia* of the mid-twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> His bleakest assessment comes in his observation about contemporary scholarship:

“Scholars who search the works of St. Thomas for insights that may prove helpful in the solution of contemporary problems have, with one

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<sup>21</sup> Joseph Wawrykow, *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas*, (Louisville, KY: John Knox Westminster Press, 2005), 137.

<sup>22</sup> William Wallace, O.P., *Summa Theologiae*, Vol. X, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), Intr, xxi.

accord, despaired of finding anything of lasting value in these pages of the *Summa*.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1967 Wallace offered several suggestions for why he considered this neglect to be inappropriate, but even these are somewhat pallid and betray what he thinks about the content of these QQ. He first expressed the hope that we could, by studying the mistaken science herein, learn something about Aquinas and the medieval period which was “shedding...an encumbering tradition” and “planting...seeds that were later to flower into the breath-taking science of our day.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, this section of the ST presented a useful data point for plotting the trajectory upon which modernity found itself, that is more thoroughly “unencumbered” by tradition and far more “breath-taking” in its scientific knowledge. In light of such an assessment, it is not hard to imagine why the students at Dominican priories and other interested readers might look elsewhere when they came to study Genesis 1.

Wallace made a second suggestion for why these QQ might be important for the contemporary reader. Wallace proposes that the reader might find a measure of scientific wisdom in Aquinas. He notes that Aquinas’ knowledge of medieval science was “impeccable” and yet “his extreme reserve and hesitation when opting for one or other theory of medieval science” is held up as laudable. Aquinas, in Wallace’s estimation, should be emulated because he “preferred to say too little, rather than to commit himself on points of detail that soon would be superseded.”<sup>25</sup> This is certainly true, but what strikes this reader is that Aquinas was not commended by Wallace for his wisdom in treating theological traditions, patristic resources, or the discipline of theology itself. He was not commended for articulating an exegesis of a Scriptural text, but the evaluation was based upon apprehension of natural science/philosophy. In Wallace’s estimation Aquinas was a wise, albeit primitive, scientist who understood that his data set did not allow him to reach certain conclusions. In other words, the way in which Aquinas handled the deficiency in his own science was noted by Wallace, not the proficiency of his theology.

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<sup>23</sup> Wallace, *Intr.* xxii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*



Wallace's observations about the state of scholarship with regard to these QQ remain valid today, nearly half a century after he made those observations. The recently published (2005) introduction to the commentaries of Aquinas which was mentioned above, *Aquinas on Scripture*, does not include these ten QQ in its survey of his exegetical works.<sup>26</sup>

c. The neglect of these QQ within the theological community.

The inattention to these QQ is commonplace and persistent. This fact becomes even more problematic when seen against the backdrop of the robust scholarship, research and writing, which has recently focused attention upon Aquinas' words about Creation as a theological locus. One finds that scholars have expressed intense interest in Aquinas' *Commentary II*, 12-15 and *De potentia* 2-4 which address the same questions and issues as ST I, 44-49 and ST I, 65-74. As a measure of the intensity of this interest, consider the recent publication of *On Creation*. The editorial board for Thomas Aquinas in Translation took the unusual step of securing access to the recently completed but heretofore unpublished Leonine critical edition of *De potentia* III, commissioned a new translation, and published it in response to demand for this work which they note in the introduction.<sup>27</sup> It should likewise be noted that this demand for a new translation of the critical edition does not reflect a lacuna in English translations of Aquinas' works. Wipf and Stock, in 2004, had reissued the very serviceable translation of the entire *De potentia* which Lawrence Shapcote, O. P. had completed in 1952. The Aquinas-reading community was demanding a new translation of the critical edition, before that edition was itself published, because that community is closely parsing what Aquinas had said about Creation. The introduction to *On Creation* further illustrates this paragraph's contention that these QQ are neglected in scholarly circles in that it notes the close connection between *De potentia* and the *prima pars* but ceases all references to the *prima pars* after I, 49, despite the fact that I, 65 has considerable overlap with Question 3 of *De potentia*.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Weinandy, et al.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Creation*, Trans.: S. C. Selner-Wright, (Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 2011) intr. vii and xvii.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, vii-xvi.

When one turns to journal articles and essays which examine Aquinas' Creation theology or his Scriptural hermeneutic, again one notes an almost complete silence with regard to these QQ. Gilles Emery O. P., in an essay entitled "Trinity and Creation," posited that Aquinas saw the persons of the Trinity, which he described as personal emanations, evidenced within the Scriptural definition of Creation.<sup>29</sup> Emery holds that Aquinas conceived of the second person of the Trinity as an emanation of the mental activity of God, particularly intelligence/knowing, and the third person as the emanation of the will of God, particularly the will expressed in love. Creation, in Emery's estimation, was therefore a foundational doctrine for Aquinas and closely integrated with his understanding of the Trinity, seeing that the Creation gave evidence of God's intellect (Word) and will (Love) combining in the creative act. In an admittedly incomplete survey of Aquinas' thought on this matter,<sup>30</sup> he opted to focus primarily on the ST. Naturally he explores in some detail the QQ which discuss the knowledge and will of God, but also the brief section on the Creation in general in I, 45-49. The surprising omission is I, 74, 3ad3 in which Aquinas addressed the charge that the Creation was improperly described because the second person of the Trinity was inadequately involved. In his response to that Objection Aquinas asserted that within both the work of Creation and the work of formation the Trinity is insinuated.<sup>31</sup> The passage succinctly, pithily, and effectively makes the case for Emery's thesis, but it does not appear within his essay. It would have been particularly helpful to Emery in the argument he struggled to make about the development of Aquinas' Trinitarian thought and his more refined articulation of the Trinity within the ST.<sup>32</sup>

A singular example hardly makes the case for neglect. We can also consider Mark Johnson's article from 1992 in which he sought to establish that Aquinas read multiple literal senses within the biblical text.<sup>33</sup> Herein he suggests that six loci within Aquinas'

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<sup>29</sup> Gilles Emery, "Trinity and Creation" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow, Trans.: Patrick Martin, (Notre Dame: Univ of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 58-76.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>31</sup> I, 74, 3ad3, *Et sic in utroque opere creationis et formationis, Trinitas personarum insinuat.*

<sup>32</sup> Emery, 64-65.

<sup>33</sup> Mark F. Johnson, "Another Look at the Plurality of the Literal Sense" in *Medieval Theology and Philosophy*, 2 (1992), 117-141.

*oeuvre* constitute his treatment of the plurality of the literal sense. The language employed within Johnson's article suggests that he is presenting the final analysis which should convince the reader and that his treatment is exhaustive. Whereas Emery above admitted that his survey was incomplete, Johnson would have the reader conclude that he is offering a complete and persuasive argument.<sup>34</sup> The six loci which Johnson examines range broadly: two from the *Commentary* (II, 12, 1, 2 and IV, 21, 1, 2, 1 ad3.), an example from the proceedings of Aquinas' quodlibetal disputations (*Quaestiones de Quodlibet* VII, 6, 1, ad5), another from *De potentia* (4, 1), one reference to the ST (I, 1, 10), and a final reference to Aquinas' abandoned revision to the *Commentary* (*Lectura romana in primum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi I, pro., 4*). In Johnson's estimation these are the six texts which "touch on a plurality of the literal sense of Scripture."<sup>35</sup> Strikingly, he does not include I, 65-74 in which Aquinas argued for the validity of both Augustine's literal interpretation and Basil's literal interpretation of Scripture. For eight of these ten QQ (66-72 and 74) Aquinas developed the implications of both literal meanings without opting for one over the other, but took great pains to accommodate both literal interpretations to the science of the day and the text of Scripture. Johnson's argument is effectively made by Aquinas' steadfast refusal to endorse one or the other as the "correct" reading, even, at times, taking great care not to do so. Aquinas explicitly states Johnson's primary contention at the end of I, 74, 2c. In that *corpus* Aquinas had once more presented the very different strands of interpretation championed by Augustine and Basil. At the end of the *corpus* he introduced his responses to the various Objectives with this careful phrase, "So as not to prejudice either view, it is necessary to respond to both views."<sup>36</sup> His Responses are a catalogue of how to accommodate both interpretations to the literal text of Scripture and the natural philosophy of his day, but more importantly, both interpretations are given equal time. It is as though Aquinas deliberately demonstrated that both interpretations were not only possible, but even necessary for the reader of Genesis 1.

Throughout these ten QQ Aquinas' writing has embodied the very point to which Johnson has striven, namely that Aquinas held that there were multiple valid literal

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-120.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>36</sup> *Ut igitur neutri sententiae praeiudicetur, utriusque rationibus respondendum est.* I, 74, 2c.

readings of the text, in the case of Genesis 1, the literal readings of Augustine and Basil. As Aquinas unfolded the six days of Creation recorded in Genesis 1, he assiduously and scrupulously refused to prioritize one literal interpretation over another. Johnson makes not one mention of this fact. Had Johnson confined himself to the exegetical commentaries of Aquinas, perhaps this omission would have made sense, but he primarily works within the systematizing theological works of Aquinas, citing another passage within the *prima pars* as one of his six loci.

In considering the subject matter of the loci which according to Johnson demonstrate that Aquinas held for a plurality of Scripture's literal meanings, the gravity of the omission becomes even greater. The first locus Johnson considers is *Commentary II*, 12, 1, 2, in which Aquinas asks whether all things were created at once and distinct in species.<sup>37</sup> The fourth locus he examines is *De potentia IV*, 1, in which Aquinas asked whether the creation of unformed matter preceded in duration the creation of things.<sup>38</sup> Both of these Articles are direct parallels of material which form the central debate that Aquinas conducted within ST I, 65-74. Johnson's primary argument contends that Aquinas argued for the plurality of literal meanings under the theological topic of Creation, specifically the interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2. In both of the parallel treatments, Johnson sees the argument for a plurality of literal senses to be rooted in Aquinas' treatment of Augustine's literal reading of an instantaneous Creation and Basil's literal reading of six calendar days of Creation. In both of these passages, *Commentary II*, 12, 1, 2 and *De potentia IV*, 1, Aquinas argued that both very different literal interpretations of Basil and Augustine were valid, exactly the contention which is embodied within ST I, 65-74. Johnson never references these QQ in the 24 pages of his article. When he turns to the recently discovered *reportatio* of Aquinas' early attempt at a revision of the *Commentary*, the work which Aquinas abandoned immediately before taking up the ST, Johnson asserts that he finds clear evidence that Aquinas believes in the plurality of literal senses at least in some passages of Scripture, especially Genesis 1:2. But he does not cite Aquinas' treatment of that very passage in I, 65-66 and again in I, 73-74. Reading Johnson's article, one would never know that Aquinas had put the principle of plural literal senses into practice through an extended examination of

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<sup>37</sup> *Commentary II*, 12, 1, 2, *Utrum omnia sint creata simul, et distincta per species.* .

<sup>38</sup> *De potentia IV*, 1, *Utrum creatio materiae informis praecesserit duratione creationem rerum.*

multiple interpretations of a Scriptural passage in ST I, 65-74, and thereby had placed an explicit discussion of this important hermeneutical issue in the *oeuvre* of his ST.

It is not reasonable to posit that Johnson was unaware of ST I, 65-74. The various commentaries, journals and articles which form the content of Aquinas studies are quite consistent and thorough in their cross-referencing the various works of Aquinas. The dependence of the *prima pars* upon *De potentia* and the comparison of the ST to the *Commentary* are regular elements of any scholarly examination of the ST. The most likely explanation for the omission of ST I, 65-74 from the discussion referenced above is that Johnson, along with most scholars, simply considers this to be an inferior theological work by Aquinas. This line of thought is not recent. As Wallace noted, Cajetan's comments were "perfunctory" and brief.<sup>39</sup> Etienne Gilson, a contemporary and colleague of Chenu, made a brief, singular, and informative reference to these QQ in 1924. He begins by noting that Aquinas in these QQ added nothing to the doctrine of Aristotle. He proceeded to note that Aquinas displayed "none of the curiosity of a Robert Grosseteste," and seemed to be puzzled that while Aquinas could have pursued subjects such as zoology and natural philosophy as did his Master, Albert the Great, Aquinas draws back from them. In describing what these QQ actually do accomplish, Gilson wrote the following:

"The questions of the *Summa theologiae* commenting on the work of the six days provided him with many occasions to exercise his natural ingenuity in one or the other of these two directions. Thomas has no heart for the task and saves his ingenuity for other subjects. The essential thing in his eyes is to preserve intact the very letter of Scripture; being well aware, moreover, that it is not a treatise on cosmography for the use of scholars, but an expression of the truth intended for the simple people whom Moses was addressing, and thus is sometimes possible to interpret in a variety of ways."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Wallace, *Intr.*, xx.

<sup>40</sup> Etienne Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Trans.: Laurence K. Shook and Armand Maurer, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002), 204-205.

Gilson perceived these QQ to be less than useful, perhaps even a lamentable loss as he seemed to wish that Aquinas had pursued these questions along the lines of Grosseteste and Albert. He had reserved his “ingenuity” for other subjects. This sentiment is certainly what Wallace asserts within his introduction to the work when he says they are “completely traditional, and their presentation shows little originality.”<sup>41</sup> Contemporary scholarship apparently joins Gilson and Wallace in their estimation, even if the estimation must be inferred from a lack of treatment rather than a positive statement. Even in his estimation of what these QQ are trying to do, Gilson picked up one aspect of Aquinas’ exploration of patristic sources, the principle of condescension, and applied it to this entire section of the ST.

There is reason for Gilson’s assessment as well as that of others. Scholars have rendered this judgment based upon an appropriate comparison with the treatments of the same subjects within *De potentia* 2-4 and *Commentary* II, 12-15. In those two treatments Aquinas quoted far more patristic and philosophical resources than in ST I, 65-74 and the questions are much more thoroughly examined. Those treatments are clearly a quest for theological and philosophical truth as Aquinas carefully integrates the text of Scripture with the philosophy of his time. If ST I, 65-74 is a similar quest, it is simply deficient. The scholar who is looking for the expected profundities for which Aquinas is justifiably known will find his or her quest much more amply rewarded when that search gleans through the appropriate sections of Aquinas’ *Commentary*, *De potentia*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and other sections of the ST, just to name a few of Aquinas’ rich contributions to the discussion of Creation.

### 3. Appeal for a re-assessment of these QQ.

This thesis does not take issue with the conclusion that these QQ do not present the theologian with the resource for the deepest of Aquinas’ speculative thought on Creation. We do, however, question the presuppositions of the search. Removed from its context the ST has frequently been read as a systematic theological text which endeavors to provide conclusive answers to theological questions. Catholicism’s use of Aquinas to meet the challenges presented by Protestantism beginning with the Council

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<sup>41</sup> Wallace, Intr., xx.

of Trent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century contributed to this tendency.<sup>42</sup> In that context the ST was expected to be a compendium of theological truth pressed into service as it engaged in intellectual combat with contexts and questions which Aquinas had not considered. What has been lost in this use of Aquinas has been the context for which Aquinas was writing, namely the educational reform program which the Order had laid upon his shoulders.

While scholars such as Chenu and Wallace have insisted that these QQ are important, surrounding and later scholarship has largely ignored these pleas for their integration. We contend that this is because the readers of Aquinas are not reading these QQ in light of that pedagogical purpose and the context of the numerous young novices entering the Dominican priories. When one takes these factors into account, these QQ become not a resource for theological profundity but something else. They serve not to demonstrate Aquinas' mastery of science and his ability to harmonize medieval science to theological or philosophical conclusions. It is not therefore valid to read them as a milestone for the modern scientist to observe how far we have come, as Wallace suggested. Nor do they provide some otherwise inexplicable key to the theology of Aquinas as Chenu postulated. These QQ reflect a Master of Sacred Page struggling to elevate the intellectual and theological skills of his students and more likely the students of his students. It was a daunting and remedial task since too many of them had not benefited from the rich Liberal Arts traditions which had informed and shaped his prior students whom he had taught at the University of Paris. Aquinas had already addressed what he considered the necessary points of the doctrine of Creation in ST I, 45-49, but the interlude of this section, a hexaameron, within the table of contents of the *Sentences* afforded Aquinas an opportunity to return to the discussion of Creation. This time however, having already established the theology of Creation, he came to this topic with the freedom to address this serious lacuna in their education and the role of Augustine within theology in general.

The gap within their training was a critical weakness for the young Dominican friars which had the potential to endanger the students' vocation. Key to their success as preachers within the boisterous and burgeoning cities of thirteenth-century Europe was an adroit handling of patristic texts. Failure to do so equipped the Order's enemies with

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<sup>42</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 86-87.

valid charges to lodge against them. These QQ were written in a climate of increasing hostility and open attacks being made against the validity and future of the mendicant orders. Aquinas knew that the preaching friars' success depended upon integrity in the interpretational task which lies behind Christian preaching. He also knew that key to interpretational integrity was the careful handling of these patristic theologians. This section of the ST is not on a quest for theological truth in the final sense. Indeed, that quest in the context of interpreting Genesis 1 might be problematic. Aquinas strove herein to inculcate a *habitus* within the student who must quickly<sup>43</sup> learn to handle patristic texts, the raw data of medieval theology.<sup>44</sup>

The substantive re-reading of these QQ which we propose leads the author to postulate another rationale for these questions and their particular characteristics. It seems likely that Aquinas had an expanded, secondary audience in mind as well, an audience which would come into clearer focus in the *secunda* and *tertia pars*. Therein he made some of his most daring assertions and sought to integrate speculative theology and the moral theology found within the confessors' manuals which he sought to supplant.<sup>45</sup> In so doing Aquinas reasonably anticipated opposition from several quarters. The anti-mendicant faction was only one. The Augustinian movement which sought to invalidate most speculative theology was gathering momentum and had found powerful voices and allies within the ecclesial hierarchy.<sup>46</sup> Even from those who were theologians, Aquinas could expect some antipathy. By the end of the discussion of Christology in the *tertia pars* he effectively called the Christological formulation adopted by many of his colleagues in the discipline Nestorian, an epithet that had particularly negative connotations in the medieval period.<sup>47</sup> When the use of patristic resources within these

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<sup>43</sup> Lawrence, 87-88, a Dominican could be licensed by the Order to preach after one year of instruction. The more expansive license to preach granted to a *praedicator generalis*, however, required no less than three years of study. See "Early Dominican Constitutions" in *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings*, Ed.: Simon Tugwell, O. P., (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982), 467.

<sup>44</sup> Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006) 120.

<sup>45</sup> Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*, Trans.: Paul Philibert, O.P., (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), 111-113. See also Jordan, 7-9.

<sup>46</sup> Lawrence, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Wawrykow, "Hypostatic Union" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, Eds.: Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 245-246.



QQ is taken seriously, another apologetic objective begins to emerge which is naturally both sympathetic and synergistic with the pedagogical goal. Aquinas appears to have been pleading for epistemic humility. He heard Augustine appealing for this same humility within his commentaries and works on Genesis 1. This would have been of great benefit to his Dominican students, and furthermore, had they adopted this posture of humility, his theological peers would have been able to listen to his subsequent arguments.

That this goal is not commonly recognized is easily enough explained. Aquinas appears to have failed in this quest. Within a few years of his death the Augustinian movement seemingly prevailed. The teaching of Aristotle along with several of Aquinas' ideas was proscribed by the Bishop of Paris.<sup>48</sup> His appeal for an intellectual space had apparently been unheeded by his peers, and even within the Dominican community there were those who doubted the orthodoxy of Aquinas in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Dominican Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwardby (1272-1278), considered some of Aquinas' ideas to be so dangerous that he forbade the faculty of Oxford to teach them. His successor as Archbishop, John Pecham (1279-1292), a Franciscan and former faculty colleague of Aquinas in Paris, was even more adamant in his opposition. It would take the Dominican order several decades to rehabilitate Aquinas' reputation and works.<sup>49</sup> By then the historical and personal context had changed and his works were quickly put to uses which he had never imagined.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4. Summary of the Goals and Conclusions of this Thesis.

As already noted, this thesis concedes that the scholarly community which engages in a quest for theological and philosophical truth neglects these QQ for valid reasons. If the scholar desires to know Aquinas' deepest thoughts on the Creation narrative of Christianity, she or he should seek elsewhere within the works of Aquinas. But the scholarly community has too hastily assumed that this reflects a fundamental deficiency

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<sup>48</sup>Henry Denifle, Ed., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, (Paris: Delalain Bros., 1889) 543-555, no. 473. For further discussion of this condemnation consider Weisheipl, 333-337 and Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Vol. I, The Person and His Work*. Trans.: Robert Royal, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 300-302.

<sup>49</sup> Weisheipl, 337-347.

<sup>50</sup> Torrell, 302ff.

in I, 65-74, as if it had been an “off day” for Aquinas when he came to this material. An important question has remained unexamined: Why does Aquinas not ascend to the intellectual and speculative heights of his prior treatments of this material? Why is it, in the words of his commentator and translator, William Wallace, O.P., that Aquinas’ treatment here is “completely traditional” and its “presentation shows little originality”? Aquinas’ other treatments of this material are profound. He was clearly capable of rigorous treatment of this material. Aquinas had examined the problems posed by Genesis 1 and produced one of those profound treatments just months before writing these QQ, hence we can conclude he was still interested in this material, for he had pursued it there with vigor and acumen. Why does he apparently aim so low that scholars ignore this work, and even his fellow Dominicans are embarrassed to teach it within their *studia*?

The answers to this question are found in a close reading and analysis of Aquinas’ treatment of his sources, primarily Augustine and Basil, but also Chrysostom, Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, and John of Damascus among others. When these are read closely, compared to his other treatments of the same material and those of his contemporaries, important patterns and conclusions begin to emerge. Coupled with the historical context and Aquinas’ own words about the *prima pars*, the reader of this thesis will come to understand more clearly why he composed these ten QQ and what roles they play within the entire work.

It is our contention that this section of the *prima pars* deserves a fresh and complete re-assessment as a primer on reading patristic sources for the students of the Dominican *studium personale*<sup>51</sup> which Aquinas operated in Rome. It also gives the reader a clear insight both into the pedagogical processes which obtained in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the challenging world in which Aquinas lived and fulfilled his vocation as a Dominican theologian. Furthermore, these questions pose to the theologians and philosophers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century an important and consistently necessary appeal to the same epistemic humility to which Aquinas summoned his students and peers in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5. Methodology and Structure

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<sup>51</sup> See Boyle, 9-10 and Torrell, 143-144 for discussion of whether Aquinas operated a *studium personale* at Santa Sabina.

As intimated above, this thesis employs a number of devices in the presentation of its arguments. The foundational research methodology is comparative analysis. Aquinas' treatment of the hexaemeral material in ST I, 65-74 is compared to parallel treatments by Aquinas, particularly in *Commentary II*, 12-15 and *De potentia* 2-4, but also to prior and subsequent sections of the ST itself. Born of a close reading of the text and noticing peculiar structures and treatments of Aquinas' use of patristic sources, this analysis is focused upon the use of patristic sources within these works. The fact that Aquinas treated this material at several junctures within his career affords the scholar an opportunity to observe not only parallel treatments but also a development within the thought of Aquinas over the period between the publication of his *Commentary* in 1256 and the writing of ST I, 65-74 in 1268. At some points, but to a lesser extent, our research also compares Aquinas' writing to that of his contemporaries, particularly the commentary upon the *Sentences* written by the Franciscan Bonaventura whose own floruit coincided with that of Aquinas.

This comparative analysis was also conducted in light of the extensive and recent scholarly research which has already taken into account the historical record of Aquinas' life and period. Utilizing the generally agreed upon shape of the 13<sup>th</sup> century world, the life of Aquinas, and the many forces which were at work, certain changes, even distortions, which this research has noted in the comparison of Aquinas' material have become more cogent and coherent.

The various observations of this comparative reading in light of historical realities are then synthesized into an intellectual schema or plan that seeks to account for the observed characteristics of ST I, 65-74. The comparative analysis suggests that this section of the ST was written with intended goals which were distinct from the purposes which drove Aquinas to produce the prior and subsequent elements of the ST, *Commentary II*, 12-15, and *De potentia* 2-4. The data are most fully accounted for by adopting the aforementioned dual purposes for this work: pedagogical and apologetic.

This schema has been distilled into a new set of expectations, a new hermeneutical lens, for reading these questions. Seen as a primer on reading patristic authorities which embodied the epistemic humility of Augustine in a hostile context, the reader of these questions might reasonably expect to find a number of elements within these ten QQ.

Regarding the pedagogical occasion for the work, a close reading of these QQ should give evidence of the following:

1. A pedagogical arc should be evident. Moving from a simplistic to more complex questions and treatments of sources.
2. This pedagogical arc would also be observed in a synthetic development of principles. Elements of prior Articles would be combined and integrated into higher order principles which would guide the reader of patristic material.
3. The material would be more narrowly focused than a speculative theological work. Extraneous, conflicting, and overly complex material would be excised, allowing the instructor and the student to focus more sharply upon the principle at hand.
4. Boundaries of appropriate use will be demonstrated, clearly demarcating when interpretation has transgressed hermeneutical lines. At the same time, the lines will not be allowed to collapse unnecessarily. The reader will understand where the appropriate areas of question and ambiguity lie.
5. The treatments of individual topics within an Article will preference discussion over argumentative conclusion. If there is a simple answer to a question, Aquinas might withhold that simple resolution until the student has had opportunity to explore the question under consideration.
6. The reader might also expect that some sort of a pedagogical exercise be present in order to provide an opportunity for the student, under the guidance of the instructor, to put into practice the principles received.

Regarding the apologetic occasion for the work:

1. The treatment of sources will highlight the fluid nature of exegesis; the interpreter is confronted with interpretational quandaries which defy explanation.
2. Important subsets of the doctrine of Creation will be demonstrated as being arenas for substantive theological disagreement. The reader will be made to

conclude that we do not “know” as much as is commonly assumed about foundational topics.

3. The aforementioned ambiguity will engender a measure of humility when reading patristic texts. Multiple answers or solutions to perplexing elements within the text will be presented, but while some readings are eliminated, that process does not eliminate all ambiguity.
4. In light of the rising Augustinian movement of his day, the reader will expect to see questions of authority, especially those that pertain to Augustine, treated carefully. The reading of his material will be deep and Augustine’s authority will be examined and may be used as a weapon against those advocating his supremacy.

## Chapter 1: Reading Aquinas in His Context

The scholarly community has increasingly accepted Chenu's call to read Aquinas' works within an appropriate historical context. This is not a simple task as dates for some works are contested<sup>1</sup> and Aquinas himself does not afford the reader many clues about such context within his writing. The text of ST I, 65-74, however, is datable with some precision. It almost certainly was written sometime between November, 1267 and early spring of 1268, a window of approximately six months. Within I, 79, 4, the section immediately after the QQ under consideration here, Aquinas cited a paraphrase of Aristotle's *De anima* made by Themistius, translated by William of Moerbeke, but not made available to Aquinas until 22 November, 1267.<sup>2</sup> It is generally accepted that the entire *prima pars* was completed in the spring of 1268, which necessitates Thomas composing ST, I, 79, 4 between November 1267 and the spring of 1268. Since Aquinas occasionally cited earlier material within the ST, but not subsequent material, he appears to have worked through the QQ in their numerical order. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that Aquinas was working on QQ 65-74, which fall immediately prior to Q 79, in either the very late fall of 1267 or, at the latest, the early part of 1268. While it is conceivable he could have written in the spring of 1268, Aquinas composed another 40 QQ, divided into 192 Articles, after Q 79, suggesting the composition of Q 79 would have fallen in the earlier part of that roughly six month span.

This chapter situates Aquinas and ST I, 65-74 within their immediate and larger historical context. In the next chapter, we will explore in greater depth the intellectual climate in which these QQ were composed. Several points of historical context bear upon the reading of these QQ and this chapter addresses these historical concerns. Of primary importance is the immediate audience for the QQ. For whom did Aquinas write these QQ, and, secondarily, what can we understand about the motivations which drove Aquinas to compose them? It is also important to bear in mind that Aquinas did not teach in an isolated *studium* located in some remote location, but had been posted by the Dominican Provincial leadership to Rome and later Viterbo with the intent that he

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<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of some of Aquinas' exegetical works such as his commentaries on Isaiah and Jeremiah. See Weisheipl, 369-370.

<sup>2</sup> Weisheipl, 361.

function as a scholarly theological resource for the papal court.<sup>3</sup> His “expert opinions” published in this time<sup>4</sup> attest to the role he played in service to the court and the Order. This important context which must also be accounted for as Aquinas addressed these QQ.

1. ST I, 65-74 at a pivotal juncture in the life of Aquinas.

The ST is divided into four parts, *prima pars*, *prima-secundae partis*, *secunda-secundae partis*, and *tertia pars*. As Aquinas transitioned from the *prima pars* to the two elements which comprise the *secunda pars* he experienced a significant change in his life circumstances. Having begun the ST in Italy, he embarked upon the writing of the initial QQ of the *secunda pars* as he began his second regency on the faculty of the University of Paris. More than one scholar of Aquinas has suggested that the marked change which they have noted at this juncture within the ST is due to the change in venue. They suggest that the far more academic climate of the university, the higher quality of students, and the conflicts which he addressed within that academic community, particularly the Aristotelian crisis in the faculty, all contributed to the tenor and content of the *secunda pars*. It should also be noted, that, as they make this comparison, most scholars also express their preference for the *secunda pars* over the *prima pars*. Torrell considers the *prima pars* to be coldly metaphysical and dry while the *secunda pars* is “far more human, full of delicacy and nuance.”<sup>5</sup> For our purposes, while we may disagree with that assessment of the two parts, we concur that they are different and that the difference may indeed be due to contextual factors. Aquinas himself may have also noted the differences in the works. He published the first two Parts of the ST at the same time in 1272 but as separate volumes. From the beginning until well after his death the Parts of the ST were normally published and distributed as separate volumes.<sup>6</sup>

Aquinas completed the *prima pars* in 1268 while in papal court in Viterbo, Italy, but he had conceived, planned, and inaugurated his work while teaching Dominican students at

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<sup>3</sup> Weisheipl, 230-231.

<sup>4</sup> *Contra Errores Graecorum, ad Urbanum IV Pontificem Maximum* (1263); *De Regno ad regem Cypri* (1265-1267); *De emptione et venditione ad tempus* (1262/1263); et al.

<sup>5</sup> Torrell, 246. See also Weisheipl, 244, for similar estimation but alternative suggestion for causes.

<sup>6</sup> Boyle, 23.

the Dominican *studium* at Santa Sabina in Rome (1265-1267). There he had been charged with operating the Italian province's first provincial school and where he also had become an important resource for the papal court.<sup>7</sup>

2. The First Audience: Aquinas' Students and the Occasion and Shape of the *prima pars*.

As one considers these 10 QQ, a primary contextual question arises regarding the nature of these students Aquinas was given to teach, the young men whom one might presume were his first readers. And here we must admit that the actual students of a medieval Regent Master, whether at a university such as Paris or the Dominican priories and *studia*, are an elusive quarry. One reads many treatments of the medieval university and could almost conclude that they did not actually have any students.<sup>8</sup> But of course teachers do have students. While events transpiring outside the walls of the priory and the personal history of Aquinas are also important, the ST was a document written for an audience, readers who were his students, and their identity will be critical for a proper understanding the influence of those secondary factors upon the work.

a. The need for a *summa*.

Aquinas conceived of the ST and began writing while teaching in a school (*studium*) which had been newly created and which had no current parallel in the Italian province of the Order. The authority to operate the school had been established by the leaders of the Italian province of the Dominican Order at a provincial chapter meeting held in 1265 in Anagni. Aquinas was present at the conference, likely advocating for this course of action and influencing the schools foundation and composition. The capitular fathers must have seen a need for this school in order for them to take this step. What is not as clear is the extent to which they believed the problem they addressed by its foundation was an educational shortcoming in their younger friars or the need to afford some venue commensurate with their famous and brilliant star theologian.<sup>9</sup> While it is

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<sup>7</sup> Weisheipl, 195-7, 361.

<sup>8</sup> Leland E. Wilshire, "The Condemnations of 1277 and the Intellectual Climate of the Medieval University" in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University: Essays in Honor of Otto Gründler*, Ed.: Nancy Van Deusen. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 160-161.

<sup>9</sup> Weisheipl, 195.



most likely a combination of both, there is good indication that the educational background of the friars in Italy and the system for their education was indeed weak and the leadership of the province was aware of this.<sup>10</sup>

What is clearer and more important for this thesis is what Aquinas thought of these young men whom the Italian priories sent to him. He left no record of any estimation of their relative competence as students, but one can discern something of a value judgment in several pedagogical decisions which Aquinas made. It appears that Aquinas began lecturing at this new *studium* on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, concurrently revising his own *Commentary* which had treated those patristic sentences compiled by the Lombard. He quickly abandoned the *Sentences* both in his lectures and his revision of the *Commentary*. Aquinas' *Commentary* had been his initial theological work, completed in 1256, a decade earlier and composed while he lectured on the *Sentences*. To use the *Sentences* within theological education was conventional, even expected. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had effectively institutionalized the Lombard's text for such purposes. That Council had sought to standardize the curriculum and did so by incorporating the Lombard's *Sentences* at the core of that curriculum. The Lateran Council mandated the length of the period of study which was to be devoted to the *Sentences* and established that lecturing upon the *Sentences* would be the pre-requisite training for anyone to be licensed to lecture on the Scriptures.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that Aquinas abandoned the *Sentences* as a text is therefore suggestive.<sup>12</sup> The *Sentences* of Peter Lombard had been the standard work for Masters of Theology in much of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. All theologians lectured upon these selections from patristic authorities which the Lombard had gathered together under various topics. It would have been natural for Aquinas to have turned to this work as he considered the curriculum for this *studium* in Santa Sabina. For reasons which he does not explicitly

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<sup>10</sup> Boyle, 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> Phillipp Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 61-62.

<sup>12</sup> Wayne J. Hankey, *God in Himself: Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 22-24, suggests that Aquinas' recent exposure to the theology of the Greek patristic theologians both enabled and necessitated this abandonment of Lombard's work. Hankey sees Aquinas applying a new organizing principle to theology which he has learned from Dionysius.

state, he felt that treating the *Sentences* and reworking his *Commentary* would not serve the goals of this *studium* and the Order.

b. Why this *Summa theologiae*? Situating the ST within its literary context.

To serve this new *studium* and its students, Aquinas set about writing a *summa*. Despite its current and strong affiliation with Aquinas' works, the *summa* in the medieval period could be applied to a broad genre of theological literature. On one end of the spectrum in the medieval period, experienced Masters of Theology regularly produced *summae* in which they organized material around a theme or motif for their students.<sup>13</sup> Some contend that Aquinas himself wrote three *summae*: the ST, the *Summa contra gentiles* (1259-1265), and a smaller work entitled *Compendium theologiae* (1269-1273).<sup>14</sup> His peers likewise were constructing systematic theological treatises which sought to organize the content of the discipline around a coherent theme. The first Dominican Regent Master at Paris (1229-1230), Roland of Cremona, had written a *summa* of the *Sentences*.<sup>15</sup> Sophisticated and substantial, these works were written for a readership which extended beyond the students who might have read them, articulating for the larger theological community the particular unifying vision of theology held by the author. These documents did not supplant<sup>16</sup> the *Sentences*, but would have served as a body of secondary literature for students of theology.

While teaching in Paris, Aquinas would have had access to a number of these works, including the *Summa universae theologiae*. This work is normally attributed to Alexander Hales (1185-1245), who died shortly before Aquinas arrived in Paris. This *summa*, like many contemporary treatments of theology, organized its discussion of

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<sup>13</sup> Chenu, 299 and Thomas O'Meara, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian*, (Notre Dame: Univ of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 41-53.

<sup>14</sup> O'Meara, 44.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Spatz, "Approaches and Attitudes to a New Theological Textbook: the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard" in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University: Essays in Honor of Otto Gründler*, Ed.: Nancy Van Deusen. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Hankey, 20, speculates about the possibility that Aquinas was seeking to supplant the *Sentences* with the ST.

God around the sacraments.<sup>17</sup> Aquinas' own mentor, Albert, was himself writing a *summa* but was, despite his long life, unable to finish his *Summa theologiae* in which he organized his material around a hierarchy which he perceived in the created order.<sup>18</sup>

Academic *summae* were written in the university settings, but most of them were not intended for a true beginner in the discipline. For many of Aquinas' contemporaries, the *summa* genre served as means to re-publish a clearer and more mature version of their commentary on the *Sentences*. This appears to have been the goal of Albert's *summa* project which adheres very closely to the content of his earlier commentary on the *Sentences*. It appears that Aquinas may have initially conceived of this project in a similar way as he began teaching in Santa Sabina in 1265.<sup>19</sup> As we have noted, he initially lectured on the *Sentences* while recasting his *Commentary* but abandoned this effort in order to embark upon writing the ST.

Unlike many of his academic peers, however, Aquinas acknowledged that he wrote this *summa* for beginners (*incipientes*)<sup>20</sup> and seems to have meant by that term a body of students who were truly beginning their theological education. It appears that he did so because the standard academic text, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, had proven itself to be unworkable for him and his students and the existing texts which were intended for these beginners did not meet with his approval.<sup>21</sup>

It should also be noted that the term *summa* was not restricted to the academic *summae* written by regent masters of theology such as Albert and Alexander. There was another body of literature which used the term and which sought to address the theological beginner. It also appears that Aquinas was not satisfied with these alternatives. In writing a *summa* for beginners Aquinas was joining a rather forgettable movement in

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander Hales (Attributed), *Summa universae theologiae*, Eds.: Bernardini Klumper and the Quarracchi Fathers, 4 vols. (Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1924-1948). (Accessed via GoogleBooks.com)

<sup>18</sup> Markus Führer, "Albert the Great", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition), Ed.: Edward N. Zalta, URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/albert-great/>>. (Accessed Nov. 7, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Weisheipl, 197.

<sup>20</sup> ST, *prooemium* (pro.)

<sup>21</sup> Torrell, 119-120.

theological publishing. Several authors, many of them Dominicans, had composed documents intended for an audience of theological beginners which they styled *summae* but which were little more than manuals intended to guide the preacher in hearing a confession. Boyle lists several of these in his discussion of the ST's setting and suggests that Aquinas had these in mind when he composed at least the initial part of the ST.<sup>22</sup>

c. A work driven by his students and the mission of the *studium*.

There could be any number of reasons which moved Aquinas to abandon the standard academic text of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the *Sentences* of Lombard, and to eschew the available alternatives. It seems hardly conceivable that one of those reasons is that the material in the *Sentences* was too basic or simple for his students. Far more likely, Aquinas considered the material too advanced or complex for these students. Boyle argues that the best and brightest of the students whom the priories put forward for advanced training within the Dominican system were being sent to the universities such as Paris, Cologne, and Naples. A Dominican province was limited in the number of students it might send to the Dominican study houses at the medieval universities. There were only five of these *studia generalia* of the Dominican Order and each province was allowed to send two friars to study at each of these, the only exception being Paris which was equipped to receive three students from each province. Thus only eleven students were sent from the entire Italian province to the Order's five *studia generalia*. The Italian province also operated two provincial houses of study, *studia provincialia*, associated with local universities which received some students.<sup>23</sup> While the numbers of students who were attending the universities was perhaps quite small, it also must be said that Aquinas was receiving the students of the second rank. The reader who comes to these questions understands that Aquinas' audience, at least for this *prima pars*, was a step below what he had taught at the University of Paris.

It also appears that the Dominican Order was concerned about the quality of these students. It is hard for the modern reader to remember, but the Dominican Order in the mid-thirteenth century was quite new. Dominic had died only a few years before Aquinas was born and it was only shortly before that, 1217, when he had dispersed his

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<sup>22</sup> Boyle, 2-3. See also the excursus on the *prooemium* later in this chapter.

<sup>23</sup> Boyle, 7-12.

followers to the universities. Riding the crest of a movement which was sweeping across Europe, all mendicant orders saw the number of their members rapidly increase in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. William A. Hinnebusch, O.P. concludes from reading early documents of the Dominicans that, while in 1220 there were perhaps 300 friars of the Order, by 1256 there were some 13,000 members of the Order.<sup>24</sup> Torrell suggests that such growth meant that the young men who made up this new wave of novices were also changing.<sup>25</sup> Initially the men attracted to Dominic and his new Order of Preachers had been the highly educated men of the universities such as Alexander Hales and Albert the Great. They often came to the Order while at the universities. The mendicant movement was by the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, however, entering a second phase in which the majority of novices were entering priories from outside the ranks of the university students and without the foundational training afforded by the universities. The mendicant movement was flourishing and this meant that it was penetrating deeper into the general population. This fact created a situation which struck at the very heart of the Order which saw its priories as a sort of “dispersed university.” In 1259 the visitors who were charged with oversight of the priories were commanded to note vacancies, primarily among the *lectores*, and press capable young men into service where needed.<sup>26</sup> These *lectores* and their educational function were considered vitally important to the Dominican Order. The Secretary General, Humbert, had mandated that they might only enter spiritual retreat at certain times of the year which would result in the smallest impact upon the daily lectures they provided.<sup>27</sup>

The students whom Aquinas taught at Santa Sabina would have likely returned to their priories to serve as *lector*. In writing the ST, Aquinas effectively had two pedagogical audiences, both the immediate student and the students of that student who would soon be licensed to preach himself. Which of these student populations prompted Aquinas to abandon the *Sentences* is indiscernible, but a likely supposition is that it was both of them.

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<sup>24</sup> William A Hinnebusch, O.P., *The Dominicans: A Short History*, (New York: Alba House, 1975), 19-20.

<sup>25</sup> Torrell, 96-98.

<sup>26</sup> C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London and New York: Longman, 1994), 72-74, 80-85

<sup>27</sup> Boyle, 4.

Aquinas, having elected not to use the *Sentences* which had comprised his own education, considered that what was needed for this situation was a new work, a *summa*. An academic *summa*, regardless of the intended audience, was not a project which was lightly undertaken. A proper *summa* dealt with the whole of theology and was organized around a specific theme or motif.<sup>28</sup> The raw material of a *summa* was generated in disputations, formal and stylized academic activities which were organized around topics. These *disputatae* were not as tightly written or formal as a *summa*, frequently allowing for more speculative activity, some of which was not fruitful. A *summa*, in comparison, was expected to be more tightly focused and formal. These disputations formed the core of medieval scholarship and research. Aquinas had presided over several disputations during his prior tenure as a regent master in the University of Paris and continued to do so while in Italy. These were incomplete for his purposes here, however, and before he undertook the *prima pars*, sometime in 1265 or 1266, he conducted a disputation whose proceedings were published and remain extant (*De potentia*).<sup>29</sup> Both his earlier *Commentary* and these disputations, especially *De potentia*, are important for the reader of this thesis and of ST I, 65-74. Many of the conclusions of this thesis will be based on a comparison of the ST with these works.

Perhaps because it was the structure with which he was most familiar, surely because he thought it was beneficial for his students to organize his material this way, while he had rejected the *Sentences* as the text for his *studium*, Aquinas retained the basic topical order in which the Lombard had progressed within his *Sentences*. While the ST would not be another commentary on the Lombard's collected "sentences" of patristic theologians of Christianity, Aquinas retained the "table of contents" from the Lombard's work, dealing with this material in the same order. In another notable point of distinction which sets the *prima pars* apart from the other Parts of the ST, Aquinas abandoned even this dependence on the *Sentences* when he began the *prima-secundae pars* in 1268.

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<sup>28</sup> O'Meara, 44-54.

<sup>29</sup> Weisheipl, 123-128. Here I follow Weisheipl's chronology for the disputations, a chronology which is itself disputed.

### 3. Excurses into the *Prooemium* and its Importance for Reading the *prima pars*.

This discussion of Aquinas' readership occasions a closer examination of his only published words on the readers of the *prima pars*. Likely just before publishing the *prima pars*, *prima secundae partis*, and *secunda secundae partis* in 1272, Aquinas penned a brief Introduction (*prooemium*) to each Part of his work. Before examining the *prooemium* of ST I, it is worth noting that Aquinas had very specific ideas of what this genre of literature was endeavoring to do and what a good *prooemium* accomplished. In his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*,<sup>30</sup> Aquinas noted that Aristotle had also written a *prooemium* and describes there a three-fold purpose or necessary elements (*quae necessaria sunt*) for such an introductory statement. In Aquinas own words, a *prooemium* first must render the reader favorably disposed (*benevolum*). Second, it renders them docile (*docilem*) or accepting of the structure (*ordo et distinctio*) of the work. Finally, it is necessary that a *prooemium* renders the reader attentive (*attentum*).<sup>31</sup> The reader of Aquinas' *prooemium* to the *prima pars* will need to ask whom he would be rendering well disposed, docile, and attentive. Is it the beginner (*incipiens*) or the one who instructs the beginner?

For the purpose of more closely examining these words, the entirety of this very brief document pertaining to the *prima pars* is reprinted here:

Because a teacher (*doctor*) of catholic truth ought not only to educate the advanced (*provectos*) but also to instruct beginners (*incipientes*) – in accord with the Apostle's words "as unto little ones in Christ I gave you milk as drink, not meat" (I Corinthians 3:1) – our principal aim in this work is to consider what pertains to the Christian religion in a manner befitting the instruction of beginners (*incipientium*). For we have reflected on the ways in which what various others have written are an

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<sup>30</sup> *Sententia libri de anima*, lectio 1, n. 2, *In tractatu autem de anima, quem habemus prae manibus, primo ponit prooemium, in quo facit tria quae necessaria sunt in quolibet prooemio. Qui enim facit prooemium tria intendit. Primo enim ut auditorem reddat benevolum. Secundo ut reddat docilem. Tertio ut reddat attentum. Benevolum quidem reddit, ostendendo utilitatem scientiae: docilem, praemittendo ordinem et distinctionem tractatus: attentum attestando difficultatem tractatus.*

<sup>31</sup> See Ralph McInerney, *Boethius and Aquinas*, (Washington D.C.: Catholic Univ. Press, 1990), 58-59, for a more substantive treatment of Aquinas' comments on Aristotle's *prooemium*.

enormous hindrance to those who are relatively new to this teaching: sometimes on account of the useless multiplication of questions, articles, and arguments; sometimes because the things that beginners need to know are not treated in accord with the proper sequence of learning, but rather according to the requirements of textual commentary or the occasion of an academic debate; sometimes even because frequent repetition of the same things has tended to produce weariness and confusion in the minds of listeners. Striving, therefore, to avoid these and other such mistakes, we shall try, with confidence in God's help, to pursue what pertains to this sacred teaching succinctly and clearly, as far as the subject matter allows.<sup>32</sup>

Aquinas obviously took quite seriously his pedagogical task and noted deficiencies in the materials used for the teaching of the beginning students, the learners he named *incipientes*.<sup>33</sup> Recent scholarship has suggested that this pedagogical goal is central to the ST and that a failure to take it into consideration leads to a serious misunderstanding of Aquinas' thought.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> ST, I, pro., *Quia Catholicae veritatis doctor non solum profectos debet instruere, sed ad eum pertinet etiam incipientes erudire, secundum illud apostoli I ad Corinth. III, tanquam parvulis in Christo, lac vobis potum dedi, non escam; propositum nostrae intentionis in hoc opere est, ea quae ad Christianam religionem pertinent, eo modo tradere, secundum quod congruit ad eruditionem incipientium. Consideravimus namque huius doctrinae novitios, in his quae a diversis conscripta sunt, plurimum impediri, partim quidem propter multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum; partim etiam quia ea quae sunt necessaria talibus ad sciendum, non traduntur secundum ordinem disciplinae, sed secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebebat occasio disputandi; partim quidem quia eorundem frequens repetitio et fastidium et confusionem generabat in animis auditorum. Haec igitur et alia huiusmodi evitare studentes, tentabimus, cum confidentia divini auxilii, ea quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinent, breviter ac dilucide prosequi, secundum quod materia patietur.* Translated by Brian Shanley, O. P., in *The Treatise on the Divine Nature: Summa Theologiae I, 1-13*, (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hacket Publishing Co., 2006), 2.

<sup>33</sup> Chenu, *Toward Understanding Thomas Aquinas*, 297-298. Thus argued Chenu, however, he also is quick to point out that he considers Aquinas, like many academics, to be somewhat deluded about the abilities of beginning students. Probably for this reason John Jenkins, C. S. C., *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5, on the other hand, argues that the intended audience is advanced students in his attempt to describe the readership of the ST.

<sup>34</sup> Vivian Boland OP, "Truth, Knowledge and Communication: Thomas Aquinas on the Mystery of Teaching" in *Studies in Christian Ethics* 19.3 (2006), 294-6.



The identification of these beginners is therefore critical for understanding the *prima pars* of the ST, and to a lesser extent the whole work. Additional *prooemia* were written for both elements of the *secunda pars*, suggesting that Aquinas may have intended these words to apply to the *prima pars* distinct from the *secunda pars*. Furthermore, he did repeat this concern for the *incipientes* in those subsequent *prooemiae*. This contention is bolstered by the fact that he published these as separate documents.

Aquinas' choice of this word for the beneficiaries of this text is merits further examination. The *Index Thomisticus*<sup>35</sup> indicates the word only occurs 62 times in the entire corpus of Aquinas as a plural participle. If one filters out the instances in which this word is used inside quotations of other authors (18 occurrences), an interesting pattern is quickly noted. Aquinas most frequently used the term in contrast with *proficientes* and *perfecti* (31 occurrences).<sup>36</sup> Even more important for understanding this term, the significant majority (21 occurrences) of the instances of comparison with *proficientes* and/or *perfecti* are found within the ST itself, primarily in QQ's II-II 183, 184, and 186 (12 occurrences). If our presumption is correct and these *prooemia* were written shortly before submission to the publisher, the *prooemium* of the *prima pars* would be roughly contemporary with these QQ from *secunda-secundae partis*.

In this final section of the *secunda-secundae partis* of the ST, Aquinas turned his attention toward the *reditus* of humanity through Christ. In this discussion he posited three states or conditions (*status*) of mankind: The *incipientes* who desired to be rid of evil, the *proficientes* who sought to love the good, and the *perfecti* who sought to be united with God. He understood this functioning on both the level of actuality and the level of desire. Hence an *incipientes* might be someone who had mastered his sinful passions, but not yet had come to love the good. He might also be someone who simply desired to master those same sinful passions, but did not yet desire to love the good. The *perfecti*, on the other hand, might be perfected in fact, enjoying a complete unity with God or may simply desire such unity.

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<sup>35</sup> Accessed via <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/it/index.age> (13, November, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> The few remaining instances (11 occurrences) of *incipientes* fit into a quite unremarkable and expected pattern of use for the participle, widely scattered throughout the works of Aquinas.

*Incipientes* are consistently contrasted within the ST with those who are in a process and with those who have arrived at the end of that process, hence his contrast here with the advanced (*profecti*). While within the prologue this contrast is made in the context of a different virtue than the QQ's which occur at the end of II-II (in the *prooemium* knowledge, in II-II, 183-186 love), the consistent pattern of usage within the ST would suggest that Aquinas had a clear content for this word. The *incipientes* are not those who are simply "behind" the author in progress, as perhaps an initiate is to a master, but they are in something of a different state. They may have recognized that they lack something or have turned away from ignorance, but they have not yet attained to that other state, "advanced" in knowledge.

This understanding of the usage and meaning of *incipientes* affects how one conceives of the intended audience of the work. It is the contention of this thesis that these *incipientes* may not have been the first audience, but a second audience, who read or heard this document under the tutelage of a *lector* within the priories of the order. These *lectores* would seem to be the primary audience of at least the *prima pars* of the ST. When Aquinas speaks of a text which has in mind the instruction of beginners,<sup>37</sup> it would suggest he may be writing for an audience which is also interested in this instruction of the beginners. I propose that this other audience of interested pedagogues is comprised of the *lectores* who would be charged with the daily instruction delivered to these beginners and who had been sent to Aquinas for instruction at the *studium* in Santa Sabina where the ST was conceived and initiated.

The *prooemium* also suggests that in writing the ST Aquinas seemed to believe he was filling a serious lacuna in the materials available to theological educators. At the time of the inception of the work, Aquinas was engaged in the educational system of the Roman Province of the order, perhaps in the establishment of a *studium personale*.<sup>38</sup> For reasons which we have explicated, we disagree with both Chenu and Jenkins as cited above who struggle to identify the *incipientes* as if they were the intended readership. Aquinas' statement within the prologue regarding his estimation of the other materials is difficult to reconcile with this interpretation that *incipientes* are the audience. There

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<sup>37</sup> ST I, *pro.*, *propositum nostrae intentionis in hoc opere est, ea quae ad Christianam religionem pertinent, eo modo tradere, secundum quod congruit ad eruditionem incipientium.*

<sup>38</sup> Torrell, 143-144.

were in fact a great number of these books being produced from many sources in that period. The very first books published by the Dominican Order were manuals for these *incipientes*, *iuniores* and *simplices*, and this continued during Aquinas' lifetime and throughout the ensuing centuries until the period of the Reformation.<sup>39</sup> The problem with understanding that Aquinas is addressing the *incipientes* directly in the *prooemium* is that it only makes sense in a more modern context in which publishing technology has significantly reduced the value of books and afforded even a beginner the opportunity to browse a bookstore for options. The choice of a text for a student body made up of *incipientes* in the medieval world would not have been the *incipientes* themselves, but the individuals who had been charged with their education. The *lector* would have had the only copy and the *incipientes* would have transcribed the content of that text from the singular copy which was in the hands of the instructor and read to the *incipientes*.

While Aquinas certainly had in mind the young friars who were entering the order, his actual audience were, I assert, the promising young men Italian priories were sending to Santa Sabina for him to train as *lectores* for the ongoing educational mission of the order.<sup>40</sup> These *lectores* were not themselves *incipientes* but had been recognized as no longer being a beginner and had hence been charged with presenting a daily lecture on Scripture for the increasingly youthful and unprepared friars within the priories of the Italian Province. Dominic himself had envisioned the Order's priories as sort of a dispersed university. In addition to a *prior*, the *lector* was the only other office within a priory mandated by the constitution of the Order.<sup>41</sup>

In further support of a double audience consisting of *lectores* and *incipientes*, Aquinas' treatment of this material is considerably less sophisticated than elsewhere within his *oeuvre*. At the same time as he is writing these QQ, he is able to conduct relatively sophisticated disputations with his students at Santa Sabina in the process of producing *De potentia*. If he had argued this material with his students a few months prior to

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<sup>39</sup> Boyle, 2-3.

<sup>40</sup> Torrell, 119-120, suggests that Aquinas realized the extensive lacunae in the Dominican educational system and the need for new pedagogical materials while at Orvieto, as he was given to teach in a substantial but single priory.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence, 74-75, 84-85.

composing these QQ, why not retain the same level of sophistication? The only readily available answer seems to be that this material was intended for those students to use upon their return to the priories of the Order, as they were called upon to conduct lectures for the benefit of the *incipientes*.

The Order's success and rapid growth had resulted more than one problem which needed to be addressed. Initially the men who responded to the call of Dominic to serve within the *Ordo Predicatorum* had arrived more or less fully educated. In the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, however, the order was experiencing dramatic growth due to its increasing popularity and acceptance within the ecclesial culture. Papal support also was a likely contributor to this success. Many who were now entering their novitiate were not yet educated. Since the preaching task remained vital to the mission of the Order, this presented a significant challenge. The preachers would need to be educated.<sup>42</sup> The council at Valenciennes, upon the recommendation of Aquinas and his fellow academics, would opt to develop the system of priories, *lectores*, and other structures of the order to create a more integrated educational system.<sup>43</sup> Having thus been a participant in the re-ordering of this system, it would not have been strange or out of place for Aquinas to have taken something of a proprietary interest in the quality and character of the education of the *incipientes*. He would have also understood that as a Master of Theology, his task was to address the system in which they were educated.

This suggestion seems to answer two important questions which have perplexed scholars who read the ST (see comments by Chenu and Jenkins above). First it allows the *incipientes* to be truly beginners, as the word would most obviously suggest. They were simply the many young men who were entering the Order throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century, novices and beginners to this apostolic life and the study of theology which increasingly marked the Dominican Order. Secondly, this suggestion allows for the complexity of the work, especially the complexity which one experiences in the rest of the *prima pars*, in that the actual readership was not in fact these beginners, but the men who had been charged to teach these *incipientes* as *lectores*. I believe that the ST started out as something of a teacher's manual for *lectores*, or perhaps a manual training these

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence, 80-85.

<sup>43</sup> Torrell, 96-98.

*lectores*. I also would concur with those who note the change in the document when one proceeds to the *secunda pars*. In the context of the university environment it would appear that the focus upon these *lectores* receded somewhat and the occasion of theology addressed in its most advanced medieval state reasserted itself.

It must also be said that it is unlikely that the students of Paris, where Aquinas' career was forged, were ever far from his mind. In truth it may be an unfavorable comparison of the young Dominican friars to his former Parisian students which initially prompted this project. He may have through this document simply sought to improve Dominican education.<sup>44</sup> As this pertains to Questions 65-74, I believe that in this section of the ST Aquinas sought to inculcate within these instructors of *incipientes* a careful and respectful handling of patristic sources which adhered to a number of hermeneutical principles. As such, these questions served as something of a primer and demonstration of these principles. We shall examine these hermeneutical principles in greater depth in the second and third chapters which deal with sources and Aquinas' treatment of those sources.

Before examining the sources which occupied Aquinas' attention in these ten QQ, several additional interlocking and salient historical points will be important to the conclusions which we assert. The first important point to remember is the proximity and nature of Aquinas' students to this task. As we have already suggested, this was a document which was likely motivated by the needs of his students. But it was not only the students of the *studium* in Santa Sabina which may have been on his mind. As already noted, at the end of his first regency in Paris, in 1259, Aquinas had been sent to a provincial conference of the Dominican Order in Valenciennes. He was summoned as the senior Master of Theology along with four of his fellow Dominicans who were also his peers in that academic rank to serve on a special commission on behalf of the provincials of the Order. Their charge was to examine the educational system within the provinces and priories of the Dominican Order and make suggestions for its

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<sup>44</sup> Boyle, 11. Boyle points out that Aquinas was named a preacher general of the Italian province in 1560 which gave him the right to speak at the periodic gatherings of the order. Within 4 years of his appointment and participation in these provincial chapters the province, which heretofore had never addressed education, had conducted an internal assessment and come to the conclusion that study in the province had been "neglected." He sees the hand of Aquinas behind these conclusions which ultimately led to the foundation of the *studium* in Santa Sabina.

improvement.<sup>45</sup> Boyle suggests that this commission was the impetus behind Aquinas seeking the *studium* in Santa Sabina several years later and subsequently his conception and production of the ST as a text book for the training of *lectors* and friars beyond his own students.<sup>46</sup> Expanding the readership into this larger body of the thousands of young men who were studying with the far-flung priories of the *Ordo Predicatorum* suggests the next point of historical importance: The nature of Aquinas himself.

4. The author: Thomas Aquinas, friar of the *Ordo Predicatorum*.

The second point is that Aquinas received the aforementioned charge at Valenciennes very seriously. The simple fact that he continued writing the ST after leaving the *studium* in Santa Sabina is itself suggestive of this fact. By all indications, Aquinas' dedication to the mission of the Dominican Order was unwavering and deeply rooted. Already as a youth he had overcome considerable opposition to his affiliation with the Dominicans. Being the youngest son of a family in the minor nobility of Italy, his parents had envisioned a career for their youngest son Thomas within the Church. They did not, however envision that ecclesial career as a Dominican, rather as a Benedictine monk, likely with the idea that he would become an Abbot. This was certainly within reach for someone entering a monastery from his social station. His decision as a student at Naples to join one of the mendicant orders was not well received by his widowed mother. Considering the long and fruitful history of both the Franciscan and Dominican Orders and their generally favorable estimation as important members of Roman Catholicism, it is hard for the modern reader to remember that in the first half of the thirteenth century the Dominicans were perceived as a new and not entirely trustworthy movement. In hindsight it is easier to see that the mendicants were a natural outgrowth of the rising cities of Western Europe. To the entrenched nobility, both within the ecclesial hierarchy and among the lay nobility, the mendicants looked to be upending social order.<sup>47</sup>

Fearful that his family might interfere, the leadership of the Dominican Order was attempting to remove the young Thomas Aquinas to France when his elder brother

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<sup>45</sup> Torrell, 96-98. See also Weisheipl, 138.

<sup>46</sup> Boyle, 10-11

<sup>47</sup> Hinnebusch, *The Dominicans: A Short History*, 25-26.

intercepted the party north of Rome. Accompanied by soldiers from the army of Emperor Frederick II, they seized Thomas and imprisoned him for more than a year during which his mother and siblings sought to dissuade him from this course. His brother attempted to seduce him with a prostitute. His mother cajoled, pleaded, and threatened, but young Thomas remained resolute. He was committed to this decision, a commitment from which he never wavered.<sup>48</sup>

Thomas Aquinas appears to have been a true believer in the Dominican project throughout his life. Chenu claimed,

“It is plain that Thomas’s joining the Preachers – in spite of the violent opposition of his family (1244) – was, together with the religious orientation of his soul, the factor that fashioned all his activity, considered not only from an outward point of view but, especially, from that of doctrine and motivation.”<sup>49</sup>

Looking at the man through the lens of his works, it is easy to forget that Aquinas chose the Order of Preachers (*Ordo Predicatorum*) long before he was an academic. He did not reject his family’s station, wealth, and career opportunities as an academic to be an academic. Before he was 20 years old, before his formation as an academic had entered even its intermediate stages, Aquinas left his secure position in a noble family to join a mendicant order of preachers as a friar. The opportunity for a successful, even illustrious academic career was a later development in the life of Aquinas.<sup>50</sup> He could not have known that he would dine with kings and popes when he made that vow. He joined the Order to pursue the apostolic life.

It just so happened that the Dominican Order recognized the talent of the young man who had joined their order and put him into roles and locations which were designed to benefit the Order’s kerygmatic goals. Paris was, in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the

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<sup>48</sup> Weisheipl, 25-36.

<sup>49</sup> Chenu, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Lawrence, 20.

center of a preaching movement which has been likened to popularized scholasticism.<sup>51</sup> The theology faculty of the University of Paris, especially its mendicant members, consisted of well-established providers of essential resources for the preachers who were flooding the streets of European cities at the time. Shortly before Aquinas arrived in Paris the faculty had produced one of the first truly successful concordances of the Bible. Even the economics of publishing had been brought into service to this task. The commentary had been distributed through a recently devised *pecia* system by which a preacher could rent a portion of it or the whole concordance for a time, far more economically than purchasing it.<sup>52</sup> In suggesting that Aquinas wrote these QQ in support of the preaching task, the training of the Dominican preachers of Italy, we are not proposing a disjuncture from his earlier career, but in fact a continuation of what he had already been doing. This had been the rationale for the Dominicans training him from the beginning.

Aquinas' own behavior was consistent with this assessment of the intensity and stability his motives. Shortly before undertaking the composition of the ST, he was offered the abbacy of Monte Cassino, the influential and lucrative Benedictine Abbey near his home. The pope even offered to dispense with the need for him to be a member of the Benedictine Order, allowing him to retain his membership in the Dominican Order. It was the very goal his parents had envisioned for him and the offer itself may have originated with familial machinations in the papal court.<sup>53</sup> He respectfully declined. Pope Clement IV also offered him the even more lucrative Archbishopric in Naples, near his ancestral home, and a cardinal's hat. Aquinas refused them all, insisting that Clement should never suggest such a thing again.<sup>54</sup> He remained a friar of the Dominican Order and he served it. This dedication to the *Ordo Predicatorum* is vitally important to reading Aquinas' ST, especially these ten QQ in that it supplies a critical rationale for the pedagogical arc of which we take note in chapter 4.

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<sup>51</sup> D'Avray, D. L., *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 164.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 74-76.

<sup>53</sup> Weisheipl, 33.

<sup>54</sup> Weisheipl, 232.



Too often his fellow ecclesial and especially his Dominican interpreters simply assume this dedication of Aquinas and make little mention of it; his secular readers frequently ignore this aspect of Thomas. The result of this silence and the failure to observe this critical element of Thomas the human being is that these ten QQ of the *prima pars* have proved opaque and dissatisfying to many who read them. But when one considers that they were composed by a man who took very seriously the charge which had been laid upon him personally as a member of the Valenciennes commission and the vital role which education played within the mission of the Order, these QQ, both in terms of their structure and their content, begin to make a great deal more sense. They reflect Aquinas' attempt to embody the very program of educational improvement for which he had advocated as a member of the commission and which he perceived to be of vital importance to the success of his Order.

##### 5. Conflicted Context: the Waxing Anti-Mendicant Impulse.

The third important contextual element which the reader must consider in reading these QQ is the hostile world in which Aquinas lived and worked and into which he would send his students as members of the Dominican Order. This too is frequently overlooked by those who read Aquinas but this omission may be more excusable. It is not without reason that Aquinas is sometimes called the "Serene Doctor" whose works seem to rise above controversies which permeated the 13<sup>th</sup> century. When reading the ST and his other more systematic works, one gets very little sense that these documents were part of robust theological, political, and ecclesial discussions, discussions which transpired in the boisterous lecture halls of the University of Paris and the Papal courts. Aquinas, though he was a member of a religious order, was not cut off from the world of the cities, universities, and courts. The mission of the friars, unlike that of monks, was to engage society in the burgeoning cities of Western Europe. To this day, in contrast to the monastic vocation, the friars are not found in an isolated monastery situated in some remote valley or on a hilltop, but always in the population centers.

Aquinas himself was personally acquainted with this rough and tumble world of medieval politics. He had been born into the politically charged and frequently violent world of the Italian minor nobility. One might simply consider his own family's response to his decision to join the order. But politics would follow Aquinas his whole life, often in the context of considerable hostility. His inaugural lecture at the University

of Paris had to be conducted under the protection of an armed guard because secular members of the theology faculty opposed to his appointment had stirred up students and local Parisians to the extent that his life was in danger.<sup>55</sup> Such violence was common in medieval universities. In 1252, a few years prior to Aquinas' inception as a Master, Pope Innocent IV demanded of the university Chancellor that he deny benefits and privileges of enrollment to all students who were found, without cause, to be carrying arms.<sup>56</sup> His proximity to and participation in the papal court would have regularly exposed him to a political environment. His emphasis on divine governance within the sections of the ST which immediately follows the QQ under current consideration, as well as a concurrent document regarding kingship, suggest that he had occasion to think about the exercise of power and authority in a political context.<sup>57</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain from his systematic theological writings the extent to which that environment was hostile to the mendicant orders such as the Dominicans. One detects very little emotion within Aquinas' writings. We know that the violence which surrounded Aquinas' inception onto the faculty of the University of Paris had been occasioned by hostility directed at the mendicants. While the instigator on that occasion, another member of the theology faculty at the University of Paris, William of St. Amour, would eventually be rebuked and exiled by the order of the Pope, the underlying tension which had given rise to William and those who agreed with him remained after 1256. The Dominicans were perceived by many to be the instruments of papal reform, a reform which was not welcome in many corners of western Christendom. Gregory IX (1227-1241) in his bull *Nimis Iniquia* had granted the mendicant orders autonomy to preach and hear confessions. This effectively interrupted the income stream for many dioceses since substantial gifts were frequently given to the confessor. While Dominican priories thrived, many outside the mendicant orders and their papal allies saw them as threats and sought any and every occasion to thwart their mission. This hostility would obtain throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century and into the 14<sup>th</sup> century as witnessed by the Lollard movement's considerable antipathy against the

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<sup>55</sup> Torrell, 79-80.

<sup>56</sup> Denifle, 238, no. 213.

<sup>57</sup> *De regno ad regem Cypri* (dated 1265-1267 by Weisheipl, 388.), ST I, 96, and 103-119. Aquinas also began but did not finish a commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* (*Sententia libri Politicorum*), likely during his second regency in Paris, (see Weisheipl, 380-381).

mendicants.<sup>58</sup> Even members of religious orders other than the Dominicans were occasionally hostile. In 1240 a ruling by the same Pope had declared that self-imposed mendicancy rendered the Dominicans the most rigorous of orders. The rule of the day held that a religious could exchange membership in one order for another, but only to join a more rigorous order. This effectively meant that the Dominicans could receive members from every other order, but no Dominican could join another order. This caused a great deal of friction and hostility even from their fellow ordered members of the ecclesial community.<sup>59</sup>

Torrell suggests that the best insight into the nature of Aquinas the man is gained through reading his handful of polemical tracts: *Contra retrahentes*, *De perfectione*, and *Contra impugnantes* which were written in defense of the mendicant orders and their particular charism for the sake of the church.<sup>60</sup> Following the conventions for such writing in the medieval period, Aquinas comes across as a far more forceful and emotional writer. The fact that these are his only polemical tracts is significant. The medieval university was a tumultuous place. The fundamental university activity, the disputation, was by its very nature confrontational and these confrontations regularly spilled over into published polemical tracts. Aquinas largely remained aloof from this. In contrast to many of his peers, disputes with fellow academics, confrontations within the ecclesial community around him, truly all other disputes, whether theological or otherwise, were constrained and argued within the academic disputation. Only one matter was so pressing and important to Aquinas that he would repeatedly enter the wild world of medieval polemical tractates: the validity of the mendicant orders.

Aquinas clearly and properly perceived his Dominican order to be under some sort of an attack and he met that attack via his tracts. And while the tracts are not contemporary with the writing of the *prima pars* the attacks on the mendicants were continuing and were being addressed by the papal court while Aquinas was present.<sup>61</sup> During Aquinas'

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<sup>58</sup> Lawrence, 152-159.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 72-73.

<sup>60</sup> Torrell, 80-82.

<sup>61</sup> Josef Pieper, *The Silence of St Thomas*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1956), 14, asserted that the mendicant and Aristotelian disputes rocked 13<sup>th</sup> century Christendom with a "passionate violence we can scarcely understand."

first regency William of St. Amour had been exiled but his ideas and influence did not go away. In 1266, often working through his proxy, Gerard d'Abbeville, William renewed these attacks with yet another tract, *Collationes catholicae*, which he addressed to the newly elected Clement IV.<sup>62</sup> Gerard, for his part, dedicated his Advent Quodlibetal disputation to attacking the mendicants at the university in Paris. The death of Clement and the ensuing three year vacancy in the papal office provided an opportunity for the anti-mendicant forces to make their case. Eventually this threat to the mendicants would have to be met in force at Paris. The leadership of Dominican order would turn to Aquinas to meet that challenge by posting him to Paris for an unusual, second regency in 1269.<sup>63</sup> However serene and irenic one might consider his writing to be, his superiors and peers clearly thought he was the man who could best lead this charge.

This thesis examines one section of that *prima pars*, more specifically QQ 65-74, in which Aquinas, following the Lombard's table of contents, took up the content of Genesis 1, the Creation narrative. Having already addressed the essential questions which revolve around the Creation event, particularly the nature of God as first source of Creation in ST I, 2-26, and I, 45-49, Aquinas was revisiting this biblical material in these QQ. He had established the theology which he considered critically important for the discussion of Creation prior to I, 65-74. The return to the topic of Creation in the Lombard's table of contents presented him with an opportunity to pursue a different goal within his treatment of these QQ.

The nature of the genre also would have made this section of the ST an inviting opportunity for Aquinas to engage in a pedagogical exercise. The medieval world was awash with treatments of Genesis 1.<sup>64</sup> The *Hexaemeron* as a type of commentary had a long and well-represented history within the Christian tradition, with the most notable patristic treatments being the hexaemeral sermons of Basil<sup>65</sup> and the several treatments

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<sup>62</sup> Weisheipl, 263-264.

<sup>63</sup> Weisheipl, 115-116.

<sup>64</sup> Wallace, 211.

<sup>65</sup> Basil, *In Hexaemeron*, I-IX.

by Augustine.<sup>66</sup> The Lombard had served to establish the genre further by dedicating a section of the *Sentences* to this chapter of Christian Scripture, thereby assuring that every Master of Sacred Page in the 13<sup>th</sup> century would have read and commented upon this material.<sup>67</sup> The topic was still lively and appealed broadly to listeners in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Bonaventura, Aquinas' colleague and fellow mendicant, presented a series of sermons or lectures on the six days of Creation in 1273 which were recorded by his fellow Franciscans and remain extant.<sup>68</sup> It would not have been out of place, therefore, for Aquinas to embed a *Hexaemeron* within his ST, an exegetical work within an otherwise systematic treatment of theology. The issue remains the sort of *hexaemeron* which he wrote. Having read prior and subsequent QQ and Articles of the ST, many have come to these QQ expecting a similarly erudite, profound, and penetrating treatment but have been disappointed.<sup>69</sup>

This thesis notes that the threat to the validity of the mendicant orders was reasserting itself as these QQ were being written and suggests that the disappointing and puzzling nature of these QQ is best understood in light of that context and the opportunity afforded by the resumption of this material within the ST. Documents attacking the Order were in the Pope's hands. Aquinas had been given an opportunity to renew his friendship with his old master, Albert the Great, who had been dispatched to the papal court in 1262 to address the conflict surrounding the mendicants. This conflict was not on the periphery of Aquinas' world. It makes a great deal of sense that Aquinas began to meet the growing anti-mendicant threat within his theological writing and only resumed writing polemical tracts upon his return to the faculty in Paris where the challenge was immediate and he had been placed into the focal point of the Dominican response.

These ten QQ were composed within the increasingly hostile climate of the latter half of the seventh decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Aquinas could not have avoided the continuing controversy which surrounded his Order. He responded through his students, equipping

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<sup>66</sup> Augustine, *De genesi adversus Manichaeos*, *De genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*, *De genesi ad litteram*, *Confessiones* XII, and *De civitate dei* XI.

<sup>67</sup> Wallace, 213-215.

<sup>68</sup> *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Ed. and Trans.: William Nyssen, (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1964).

<sup>69</sup> Gilson, *Thomism: The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, 204-205.

them to enter that hostile world by inculcating a careful, reverential reading of patristic theologians with a profound epistemic humility. The student who internalized what Aquinas said here would successfully avoid the valid criticisms which might have been leveled by an educated hearer against a poorly schooled Dominican preacher. That preacher would also have been equipped to provide cogent answers based on a reading of patristic theologians which was wider and deeper than the reading done by most of his antagonists. Because this reading of patristic authorities will focus primarily upon the reading of Augustine, we treat this patristic resource in greater depth in chapter two as we further explore this hostile intellectual climate.

## Chapter 2: Augustine and Aquinas

That a treatment of a medieval theologian should start with Augustine is hardly surprising. Augustine's writings formed one of the pillars upon which the medieval conceptual world had been built.<sup>1</sup> Through his many interpreters and through the ongoing popularity of his own works, Augustine had assumed a position of significance, even dominance, over the theological landscape, a position which he held through the period of the Reformation and beyond.<sup>2</sup> In his recent treatment of the Reformation Diarmaid MacCulloch asserted that the primary arguments of that period all took place within the "mind" of Augustine.<sup>3</sup> In treating a controversy of the century prior to Aquinas' floruit, Marcia Colish makes a similar claim as she treated the school of Abelard and the Victorines which contended about the proper understanding of marriage. Each side within that debate sought ascendancy by marshalling Augustine's occasionally divergent comments and writings on marriage against the other.<sup>4</sup> To engage in theological discourse in the medieval period meant one had to deal with the bishop of Hippo.

Augustine's considerable significance only increases when one considers the medieval scholar's use of Augustine under the theological locus of the biblical Creation account. Augustine revisited the issue of Creation and particularly the first chapters of Genesis several times throughout his writing career.<sup>5</sup> These texts and Augustine's many other

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<sup>1</sup> Etienne Gilson, *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Random, 1955), 363, wrote that while other influences were present, the fundamental positions of the medieval period were "all Augustinian" and that these positions "dominate the rest as the *forma totius* perfects, unifies and orders its whole."

<sup>2</sup> M. D. Chenu, O. P., *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, Trans.: A. M. Landry, O. P. and D. Hughes, O.P., (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1964), 405.

<sup>3</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch *The Reformation: A History*, (New York: Penguin, 2003), 107-114, asserted that the Reformation is best understood as a controversy which pitted different interpretations and emphases of Augustine against each other.

<sup>4</sup> Marcia Colish, "The Sentence Collection" in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University: Essays in Honor of Otto Gründler*, Ed.: Nancy Van Deusen, (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 12

<sup>5</sup> Augustine has five extant, significant treatments of Creation: *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*; *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*; *De Genesi ad litteram*; *Confessiones*, XII-XIII; and *De civitate dei*, XI and XIV.

writings had done much to shape the theology and culture of medieval Christianity, especially as they came to the question of origins and the First Cause.

This chapter seeks to establish three points. First it acknowledges the debt which Aquinas owed to Augustine's thought when he turned to explicating the hexaemeron. In this, Aquinas was thoroughly a follower of Augustine's thought. Second, this chapter explores Aquinas' utilization of Augustine's works, both in terms of how much he knew of Augustine and how these works function within the writings of Aquinas. Finally, this chapter would articulate the role which Augustine's theological/philosophical method played in the development of Aquinas' own theology and philosophical outlook as he embarked upon the writing of the ST.

### 1. Aquinas' debt to Augustine

As noted above, the choice to approach the work of Aquinas through an Augustinian filter could be justified on the basis of Augustine's vast influence within the medieval world. Augustine possessed an authority (*auctoritas*) in Aquinas' world with which one had to reckon. One gets a sense of this from reading ST I, 39, 5. The arguments about divine essence and the Trinity need not concern us here, what is interesting is that in I, 39, 5ob1 Aquinas noted that Augustine had posited a position which he concluded was simply in error regarding the procession of essence within the Trinity. His endeavor to preserve Augustine's integrity in the Response<sup>6</sup> to that Objection reveals how highly Augustine was esteemed by Aquinas and his peers. The Response to the Objection is entirely dedicated to preserving Augustine from the charge of error. Augustine's language may have been improper in this instance, but it was careless language, not genuinely in error.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I, 39, 5ad1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, ad exprimendam unitatem essentiae et personae, sancti doctores aliquando expressius locuti sunt quam proprietates locutionis patiatur. Unde huiusmodi locutiones non sunt extendendae, sed exponendae, ut scilicet nomina abstracta exponantur per concreta, vel etiam per nomina personalia, ut, cum dicitur, essentia de essentia, vel sapientia de sapientia, sit sensus, filius, qui est essentia et sapientia, est de patre, qui est essentia et sapientia. In his tamen nominibus abstractis est quidam ordo attendendus, quia ea quae pertinent ad actum, magis propinque se habent ad personas, quia actus sunt suppositorum. Unde minus impropria est ista, natura de natura, vel sapientia de sapientia, quam essentia de essentia.*

<sup>7</sup> See Bruce Marshall, "Aquinas the Augustinian? On the Uses of Augustine in Aquinas's Trinitarian Theology" in *Aquinas the Augustinian*. Eds.: Michael Dauphinais, David Barry, and Matthew Levering.



Augustine's considerable gravitas as a theological resource does not fully explain Aquinas' debt to Augustine. Aquinas had received from Augustine more than authoritative theological insights and exegetical technique; although, he received those as well. Much of the academic and intellectual ethos which is attributed to Aquinas can be traced to Augustine's writings. Within Augustine's works Aquinas read that the human being is on a quest toward ultimate truth without ever completely arriving at that goal.<sup>8</sup> He read from Augustine that ambiguity and paradox are the fertile fields of intellectual inquiry.<sup>9</sup> Augustine strongly warned his reader not to be too certain of theologically speculative conclusions<sup>10</sup> and encouraged his reader to appreciate the need for intellectual space, an open field for curiosity, imagination, and creativity in order for theological life to flourish.<sup>11</sup> Augustine had articulated that all truth, even from sources outside the Christian tradition, "belonged to God."<sup>12</sup> In many respects, Aquinas thoroughly reflected the ideas and attitudes of Augustine.

When considering the Augustinian hermeneutic applied to the hexaemeron, Ernan McMullin noted<sup>13</sup> three principles of Augustine's reading of Genesis which are easily discernible in Aquinas' subsequent treatment.

1. The relevance of cosmology to theology.
2. Natural philosophy cannot contradict Scripture.
3. Cosmology is not the primary focus of Scripture; rather, that primary focus is salvific

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(Washington DC: Catholic Univ. Press, 2007), 41-61, for a more substantive discussion of Aquinas' treatment of Augustine within ST I, 39.

<sup>8</sup> *Conf.* XII, 32, 43; see also Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 70.

<sup>9</sup> *Gen. ad litt.*, V, 8, 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Gen. ad litt.*, I, 19, 39.

<sup>11</sup> *Revisions* II, 24, 1.

<sup>12</sup> *De Doctr. Chr.*, II, 18, 28. See also Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, (New York: Random, 1960), 234.

<sup>13</sup> Ernan McMullin, "How should cosmology relate to theology?" in *The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century*, Ed.: Arthur Peacocke, (Notre Dame, IN, Notre Dame Press, 1981). 20-22.

McMullin profitably held that these principles within Augustine's thought functioned in a dynamic, almost competitive, interaction with each other. The first principle meant that one could not simply divorce theology from the observable world. The second principle on the surface could be seen to relegate natural philosophy to a subservient role, but it did not do so. Augustine held that the thoughtful interpreter of Scripture needed to seek congruence but that, while Scripture was hierarchically superior, conflict may be resolved by amending the interpretation of Scripture in light of natural philosophy.<sup>14</sup> These two principles play out in nearly every Article of the QQ under consideration in this thesis as objections are raised, and the text of Genesis 1 most often forms the *sed contra* for each Article.

The final element, however, may be the most significant contributor to Aquinas' treatment of Genesis 1. As Augustine matured, especially within his anti-Manichean works, he increasingly posited a distance between the cosmological tension created within the human being who observed nature and read the text of Scripture as an authority.<sup>15</sup> Augustine's willingness to consider Creation in another category seems to have enabled Aquinas to do the same, thus creating a kind of theological laboratory in which he was able to conclude that the reverential reader of Scripture and the patristic theologians may not be able to reach a firm and ultimate conclusion.<sup>16</sup>

This is not to say that Aquinas was wholly or solely dependent upon Augustinian thought. He drew from a notably wide range of resources for his theological and philosophical insights. We will discuss in greater detail his relationship to some of these in the portion of this thesis dedicated to an evaluation of these other sources, but two of them merit brief attention as we here consider Augustine. The first of these is Aristotle some of whose works had only recently been reintroduced to Western Europe through Islamic and Jewish interpreters and translations. While Aristotelian philosophy was

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<sup>14</sup> Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 114-116.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Allen, "Augustine and the systematic theology of origins", in *Augustine and Science*, Eds.: John Doody, Adam Goldstein, and Kim Paffenroth, (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2013), 15.

<sup>16</sup> See David Fergusson, "Interpreting the Story of Creation: A Case Study in the Dialogue Between Theology and Science" in *Genesis and Christian Theology*, Eds.: Nathan MacDonald, Mark W. Elliot, and Grant Macaskill, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 155-174, for a contemporary articulation of the tentative nature of both scientific and theological conclusions in this regard.

foundational to his understanding of hylomorphic physics, Aquinas is to be numbered within the second generation of Aristotelian readers. His mentor, Albert the Great, was to a more significant degree beholden to Aristotelian thought and notably less critical in his adoption of Aristotelian categories and arguments. Aquinas can be distinguished from his mentor in that he is more circumspect in his handling of Aristotle.<sup>17</sup> Where much of Albert's work is simply the restatement of what Aristotle wrote, Aquinas is far more developed in placing Aristotle within a hierarchy of resources.<sup>18</sup> Aquinas' use of both Augustine and Aristotle was not systematically sustained and this dynamism can be noted even within the writing of the ST through a simple numerical comparison. As one reads through the ST, the frequency of quotations from Aristotle diminishes and the quotations from Augustine increase.<sup>19</sup> As these questions fall within the earliest elements of the ST, Aristotle is frequently cited and forms another important foundation to Aquinas' examination of the six days of Creation.

The second resource which should be briefly noted at this juncture is Dionysius, frequently known as Ps.-Dionysius. While it is known today that this author was a 5<sup>th</sup> century Neo-Platonist from the region of Syria, Aquinas and his colleagues considered that Dionysius, or 'Denis' in Aquinas' writings, was the same man mentioned in Acts 17:34, one of the Apostle Paul's first gentile converts to Christianity and a philosopher of first century Athens. This proximity of a classical era philosopher to an apostolic witness lent these works an authority which approached that of Scripture for many of his medieval readers.<sup>20</sup> Aquinas is no exception to this medieval state of affairs and Dionysius contributed significantly to Aquinas' thought. Of particular interest to the reader of these ten QQ, the ideas of Dionysius enriched Aquinas understanding of a very Augustinian topic: words as signs. Within Dionysian thought, and it should be noted that this is in some tension with the Augustinian formulation, Dionysius held that the verbal sign could be much more than a sign. Dionysius understood that the verbal images of God, which pagans ridiculed as crude, were much more than metaphors.

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<sup>17</sup> Weisheipl, 43-43.

<sup>18</sup> Torrell, 228ff.

<sup>19</sup> Torrell, 245-6.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15.

These words/signs were in fact incarnational vessels of God. This notion seems to have been particularly important for Aquinas as he explicated QQ 65-74. Although Aquinas does not often quote Dionysius within these questions,<sup>21</sup> Paul Rorem asserts that counting quotations is not an accurate gauge of the Areopagite's influence. Rorem finds Dionysian ideas underpinning without quotation or citation arguments across the theological spectrum in the medieval period, including Aquinas.<sup>22</sup>

While Aquinas drew from many resources, the challenges and insights offered by Augustine's ideas predominate within QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars*. This may be attributable to more than simply Augustine's considerable contributions to the exegesis of Genesis 1. Aquinas use of Augustine within these QQ of the ST may also be attributed to Augustine's singular usefulness in meeting what was for Aquinas a very contemporary challenge. Aquinas' reading of Augustine needs to be contextualized by the modern reader within a debate which was taking place within the thirteenth century. Aquinas' mentor, Albert the Great, had opined that while Augustine was the leading theological authority, he would seek out the works of Galen or Hippocrates when sick and Aristotle when he sought to understand the natural world. He was driven to make such a comment in response to a movement within and outside the Dominican order which sought to establish Augustine as the final word on all matters, not only theological, but also in medicine, natural philosophy, and astronomy.<sup>23</sup> This Augustinist movement was not simply a fringe body of reactionaries. It was gathering momentum throughout much of Aquinas' life and won substantial victories in the months and years following Aquinas' death. On the third anniversary of Aquinas' death, March 7, 1277, Stephen Tempiers, the Bishop of Paris, under pressure from the Pope and this Augustinist faction, issued a list of 219 condemned teachings,<sup>24</sup> some of which were

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<sup>21</sup> Eight times in QQ 65-74, but five of these are in the articles devoted to the Creation of light.

<sup>22</sup> Rorem, 30.

<sup>23</sup> Albert the Great, *Scriptum super sententiarum* II, 13, C, 2c. Borgnet, Vol. 27, 247, *Unde sciendum, quod Augustino in his quae sunt de fide et moribus plusquam Philosophis credendum est, si dissentiunt. Sed si de medicina loqueretur, plus ego crederem Galeno, vel Hipocrati: et si de naturis rerum loquatur, credo Aristoteli plus vel alii expert in rerum naturis.* For analysis of Albert's statement see Weisheipl, 43.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Denifle, Ed., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, (Paris: Delalain Bros., 1889) 543-555, no. 473. For further discussion of this condemnation consider Weisheipl, 333-337 and Torrell, 300-302.

attributed to Aquinas,<sup>25</sup> but most of which were directed against any whose theology had been shaped by Aristotle, his Islamic commentators, and resources other than approved patristic theologians. For the next fifty years this faction worked vigorously to quell the sort of intellectual debates which Aquinas, Albert the Great, and other like-minded scholars had sought to foster.<sup>26</sup> Eventually the doors which the condemnations of 1277 sought to slam shut did swing back open, but it was only through the effort of academics who struggled to do so.<sup>27</sup> Even Bonaventura, Aquinas' fellow mendicant friar and Regent Master at Paris, would, in his later years, assert the primacy of Augustine over all other knowledge. This fight would be carried on after Bonaventura's death by his student and successor to the Franciscan chair of theology at Paris and even still later the Archbishop of Canterbury (1279-1292), John Pecham.<sup>28</sup> In a letter addressed to the Bishop of Lincoln, dated 1 June, 1285, Pecham asserted that while he was in favor of philosophical study in general he disapproved of recent inventions which were:

“weakening and destroying with all its strength what Augustine teaches concerning the eternal rules and the unchangeable light, the faculties of the soul, the seminal reasons included in matter and innumerable questions of the same kind, let the Ancients be the judges, since in them is wisdom, let the God of heaven be judge, and may he remedy it.”<sup>29</sup>

The sort of thinking in which Pecham engaged was not simply a reaction to Aquinas and his peers; it had been present, albeit not quite so virulently, when Aquinas arrived in Paris as a student. Stephen of Tournai (1128-1203), the Abbot of Ste Genevieve on the Mount, had a generation earlier expressed his disapproval of the Masters at Paris asking

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<sup>25</sup> Wilshire, 151-156, argues, contrary to most biographers of Aquinas, that Aquinas was not actually the target of any of these condemnations, nor the subject of the subsequent 30 condemnations published by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Kilwardby, O. P. a few weeks later in Oxford.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Weisheipl's discussion of the condemnation and eventual rehabilitation of Aquinas' teachings immediately after his death, 331-340.

<sup>27</sup> Wilshire, 178

<sup>28</sup> Weisheipl, 245 and 285.

<sup>29</sup> John Pecham, *Registrum epistolarum*, Vol. III. 871, 901-902. Quoted and translated by Etienne Gilson, *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (New York, Random, 1955), 359.

questions and conducting disputations on topics such as the Trinity and Incarnation. “As if the works of the holy fathers are not enough,” he complained.<sup>30</sup> For Stephen, these topics were settled, the answer had been given, and the inquiry into these topics was complete. At this time, in Stephen’s considered opinion, the task of the theologian was to impart the conclusions of these “fathers”, not to raise doubt and open old questions anew. Stephen could have pointed to more than one theologian who exemplified this approach to theological education. One of the earliest systematizing works in the 12<sup>th</sup> century was the *Elucidarium* by Honorius Augustodunensis. His attempt to educate his fellow Benedictines in pastoral and theological matters bore a striking resemblance in its goal to that of Aquinas, but could not have been more different in its approach. By offering up his best answers in simple form, he sought not to foster intellectual inquiry but to lay such questioning to rest.<sup>31</sup>

As Aquinas composed the ST, therefore, he was already immersed in an increasingly conflicted intellectual climate in which Augustine was being used by various factions among his peers and contemporaries both to pursue theological inquiry and to quash that very same inquiry.<sup>32</sup> The entire project of the ST hung on the validity of such inquiry, the very thing he was seeking to inculcate within the *incipientes* for whom he wrote.

This theological inquiry was vitally important to Aquinas. In Aquinas’ view, to be a human being is to be a learning creature.<sup>33</sup> Unlike many within the Augustinian movement, he did not consider that theology had found final truth, rather it needed continually to be on a quest for such truth and it needed to be questioning the formulations of truth which it regularly asserted. With the project of the ST Aquinas sought to raise significant questions regarding theological conclusions which were

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<sup>30</sup> C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society*, (London and New York: Longman, 1994), 13. Stephen of Tournai is quoted from PL. 211, 517.

<sup>31</sup> Colish, “The Sentence Collection,” 4-5.

<sup>32</sup> Wilshire, 151, expresses some puzzlement that the condemnations of 1277 are not discussed more thoroughly as matters of academic freedom.

<sup>33</sup> ST III, 9, 4c, in which Aquinas argues that Christ’s intellect had to include the ability to learn actively or he would not have been a true human being. It is also interesting to note that this regard Aquinas is contradicting what he had written in earlier treatments of this topic.

widely held in his time. He had to know that such a challenge would not be well received. An example of this can be found in the recent work of Joseph Wawrykow in which he contends that Aquinas challenged nothing less than the Lombard's assertions regarding the options for understanding doctrine of Christ's Incarnation.<sup>34</sup> In *Sentences*, Book III, distinction 6, the Lombard had posited three possible conceptual models for the Incarnation of Christ. Through reading the documents which had been produced at the time of the ecumenical councils of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries,<sup>35</sup> Aquinas had come to realize that two of these "opinions" were essentially Nestorian and had been rejected by the patristic theologians who had come to be called orthodox. Not only would this conclusion, if accepted, force a significant reconsideration of a primary theological concept for his peers in western Christianity, but Aquinas would in effect accused some of those peers of being Nestorians in the *tertia pars* of the ST. That term "Nestorian" had come to have a particularly pejorative sense within the medieval world, even if not always accurately applied.<sup>36</sup> As a result, when Aquinas embarked on the ST he was not only contributing to theological education in the medieval period as he observes in the ST's *prooemium*, he apparently had in mind to challenge foundational positions which many of his peers considered orthodox. For this reason he needed intellectual maneuvering room. In a sense he needed to "loosen up" some long held theological convictions. Put another way, he needed his readers and peers to approach theological assertion with considerable epistemic humility.

The locus of Creation provided Aquinas with a natural opportunity for Aquinas to pursue that goal. The content and significance of Genesis 1 provides an intersection of both unanswered questions and theological interest.<sup>37</sup> Anyone who wrote about Creation was almost guaranteed an audience in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A conflict which revolved around the topic of Creation had recently resurfaced. Not only had the Albigensian movement questioned whether God had made the world at all, the recent

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<sup>34</sup> ST III, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Weisheipl, 164-168, Aquinas was the first medieval scholar to cite many of these documents.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph Wawrykow "Hypostatic Union" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, Eds.: Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 235-237.

<sup>37</sup> R. R. Reno, "Beginning with the Ending" in *Genesis and Christian Theology*, Eds.: Nathan MacDonald, Mark W. Elliot, and Grant Macaskill, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 28, considers the opening chapters of Genesis to be an invitation to this sort of speculative theology.

reintroduction of some Aristotelian material had called into question several hitherto unquestioned assertions about the material world and its creation. Perhaps from the *Timaeus* or from Neo-Platonism it appears some were reexamining the understanding of *creatio ex nihilo*. The divine emanation theories of Avicenna, Averroes, and other interpreters of Aristotle were calling into question the Christian assertion that God had not used secondary causes to create and that the material universe had a beginning point and was not itself eternal.<sup>38</sup> These intellectual challenges had caused Aquinas to expend considerable energy on this issue and write extensively. So much so that one of his modern readers has played upon his name and argued that he should be called “Thomas a Creatore” and not “Thomas d’ Aquino.”<sup>39</sup> We can confidently say that Aquinas was working within a locus of theology which he knew very well and which was of interest to his readership. It was also a field of theology in which a maelstrom of sophisticated philosophical arguments, conflicting ideas, and firmly held opinions presented dangerous pitfalls to his fellow Dominican friars, especially those whose theological formation was in its beginning stages.

Augustine’s interpretation of the hexaemeron would also prove particularly useful in order to lay important foundations for the project we have just described for a number of reasons. First, Augustine’s position as a theological authority in the medieval world was unassailable. As noted earlier, there were significant voices which at the time were seeking to assert Augustine’s authority pertaining to all areas of knowledge. By using Augustine to force open this intellectual space, Aquinas was in effect using his enemies’ own weapon against them. But there is yet another reason that made Augustine attractive for this sort of project. Augustine’s actual theology of Creation was widely cited but quite often only superficially known. As we will subsequently demonstrate, many thought they understood Augustine, but not many had read him carefully and thoroughly.

In ST I, 65-74 Aquinas did not, however, seek simply to replace one orthodox statement with another. He was not trying to assert Augustine’s theological statements about the

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Baldner and William Carrol, *Aquinas on Creation: writings on the “Sentences” of Peter Lombard Book 2, Distinction 1, Question 1*, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1997, 22-26.

<sup>39</sup> Torrell, 163-164.



Creation were more true than other statements as much as he was endeavoring to inculcate a theological *habitus* within his readers, the very *habitus* which he had learned from his extensive and careful reading of Augustine's works. In order to do this, Aquinas needed to have a viable alternative to Augustine's treatment of the Creation. This presents a second reason that Augustine's treatment of the six days of Creation was attractive for this purpose. Such an alternative was readily available in an equally unassailable ancient source: Basil. In the centuries prior to Aquinas, another strand of interpretation, which was supported by numerous patristic theologians, had come to be generally accepted by most theologians. The most authoritative resource for this was a series of sermons by Basil on the six days of Creation recorded in Genesis 1 (*Hex.*) These were widely read and had served as the prototype for a kind of commentary which was frequently undertaken up to and after the period of Aquinas, nearly 900 years after Basil preached.<sup>40</sup> Basil's concordant readings of Genesis 1 and the readings of other patristic theologians were generally favored at the time of Aquinas. This was both exemplified and reinforced within Peter Lombard's *Sentences* in which he simply said that one should not accept the timeless Creation which Augustine espoused.<sup>41</sup> This was followed by a further explanation in which the opinion of "many others" was said to be more congruent (*magis congruere videtur*) with the meaning of Genesis 1 than Augustine's opinion.<sup>42</sup>

The third reason Aquinas may have chosen this locus of Theology in which to conduct this exercise was likely because Creation as a doctrine was so familiar to the reader. Peter Lombard had included a section on the hexaemeron within the *Sentences*. Hundreds of commentaries on the Lombard's *Sentences* had been written within the

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<sup>40</sup> Wallace, 205.

<sup>41</sup> *Sentences* II, 12, 1, *Deinde elementa distinxit Deus et species proprias atque distinctas singulis rebus secundum genus suum dedit, quae non simul, ut quibusdam sanctorum Patrum placuit, sed per intervalla temporum ac sex volumina dierum, ut aliis visum est, formavit.*

<sup>42</sup> *Sentences* II, 12, 2, *Quidam namque sanctorum Patrum, qui verba Dei atque arcana excellenter scrutati sunt, super hoc quasi adversa scripsisse videntur. Alii quidem tradiderunt, omnia simul in materia et forma fuisse creata; quod Augustinus sensisse videtur. — Alii vero hoc magis probaverunt atque asseruerunt, ut primum materia rudis atque informis, quatuor elementorum commixtionem atque confusionem tenens, creata sit; postmodum vero per intervalla sex dierum ex illa materia rerum corporalium genera sint formata secundum species proprias. Quam sententiam Gregorius, Hieronymus, Beda aliique plures commendat ac praeferunt, quae etiam Scripturae Genesis, unde prima huius rei cognitio ad nos manavit, magis congruere videtur.*

growing number of universities of Europe and all of them included some treatment of the hexaemeral material. Aquinas' contemporary, Bonaventura, might serve here as an exemplar of what Aquinas' contemporaries were writing in this regard as well as an illustration of a medieval approach to the questions raised by Genesis 1.

A theologian of considerable gravitas in his own day, Bonaventura's theological writings remain significant to this day.<sup>43</sup> Within his commentary on the *Sentences* Bonaventura concurred with the Lombard over against the ideas of Augustine regarding the six days of Creation. Augustine's theory was cursorily explained, but dismissed. The value of the six calendar day Creation was asserted and Augustine himself was contextualized as a theologian who was seeking to make his doctrine more palatable to a contemporary philosophical community.<sup>44</sup> Bonaventura did not write that Augustine was in error, but Augustine's interpretation can only be heard inside that context of a philosophical debate. In Bonaventura's opinion, Augustine was not trying to explain things as they "had to be" (*quam quid factum fuerit*). Bonaventura expended considerable effort to show that Augustine was not in substantive contradiction to the others, but he had to be read in this philosophical context. He even appealed to Augustine's concept of multivalent meaning of Scripture<sup>45</sup> to suggest that Augustine may sound at odds with the others, but for Augustine's time it was something the Spirit of God had in mind. The Seraphic Doctor, however, clearly held that the Spirit did not have this interpretation in mind for Bonaventura's audience. Throughout this attempt to keep Augustine from the charge of error, however, Bonaventura did not wrestle deeply with the actual content of what Augustine said. Augustine was asserted to be inside the stream of orthodoxy on this matter, but the actual theology of Augustine was not substantively examined. This entire analysis of whether Creation took place in six calendar days or in an instant occupied just under 1100 words in the Latin text of

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<sup>43</sup> The Franciscan community is currently in the process of translating a number of Bonaventura's works and publishing them at this website: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/index2.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Bonaventura *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* II, XII, 1, 2 *Et sicut patet ex eius (Augustine's) intentione ibidem, magis volebat intellectum ex Scriptura elicere, ex quo Scriptura non posset a viris philosophicis derideri, nec propter hoc aliquis, naturali philosophia imbutus, a fidei veritate retardi, sicut ipse aliquando fuerat retardatus, magis, inquam, quam intellectum principalem exponere, quem ibi habuit Legislator; et magis intendit ostendere, quid congruum fuerit vel tunc esse potuerit, quam quid factum fuerit.*

<sup>45</sup> *Conf.* XII, 30, 41 – XII, 33, 43.

Bonaventura's commentary. The first two Articles in Aquinas' ST I, 65 contain just under 1,500 words.

This is not an aberration within the treatments of this issue. Even Aquinas' own teacher, Albert the Great, within his *Summa*, while more open to Augustine's idea, did not actually explicate or explore this issue deeply.<sup>46</sup> Although Augustine's ideas were not unknown to the theological community of his day, his contribution to the exegesis of Genesis 1 was superficially treated. The default position of most theologians was an acceptance of the strand of literal interpretation which will be attributed to Basil within ST I, 65-74 and which the Lombard himself had espoused.

It appears that the majority of those who read Augustine on this matter and other matters may not have actually read very deeply in Augustine. Even the usually provocative Peter Abelard, in his *Hexaemeron*<sup>47</sup> did not take up Augustine's question of a simultaneous Creation.<sup>48</sup> This rather shallow knowledge of Augustine served Aquinas' purposes well. By demonstrating the general lack of depth within the theological community in regard to a figure such as Augustine and furthermore in regard to such a central doctrine as Creation, a topic which was frequently written about and discussed, Aquinas would have forced the reader to concede the possibility of the re-evaluation of other central doctrines, in the case cited above: Incarnation. By putting his readers into the position of accepting Augustine's counter-intuitive interpretation of Genesis 1, Aquinas may have also forced his readership to be somewhat circumspect in the use of Augustine as an answer to all questions theological and otherwise.

Aquinas did not limit his theological energies simply to challenging the Christology of his peers. The understanding of the Incarnation could be an esoteric conversation even by scholastic standards. Aquinas was a creative and constructive theologian whose ideas were large and would need to be heard in an atmosphere of openness if they had any chance of adoption and implementation. Toward this end, Augustine also may have been considered helpful, particularly as he addressed Creation. Here Aquinas' purposes

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<sup>46</sup> Albert the Great, *Summa* P. II, tr. 11, q. 46, a. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Abelard, *Expositio in Hexaemeron*. CCCM: 15. Eds.: M. Romig, D. E. Luscombe, and C. Burnett. 2004. 10-11, and 24-25.

<sup>48</sup> See discussion in Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 323-325.

may be seen in the very structure of the ST. QQ 65-74 are followed immediately by the section of the *prima pars* which explored his challenging anthropology. This lengthy and beautiful discussion of the human being closes out the *prima pars* and thus leads the reader into the integration of the theological and moral teachings in the *secunda pars* which follows immediately.

The fact that Aquinas used a treatment of the six days to accomplish these goals may also reflect a fortuitous placement within the table of contents of the *Sentences*. The *prima pars* follows the order in which this material was presented in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Assuming that Aquinas conformed the ordering of these QQ to the outline of the *Sentences*, these QQ would have come immediately prior to some of Aquinas' innovative material. If our thesis is correct, and QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* are in fact an attempt to loosen up a somewhat ossified theological system so that Aquinas could introduce new ideas, these QQ on the six days of Creation are in the ideal place for that to happen, since some of those new ideas include the definition of the human being and the integration of theology into the human life. Within the Lombard's ordering of the *Sentences*, those ideas follow immediately after the discussion of the hexaemeron.

Within the two following sections, Humanity: QQ 75-102 and Governance: 103-119, Aquinas asserted an understanding of the human being which, had it been adopted, would have challenged the medieval world's idea of what is a person. Some have argued that in this regard the ST represents an attempt to integrate both Aristotelian and Augustinian thought as well as the integration of more theoretical and practical/moral theologies which had become bifurcated within the Dominican and larger Medieval educational systems.<sup>49</sup> Already in his commentary on the *Sentences* Aquinas had postulated that the human being stood in a unique position as both a fully spiritual and physical entity, bridging two worlds. In Aquinas' own words, the human being is a "horizon creature."<sup>50</sup> In the estimation of most scholars, Aquinas' project in this regard did not succeed. He had sought to integrate the theological and moral life more fully and more intentionally. Within a generation of his death, his treatments of moral theology

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<sup>49</sup> Chenu, *Toward Understanding Aquinas*, 55-7.

<sup>50</sup> *Commentary*, III, pro., *homo enim est quasi orizon [sic] et confinium spiritualis et corporalis naturae, ut quasi medium inter utrasque, bonitates participet et corporales et spirituales,...*

were being stripped out of the ST and read in isolation from the more theoretical theology and anthropology which undergirded them.<sup>51</sup>

Contending with his theological peers does not exhaust the rationale for using Augustine this way. As noted in the first chapter of this thesis, the stated and primary goal of the *prima pars* was the reform of theological education within the *studia* of the Dominican Order. The foregoing also must be understood in that light. Aquinas had been charged earlier in his career, while in his first regency at Paris, with reforming the Dominican educational program. This educational system was located within the priories and various *studia* of the order and only culminated for only the brightest and best students in a university degree.<sup>52</sup> The majority of the *incipientes* would not attain to the universities but would enter the rapidly changing and conflicted world of medieval urban preaching. Aquinas appeared to have this general student in mind when he wrote this text; although, as noted, it is possible he may have overestimated their abilities. He sought to inculcate within his audiences, both the *lectores* within the priories of the Dominican order and their students, a spirit of open-minded inquiry and intellectual rigor. For this too, Augustine's humble questing for Truth and intellectual flexibility were important. The appeal that Augustine made within his treatment for an open-minded reader<sup>53</sup> would be an important attribute which Aquinas sought to instill within his intended thirteenth century audience, both the immediate students and the larger academic world whom he is also addressing.

And thus it is fitting that Augustine should shoulder this burden within in the ST. Aquinas' contemporaries who were using Augustine and other patristic theologians as proof-texts in order to shut off intellectual inquiry had fundamentally misread and misunderstood their primary resource. When it came to Creation, one of the most basic theological tenets of the medieval period, Augustine had not posited his Creation theology in order to end discussion, but to continue discussion. He had argued for an epistemic humility which allowed for ambiguity and even paradox within the confession of the Christian faith. In rhetorical terms, Aquinas turned his opponents' own perceived

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<sup>51</sup> Mark W. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After His Readers*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 7-9.

<sup>52</sup> Torrell, 96-98.

<sup>53</sup> *Conf.* XII, 31, 42.

“trump card” against them. The Augustine whom they sought to cite as a final authority had argued against that very enterprise. What is more, he had done so in the treatment of what is the most foundational element of medieval theology: Creation.

## 2. The Augustine Aquinas Knew

The preceding discussion suggests the importance of understanding just how much of Augustine’s body of work Aquinas knew. In turning to this question, we first note considerable development over the career of Aquinas. Since the ST was written toward the end of his career, it is of particular interest to determine how much Aquinas knew at that point, but the facts that Aquinas himself seemed to undergo a transformation in his reading of Augustine and that in this he can be distinguished from his peers are also significant. Thomas Aquinas seemed to believe he had learned something which his community of fellow theologians and the larger ecclesial community needed, something which he had also been forced to discover. The magnitude of Aquinas’ discoveries in this regard is difficult to overstate. He was the first scholastic, for instance, to quote directly from the official documents which came out of the first ecumenical councils.<sup>54</sup>

As already noted, theologians in the thirteenth century were well acquainted with the writings of Augustine, but most often this acquaintance was with a redacted and excised Augustinian corpus. This filtered body of works by Augustine was the result of structural realities in the program of theological education at the time. The progress of a theologian through the ranks of Bachelor and Master of Theology involved ascending through a number of categories. Early in the process, the student conducted cursory lectures on the Scriptures and later lectures on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard under the guidance of a Regent Master.<sup>55</sup> Due in part to Lombard’s ecclesial authority and the value of his work, his collection of sentences<sup>56</sup> had come to dominate theological education in the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth. By the 1240’s, the *Sentences* had become the required textbook for all students who had achieved the rank of

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<sup>54</sup> Weisheipl, 164-168.

<sup>55</sup> Philipp W. Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Book*, (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 60-62.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Lombard had been a master of theology at Paris and, shortly before his death, consecrated as the Bishop of Paris in the middle decades of the twelfth century. Phillip W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 37-38.

Bachelor of Theology.<sup>57</sup> While later scholasticism, the Renaissance, and the Reformation would eventually unseat Lombard's *Sentences* from this position; as late as the 16<sup>th</sup> century a young Martin Luther wrote glosses as he lectured on the *Sentences* of the Lombard.<sup>58</sup> In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the culminating work of a student's progress in formal theological education was the production of a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.<sup>59</sup> When this commentary on the *Sentences* had been thoroughly examined, approved, and published, one was awarded the title "Master of Theology." There are hundreds of extant commentaries by various medieval scholars on these *Sentences* from this period, up to and including that of Martin Luther in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>60</sup>

In this way Lombard's came to serve as a gateway to Augustine and other patristic theologians for the medieval scholar. This was particularly true of Augustine. The *Sentences* contain nearly 1,100 quotations from Augustine, far more than any other theologian. The Lombard appears to have known much of the Augustinian corpus, including *De doctrina Christiana*, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, *Enchiridion*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, and *Retractationes*. There are, however, some significant omissions. Most notably for this discussion, he does not appear to know *De Trinitate*.<sup>61</sup>

Lombard's work formed a type of canon of medieval theology. As is often the case, however, when using a standard canon of literature, many students do not read much further than the prescribed elements of that canon and this appears to have been true

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<sup>57</sup> Spatz, 31.

<sup>58</sup> Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 3. See also Spatz, 27-52, for another examination of this critical work through the eyes of its readers.

<sup>59</sup> At the point at which Aquinas wrote, this use of the *Sentences* was still a relatively new phenomenon. Alexander Hales (Master at Paris 1220-45) had been first to lecture on the *Sentences*. The controversy which erupted was resolved by requiring lectures on the *Sentences* but limiting them to the Bachelor's, under the tutelage of a licensed Master. Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Book*, 60-62.

<sup>60</sup> Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 198. The authors of the Franciscan Archive website have collected and linked a number of medieval commentaries on the *Sentences* to the internet: <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/lombardus/>.

<sup>61</sup> Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 56.

with the Lombard's *Sentences*.<sup>62</sup> When one turns to the early works of Aquinas and his peers, one finds regular quotation and reference to the works of Augustine, but often that reliance does not stray too far or deeply beyond the quotations found in Lombard's *Sentences*. Consider the able colleague of Aquinas, Bonaventura who, in his commentary on the *Sentences*,<sup>63</sup> has an entire Question devoted to refuting the Manicheans in which he has no citation of Augustine's considerable output regarding the same Manicheans. Though Augustine's works were readily available, and remained in publication throughout this period, much of the theological discourse of the time was limited to the quotations and immediate context of those quotations which Lombard included in his work.

Before one levels a charge of intellectual laziness and academic ineptitude, it must also be said that Lombard's work was four volumes and included a broad selection of materials excised from the writings of patristic theologians, medieval authors, and the *glossa ordinaria*. There is a great deal to read and discuss within Lombard's work. Rosemann suggests that this was in fact the reason the *Sentences* proved so successful. It was a clear advance over other attempts to assimilate patristic theologians and systematize the theology of medieval Christianity. What is more, because the Lombard occupied a transitional point in the development of systematic theology, his work struck a particularly flexible balance between dogmatic statements and questions simply left unanswered. This combination afforded the medieval theologian a large and frequently unfinished field upon which he might work. The *Sentences* provided the medieval theologian with a rich, however circumscribed, environment in which an entire academic career might be conducted.<sup>64</sup>

Aquinas was notable in the medieval period for his unwillingness to let the Lombard delimitate his reading. While he wrote his earliest works, including his commentary on the *Sentences*, with a rather limited set of sources, his use of Augustine and other patristic sources grew significantly throughout his career. By the time he wrote the ST, his use of patristic and other ancient sources would by one estimate "sextuple." This

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<sup>62</sup> Chenu, *Toward Understanding Aquinas*, 52.

<sup>63</sup> Bonaventura, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum* II, 2, 1

<sup>64</sup> Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 195-8.



was not limited to Augustine. His contemporaries noted Aquinas voracious appetite for resources and that, unlike many of his day, Aquinas sought access to the works of Greek patristic theologians which had been largely ignored by his peers.<sup>65</sup>

### 3. Excursus into Aquinas' use of Augustine: Creative Agency

To this point we have made several assertions regarding Aquinas' use of Augustine which need to be substantiated. Within the material which is treated within QQ 65-74 of the ST, the question of creative agency presents an opportunity to illustrate two points about Aquinas' treatment of Augustine. One can easily notice an increasing access to and use of patristic sources, including Augustine as his career progressed. Careful reading and comparison with earlier treatments in *Commentary* and *De potentia*, however, will also reveal subtle and important shifts in how he utilizes Augustinian material in the formulation of his arguments.

As a subject for a comparison this topic serves well for at least two reasons. First, it is treated no less than four times by Aquinas over his career affording the reader an opportunity to observe the development of Aquinas' use of sources. Second, it is an issue which was of considerable import even centrality to Aquinas' theology for it touches upon the *exitus* and *reditus* themes which are found within many of Aquinas' more ambitious works. Even within his earliest works such as his *Commentary* this *exitus* and *reditus* movement is discernible as he treats this material. For Aquinas, both the source of the Creation and the teleological goal of Creation demanded his most careful attention. In terms of Aquinas' theology, creative agency was no peripheral topic, but central to what he believed and wrote. Thus, we conclude that this locus is a viable assay of Aquinas' use of Augustine.

This excursus demonstrates several of the assertions we have already made. Aquinas use of Augustine was growing deeper and broader as he marshalled a broader array of sources to support his arguments. But the reader will also notice that the trajectory of the treatment of Augustine undergoes a significant shift when one picks up ST I, 65-74. The argumentation is simpler as is the treatment of the sources. But of greater

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<sup>65</sup> Torrell, 139.

significance, the role which Augustine played within the work of the text was substantively changed.

Aquinas first treatment of the question of creative agency is found within the *Commentary* completed in 1252-56, prior to his first regency in Paris. The Lombard had broached the subject of whether Creation might happen via intermediary beings in II, 1, 2 and 3. He began the discussion with a favorite mechanism of scholastic theologians: the definition of terms. In the first paragraph he noted that the words for create (*creare*) and make (*facere*) have an important distinction in that one, to create, is properly only attributable to God for it implies the creating of being, whereas the other, to make, is attributable to human beings as well, such as a craftsman might make a tool or object. He concluded with the observation that Scripture is not entirely consistent in this. In terms of sources he cited, the Lombard made neither an allusion to a source nor any quotation of a source.

Looking at a slightly larger context within the *Sentences*, in Chapter 3, the Lombard had begun to deal with the rationale for his preceding statements and to deal with the sources on this matter. He most likely had a passage of Augustine in mind at the beginning of Chapter 3 in which he noted that the Scriptures frequently ascribe to God attributes which are better said of creatures; although, this is not clear.<sup>66</sup> Later in the same chapter the Lombard attributed a quote to Aristotle, but it was in fact known by Aquinas' time to be from the first paragraph of Ambrose's commentary on the hexaemeron.<sup>67</sup> He refuted (*evacuo*) this error of "Aristotle" and those who agree through a longer quote from Hugh of St. Victor, a 12<sup>th</sup> century theologian.<sup>68</sup> His primary argument revolved around what was properly said only of God alone as unmoved and unchanging but which the vagaries of human language occasionally misattributed to creatures. Aristotle was labeled as a pagan source of error among some theologians for he had introduced the notion that there could be more than one source of being, an idea which the Lombard rejected.

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<sup>66</sup> The editors of the Franciscan online archive suggest: *Gen. ad litt.*, I, 18, 36. <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/lombardus/opera/l2-01.html> (Accessed 18 May, 2012).

<sup>67</sup> Ambrose, *Hexaemeron* I, 1, 1. Ed.: [C. Schenkl](#), 1896, CSEL Vol. 32/1.

<sup>68</sup> Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis* I, 2, 1.

Aquinas in treating this question in *Commentary* II, 1, 3 agreed with the Lombard but expanded the sources and significantly deepened the argument. In support of multiple sources of being Plato is cited as is *Liber de causis*<sup>69</sup> in the first Objection. In the fourth Objection Aquinas quoted one of his favorite authors, Dionysius. In the first *sed contra* statement Aquinas cited John of Damascus<sup>70</sup> for his condemnation of the idea of another source of being. He also noted that the Lombard was not entirely consistent in this. In Book IV, Distinction 5 the Lombard had himself spoken of the human role as an agent in the creative act of Baptism.

Aquinas had composed his *Commentary* while lecturing on the *Sentences* as a Bachelor, 1252-56. Ten years later, in 1265-66 he conducted the academic disputations which would be published as *De potentia*.<sup>71</sup> Under Question III, 4, Aquinas took up the same question of whether the creative power or act was communicable to a creature. The conclusions Aquinas reached were not substantively different from those which he articulated in his *Commentary*. The depth of the argument there, however, was substantially more complex, as was the treatment of the patristic sources.

The reader of *De potentia* notices the dependence of this document upon Aquinas' *Commentary*. One sees nearly all of the same references as in the *Commentary* and indeed there are elements of the argument in *De potentia* III, 4 which were nearly verbatim quotes from *Commentary* II, 1, 3. He reproduced and expanded his resolution of the Lombard's discussion of the human being as a creative agent in Baptism. Dionysius was again referenced, as is the *Liber de causis*, and Aquinas used the same quote from the Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* which anathematized anyone who held to a creative agent other than God. Only the passing reference to Plato in *Commentary* II, 1, 3ob1 was omitted from *De potentia*'s treatment.

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<sup>69</sup> Aquinas, along with his contemporaries, first received this text as a work of Aristotle. Later in his career, he procured a much more accurate translation from Greek into Latin and concluded accurately that this was a Neo-Platonist work, not by Aristotle.

<sup>70</sup> John of Damascus had only recently been translated into Latin and was known to the Lombard, but it appears his access to the text was limited and hence his inclusion of *De fide orthodoxa* was limited to books I and III of the *Sentences*. In the intervening decades since the publication of the *Sentences* John's work had been much more widely diffused through theological circles. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, 38.

<sup>71</sup> Weisheipl, 358 and 363

While the reader notes similarities and echoes of the *Commentary*, the reader also notices the expansion of both the argument and the resources, particularly those from Augustine whose statement from *De Trinitate* III, 1, 7-8 delivered the conclusive rejection of the idea that God might have deputed to angels his creative work. In another expansion Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was woven into the Objections on three separate occasions with citations from books IV and VII. It is the appearance and the breadth of Augustine's works which are most notable. In *De potentia* Augustine first appeared in the fourth Objection with a citation from *Gen. ad litt.* II, 8, 16-19. In the sixth Objection *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 22, 39 was cited. Both these citations from the objection picked up on Augustine's treatment of the Creation within the angelic minds. In the eighth Objection, Augustine was again quoted from *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus*, LXXII, 3, seemingly in support of the Lombard's position that the human being might participate in Creation through a sacramental act. Again in Objection 12 Augustine is cited, this time from *De immortalitate animae* 16, 25, once more in an apparent argument that the spiritual creature creates the corporeal being.

The *sed contra* consisted of five statements, the first and last being arguments from reason, the second being a citation of Dionysius which addressed the first Objection's quotation from the same work. The third and fourth *sed contra* statements were both appeals to statements made by Augustine. The first from *De Trin.* III, 8 and 9, and the second from *Gen. ad litt.* VI, 12, 22. This same quote from *De Trin.* surfaces again in the *corpus* of the Article as the conclusive point that angels cannot create.

Within the *corpus* of the Article, the belief that God created through intermediaries is denied in the strongest possible terms,<sup>72</sup> anathematizing those who hold the idea and

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<sup>72</sup> *De potentia*, III, 4c, *Et ideo secundum fidem Catholicam ponimus, quod omnes substantias spirituales et materiam corporalium Deus immediate creavit, haereticum reputantes si dicatur per Angelum vel aliquam creaturam aliquid esse creatum; unde Damascenus dicit: quicumque dixerit Angelum aliquid creare, anathema sit.*

labeling it a heresy. Aquinas wants no doubt to linger about his position in this regard.<sup>73</sup> However, the *corpus* proceeds for several more paragraphs of material, particularly focused on extracting the Lombard from that charge of heresy and explaining what he meant by the priest participating in the creative action through the sacrament of Baptism. But the Lombard's internal contradiction is a truly minor issue, seemingly concocted by Aquinas himself.<sup>74</sup> Here one notices a practice which is common in Aquinas' works: the minor or contrived dispute used as an occasion to ask the questions which lead to deeper theological truths. Aquinas invited the reader to look into the question "carefully"<sup>75</sup> and this yielded a complex five-fold excursus into the creative action of God.

In comparing *Commentary II*, 1, 3 and *De potentia III*, 4 one can see that Aquinas' use of patristic sources has grown far more robust. He is quoting from a much broader field of works. One also notices that the argumentation has grown more sophisticated and precise. None of this is surprising. He was maturing as a scholar and theologian.

Within months of conducting and composing *De potentia*, Aquinas wrote QQ 65-74 of the ST.<sup>76</sup> But this is not the only locus for this discussion with the ST. He also treated this very same question in I, 45, 5: Whether it belongs to God alone to create.<sup>77</sup> This issue is then revisited in ST I, 65, 3: Whether they (corporeal creatures) are made through the mediation of angels.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> That there was no doubt may have in fact been a matter of some import for Aquinas. The recent interest in the Arab commentators on Aristotle had introduced the idea of creative agency among other ideas. On three separate occasions, both during (1240) and after Aquinas' time in Paris (1270 and 1277), the Bishops of Paris issued lists of condemned errors which were taught by the faculty of the University. The lists included the charge of teaching that there were multiple creators or deputed creative agency. See Weisheipl, 331-340 and scholium note at <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/opera/bon02028.html> (Accessed 18 May, 2012).

<sup>74</sup> When Bonaventura treats the same question, he makes no mention of the apparent contradiction within the text of the Lombard's sentences. Bonaventura, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum* II, 2, 2.

<sup>75</sup> *De potentia*, III, 4c, *Sed diligenter consideranti apparet hoc esse impossibile.*

<sup>76</sup> Weisheipl, 361.

<sup>77</sup> ST I, 45 pro., *utrum solius Dei sit creare.*

<sup>78</sup> ST I, 65 pro., *utrum sit facta a Deo mediantibus Angelis.*

A comparison of the argument and sources in I, 45, 5 with the preceding works again bears interesting fruit. The deep and expansive argumentation and source manipulation of *De potentia* has been greatly reduced, but bears the unmistakable imprint of that work when compared to the *Commentary*. Aristotle again appeared in the Objections, but no longer his *Metaphysics*; in Objection 1 Aquinas cited *De anima*. The aforementioned citation of Augustine from *De Trinitate* III, 8, comprised the entire *sed contra*. The *corpus* cites *Liber de causis* again, but not the same passages which featured so prominently in the *De potentia*. Here the material appeared in the *corpus* and is intended to simplify and bring the question to resolution.

Having answered the primary point in dispute, however, Aquinas again raised the aforementioned “problem” of the Lombard’s statement that in the sacramental act the human being is also creative. This time the idea is placed into a parallel construction<sup>79</sup> to that of Avicenna, the Persian commentator whose works were widely read in 13<sup>th</sup> century scholarly circles. Again, the refutation of the confusion about the Lombard’s argument provided an occasion to explore the creative act, but this time in much greater simplicity, involving a charming illustration of a saw being used to make a bench by a workman.

As already noted, Aquinas returned to the same issue twenty QQ later within the section of the ST under consideration by this thesis. In Q 65, 3 Aquinas asked whether angels might not be intermediary creative agents of God. His answer again was clearly in the negative. Here Aquinas once more cited Augustine’s *De Trin.* but not the same passage that served in that role in the *sed contra* in I, 45, 5. This time Augustine is paired with Psalm 103:24 and Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the first Objection, apparently supporting the notion of an angelic creative agency. The argument is that such an arrangement would befit the wisdom of God. This is a critical distinction. In both *De potentia* and in ST I, 45, 5, Augustine was a primary authority to whom Aquinas appealed for support in reaching the theologically proper conclusion. In 65, 3 Augustine was quoted to create the tension of the Article, but ultimately refuted. He did not appear as the resolution of the issue, even though his statement in *De Trin.* had already been cited for exactly this purpose in I, 45, 3.

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<sup>79</sup> ST I, 65, 5c., *Et secundum hunc etiam modum Magister dicit.*

The second and third Objections of 65, 3 were more substantial, quoting from Aristotle and arguing that the diversity which confronts the observer demands a multiplicity of creative agents. The *sed contra* was simply the text of Genesis 1:1 and the argument which was made opposed the rationale put forward by the Objections. It was one of the rare moments in QQ 65-74 in which Aquinas actually came to such a decisive conclusion.

This examination of Aquinas' treatment of sources reveals at least two conclusions. The first is in support of Torrell's claims that Aquinas experienced an explosion of resources in the ten years which came between his commentating on the *Sentences* and the composition of *De potentia*.<sup>80</sup> The citations are far more significant, from a much broader body of authors and documents, including works which are not thought to have been known to the Lombard. What is more, the reader notices that Aquinas had integrated these additional sources, in this case the citation from *De Trin.* into the core of his argument, allowing Augustine's words to definitively answer the Objections' challenge to divine monergism in Creation.

But when we turn to the ST, the reader then notices another, contrary motion in regard to the sources. Rather than the expansion of resources, Aquinas muted and subtly changed his treatment of resources. In ST I, 45, 5 Aquinas still made his point forcefully and conclusively, but with far more economy. The number of sources was greatly reduced and the length of the argument was also reduced, although its primary elements were retained. Augustine's strong words from *De Trin.* III, 8 are retained and carry the same force they had in *De potentia*. This simplification would suggest that the pedagogical character of these questions is driving the use of sources. *Incipientes* need to enter this patristic world in small steps.

In the topic's repetition, however, in I, 65, 3, the sources undergo still more mutation. Augustine and Aristotle are still present, but only within the Objections, both of them seemingly in support of the notion of angelic creative agency, an idea which has already been refuted in I, 45, 5 and which was about to be refuted in the *corpus* of this Article. This article's refutation of the Objections appealed to no authority other than the first verse of Genesis 1 from the *sed contra*.

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<sup>80</sup> Torrell, 139.

It is the contention of this thesis that this transition in the treatment of Augustine is significant. In the commentary portion of this thesis,<sup>81</sup> Article three of Question 65 in the *prima pars* will be demonstrated to be in a conversation with the Articles which surround it. Not only was creative agency theologically important to Aquinas, but he was carefully positioning Augustine within the hierarchy of sources, reining in the authority of Augustine who had been used in the prior articles to establish important theological points. Having already dealt with the question earlier in the ST at I, 45, 5, in which he had used Augustine to compel the reader to the right conclusion, Aquinas cited Augustine in 65, 3 to be in support of the erroneous position which the Article refutes and contrary to his earlier usage of Augustine's material.

If both ST I, 45, 5 and I, 65, 3 are to be understood in pursuit of the proper answer alone, this is a strangely inconsistent use of Augustine. Far more likely, it seems, Aquinas was leading his reader to the proper answer in I, 45, 5 for it bears the closer resemblance to the treatment of this same question within both *Commentary II*, 1, 2-3 and *De potentia IV*, 3. Both of these earlier treatments had clearly been on a quest for such truth. ST I, 65, 3, however, suggests that Aquinas had another goal in mind, a goal which had something to do with the nature of Augustine's authority. Aquinas arrived at the same conclusion, but Augustine's role in arriving at that conclusion has been completely reversed. In the other treatments, he was the source of the proper answer. In this treatment, Augustine provided the problematic concept which must be refuted.

Aquinas can be seen as having gone through a process of maturation in regard to all his sources, but particularly Augustine. From the time of his *Commentary* until *De potentia* and the ST he has significantly increased his knowledge of Augustine and other patristic theologians. Weisheipl and Torrell both attribute this to the completion of another work of Aquinas at the time, the *Catena aurea* or "Golden Chain."<sup>82</sup> This was a chain of glosses on the four Gospels begun in 1262 and completed in 1267, while Aquinas was in Oviedo and Rome.<sup>83</sup> It was notable at the time for its variety of sources and especially for using Greek sources which Aquinas received from an unknown source.

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<sup>81</sup> Pp. 146-148.

<sup>82</sup> Weisheipl, 171 and Torrell, 139,

<sup>83</sup> Weisheipl, 371.



In his treatment of Augustine in the ST, however, one sees that while he had a great deal of Augustine at his disposal, Aquinas' use of Augustine was exceedingly careful, even manipulative. Augustine might be quoted to decide an argument. Or, in the event that the same argument is treated elsewhere, another portion of Augustine's writings might be cited in order to create the tension upon which the argument was constructed. In this way, we see that within the ST Aquinas' use of Augustine had transitioned from being only an authoritative source of theology for Aquinas into being a tool which he put to pedagogical and disputative ends.

#### 4. Augustine as a tool in Aquinas' work

Thus far the reader has noticed that Aquinas had both broadened his reading of Augustine and matured in that reading and as a theologian. Augustine was not only an authoritative source but was also a pedagogical tool in his effort to open up his readers' theological world to new ideas. Of course, this is not to suggest that this was unique or original to Aquinas. Placing patristic sources into a dialectic tension was a hallmark of the medieval theological method.<sup>84</sup> But Augustine's words on the six days of Creation proved to be an especially effective lever for Aquinas' purposes.

As already noted, Augustine's treatment of the Creation was useful to Aquinas simply for its volume. Here he had ample material with which to work, indeed so much that many of his peers seem to have settled for synopses of Augustine rather than mastering this entire corpus. Three of Augustine's exegetical works written over his entire career focused principally upon the interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis. Even before his elevation to the bishopric in Hippo, indeed before his ordination into the priesthood, as early as 388,<sup>85</sup> he wrote a work entitled *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* (*On Genesis against the Manicheans*). This work, his first known exegetical text, sought to address criticisms leveled against the Christian faith by Manicheans, specifically those which arose from the Creation account. On several occasions within the arguments in defense of the Scriptural account of Creation, Augustine made use of a spiritual or allegorizing

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<sup>84</sup> Colish, 11-12.

<sup>85</sup> Edmund Hill, *On Genesis*, vol 13 in "The Works of Saint Augustine," Ed.: John E. Rotelle, O. S. A., (New York: New City Press, 2002), 13

interpretation, setting aside the literal understanding when it proved too difficult.<sup>86</sup> He had learned this practice from his mentor, Ambrose, who himself was a reader and admirer of Origen.<sup>87</sup>

Augustine was by his own admission not satisfied with this work. He also had apparently met with some criticism of his methods, and thus between 393 and 395,<sup>88</sup> he attempted a second commentary which would be strictly literal. He found, however, that he was unable to complete this work because, in his own estimation, he was simply not up to the task, leaving off after verse 25 of the first chapter of Genesis.<sup>89</sup> Only at the end of his career, after publishing another and complete attempt at a literal commentary, did he return to this incomplete and unpublished work and publish it in its incomplete form; although, he did append a brief section to the end. To distinguish it from the later work, Augustine named it *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus* (*Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis*).

Less than a decade after leaving his earlier commentary unfinished, perhaps as early as 401, Augustine began his second attempt at a literal commentary of Genesis entitled *De Genesi ad litteram* (*Literal Commentary on Genesis*). He did not, however, publish it until 416. His letters suggested that his colleagues were urging him to publish but he claims the delay was due to the fact he was taking great care in this work.<sup>90</sup> He also was most likely distracted by the Donatist controversy, the fall of the city of Rome in 410, and ill health.<sup>91</sup> This work in 12 books represented what Augustine considered his best,

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<sup>86</sup> *Revisions* I, 18.

<sup>87</sup> Gerard Watson, "Origen and the Literal Interpretation of Scripture" in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit* edited by Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, (Dublin/Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1995), 84. See also *Confessions* V, 11, 21 and again in V, 14, 24 for Augustine's own account of how Elpidius' and Ambrose's figurative interpretations of difficult passages from the Hebrew Scriptures played into his conversion to the Christian faith from Manichaeism.

<sup>88</sup> Hill, 105.

<sup>89</sup> *Revisions* I, 18.

<sup>90</sup> Letter 159, 2 CSEL, 44, 499f.

<sup>91</sup> Hill, p. 164.

but not perfect, interpretation of Genesis. That estimation on his part is tempered by the fact that he did not disavow the earlier attempts.<sup>92</sup>

Two other treatments of the Genesis 1 text by Augustine also merit inclusion here. At the height of his creative career, as the city of Rome had fallen and the entire western world seemed to be shaken, Augustine undertook a great work which eventually contributed substantively to the re-casting of the philosophical underpinnings of western culture: *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos libri viginti duo* (*The City of God*), written between 412 and 426. Through its many subsequent readers and interpreters, Augustine created a framework which served as an intellectual foundation to much of the medieval period. While this is not primarily a work of exegetical commentary, in books 11 and 14 he dedicated considerable attention to the Creation account of Genesis 1-3, returning to the ideas he had posited in his commentaries. The city of God, in Augustine's estimation, is built on the creative event. The other treatment of Creation which must be noted comes within the *Confessions*, a work even more striking for its personal nature and which precedes *The City of God*. Written shortly after the year 400, Augustine devoted almost the entirety of book 12 of *Confessions* to his peculiar understanding of the creative event. Within this work Augustine was creatively exploring self-awareness in ways which continue to shape western thought. By expending so much effort on this subject one might conclude that Augustine's own self-awareness was derived from his understanding of Creation.

It is apparent that when Augustine came to the most significant questions of his life, he repeatedly and extensively returned to this theology of Creation. Because Augustine had treated Creation in several genres and for multiple purposes, Aquinas found within his words a useful, flexible tool for multiple purposes in the thirteenth century as well. Of significant value was the fact that Augustine himself was positing an interpretation over against a more widely accepted understanding of Genesis 1. This meant that much of Augustine's treatment involved an appeal for an epistemic humility which allowed for someone to consider his ideas.

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<sup>92</sup> In his comments on the *Unfinished Literal Commentary* in the *Revisions* noted above, Augustine does not endeavor a large scale revision of the text of the unfinished work, but simply urges the reader to consider it in light of the later and completed work. See Karla Pollmann, "Augustine, Genesis, and Controversy" in *Augustinian Studies*. 38:1 (2007). 211.

When one turns to the actual content of Augustine which Aquinas found so useful, the reader must account for an issue which has arisen for the modern reader, but which did not obtain for Aquinas and his readers. This difficulty derives from the definition of “literal.” This question has been extensively discussed and dissected over the past generations with little or no effect on how most moderns read the words of Augustine.<sup>93</sup> The modern reader tends to hear the word ‘literal’ and assumes this word connotes a singular meaning of the text which is stripped of all literary devices such as metaphor or allegory.<sup>94</sup> In a current context, this sort of a literal reading of Genesis 1 means a six calendar day Creation event. A literal reading of “day” must mean a 24 hour period of time. While the ancients recognized this interpretation of Genesis 1 as a valid literal reading,<sup>95</sup> they did not so understand literal as preclude any other literal reading of the text. For the ancient and medieval theologian, a literal reading of the text was a reading which took very seriously the words which were on the page as significant in their own right. The order of those words, the absence of a word, even the spelling or misspelling of a word might be significant. Origen, the Alexandrian commentator of the third century, who remains well known for his occasionally excessive allegorical reading of the text, rooted all those allegories and spiritual interpretations in a careful reading of

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<sup>93</sup> This may be attributed to the lamentable fact that many who have studied theology and patristic theology specifically cannot agree on the meaning of this word. Often and erroneously the modern definition is substituted with the simplistic assertion that the ancient meaning for literal is encompassed in “authorial intent.” See: Alister McGrath “Augustine’s Origin of Species: How the great theologian might weigh in on the great Darwin debate.”

[www.http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/may/22.39.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/may/22.39.html) (05/13/2009), or Steven Baldor and William Carroll, *Aquinas on Creation* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1997) 3, n. 4. For a much better definition of literal, consider K. E. Greene-McCreight, *Ad Litteram: How Augustine, Calvin, and Barth Read the “Plain Sense” of Genesis 1-3*. (New York, Washington, D.C./Baltimore, Boston, et al: Lang, 1999), 17 and 32; see also Pollmann, 209-210.

<sup>94</sup> For an example, see “literal” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Chris Baldick. Oxford University Press, 2008. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. (Accessed 25 May, 2010.) See also Louis LaVallee, “Augustine on the Creation Days” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32:4, Dec. 1987, 457. In the opening paragraphs of this article he provides an exemplar of a theologian imposing this modern definition of “literal” upon the works of Augustine.

<sup>95</sup> See Basil *In Hexaemeron* homily 8, SC 26: 428-430.

the Scriptural text which he understood to have been dictated by God to the biblical authors.<sup>96</sup> Augustine repeatedly treats his literal meaning of Genesis in this way.

An example of Augustine's understanding of a literal reading can be found within his treatment of Genesis 1. In all three of his commentaries, Augustine began by wrestling through this question of what a literal reading might be.<sup>97</sup> In the *Gen. ad litt. Imperf.* he supplied a readily accessible clue to what he had in mind. After a very brief discussion of the history of interpretation in which he noted four approaches to the text, he delves immediately into the meaning of the word "beginning."

As regards the historical (literal) sense, we ask what *in the beginning* means; that is, whether it is in the beginning of time, or in the beginning, in the very Wisdom of God, because the Son of God actually called himself the beginning when he was asked *who are you, then?* And he said, *The beginning, as which I am also speaking to you* (John 8:25). There is, you see, a beginning without beginning, and there is a beginning with another beginning.<sup>98</sup>

Augustine did not pose these two readings of "beginning" as a choice between a literal and a figurative or metaphorical meaning.<sup>99</sup> Instead, Augustine posited two literal meanings to this word "beginning." In Augustine's mind, the interpreter of Scripture who seeks the literal meaning of the text has options. The reader of this thesis is urged to contrast Augustine's view with the contemporary, post-enlightenment reading which sees the literal reading as a reading which is confined to a singular meaning, a reading

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<sup>96</sup> Gerard Watson, "Origen and the Literal Interpretation of Scripture" in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*. Eds.: Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, (Dublin/Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1995), 80-82.

<sup>97</sup> *Gen. contra Man.*, II, 2, 3; *Gen. ad litt. Imperf.*, I, 3, 6-10; and *Gen. ad litt.*, I, 1,1-5,11. For a contemporary reflection on the meaning of "beginning" along the lines of Augustine see Reno, 38.

<sup>98</sup> *Gen. ad litt. imperf.*, 3, 6, *Secundum historiam autem quaeritur quid sit: In principio, id est, utrum in principio temporis, an in principio in ipsa Sapientia Dei, quia et ipse Dei Filius principium se dixit, quando ei dictum est: Tu quis es; et dixit: Principium quod et loquor vobis. Est enim Principium sine principio, et est Principium cum alio principio.*

<sup>99</sup> Augustine seems to have considered that being limited to a singular literal meaning was irrational; although, the fact that he treats it in *De Divers. Quaest.*, q. 65 suggests that even in his own day some held this idea. cf discussion in Lubac, vol ii, 7ff.

which takes all other meanings and would consign them to the category of “figurative.” While a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader might surely consider Augustine’s reading of “the beginning” as referring to Christ to be a figurative reading, Augustine considered it as a validly literal reading. Augustine argued that there are multiple literal readings of the text. He may have even understood that there were infinite readings of a text.<sup>100</sup> This did not mean Augustine held that any reading was possible. Every interpretation was subject to his well-known hermeneutical principle of the twin loves of God and fellow human beings.<sup>101</sup> The establishment of that boundary however, did not result in a singular meaning, but presented the reader with a field of interpretational opportunity.<sup>102</sup>

Aquinas himself had treated Augustine’s interpretation of this verse within his *Commentary* and subjected Augustine’s interpretation to some further clarification.<sup>103</sup> Although he had not fully concurred with Augustine on other issues, he did not question the plurality of a literal sense. As we noted in the Introduction, Mark Johnson argues persuasively in his article that Aquinas also held for a plurality of the literal sense.<sup>104</sup> Aquinas, his academic peers,<sup>105</sup> and his immediate readers did not subscribe to modernity’s definition of literal, both within the interpretation of Scripture and other

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<sup>100</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 21, 41. See also Thomas Finan, “St. Augustine on the ‘mira profunditas’ of Scripture: Texts and Contexts” in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, Eds.: Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, (Dublin/Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1995), 170-171.

<sup>101</sup> *De Doctr. Chr.* I, 36, 40. *Quisquis igitur Scripturas divinas vel quamlibet earum partem intellexisse sibi videtur, ita ut eo intellectu non aedificet istam geminam caritatem Dei et proximi, nondum intellexit. Quisquis vero talem inde sententiam duxerit, ut huic aedificandae caritati sit utilis, nec tamen hoc dixerit quod ille quem legit eo loco sensisse probabitur, non perniciose fallitur nec omnino mentitur.*

<sup>102</sup> E.g., *Gen. ad litt.* I, 21, 41. See also Greene-McCreight, 50-52.

<sup>103</sup> *Commentary* II, 1, 1, 6ob1, *Videtur quod inconvenienter exponatur: in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram, idest in filio. Pater enim est principium totius divinitatis, ut Augustinus dicit. Ergo per principium appropriate debet intelligi pater.* And *Commentary* II, 1, 1, 6ad1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ratio principii effectivi appropriatur patri, sed ratio principii exemplaris per modum artis appropriatur filio, qui est sapientia et ars patris.*

<sup>104</sup> Johnson, 117-141.

<sup>105</sup> John Boyle, “The Theological Character of ‘Division of the Text’” in *Medieval Christian Exegesis of the Bible*, Eds.: Jane D. McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 279.

ancient texts.<sup>106</sup> The medieval theologian did, however, along with every generation of humanity, struggle with the limits of theological discourse and an appropriate epistemic humility when addressing metaphysical and theological topics. The impulse to overstate the conclusions and provide simple answers to complex questions did not begin with modern undergraduate essay writers.<sup>107</sup> In this sense, the modern and the medieval theologian may be said to contend with similar forces. From our reading of Aquinas' QQ 65-74, Aquinas identified Augustine as a resource for the inculcation of an epistemic humility within his readership. Augustine had pleaded for his audience to consider the possibility of his interpretation. Aquinas imbibed the spirit of Augustine's argument and sought to explicate the two competing and seemingly mutually exclusive strands of interpretation of Genesis 1, but in the end adopted Augustine's theological method against Augustine's proposed theological content by refusing to admit that one interpretive strand was to be seen as correct at the expense of the other. By so doing he was establishing through the manipulation of resources and the exploration of Scriptural texts the limits of theological knowledge.

Augustine's argument in this regard was useful to Aquinas because it was persistent and consistent. While Augustine was aware of the interpretation of others which held a six calendar day Creation event,<sup>108</sup> Augustine insisted that he offered an equally valid literal interpretation of Genesis 1 which was different.<sup>109</sup> Augustine read the same words and concluded that they could literally be referring to an instantaneous event which was explained using "day" as a logical and not a temporal marker.<sup>110</sup>

This counter-intuitive reading of Genesis 1 by Augustine, which the Lombard and his commentators, save Albert, had rejected, Aquinas explored in great detail and used

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<sup>106</sup> Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 35: "Surprisingly large stretches of medieval philosophy take off from throw-away remarks by Aristotle,..."

<sup>107</sup> See the earlier citation of Colish on Honorius Augustodunensis' *Elucidarium*. Colish, 4

<sup>108</sup> Basil, Chrysostom, et al.

<sup>109</sup> *Conf.*, XII, 17, 25 – 18, 27; *Gen. ad litt.* I, 18,37-21, 41; IV, 28, 45; et al. See Thomas Finan "St. Augustine on the 'mira profunditas' of Scripture: Texts and Contexts" in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit* edited by Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey, (Dublin/Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1995) 170-171. Cf. Pollmann, 209-211.

<sup>110</sup> Beginning with *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 21, 38 and continuing to the conclusion of Book IV, 35, 56 Augustine makes his most thorough examination of this idea. He also visits it in *Conf.*, XII, 13, 16ff.

within these QQ of the *prima pars* both to establish an epistemic boundary for theological discourse and at the same time create an open space for theologically creative activity. In forcing open intellectual space through the admission that two literal but divergent readings of a text had to be entertained as possible, Aquinas forced his readers to evaluate with some skepticism ideas which they had received and considered to be certain. Within the newly opened fissures in theological certainty, Aquinas sought to explore new ideas about humanity, the Incarnation, and the ultimate end/goal of salvation itself.

As noted earlier in this thesis, these QQ of Aquinas served more than one purpose. While forcing a re-evaluation of a core doctrine of Medieval Christianity, Aquinas also schooled *incipientes* in the proper use and reading of patristic sources. This aspect of these QQ must be treated in greater detail in subsequent chapters and within the commentary itself where the structures and pedagogical arc of the QQ can be more fully examined and explained. But while this explication must wait for that portion of the thesis, it can also be seen why Augustine would prove a natural case study for a Regent Master seeking to school his students in the proper use of patristic sources. Augustine's considerable authority and the frequency with which he was quoted created the perfect environment for this project as well.



### Chapter 3: Aquinas' Treatment of Authoritative Sources within ST I, 65-74

As noted within the Introduction to this thesis, scholars of philosophy and theology frequently ignore these QQ within the ST. The philosopher finds that Aquinas' treatment of the material hardly advances the discussion of ontology or the proof of God, two subjects which might be expected in a treatment of origins. Etienne Gilson's estimation of these QQ from a philosopher's point of view continues to be valid.<sup>1</sup> The scholar interested in the history of science might come looking for an exploration of Aquinas' hylomorphic physics, but while it is presumed, such physics does not serve as the focus of these questions. The theologian also finds reasons to look elsewhere in the ST for riches. The topic of Creation is treated, but not substantively advanced over the earlier treatment of QQ 45-49. In form, these QQ are an exegesis of Genesis 1, but even read this way they are an exegesis which proves unsatisfactory. Aquinas sifted the interpretations of patristic theologians but came to no conclusions. What is more, as is frequently the case when one reads medieval theologians, the scientific assumptions are embarrassing in light of current understanding.<sup>2</sup> After all, how much time does one really need to spend on the discussion of the waters above the firmament when astronauts have regularly returned from the arid reaches of space and report not some vast ocean of water but emptiness and cosmic dust?

This chapter expands upon the assertion articulated in the Introduction to this thesis. There we suggested that the frustration of the theologians and the philosophers in reading these QQ, while well founded, is due to the fact that they come to these pages looking for something other than what Aquinas intended them to find. This misapprehension of Aquinas' purpose is most clearly demonstrated in the examination of Aquinas' treatment of authoritative sources. That examination of Aquinas' sources occupies this chapter. In the first section of this chapter the reader is given to notice that the use of Scriptural sources in 25 of the 29 Articles is markedly different than Aquinas' treatment throughout the rest of the QQ. In the four Articles which do conform to Aquinas' usual practice, the examination of subject matter and structure suggest these Articles are better read as belonging to the larger goals which Aquinas intended for the entire work, particularly the *exitus* and *reditus* motif. When one excludes these four

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<sup>1</sup> Gilson, *Thomism*, 205-206.

<sup>2</sup> Wallace, *Intr.* xxii.

Articles and exclusively considers Aquinas' use of patristic resources in isolation from his use of Scriptural sources, another pattern emerges. Augustine and Basil are held up as exemplars of divergent interpretational strands, but neither is prioritized nor favored. Aquinas expressed<sup>3</sup> a desire to retain a parity and appears to have manipulated sources to create that parity for the reader. The interpretation of both strands is articulated and integrated into both a reading of the Scriptural text of Genesis 1 and into medieval natural philosophy without resolution of apparent contradiction or competing conclusions.

In examining the philosophical sources, these also reveal an unusual pattern of use and function within these QQ. The philosophers, primarily Aristotle, function in purely supportive roles throughout these questions, most often providing the backdrop against which the theologians can be more clearly or cogently perceived. The observation and analysis of these patterns will yield the conclusion that QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* address the interpretation of these theologians and the reader's response to these interpretations more than these QQ address the actual "truth" of Genesis 1. Aquinas' treatment of these interpretational strands suggests to his reader that this truth can only be discerned in broad strokes and not fine details. Aquinas argued that this lack of resolution created an ambiguity which must accommodate the potential that either of these two strands of interpretation could be correct and opens the possibility which Aquinas will posit in the final Article that neither of them is correct.

#### 1. The First Source: Scripture

In any exegetical exercise such as QQ 65-74, the first source with which an interpreter must wrestle is the text of Scripture itself.<sup>4</sup> Medieval regent masters of theology were well versed in the texts of both New and Old Testaments.<sup>5</sup> Every medieval Master of Theology began his academic career delivering cursory lectures over Scripture as a

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<sup>3</sup> I, 74, 2c, *Ut igitur neutri sententiae praeiudicetur, utriusque rationibus respondendum est.*

<sup>4</sup> See ST I, 1, 8, for Aquinas' own formulation of the role of Scripture as a source among theologians and philosophers. Scripture is posited there as an absolute source, which can answer the questions of those who raise difficulties and questions, but which concedes nothing to those who raise objections.

<sup>5</sup> Lubac, 66-72.

Bachelor<sup>6</sup> and fulfilled his vocation by offering more substantive Scriptural lectures as a Master<sup>7</sup>. This mastery of sacred page was an even more significant reality for one of the mendicant Masters of Theology than for a secular. As a Dominican friar and appointed as a lecturer within both priories and *studia* of the order, Aquinas's life was steeped in Scripture. Being a devout member of the *Ordo Praedicatorum*, it is likely that he could have recited the Psalter from memory as it was sung in its entirety within the priories every week. Because it was mandated by the rule of the Dominican Order, even when he was not lecturing, Aquinas would have attended lectures on Scripture daily during his 30 years within the order.<sup>8</sup> It simply can be assumed that Aquinas had a deep familiarity with the text of Scripture.

The reader of QQ 65-74 who is considering Aquinas' use of sources notices both his utilization of Scripture and the lack of Scripture citation. If one excludes the references to the first chapter of Genesis which naturally permeate these QQ, within the Blackfriars edition of the ST, the editor notes just 39 instances in which Aquinas cited or alluded to Scriptural passages which do not fall within Genesis 1. When compared to his use of other authorities, this number is slightly more than half of the 72 citations attributed to Augustine.

When one compares this to other sections of the ST an important contrast can be noted. It is true that there are more philosophical sections of the ST in which Scriptural references are relatively rare. Someone reading I, 3 on the Simplicity of God, as an example, would find entire articles therein which do not reference Scripture once. When the Scriptural material is available and important, however, such as in I, 3, 1, in which

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<sup>6</sup> Aquinas likely did this as a Bachelor in the *studium generale* under Albert the Great in Cologne, 1245-48. Torrell, p. 27. Aquinas' commentaries on Isaiah (Leonine edition, vol 28) and Jeremiah with Lamentations (Parma ed, vol 14, pp. 577-685) which are generally thought to date from these initial lectures are extant. See Weisheipl, 369-370 for discussion of dating.

<sup>7</sup> These lectures were frequently made into commentaries, either by the process of publishing a student's notes, a *reportatio* or by the publication of notes corrected by the Master, an *expositio*. Of Aquinas publications in this genre survive commentaries on Job (Leonine ed, vol 26); Matthew (incomplete – Parma ed, Vol 10, pp. 1-278); John (Parma ed, vol 10, pp. 279-645); The Letters of Paul (Leonine ed, 32); Psalms 1-54 (Parma ed, vol 14, pp. 148-553) and his famous commentary on the four gospels, usually known as the *Catena aurea* (Parma vol 11-12).

<sup>8</sup> Boyle, 4, the *lector* in a priory was a required position and, in the thirteenth century was only allowed to enter his personal spiritual retreat at times which would result in the smallest impact upon these lectures.

Aquinas explored the simplicity of God under the question “Is God a Body,” Scriptural citations permeated the discussion. When Scripture spoke to a subject, Aquinas incorporated that text as his highest authority. A more appropriate comparison is made to those QQ which, like I, 65-74, address specific Scriptural content. In ST III, 27-59, Aquinas explored the life of Christ, drawing from all four of the Gospel accounts of Christ’s life. In III, 46 he examined the Passion of Christ in 12 Articles. This might be compared to the 29 Articles in I, 65-74. As was done with the references to the Creation account in Genesis 1, if one excludes the references to the Passion narratives in the four Gospel accounts, one finds no less than 62 Scriptural citations and allusions from 21 books of the Christian Scripture.

Further comparison of III, 46 with QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* is striking. When treating the passion narrative, Aquinas repeatedly mined significant treatments of the Passion of Christ found elsewhere, such as Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Philippians 2. Significant treatments of the Creation event in other portions of Scripture are not utilized by Aquinas when making his arguments in ST I, 65-74. Absent from the treatment of Genesis 1 is the significant discussion of the Creation in Romans 8 by the Apostle Paul. Isaiah who spoke eloquently of the new Creation is only mentioned once and that is a passage from chapter 14. Psalm 104 with its poetic rendition of Creation event is not cited once, nor is the account in Proverbs 8. The book of Job, which has an extensive treatment of the Creation in chapters 38-41, is also entirely absent. This last omission is particularly important as Aquinas had completed a lengthy commentary on the book of Job in 1264.<sup>9</sup> Psalm 148 and the Gospel according to John receive the most significant and concentrated attention with but 4 and 5 references respectively. Of further interest, the references taken from the Gospel according to John are not principally found in the prologue of the book with its famous restatement of Creation which would seem a logical source from which one would anticipate Aquinas to derive a Christian discussion of the Creation event.<sup>10</sup> When one remembers that Aquinas had lectured upon and published commentaries on many of these works, these omissions become suggestive. If this is a quest for philosophical or theological truth, one must

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<sup>9</sup> Weisheipl, 368.

<sup>10</sup> Two citations from the prologue of John 1:3 (74, 3ob1); 1:17 (73, 1ad1); the other three citations fall later in the book at John 3:5 (74, 3ad4); 5:17 (69, 2c); and 19:30 (73, 1ob1).

wonder why he eschewed these important Scriptural resources, resources which he effectively utilized elsewhere within the ST.

This absence of Scriptural citation is made more puzzling when one reads a citation of Augustine which is not only quoted within these questions, it is essentially repeated. In I, 68, 1 Aquinas listed three objections to the making of the firmament on the second day. The *sed contra* is simply a quotation of Genesis 1, verses 6 and 8. Aquinas began the *corpus* by paraphrasing two hermeneutical principals established by Augustine.

“Augustine teaches that two points should be kept in mind when resolving such questions. First, the truth of Scripture must be held inviolable. Secondly, when there are different ways of explaining a Scriptural text, no particular explanation should be held so rigidly that, if convincing arguments show it to be false, anyone dare to insist that it still is the definitive sense of the text. Otherwise unbelievers will scorn Sacred Scripture, and the way to faith will be closed to them.”<sup>11</sup>

In the next article, I, 68, 2, Aquinas again posited a number of objections from reason against the idea that there are waters above the firmament. The *sed contra* is once more a restatement of the Genesis text. In confronting the tension created by these apparently contradictory views he begins the *corpus* with an unusually long quotation from the second book of Augustine’s important commentary on Genesis.

“Augustine observes, *The Scriptural text has more authority than any human theory. Therefore, however and whatever these waters may be, we cannot in any way doubt that they are there.*”<sup>12</sup>

Both citations and their use as resolution of strong tensions between Objections and *sed contra* statements suggest Aquinas placed Scripture into a pre-eminent position as an

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<sup>11</sup> I, 68, 1c, *sicut Augustinus docet, in huiusmodi quaestionibus duo sunt observanda. Primo quidem, ut veritas Scripturae inconcusse teneatur. Secundo, cum Scriptura divina multipliciter exponi possit, quod nulli expositioni aliquis ita praecise inhaereat quod, si certa ratione constiterit hoc esse falsum, quod aliquis sensum Scripturae esse asserere praesumat, ne Scriptura ex hoc ab infidelibus derideatur, et ne eis via credendi praecludatur.* Trans.: Wallace, 71.

<sup>12</sup> *sicut dicit Augustinus, II super Gen. ad Litt., maior est Scripturae huius auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas. Unde quomodo et quales aquae ibi sint, eas tamen ibi esse, minime dubitamus.* Trans. Wallace, 79.

authority. Yet, he made very little use of Scripture in presenting the arguments within this section of the ST. This could be viewed as an example of hypocrisy on his part, but we argue against such a conclusion. It suggests, rather, that Aquinas had a goal other than stating or carrying a theological argument of significance for the entire work or even the argument which was in dispute. When one takes into consideration the great skill which Aquinas had previously displayed in commentaries and other theological writings and in other sections of the ST in the use of Scripture as an authority, this relative absence of Scriptural citation is suggestive of another purpose for these QQ. At this point, one must also note that Aquinas had been engaged in the production of one of his most significant works, the “Golden Chain” (*catena aurea*)<sup>13</sup> which both Weisheipl<sup>14</sup> and Torrell<sup>15</sup> cite as having transformative effect upon the theology and writing of Aquinas. His examination therein of various patristic commentaries and sermons on the text of the New Testament’s Gospel accounts seems to have changed the way he used these patristic resources. In terms of chronology, Aquinas completed the *catena aurea* and almost immediately began composing the ST.

The explanation for the absence of Scriptural citation presents itself in analysis of the Articles in which Aquinas did make use of extra-Genesis Biblical citation. Aquinas extensively cited portions of Scripture outside the first chapter of Genesis in four Articles: 65, 1; 68, 4; 73, 1; and in the final Article of the section, 74, 3. If one excludes these four Articles, only eight extra-Genesis 1 citations are found the remaining 25 Articles of this section. This observation suggests that one might discern some reason for this divergence in the use of sources. That reason becomes apparent when one compares the subject matter of each of these four Articles. Each addressed a topic which was somehow important for the larger goals of the ST.

Article 65, 1 is naturally important as it leads off the discussion of the Creation by posing the question of whether corporeal creatures are from God. This Article revisits foundational material found in ST I, 45-49. The subject under consideration had considerable implications for the entire work, especially as he developed this idea in the

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<sup>13</sup>*Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*, Ed.: A. Guarenti, (2<sup>a</sup> ed.: Marietti, Taurini-Romae, 1953).

<sup>14</sup> Weisheipl, 171-174.

<sup>15</sup> Torrell, 139.

subsequent Parts. The fact that God was indeed responsible for the corporeal Creation had to be settled conclusively. Wide ranging Scriptural citations fill the first Article and his conclusion was a firm “Yes.” But in Article 65, 2 the extra-Genesis Scriptural citations almost completely disappear and this continues in the subsequent articles of the Question. In those articles, and those of QQ 66-68 Augustine and his fellow theologians of the past make up the bulk of the citations until the reader reaches I, 68, 4. Here Aquinas again made use of significant Scriptural citation outside of Genesis 1. In this Article Aquinas took up the question of whether there is only one heaven. While this might strike the reader as a rather obscure subject; Aquinas took this quite seriously, because in this article he focused on the *reditus* of the whole Creation, a topic which occupies center stage in the *secunda secundae partis* and the *tertia pars* of the ST. When, in the course of examining this question, the subject bore upon the goals of the entire work, Aquinas increased the level of authority. When the conclusion reached within an Article was important for Aquinas’ larger goals for the ST, the answer was supported by the highest authority at his disposal.

Once this teleological element is introduced and the question settled, Aquinas again let Scripture recede into the background and the arguments between Augustine and the other theologians resumed. This was only re-interrupted in Article 73, 1 in which Aquinas dealt with the completion of the divine work and whether it should be ascribed to the seventh day. This time the question itself was not truly the matter at hand, but presented Aquinas with a pretext to range into a topic important to the entire work. In this case, the treatment of the completion of Creation on the seventh day prompted Aquinas to bring up the subject of the Incarnation of Christ and his role in the Creation’s arrival at its final, eschatological goal. Again this had implications for arguments yet to be articulated in the *tertia pars*. Aquinas here articulated the principle that both created nature and divine grace would have to come together in order to reach Creation’s final goal. The act of Creation had supplied the natural material, but the Incarnation supplied the grace necessary for the consummation of future glory. At this point of the discussion he had again broached a concept which was of critical importance to the entire work. Aquinas once more set aside the treatment of Augustine and other theologians and raised the level of authority, drawing upon Scripture as the primary authority.

It would seem that at the critical junctures within these questions, when the topics came close to the *exitus* and *reditus* motif, the primary goals for which the ST was written, and when the answers made a difference for what was said later, Aquinas made use of a higher level of authority to make his argument. These articles thus function as points of contact with the major themes of the entire work, points upon which his primary arguments turned. In the intermediate portions of these QQ, the other 25 Articles of this section of the ST, Scriptural authority receded behind the issues which were raised by the patristic theologians who had interpreted Genesis 1, thus allowing the debate among the various patristic authorities to be minutely examined. It was the interpretation of these patristic theologians which was under scrutiny here, not the actual meaning of Genesis 1. Had the actual meaning of Genesis 1 been in question, Aquinas would have argued these QQ's and Articles with much more robust Scriptural authority.

It cannot be maintained that these four Articles by the nature of their subject matter particularly merited a Scriptural component over against the other Articles in QQ 65-74. It is not the case, for instance, that these Articles alone involved topics upon which Scripture presented more obvious resources. In truth, the complete absence of Psalm 104 in the discussion of the second and third day suggests otherwise. Psalm 104 is a poetic rendition of the Creation event which pays particular attention to the Creation of the firmament (day 2) and the establishment of land (day 3). Psalm 104:24 "In wisdom you have made them all;" would seem especially important as Aquinas contended with Origen in 65, 2 and 3. Consider his rebuttal to Origen's interesting argument that the Creation contradicts the divine principle of justice in 65, 2ad3. Origen had argued that the variety in Creation violated God's equal treatment of all, his justice. Aquinas rejected this argument, appealing to God's wisdom. Psalm 104 provided a perfect Scriptural citation in support of Aquinas's argument. Aquinas knew this, in fact, just a few months before, while conducting the disputation which became *De potentia*, Aquinas had utilized this very verse to make this very argument against this same idea of Origen.<sup>16</sup> This was a citation which Aquinas and his fellow friars in the priory had likely sung hundreds of times; a citation he had used in prior works to make this very point, nevertheless, he did not use it here.

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<sup>16</sup> *De potentia*, IV, 2ad29.



The contention of this thesis is that Aquinas is not really interested in rebutting Origen as much as he tried to inculcate a reverential reading of Origen and other early Christian authors which critically examined their statements, let them speak to the current generation of reader, and which served the larger purposes of the ST. To restate an earlier assertion, this seems to be a pedagogically driven text, which sought to inculcate a *habitus* within the 13<sup>th</sup> century reader, not a text which asserted various theological truths which Aquinas sought to be adopted by that reader.

This theory is reinforced by the treatment of Scripture as a resource in the final article of the section on Creation in which one also finds a number of Biblical references outside of Genesis 1.<sup>17</sup> In a departure from his usual structure, this Article includes neither a *sed contra* nor a *corpus*, but simply a list of Objections and individual Responses to the Objections.<sup>18</sup> It could be that this final Article is simply an omnibus Article, a convenient locus for Aquinas to gather together items which he had not worked into earlier articles. I think, however, that the replies to the various Objections argue for something else. They are quite long in comparison with other replies to Objections and what is more they are theologically significant. Also significant is the fact that these seven Responses to the Objections are one of the few places in this section of the ST in which all three strands of sources (Scripture, patristic, and philosophical) come together and interact with one another on something like an equal footing:

The Responses in Article 74, 3 bring together the three different sources into a conversation. For not only is Scripture present, but so are Augustine and Basil, the two primary protagonists of the theological debate. Even more interesting, the non-Christian sources are also woven into this final article of the whole treatment. Rabbi Moses, a Jewish interpreter of Aristotle, is quite favorably treated in ad3 and ad4. In keeping with the previous QQ of this section, no conclusions are reached, but all the sources have their say. Did Aquinas, in 74, 3, present an example of the approach to Augustine, Basil and others for which had had argued within this entire section of the ST? Was this perhaps an exercise or a list of possible debate subjects upon which the students of the priory might practice? Both are possible, I am inclined to favor the latter. But in no way

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<sup>17</sup> ST I, 74, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Wallace notes that Cajetan, Aquinas' Reformation era commentator, thought that the response to the first objection should be considered an article. pp. 162-3, note a.

do these Objections and their Responses fit neatly into any theological or philosophical reading of the text. They must have another purpose which most reasonably is pedagogical.

## 2. The Second Source: Patristic Theologians

That Aquinas used a genre common in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a hexaemeral commentary, to develop an example of a reverential reading makes a great deal of sense. William Wallace in the introduction to the Blackfriar's edition of the ST, Vol. 10, suggests that the medieval scholar who addressed the Creation account in Genesis 1 had "an embarrassment of riches" when addressing resources.<sup>19</sup> As earlier noted, Augustine himself had written five significant works which dealt with this subject, four of which are quoted or referenced within QQ 65-74.<sup>20</sup> The editor attributes seven citations to the *Confessions*, three to the *De civitate dei*, four to the *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, and 46 to the *De Genesi ad litteram*. Missing from the list of citations is *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*. In addition to these commentaries on Genesis, the editor credits Aquinas for citing material five times from *De Trinitate*.

In order to achieve his goals, Aquinas utilized a tension between Augustine and another familiar interpretive strand of theology championed by the Cappadocian Basil. Basil lived and wrote in the generation immediately prior to Augustine. His works were known to Augustine and cited by him. His series of sermons delivered on the hexaemeron<sup>21</sup> were both well-known and important for medieval interpretation of the Creation event. In these sermons, Basil had sought to establish the validity of the Creation event for a literate and learned audience in the fourth century and to draw out its moral implications.<sup>22</sup> Aquinas cited these sermons 21 times according to the editor.

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<sup>19</sup> Wallace, intr p. xx.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that this conclusion was reached by surveying the editor's citations in the Blackfriar's edition of the ST. Because Aquinas does not often cite works of Augustine by name, the compilation of such citations is not an exact science. Furthermore, because Augustine repeated himself in many of these works, which reference Aquinas has in mind may not be clear and may reflect simply the editor's greater familiarity with one work over another. Hence, general trends might be seen, but considerable care must be exercised when using such a compilation.

<sup>21</sup> *In Hexaemeron I-IX*. SC:26.

<sup>22</sup> Wallace, p. 205.

He also suggests that on another three occasions the ideas which Aquinas attributed only to “some say” are found within Basil’s *Hexaemeron* sermons.

Basil’s interpretation of Genesis 1 evidences a strong “Scripture over secular learning” position, but he sought to engage the secular learning as much as possible. He was at times dismissive of secular science but seemed on the whole to have been sensitive to the fact that his audience was well read.<sup>23</sup> He generally tried to reconcile or harmonize, but when faced with expressed doubts regarding the length of the Creation event insisted that the days of the Creation week were genuine calendar days, periods of 24 hours. This assertion and its attendant implications for the Creation narrative are his primary and critical points of departure from the interpretation which Augustine put forward in the next generation.

John Chrysostom, the preacher of Antioch and Constantinople from the late fourth and early fifth centuries, was also regularly cited by Aquinas within these questions. His eleven sermons on the Creation narrative in Genesis<sup>24</sup> are cited nine times. Chrysostom was especially important for establishing two important principles as Aquinas interpreted Gen 1. His assertion that many of the apparent problems within text of this chapter of Genesis are actually due to an accommodation of the primitive hearers was invaluable to Aquinas.<sup>25</sup> Often and unfortunately translated “condescension”, this term (συγκατάβασις) in Chrysostom is better understood as “considerateness.” Chrysostom understood that God in his loving-kindness was taking into consideration the state of the first audience. The presumed state of Moses’ audience often forced God to use words which were, in Chrysostom’s estimation, earthly or thick (παχύτης).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Wallace’s discussion of this in Appendix 7 “Hexaemeron: Patristic Accounts”, 202-210.

<sup>24</sup> Chrysostom, *In Gen.* PG 53, 21-98.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. I, 67, 4, res; 71, 1, ad1 and ad4.

<sup>26</sup> Sten Hidal, “Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Antiochene School with its Prevalent Literal and Historical Method” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, Vol. 1, Ed.: Magne Saebø, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Rupprecht, 1996), 559-560.

Aquinas also considered Chrysostom important because he believed him to be an authoritative resource on the Hebrew language<sup>27</sup> and Chrysostom offered him the insight that Genesis 1 included Semitic idioms and figures of speech.<sup>28</sup> Of the Antiochene tradition, Chrysostom asserted the primacy of the literal reading of the text and positioned his interpretation over against the interpretation of members of the Alexandrian tradition who often tended toward a more extensive use of symbolic or allegorical interpretation of Scripture. He too considered every word of the Scriptures to be potentially meaningful, no matter how apparently insignificant.<sup>29</sup>

Dionysius, usually named “Denis” by Aquinas and commonly named “Pseudo-Dionysius” today, was another important source within these Questions. Aquinas and most other medieval scholastics believed Dionysius was Dionysius the Areopagite, whose conversion is recorded in the New Testament.<sup>30</sup> For most medieval theologians this association with Paul lent to the works of Dionysius an authority which was only exceeded by Scripture.<sup>31</sup> Considered an intellectual who had conversed with an apostle, Dionysius would have been an important guide to understanding the Christian faith in light of classical philosophy. In actuality, Dionysius was a 6<sup>th</sup> century Christian Neo-Platonist. Any skeptical analysis of these claims about Dionysius’ identity would have to wait for Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus in the period of the Renaissance and the question would not be finally settled until 1895 when Koch and Stiglmayr conclusively demonstrated Dionysius’ dependence upon the fifth century philosopher Proclus.<sup>32</sup> Aquinas was a devoted reader of Dionysius, quoting and alluding to his works over 1700 times in his entire corpus<sup>33</sup> and composing a commentary on at least one of

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<sup>27</sup> I, 68, 4c, In this Aquinas was mistaken. It appears that while the Antiochene school frequently resorted to argument from linguistic *idiomata* which they rooted within the Hebrew text, but it also appears they had little or no knowledge of Hebrew. See Hidal, 553.

<sup>28</sup> I, 68, 1 ad2.

<sup>29</sup> Hidal, 560.

<sup>30</sup> Acts 17:34.

<sup>31</sup> Torrell, p. 127. See also Rorem, 15-20.

<sup>32</sup> Rorem, p. 17 While Peter Abelard had questioned the hitherto uncritically accepted confusion of Denis the Areopagite and Saint Denis of Paris, he did not question the validity of the claim that Dionysius of Acts 17 was in fact the author of the works attributed to him.

<sup>33</sup> Rorem, p. 37.

Dionysius' works. Aquinas quoted Dionysius within these questions eight times, seven of which are from *De divinis nominibus*<sup>34</sup> primarily book IV but also from book II. There is one citation from *De caelesti hierarchia*.<sup>35</sup> In terms of subject matter, five of these citations were cited in the discussion of light and its creation.

The presence and occasional absences of Dionysius within these Questions merit attention for another reason. As already noted, throughout Aquinas' career an intense debate raged throughout Western Europe over the role of the mendicant orders. We have already discussed<sup>36</sup> the fact that Aquinas' first regency in Paris had been forced on several occasions to enter into disputes over this issue. Dionysius wrote two important works on hierarchy and appears to have been the author who coined the term "hierarchy."<sup>37</sup> Within the *Commentary* Aquinas had dedicated an entire Article to examining the appropriateness of Dionysius' use of this term.<sup>38</sup> While Dionysius seems to have used the word to mean a "source of the sacred," by the medieval period his writings would be the foundation of a white-hot controversy which raged between the Pope and the mendicants on one side against the local, secular clergy on the other side.<sup>39</sup> A central issue was the propriety of the mendicants hearing confessions from wealthy Christians about to die and the gift customarily given to the one who heard these deathbed confessions. This state of affairs injected a natural economic urgency to the tension between mendicant and local clergy. The local clergy asserted that such confessions should be heard by the local church and its representative, and they in turn should benefit from the gift. The Pope and the mendicants naturally saw this very differently. Both sides would claim that Dionysius supported their claims to hierarchical authority and legitimacy in this regard.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> PG 3, 587-996.

<sup>35</sup> PG 3, 119-370.

<sup>36</sup> Chapter 1, 45-50.

<sup>37</sup> Rorem, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Commentary* II, 9, 1, 1, *Utrum definitio hierarchiae data a Dionysio, sit conveniens*.

<sup>39</sup> Lawrence, 109-112. Cf. Hinnebusch, *The Dominican Order: A Short History*, 19ff.

<sup>40</sup> Rorem, 32-33.

This dispute made Dionysius important to Aquinas who wrote multiple works in defense of the mendicants and one commentary<sup>41</sup> on Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus*. If Weisheipl's admittedly tentative dating is correct, he had completed this important work while composing the *prima pars* shortly prior to the composition of these QQ.<sup>42</sup> This interest in Dionysius may have driven Aquinas to read the Areopagite much more carefully. This careful attention to Dionysius may manifest itself in the text of these questions without necessarily being attributable to a singular passage; but rather in the entire enterprise. Dionysius was noteworthy for his Neo-Platonist discussion of "signs" and "images." While Dionysius is considered the master of an apophatic theology which denies the ultimate veracity of any positive statement about God, in a difficult and very densely written passage he also speaks of signs as creations of God which participate in the created procession (*exitus* in Aquinas' language) and return (*reditus*) to God.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in Dionysius' theology, while the signs always fall short of being a univocal truth about God, for the Christian they become the gracious and transcending vehicle for God to communicate genuine truth. Dionysius himself used this separation between the essence of God and the language we use to discuss God as an argument against making polemical denunciations and refutations, arguing instead for a profound humility.<sup>44</sup> In this appeal for epistemic humility, Dionysius was in agreement with Augustine's central message in his later commentaries and discussions of Genesis. This appeal for epistemic humility which parallels Augustine's own appeal for the same humility prompts the current reader to pay careful attention to I, 73, 2 and 3. In these two articles Aquinas broke off from the tension between Augustine and Basil and brought the reading of Augustine into a nuanced and subtle conversation with Dionysius.

This humility before the "signs" and "images" which recognizes that they cannot be Truth in the final sense, and yet convey Truth from the one who is Truth, seems to lie at the heart of what Aquinas attempted in the reverential reading under consideration here

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<sup>41</sup> *Exposito super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, (1265-1267).

<sup>42</sup> Weisheipl, 382.

<sup>43</sup>This would have obvious implications for Aquinas' *exitus* and *reditus* schema in the ST. See Denis' *Letter 9: to Titus, the hierarch*. PG 3, 1105D-1108A. Even Aquinas admitted that Denis wrote in "an obscure style." *In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus exposition*, Ed.: C. Pera (Turin: Marietti, 1950), 1-2.

<sup>44</sup> Rorem, 12. See also Hankey, 24-30.

and elsewhere. For Aquinas, the human language cannot bear the strain of addressing the divine.<sup>45</sup> This was particularly true in the discussion of Creation as it implied the creation of being, even the being of words and time, necessitating language which was at best an approximation of the truth.<sup>46</sup> The words which Augustine used and the words which Basil used might appear to us to be in a complete contradiction with one another. They may also appear to be in contradiction with the observations of natural philosophy. In truth, they might both contain substantive error. But, in Aquinas' estimation, that does not mean that they do not each convey Truth by the gracious action of the divine essence who seeks to communicate via those words.

The last significant patristic resource found within these questions is John Damascene, whose *De fide orthodoxa*<sup>47</sup> has been suggested to be the model on which Peter Lombard based his *Sentences*. A well-educated Syrian Christian of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, John wielded considerable influence in the medieval world, a role which he would continue to play through the Reformation and into the works of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic theologian, Schleiermacher.<sup>48</sup> John's presence in the monasteries of Palestine locates him within the fierce defense of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy over against what they perceived to be a compromising Monothelite theology which was being promoted by the Byzantine Emperors. This is important to one of the larger controversies addressed within the ST and to understanding Aquinas' use of John Damascene. In Part III of the ST, Aquinas wrestled with contemporary misunderstandings of Christology and would be unique in his extensive use of eastern conciliar documents and Orthodox theologians such as John Damascene.<sup>49</sup> A comparison of the Christological sections in *Commentary*, written early in his career, and the same material treated within ST indicates that his quotations of patristic theologians, including Greeks, increased six-fold in the ST. When compared with his peers, Aquinas himself is noteworthy in that he is the first mediaeval

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<sup>45</sup> ST I, 1, 9, Aquinas opened the ST with a discussion of the nature of theology and its ability to discuss God, arguing for the propriety and potency of metaphorical language.

<sup>46</sup> David, B. Burrell, C. S. C., *Aquinas: God and Action*, (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 135-137.

<sup>47</sup> PG 94, 790-1228.

<sup>48</sup> Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>49</sup> Weisheipl, 121-122.

theologian to make such use of the Greeks in the Latin West.<sup>50</sup> This facility with patristic theologians of the Greek traditions enabled Aquinas to contextualize the readily accessible material of the Damascene and read it more deeply.

*De fide orthodoxa* is cited 6 times within these Questions, according to the editor of the Blackfriar's edition. Because of the paucity of references, and the scattering of these throughout the work, it is impossible to discern a particular emphasis or pattern within the citations.

Other theologians also make brief appearances within these questions. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan to whom Augustine gives considerable credit for his conversion, is cited two times.<sup>51</sup> Origen, whose theological creativity was unmatched in the first centuries of the Christian movement, is cited three times,<sup>52</sup> always unfavorably. The Venerable Bede, an 8<sup>th</sup> century Latin author, is also cited twice. His relatively light treatment is in itself somewhat perplexing. Despite the obvious application to issues which Aquinas addressed within these questions, Aquinas does not cite Bede's commentary on Genesis<sup>53</sup> which was well known in the thirteenth century and notable for its allegorical interpretation in which Bede proposed, following on interpretation offered by Augustine, that the six days actually foreshadow later ages of considerable length.<sup>54</sup> This is odd because Aquinas is clearly aware of Bede's work. For a scholastic of Aquinas' caliber, who is seeking truth, the omission of such an important voice itself is noteworthy. But for a Scholastic who is preparing an exercise in the reading of patristic theologians, it may well be that Bede and his more allegorical interpretation

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<sup>50</sup> Torrell, 139.

<sup>51</sup> I, 66, 1c. and I, 67, 1sc. The editor also cites Ambrose no less than three times as the source behind the "others" that Aquinas cites, together with Basil and Bede.

<sup>52</sup> I, 65, 2c; I, 68, 2c; and I, 70, 3c.

<sup>53</sup> Calvin Kendall, *On Genesis*, (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 2008), p. 59. In his introduction to Bede's commentary Kendall posits that the work was well known in France in the medieval period, with no less than four medieval manuscripts extant in Paris and over half of the 22 extant medieval copies being located in France.

<sup>54</sup> Bede the Venerable, *Libri quatuor in principium Genesis* I, ii,3. CCL: 118A:35-39. See also Kendall's translation, 100-105, and Karla Pollmann, "'And Without Thorn the Rose'? Augustine's Interpretations of Genesis 3:18 and the Intellectual Tradition", in *Genesis and Christian Theology* Eds.: N. MacDonald, et al., (Grand Rapids, 2012), 223f.



would have presented a serious complication to his reflection upon the Augustinian position of an immediate action on God's part and Basil's assertion of a literal six day creative event. Aquinas elected to focus his attention on the differences between Augustine and the theological strand championed by Basil, probably because of the popularity of Basil's *Hexaemeron* sermons within the period. Again, this suggests that Aquinas was not engaged in a quest for truth in quite the same way as he was in *De potentia* or other similar treatments. A more likely explanation for the omission that perhaps regent master Aquinas is shaping the disputation within his classroom by limiting the discussion, bracketing out certain theologians whose ideas will create too much confusion in the minds of his incipient theology students and obfuscate his real goal for this section.

### 3. The Third Category of Sources: Non-Patristic Sources<sup>55</sup>

Aquinas lived at a pivotal moment for anyone engaged in scholarship. The recent recovery and translation of several Greek philosophical works, especially of Aristotle and his commentators, was in the process of transforming the world in which he lived. One cannot consider the sources within the ST without considering his use of Aristotle and the various commentators on Aristotle who had so revolutionized scholasticism in the decades prior to and during his career.<sup>56</sup> The editor of the Blackfriars' edition of the QQ credits Aristotle with 22 direct citations from seven different works, *De anima* (1), *De caelo* (6), *De generatione animalium* (1), *De generatione et corruptione* (3), *Metaphysica* (3), *Physica* (6), and *Topica* (2).<sup>57</sup> While he frequently placed Aristotle in the Objections, the more regular usage of Aristotle was as an insight leading to reconciliation between Scripture and a patristic source or between two patristic sources.

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<sup>55</sup> Jordan, 56, Aquinas is extremely careful in his treatment of this distinction. He does not call a Christian theologian a "philosopher" and likewise he does not refer to a non-Christian philosopher, even Aristotle, as a "father", his usual designation for the theologians of the Christian tradition.

<sup>56</sup> Baldner and Carrol, 14, suggest that Avicenna, one of these Islamic commentators on the works of Aristotle provided Aquinas with the philosophically critical insight that anything in which one might note a distinction between essence and existence had to an ontologically dependent being and could not be God.

<sup>57</sup> In discussing I, 66, 4ad5, Wallace, 50, note h, the editor attributes Aquinas's ideas about time to Aristotle but does not cite any reference, however in his appendix 4, 188-92 of vol X, he attributes this same idea to Aristotle's *Physica*. Wallace, 191.

A more interesting insight perhaps is that many of these references are grouped in a similar pattern as the Scriptural citations noted above. Question 70 accounts for seven of them, or one third of the references. The remaining references are all found within QQ 65 (2), 66 (5), 67 (4), 68 (4). Only two of these, QQ 65 and 68, coincide with the surge of Scriptural quotations noted and the Aristotelian citations are not in the same Articles as the Scriptural citations. It would seem that here the material itself provided the rationale for the grouping. Question 70 examined the fourth day, especially the creation of light and relies heavily upon Aristotelian statements about heavenly bodies for the Objections and then for clarifications in the Responses. QQ 65-67 deal with the creation and diversification of forms, questions for which there is a natural connection to Aristotelian material. In Q 68 Aquinas turned to Aristotle to describe the heavens themselves as the firmament is made and the waters below are separated from the waters above. Ancient and medieval theologians devoted a great deal of attention to the problems raised by this proposition. Indeed it would seem that Aquinas' preoccupation with such matters serves in some part to explain the seemingly embarrassed silence from most modern commentators on this section. QQ 69 and 73-74, in which there are no citations of Aristotle, deal with explicitly Christian theological topics about which Aristotle did not have as much to say, (e.g., God's rest on the seventh day.) QQ 71 and 72 are extremely brief, as noted above, it appears that Aquinas had said what needed to be said in question 70, but the hexaemeral form necessitated a question which addressed each of these days.

Of interest to the reader is Aquinas' usage of Aristotle in comparison with his usage of the patristic theologians. He went to some pains to point out that Aristotle was not to be accepted without critical examination. Most pointedly he even says that the reader has to be circumspect when reading Aristotle: "Still, we need not pay too much attention to the examples Aristotle gives in logical treatises, because he gives them as probabilities deriving from the opinions of others."<sup>58</sup> As closer analysis will demonstrate, comparison with Aquinas' treatment of the same material in the *Commentary* and *De potentia* suggests that the role of Aristotle is greatly diminished, even, at some points, excluded from the discussion in ST I, 65-74.

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<sup>58</sup> 67, 2, ad2, *Non tamen est multum curandum de eis exemplis quae Aristoteles inducit in libris logicalibus, quia inducit ea ut probabilia secundum opinionem aliorum.* Trans.: Wallace, 59.

In addition to Aristotle's works, Aquinas also makes use of several of the commentators on Aristotle; although, their roles are considerably smaller. Averroes and Avicenna show up once, and that in the response of the same article. Their respective ideas are listed in a catalogue of natural philosophers who are rejected. Avicenna is cited three times.<sup>59</sup> Twice Aquinas rejects his ideas, and once he is cited for a comment about the spontaneous generation of maggots caused by sunlight.<sup>60</sup> Of the non-Christian authors he cited other than Aristotle, Rabbi Moses Maimonides was used most often, four times from his *Guide to the perplexed*.<sup>61</sup> His role within the specific Responses to the Objections is notable. These responses often form Aquinas' attempts to reconcile the tensions he had set up between the Objections and the *sed contra*. He frequently provides critical resolution or, in one instance, a simplification to a problem.

But Maimonides and Avicenna are not only commentators on Aristotle, they are also Neo-Platonists. As he matured within his theology Aquinas gained access to the full texts and better translations of sources which in medieval theology had often been excised, cited, and strung together in works such as Lombard's *Sentences*.<sup>62</sup> This can even be detected in his treatment of Augustine. In philosophical terms Aquinas grew from the more simplistic reading of Aristotle which he had inherited from his mentor Albert the Great into a critical reader. In fact he has been cited as unique among medieval scholars for his ability to read and assimilate philosophical and theological sources while respecting their logical and semantic integrity.<sup>63</sup>

Undertaken toward the end of his career, the ST represents Aquinas in his mature reading of Aristotle and Augustine. As he matured, Aquinas tended to grow somewhat in his appreciation of Platonism, especially the theology of Augustine which is indebted

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<sup>59</sup> 65, 4, resp; 67, 3, ob3; and 71, ad1.

<sup>60</sup> 67, 3, ob3.

<sup>61</sup> 66, 2, ad5; 68, 1, ad1; 69, 1, ad5; and 74, 3, ad3.

<sup>62</sup> Wawrykow, "Thomas Aquinas" pp 829-30; although, Bruce Marshall, "Aquinas the Augustinian?" in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, Eds.: Dauphanais, Barry, and Levering, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2007), 48-50, disputes this notion.

<sup>63</sup> David B. Burrell C.S.C. "Analogy, Creation, and Theological Language" in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas* Eds.: Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow, (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 77.

to Platonism. It must also be observed, as Torrell notes in his treatment of the neo-platonic influences on Aquinas, Aristotle was a Platonist himself.<sup>64</sup>

Plato is also cited. There are four direct citations to the *Timaeus* within these questions.<sup>65</sup> Two of those, however, the editor considers to be reliant more upon the ideas of Calcidius, a fourth-century commentator on Plato whose work was known through Boethius. In addition, the editor sees Platonism and Neo-Platonism in at least two of the “Some philosophers” references.<sup>66</sup>

In considering the philosophers, the analysis of the sources in this section of the ST suggests that they are utilized in a supportive role. Their most positive use is in the support of one position or another or in which they clarify what a theologian has said.<sup>67</sup> But this is infrequent. The most common utilization of the philosophers in these questions is to create the intellectual tension which is the ST’s modus.<sup>68</sup> These articles are disputations in miniature. The philosophers are playing a supportive role with the structure of the articles, but not in the development of content. Regularly they posit the Objections against which the *sed contra*, quite often the text of Genesis itself, will push. The examination of this tension will give theologians an opportunity to speak, but not necessarily to provide answers.<sup>69</sup> Often the philosophers are held up as proposing something different than the theologians, but which upon further examination is seen to be a matter of the definition of words or a distinction without a genuine difference.

The third use of the philosophers evidenced within these questions is in a catalogue of opinions. This occurs three times in the text and accounts for most of the actual citations

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<sup>64</sup> Torrell, p. 128.

<sup>65</sup> I, 66, 1ad4; I, 66, 2c; I, 68, 1c; and I, 70, 3c.

<sup>66</sup> I, 65 3c and I, 65, 4c.

<sup>67</sup> See I, 74, 1, in which Aristotle is brought out to support the tripartite actions which Augustine sees in the Creation as reflective of the Trinity. Augustine concurs that such triplets are a perfect form.

<sup>68</sup> See I, 68, 4, ob2 or I, 70, 2, ob4.

<sup>69</sup> See I, 68, 4c and ad2 which respond to the objection cited immediately above. The answer to Aristotle’s statement is not really the issue and is dealt with rather summarily, it would seem the real goal is the discussion which ensues and which gives Basil, Chrysostom, and Augustine occasion to present their various views on the empyrean heaven.

of philosophers.<sup>70</sup> On each of these three occasions, a number of philosophical opinions are listed and critically examined as they pertain to the question at hand. But the answers are then woven into the various and competing answers given by the theologians. Thus the responses to the various objections raised begin with statements such as: “In this Augustine follows the opinion of Plato, who did not hold for a fifth essence.”<sup>71</sup> It seems that by simply positing the disagreements within the philosophical community, Aquinas sought to explain the differences between the theologians. Again, however, the theologians are permitted to disagree with each other as they subscribe to various philosophical tenets.

#### 4. Conclusions

Within QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* of the ST, Aquinas organized resources into a clear hierarchy, the same hierarchy which is generally observed throughout the ST. In the first position stood Scripture itself. This was, for Aquinas, the font of theology.<sup>72</sup> A wider reading within the ST and a detailed reading of these QQ suggests that this was no platitude for Aquinas, but seemed to have been a tenet genuinely held and embodied within his theological works. His voluminous writings on Scripture and regular return to the text for argumentation purposes suggest that he accorded it this position. Beneath Scripture, in the second place are the theologians, particularly those who come from antiquity and whose ideas have stood the test of some time. While they do not always agree with one another, Aquinas held these interpreters of biblical text to be valuable guides for understanding. In the third place and in service to understanding both the text of Scripture and the theologians are the philosophers. It is especially interesting to notice that Aquinas never calls a Christian theologian a “philosopher.”<sup>73</sup> He occasionally noted the dependence of even Augustine on certain philosophical ideas, but Augustine remained for Aquinas a theologian, not a philosopher. He perceives a distinct, essential difference between the two and places them into a hierarchy of

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<sup>70</sup> See the responses of I, 65, 4; I, 66, 2; and I, 68, 1. I, 70, 3 might be considered a miniature version of a catalogue, noting Anaxagoras and the Platonists, but quickly shifting to theologians.

<sup>71</sup> I, 66, 2, ad1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Augustinus sequitur in hoc opinionem Platonis, non ponentis quintam essentiam*. Trans.: Wallace, 39.

<sup>72</sup> Wawrykow, *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas*, 137.

<sup>73</sup> Jordan, 55.

authority which was clearly demarcated both by how he utilized these resources and within his taxonomy.

It should be noted, however, that the philosophers do not simply bow to the authority of the theologians and the theologians to Scripture. The interplay between these three sources is dynamic and complex. Quite often the insights of the philosophers are used for a critical examination of what the theologians have said, and both may be put into service to clarify the text of Scripture. By examining the words of a theologian such as Augustine, Chrysostom or John Damascene in light of Aristotelian language and philosophical constructs, Aquinas often sought to shed light and bring clarity to their words. The simplistic or obvious reading of the text or a theologian may not be the best reading. An apparent conflict between biblical text and theologian or between common sense and a theologian may be best resolved by the insights of a philosopher.

This dynamic interplay of authorities is not at all unique to these QQ of the ST, but is evident throughout the *Summa theologiae*. What does appear unusual, perhaps unique, to these questions, however, is Aquinas' reserve in bringing to bear the higher authority of Scripture to the questions addressed in the various articles. While the text of Genesis permeates the text, the rest of the Scriptural witness is singularly silent, even when clear passages exist, upon which Aquinas has elsewhere commented. The most reasonable explanation for this silence is that Aquinas was not interested in settling debate or answering questions, but was engaged in another goal which I believe to be related to the pedagogical goal stated in the introduction to the *prima pars*.

The effect of this careful management of sources was to create an open field of inquiry about a foundational doctrine of Christianity: Creation. The *incipientes* who were taught from this text would have found no answers within these pages, but a reverential reading of two giant figures of the Christian tradition, Basil and Augustine, as they wrestled with the text of Genesis 1. With the exception of four Articles in which the answers were truly important for the entire project of the ST, the authority of these two theologians and the interpretational strands which they championed were left to stand. Scriptural authority would not be employed to take either side. The secondary authority of the philosophers played a supporting role but was not the primary focus. The text of Genesis 1, which might have been expected to be the authority, was the theological data

which they interpreted and evaluated, it did not answer the questions but its ambiguities were the occasion for the questions which the authorities posed and sought to answer.

## Chapter 4: The Pedagogical Arc within QQ 65-74

### 1. Recapitulation of Arguments for a Pedagogical Goal

Earlier chapters of this thesis have demonstrated that Aquinas' treatment of hexaemeral material in QQ 65-74 does not fit neatly into either a philosophical or theological genre. Those who attempt to read this section as such, find it a disappointment.<sup>1</sup> One who comes to these ten QQ looking for conclusive answers to metaphysical and theological questions about the Creation will for the most part find none herein. Aquinas' use of resources and his refusal to reach a conclusion have led us to assert that Aquinas was not here engaged in writing toward the goal of making a philosophical or theological point which furthered what he had already posited within the ST. We have contended that two primary rationales best accommodate the treatment of Genesis 1 within these ten QQ. In chapter 2 we posited that the treatment of Augustine would more reasonably accommodate a polemical goal in the context of an effort to use Augustine as an authority to end speculative exploration of theology. That contention regarding the polemical goal, however, was made clear by reading ST I, 65-74 in light of its other intended purpose, the inculcation of a theological *habitus* within a body of student readers and auditors.

As we suggested in chapter 1, these questions most likely were written for a group of students who were being trained themselves to educate the novice friars (*incipientes*) streaming into the Dominican Order in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Noting the anomalous material within these ten QQ, anomalous in terms of genre, structure, and sophistication of content, we posited that these ten QQ serve to engage the one charged with educating *incipientes* with an eye toward inculcating a particular theological method or *habitus*. The reader who internalized this section of the ST approached the basic data of the theological discipline, Scripture and especially the patristic authorities whose writings have come to be accepted by the Christian community, in a reverential, faithful, and intellectually rigorous manner.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wallace, *Intr.* xx-xxii.

<sup>2</sup> In this, Aquinas may not have been innovative. Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 28, notes that Abelard may have had the same intent for *Sic et non* a century before Aquinas wrote.



The future *lectores* whom Aquinas directly taught and their students, *incipientes*, in the priories, as we have also asserted, would have been in particular need of such training. The audiences to whom the friars preached often included local clergy who were looking for any excuse to have these intruding Dominicans excluded from their parishes and from access to wealthy donors<sup>3</sup>. More charitably understood, these clerics may have honestly sought to protect their flocks from what they perceived to be a heresy. No matter the motive, these hostile auditors were listening for error. In the presence of such an audience, the preacher needed to exercise great care in the handling of sacred text and patristic theologians. While local parish priests had little or no training in writing and preaching, Dominicans were to receive in their priory a full year of theological education prior to being licensed to preach.<sup>4</sup> This careful attention to the audience was a well-established element of medieval theological education. Peter Lombard himself was noted for carefully couching his formulations of Christology and making important distinctions between his audiences, calling his theologically trained students “safe ears” which enabled him to use certain more daring formulations.<sup>5</sup>

If this hypothesis for the reading of Aquinas’ section on the hexaemeron is correct, the reader could reasonably expect that these ten QQ should exhibit some pedagogical structures. This chapter examines QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars* looking for such structure. A pedagogical document should evidence certain structures and content elements. The reader should be asked to make some discernible progress in either a skill or a body of knowledge. The material in its complexity should give evidence some synthesis as it moves from simple to more complex. Elements which are introduced should be subsequently integrated into the discussion and students should have opportunity to practice and test their skills. Initially the instructor should distill for the student clear principles, apply them simply to clear examples which the student can easily grasp. The student should not be overwhelmed by too much information or with exercises which are too complex. As the student’s skills increase, the material should continue to grow more challenging and complex.

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<sup>3</sup> Lawrence, 152-154.

<sup>4</sup> Boyle, 4, and Lawrence, 84-88.

<sup>5</sup> Rosemann, 40-41.

Aquinas had already suggested such goals for the entire work, but such structures have been difficult to ascertain in earlier elements of the ST. Our intention within the first section of this chapter is to demonstrate the presence of pedagogical structures within these QQ. In the subsequent section of this chapter we analyze in some detail Aquinas' use of patristic resources, demonstrating through comparative analysis that he has manipulated resources for pedagogical aims. In the final element of this chapter we note how this pedagogical goal of the document, particularly the epistemic humility, would benefit the reader who continued to read in the ST.

## 2. A Patristic Primer

Research has led the author of this thesis to conclude that the best presupposition to adopt when reading this section of the ST is that it is a primer or handbook for the reverential reading of patristic sources. The term "reverential reading" (*exponere reverenter*) first appeared in Aquinas' written works shortly before he undertook the writing of the ST. In 1263 Aquinas had been called upon to render an expert opinion for Pope Urban VI about certain documents which were put forward as part of ongoing conversations with the Patriarch of Constantinople. Aquinas' response was delivered to the pope in a document entitled *Contra errores Graecorum*. While the actual documents to which he was responding have largely been proven to be forgeries, within his introduction to this document the reader gains significant insight into Aquinas' method for reading patristic authorities. He argued for what he termed a reverential reading (*exponere reverenter*). This reading is marked by a willingness to contextualize the works of ancient authors charitably, most importantly not demanding of them the theological or philosophical precision which was only later achieved through councils and the development of theological discourse. This particular facet of Thomistic study has been thoroughly explored elsewhere and this thesis is indebted to the insights expounded elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Weisheipl, 168-171, discusses the historical background to *Contra errores Graecorum*. M.-D. Chenu's *Toward Understanding Aquinas* provides the most fulsome treatment of a reverential reading but several have subsequently treated it, including Walter H. Principe, C. S. B. "Thomas Aquinas' Principles for Interpretation of Patristic Texts" in *Studies in Medieval Culture*, Vol VIII & IX edited by John Sommerfeld and E. Roxanne Elder, Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute of Western Michigan University, 1976. For a more recent (2003) but somewhat derivative treatment of this issue consider Mark Jordan's previously cited *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After His Readers*.

While Aquinas himself makes no specific pedagogical identification or claim for this section of the ST, it must also be admitted that he makes no such claims for any section within the ST. The causes of the ST have been debated for some time and a scholarly consensus about Aquinas' motives for composing the ST has proven to be elusive. At the same time, readers of Aquinas' ST, as with any work, must engage the text by constructing some such purpose in the absence of any stated goal.

This assertion of a pedagogical thrust for these QQ is not intended to be entirely exclusive of other potential readings of this material. At the same time the reader of the ST who is alerted to this possible rationale for the *prima pars* and this section in particular will notice a pattern of development and synthesis within these QQ. This pattern becomes much clearer when careful comparative analysis is applied to Aquinas' use of authoritative sources. This comparative analysis will be applied both internally to the ten QQ themselves and externally as Aquinas treats identical subjects in other works. The internal comparative analysis will yield the conclusion that Aquinas' treatment of the authoritative sources grows increasingly complex as the ten questions progress. The comparison with his other works will yield the conclusion that Aquinas is indeed not writing to reach theological or philosophical conclusions, but has written this document to create a circumscribed arena for an intellectual debate to take place, a debate which will hone important skills necessary for the friar in the Order of Preachers.

In order to create this medieval version of a virtual classroom, Aquinas excluded complicating factors, creating an artificially discrete debate between two interpretational strands. He was aware of a potent third strand of interpretation frequently applied to Genesis 1, the allegorical interpretation, but Augustine's more allegorical writing on the subject of Creation in *Confessions* and the allegorical commentary on Genesis by Bede were largely excluded even though both were known to Aquinas. By such an exclusion of complicating interpretational strands, Aquinas created the arena for *incipientes* to focus on the skills of reverential reading.

In order to see better how this works out within these ten QQ, the reader may benefit from a brief outline and recapitulation of the 29 Articles contained therein. As noted in the preceding chapter, when Aquinas' use of extra-Genesis Scriptural sources is considered there is reason to bracket out four articles. Three of these articles deal with theological issues which appear to have been important to Aquinas and can arguably be tied to larger themes and purposes of the entire work. Within these bracketed Articles

the use of authoritative sources changes, moving up the hierarchy of authority. What is more, unlike the other Articles within the section, three of these four Articles reach definitive conclusions and the fourth and last Article of the entire section has a peculiar structure. I have indicated with boldface type the four articles which make extensive use of extra-Genesis Scriptural citation and which touch on subjects pivotal to the entire work and thus should be bracketed out of this pedagogical trajectory.

#### Q 65 Creation of the material universe

##### **Article 1: Do Material Creatures come from God – Yes!**

Article 2: Patristic theologians can err and must be examined in light of the principles of Scripture and Reason. Origen's idea that the physical Creation was a punishment for spiritual beings was simply wrong because it violated a principle of simple reason.

Article 3: Patristic theologians can be misunderstood easily; hence, one must read them reverentially, taking into account what one knows to be the truth. Augustine's words on the wisdom of the Creator might lead one to misunderstand him.

Article 4: Patristic theologians can sometimes appear to contradict one another. Careful reading of these theologians will conclude that the disagreement is often resolvable. Boethius and Augustine seem to be in disagreement, but are not when one considers them in light of later philosophical development.

#### Q 66 Creation related to diversification

Article 1: Patristic theologians sometimes simply do disagree – Basil and Augustine on Creation for instance – that disagreement, however, may not always be clearly settled. They might both be read as faithful interpretations of the sacred text.

Article 2: Patristic theologians must be read within their own conceptual worlds. Augustine was a Platonist and thus held certain ideas which Aquinas contested, but what he says must be understood as being said by someone who subscribed to a particular philosophical system.

Article 3: Patristic theologians often have an overlapping technical vocabulary which may reflect their varying concepts of reality. Thus one needs to

understand, for example, that Augustine followed Porphyry in this matter when he used certain terms.

Article 4: Patristic theologians, however, sometimes cannot be reconciled through philosophical argument. Their disagreement in a fundamental doctrine suggests an attitude of epistemic humility before the text and their theology. Augustine posited a twofold initial creation of primary physical being and angelic being, exclusive of time. Other theologians, however, insist on a four-fold initial creation of physical being, angelic being, heavenly being, and time. Both interpretational strands have made strong arguments.

#### Q 67 The work of differentiation

Article 1: A lesson in semantics: words sometimes mean different things. One must ask what a patristic theologian means by a term such as “light.” Augustine says it is a spiritual reality, Ambrose said it is a metaphor.

Article 2: But words are not devoid of meaning nor is any meaning possible for a word. Some meanings for words must be rejected as physically impossible or inherently contradictory. Augustine, Aristotle, and Dionysius suggest that Light is a physical body, but philosophically this is impossible.

#### **Article 3: Is light a quality? What is a quality in precise terms?**

Article 4: Augustine and Basil meant very different things by the word “light” which was mentioned on the first day of Creation. Both of them are possible, however, when judged by the criteria of Article 2.

#### Q 68 The second day

Article 1: The simple fact of being a faithful interpreter of Scripture does not allow the patristic theologian to transcend reason or the reasonable world. In response to a contrived objection, the creation of the firmament on the second day is discussed under Augustine’s famous dictum that one not hold to a theological principle so resolutely that it forces one to retain it in the face of incontrovertible philosophical evidence.

Article 2: Yet, the faithful reading of the Scriptural text will also assert what the text demands the faithful reader assert. In the case of Genesis’ assertion about the second day, there are waters above. How, exactly, the various authors

understood those waters will vary, but they will all assert the waters above contrary to clear observation and reasonable logic.

Article 3: The principle of condescension is introduced. The faith of the author is tied inexorably with the faith of the audience. Moses does not make a philosophical argument here, but seeks the faithful response of his audience. Hence one cannot expect philosophical precision from his words. Moses' audience would not have understood such philosophical precision and the purpose of Scripture would have been thwarted.

**Article 4: Is there only one heaven?**

Q 69 The Third Day

Article 1: There is value to the perceived tension between authorities. The tension of the two interpretational strands of Augustine and Basil may even serve to enhance the interpretational task as Basil's interpretation requires considerable effort in order to reconcile with philosophical truths and theology and this effort is fruitful.

Article 2: On the other hand, Augustine's idea also provides critical insights into the possible nature of reality – *rationes seminales*.

QQ 70-72 The fourth through sixth days

Article 1: Despite the differences among the patristic theologians, the reverential reading also recognizes a fundamental unity. In many things the patristic theologians agree and they help the reader understand the philosophers.

Article 2: Even Moses needs to be read reverentially – the needs of his audience forced him into using terms which were not precise. The principle of condescension is further explored

Article 3: Sometimes, when the patristic theologians disagree on one point, one must remember the essential unity of Article 1 and the condescension of Article 2 and thus simply force the theologian into orthodoxy through an appeal to a principle of equivocation.

QQ 71 and 72:<sup>7</sup> A demonstration of the two readings and the richness of allowing both interpretational strands to exist side by side.

Q 73 The seventh Day

**Article 1: The completion of divine works –*Reditus***

Article 2: Epistemic humility, the fact that God “rested” is difficult to understand. Dionysius and Augustine can help, but Augustine is not the ultimate authority. He too needs to be read with an appropriate humility.

Article 3: Epistemic humility demonstrated: God’s rest is simply what it is, not a tool in the hands of those who would make mincing arguments of it today. Dionysius’ parsing of etymologies needs to be read with a measure of good sense.

Q 74 All Seven Days Taken together.

Article 1: Both interpretational strands re-addressed and demonstrated to be possible interpretations of Genesis 1.

Article 2: Intellectual space – two significant theologians can assert the same the thing, namely the Creation, and disagree profoundly on its details. There is room for such disagreement.

**Article 3: Exercises in Reverential Reading**

In considering the recapitulation and the recasting of these QQ which follows, the reader should keep in mind the following observations:

1. There was progression from simple to more complex. The initial treatment of the patristic authors was quite elementary and reflects the basic material of medieval scholasticism. The later treatment, such as that of Augustine in light of Dionysian theology in Q 73, 2 and 3, was quite sophisticated. Aquinas asked his reader to develop and apply critical reading and thinking skills while progressing through this section.
2. The development is synthetic. Elements which were introduced early in the discussion are then used appropriately in Articles which follow. For instance, the

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<sup>7</sup> Note that these articles were treated in only one article and hence are treated with Q 70

principle of condescension which first appeared in I, 66, 1, was used repeatedly and with greater sophistication in subsequent Articles.

3. The Articles within the section were frequently themselves in a dialogue with one another. Consider 67, 1 and 2 in which the conclusions reached stand in a tension with one another.
4. The oscillation between the introduction of concepts and the demonstration of those same concepts is a time honored pedagogical technique. (Aquinas was always a teacher.)
5. The lack of resolution of the central question of whether this was a six calendar day Creation or an instantaneous Creation seemed designed to foster conversation among the readers, creating questions rather than answering them.

Another interesting pedagogical feature which is not discernible in the outline form is the presence of simple or obvious opportunities for a student to challenge a point within the Articles. Normally Aquinas is very careful when establishing the suppositions of an argument. While the modern reader often finds the science of medieval texts to be risible, Aquinas is noted for exercising considerable care in this regard.<sup>8</sup> In I, 73, 3ob2, however, Aquinas argued a theological premise upon the rather dubious foundation of the etymology of a Latin word. This is especially interesting in that he had already addressed within these QQ the fact that Genesis 1 had been written in Hebrew and Greek and the reader needed to take these languages into account in the interpretive act.<sup>9</sup> He does not elsewhere indulge in this sort of etymological exercise within these QQ. In the Response to the Objection Aquinas let the theology stand for it was congruent with what he asserted, but he seemed to be inviting a challenge from a student based on the fact that this Latin etymology may not apply to what the Hebrew or Greek text of Genesis 1 or the words of Dionysius which were written in Greek.

The internal analysis of these ten QQ is insufficient, however, to be conclusive. The findings are admittedly somewhat subjective and the brevity of this section may suggest to the reader that this is too narrow of a sampling of Aquinas' work to make such a claim. The vagaries of subject matter and resources may also account for what I have

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<sup>8</sup> Wallace, *Intr.* xx-xxii.

<sup>9</sup> I, 68, 4c.



labeled as synthesis and progression with the text. Another perfectly plausible explanation for this material could be that Aquinas was intending a more theological or philosophical treatise, but that he simply failed to execute very well. This seems to be the answer to which many of Aquinas modern readers subscribe.<sup>10</sup>

These objections, while at this point plausible, become untenable when one compares these ten QQ to other works of Aquinas in which he addressed the same materials. This thesis directs your attention to this second analysis.

### 3. A comparative analysis of Aquinas' various treatments of the primary question of QQ 65-74

The sense that ST I, 65-74 is a pedagogical and not a theological exercise is strengthened when one compares QQ 65-74 to Aquinas' treatments of the primary questions of this section in his other works, both earlier and those written at approximately the same time. Aquinas addressed the days of Genesis 1 and particularly whether these were calendar days or a logical progression in two significant prior works: *Commentary II*, 12-15 and *De potentia II-IV*. Aquinas wrote the *Commentary* at the beginning of his career<sup>11</sup> and it functioned as the thesis by which he entered the rank of Master of Theology. This was the regular purpose for such commentaries in that period.<sup>12</sup> The disputations were conducted in Rome, just prior to writing the *prima pars* of the ST.<sup>13</sup> Many have noted the literary and conceptual connections between these elements of *Commentary* and of *De potentia* and the contents of ST I.<sup>14</sup>

A third work also needs attention in this comparison, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG).<sup>15</sup> But here the reader engaged in comparing the texts notes an absence. The

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<sup>10</sup> See discussion in Introduction, 8-17.

<sup>11</sup> Weisheipl, 358 dates this 1252-6 when Aquinas lectured on the *Sentences* and wrote this document. There is some indication that he may have edited sections of in subsequent years, but not apparently this section.

<sup>12</sup> Torrell, 40-41.

<sup>13</sup> Weisheipl dates *De potentia* to 1265-6 and the first portions of ST I to 1266. He completed the *Prima Pars* prior to his departure for Paris, likely in 1268. We know that Q 79 must have been composed sometime after Nov 22, 1267 as he quotes a translation of Aristotle which was published on that date. Weisheipl, 360-3.

<sup>14</sup> Torrell, 161-2.

<sup>15</sup> Weisheipl, 359-360, dates the composition of SCG to 1259-64.

entire second book of the SCG is given over to the questions of Creation. None of the primary issues which are addressed in ST I, 65-74 are found there. The SCG's premise of presenting Christian theology without an appeal to revelation allows the reader to see just which elements of theology Aquinas thought were evident and accessible to reason alone, and which elements required knowledge only attainable by a human being through revelation. Since the answers to the question at hand depend upon both philosophical and theological objections to the creation of unformed matter, the fact that the SCG does not address these questions provides critical insight into Aquinas' understanding of the nature of these QQ. By not addressing these questions in the SCG, Aquinas bracketed this entire discussion within the field of Scriptural interpretation. While every discussion was a philosophical discussion for Aquinas, he understood that the discussion of the days of Creation belonged properly to the realm of interpretation and exegesis. The understanding of the days of Creation was not accessible through unaided human reason. The questions which are addressed in QQ 65-74 of the ST involve what a theologian would commonly call a "mystery," a theological truth which is accessible to reasonable exploration, but cannot ever be fully comprehended. This reasonable exploration is only possible through divine revelation. Like Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, et al., Aquinas apparently thought that human rational capability would not arrive at these divine truths or even ask these questions. As a result, they demanded epistemic humility of the theologian.

Two works also need to be mentioned here because they are not included in the comparison for disparate reasons. Aquinas also treated the question of Creation in QQ 44-49 of the *prima pars* of the ST. Herein he was mostly interested in the creative acts as an expression of the *exitus*, but in 44, 2 he catalogued and evaluated philosophical opinions regarding the relationship between form and matter. He does not directly address the subject of the six days here, but he does lay out what were Aquinas' core philosophical objections which make a belief in a temporal six days problematic. A second work which would have been important had it been completed was Aquinas' aborted second commentary on the *Sentences*. Lost for many years, it has been recently rediscovered.<sup>16</sup> Before embarking on the ST, Aquinas had initially attempted a new

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<sup>16</sup> *Lectura romana in primum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*. Usually referred to as the *Lectura Romana*. The critical edition was published in 2006, edited by Leonard E. Boyle OP and John F. Boyle.

commentary on the *Sentences*, but abandoned this project before he arrived at these questions. Thus it is not able to serve as a point of comparison.

At the outset of this comparison, one should make note of a matter of continuity within Aquinas' thought. Peter Lombard in the *Sentences* had definitively taken the side of that interpretive strand for which Basil stood within this discussion, suggesting that the understanding of Genesis 1 which read the days as calendar days in which successive creative acts took place made more sense and had stronger support within the Christian tradition.<sup>17</sup> He noted Augustine's position, and did not positively refute it, but simply asserted the other interpretational strand made better sense to him, was easier to teach to people, and had stronger support. As early as his *Commentary* Aquinas had demurred.

“This (*interpretation of Ambrose, Basil, et. al*) is the more common opinion and superficially seems more consonant with the text, but the first (*interpretation of Augustine*) is more reasonable and better protects sacred Scripture from the derision of infidels, which Augustine teaches in his literal interpretation of Genesis that Scripture be explained in such a way that the infidel cannot mock it; and this opinion is more pleasing to me; nevertheless, the arguments sustaining both will be responded to.”<sup>18</sup>

Aquinas, contra the Lombard's conclusion, clearly favored Augustine, but he insisted that the interpretation of Basil and Ambrose and others is perhaps, on a superficial level, more consonant with the text of Scripture and thus was also interpreted. We are not able to ascertain what he said in this regard in *De potentia* due to an unfortunate textual lacuna. The text breaks off in the middle of the *corpus* of question IV, article 2, which addressed the very question of whether the Creation happened in stages or immediately.<sup>19</sup> While the objections and first portion of the Article place him on a

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<sup>17</sup> *Sentences*, II, 2, 1, 3. *Quam sententiam Gregorius, Hieronymus, Beda aliique plures commendant ac praeferunt, quae etiam Scripturae Genesis, unde prima huius rei cognitio ad nos manavit, magis congruere videtur.* See also the discussion in Rosemann, 103-105

<sup>18</sup> *Commentary* II, 12, 2c, *et haec quidem positio est communior, et magis consona videtur litterae quantum ad superficiem; sed prior est rationabilior, et magis ab irrisione infidelium sacram Scripturam defendens: quod valde observandum docet Augustinus super Genes. ad Litt., libro 1, cap. 19, ut sic Scripturae exponantur, quod ab infidelibus non irrideantur; et haec opinio plus mihi placet; tamen utramque sustinendo, ad omnia argumenta respondendum est.*

<sup>19</sup> *De potentia* IV, 2, *utrum materiae formatio tota simul fuerit, an successive.*

trajectory to come to a similar conclusion as both the ST and *Commentary*, the lack of material renders such a comparison purely speculative.<sup>20</sup>

While this lacuna means one cannot use these documents to compare adequately the central assertion of QQ 65-74 of the ST, one can inquire into the methodology of his treatment of the individual components. One is able to consider how Aquinas answered and approached the various sub-questions, and, more importantly, whether he answered them. It has been our contention that in other places Aquinas did answer these questions and in so doing used all the tools of medieval theology to arrive at answers which he believed best reflected what he would have called “Truth.” In ST I, 65-74, however, we demonstrate that he deliberately did not answer these sorts of questions. Aquinas used this ambiguity to create a virtual classroom within these QQ and Articles in which nascent theologians were given a scope and field to develop critical skills. He deliberately limited the tools of theology, particularly the complexity of the patristic resources, lest he overwhelm these *incipientes*. This comparison is especially valid because throughout the treatments of certain points, the same citations are repeated, but Aquinas’ use of these quotations and citations underwent considerable mutation in form and role. Thus, even when considering his treatment of identical patristic citations within multiple works, his use of the same theological data suggests that he is seeking a different goal in his treatment within the ST.

For the purposes of this analysis, we propose to consider Aquinas’ treatment of one problem which vexed theologians and philosophers of the medieval period: the assertion in the text of Genesis 1 that on the second day God had placed waters above the heavens. He dealt with this question within this section of the ST in 1, 68, 2 and 3. He likewise specifically deals with the question in the *Commentary on the Sentences* II, IV, 1-5. In *De potentia* he wrestled with this issue in IV, 1ob1-7 and the corresponding

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<sup>20</sup> In the fifteenth century Dominican Vincent of Castronovo attempted to repair this lacuna and completed the *corpus* along with responses to all the objections. His reading of Aquinas’ thought clearly articulated openness to either interpretation but favored Augustine’s approach: *Harum igitur expositionum prima, scilicet Augustini, est subtilior, magis ab irrisione infidelium Scripturam defendens; secunda vero, scilicet De De potentia IV, 2 continuo, co, aliorum sanctorum, est planior, et magis verbis litterae quantum ad superficiem consona. Quia tamen neutra earum a veritate fidei discordat, et utrumque sensum circumstantia litterae patitur, ideo, ut neutri harum expositionum praeiudicetur, utramque opinionem sustinentes utriusque rationibus respondendum est.*

responses IV, 1ad1-7. Of particular interest to this study will be Aquinas' repeated use of this quote of Augustine from his literal commentary on Genesis:

“In whatever form, however, waters may be there, and of whatever kind, let us have no doubts at all that that is where they are; the authority of this Scripture, surely, overrides anything that human ingenuity is capable of thinking up.”<sup>21</sup>

Aquinas addressed the question of the waters above first within the pages of the *Commentary* in Book II, Distinction 14, Question 1, Article 1, under the title: Whether there are waters above the heavens.<sup>22</sup> Lombard's *Sentences* had focused on an apparent tension inside Augustine's own writings regarding the nature of these waters and an apparent conflict between Augustine and the commentary on Genesis written by Bede who had taken a much more spiritual, metaphorical approach, which, however, also went back to Augustine. As with many of the commentators on the *Sentences* Aquinas significantly expanded the discussion and focused his writing upon philosophical and theological challenges which were only tangential to the material in Peter Lombard's text or which must be imposed and imported to the discussion.<sup>23</sup>

The quote from Augustine which was noted above serves as the substance of the *Commentary's* first Objection of this Article. The rest of the objections argue for the presence of water above the firmament: The natural ordering of the human body in Objection 2 suggests that we regularly encounter physical things in what appear to be illogical arrangements. The established observation that Saturn moves very rapidly and must somehow be cooled and thus requires water forms Objection 3. The *sed contra* is entirely comprised of philosophical, scientific arguments from Aristotle which point to the impossibility of the waters above. Within the *corpus* Aquinas arrived at a resolution of the philosophical tension with some ease. The only real Objection of substance is the one raised by Augustine. The notion of water above the heavens is simply implausible for Aquinas. It cannot be the same elemental water which we observe in this world

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<sup>21</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* II, 5, 9, *Quoquo modo autem et qualeslibet aquae ibi sint, esse eas ibi minime dubitemus: maior est quippe scripturae huius auctoritas, quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas.*

<sup>22</sup> *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1 *Utrum aquae sint super caelos.*

<sup>23</sup> Rosemann, 195-98, suggests that this is the real genius of Lombard's text and one of the contributing reasons for its success in the medieval period. The ambiguity and lacunae in the text were just large enough for subsequent commentators and theologians to develop their own systems of thought.

below. The answer at which he arrived is that Scripture used an equivocation or condescension here, describing the otherwise unknown fifth essence with an element which would have been comprehensible to the audience.<sup>24</sup> He made this even clearer in his Response to the first Objection after the *corpus*. Augustine was correct, but Aquinas argued that Scripture often resorts to metaphorical speech which is unintelligible when read in a plain or superficially literal sense.<sup>25</sup>

For the purposes of this comparison, it should be noted that Aquinas has a definitive, correct answer. While there is some conditional phrasing of the conclusions, it is “better” to call this the fifth essence. He was aware that not everyone agrees, but he did not place the alternative views on the same footing in the discussion. For Aquinas these ideas are quite problematic philosophically. Augustine is allowed to stand, but only when the text is read metaphorically. The superficial literal readings are nonsensical for Aquinas (*intelligi non valent*).

More than a decade later, in *De potentia* IV, 1, Aquinas again dealt directly with the question of Augustine’s approach to the second day and the approach of other theologians in two very long articles in which he asked whether the creation of formless matter preceded in duration the creation of all things and whether matter was given form all at once or in stages.<sup>26</sup> The reader who compares this disputation to the material within ST I, 65-74 and the *Commentary* cannot but notice the degree to which the questions in *De potentia* are deeper, and the resources are more complex. This is a more mature and capable theologian and philosopher at work than the young man who wrote his *Commentary*. It should be remembered that the disputations which are recorded in *De potentia* were held immediately prior to the ST and seem to have served in many cases as a sort of conceptual laboratory for ideas which would appear in the ST. The

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<sup>24</sup> *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1c *Sed tamen melius possumus dicere, quod intelligatur de firmamento quod est caelum sidereum, supra quod sunt aquae, non quidem de natura hujus aquae quae apud nos est, sed de natura quintae essentiae, habentes similitudinem cum hac aqua, ratione cujus nomen aquae Scriptura eis attribuit, occulta per sensibilia nota manifestans.*

<sup>25</sup> *Commentary*, II, 14, 1, 1ad1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod in hoc nihil auctoritati Scripturae derogatur, si diversimode exponatur, dummodo hoc firmiter teneatur quod sacra Scriptura nihil falsum contineat. Constat tamen in Scriptura sacra multa metaphorice tradita, quae secundum planam superficiem litterae intelligi non valent.*

<sup>26</sup> *De potentia* IV, pro, *Et primo quaeritur utrum creatio materiae informis praecesserit durationem rerum. Secundo utrum material informis tota simul fuerit, an successive.*

first Article alone raised 23 objections and offered eight *sed contra* statements. When one considers Thomas' usage and treatment of sources, the interplay between the patristic and philosophical sources results in a far more rigorous and thorough exploration. Like the *Commentary*, however, the entire article in *De potentia* is clearly on a quest for definitive answers, the truth, whereas in the ST this is not the aim.

The question of the waters above the firmament does not receive treatment as an independent Article in *De potentia*, but it is addressed in a series of Objections and Responses (1-7) in the first Article which was focused upon on the phrase "formless and void."<sup>27</sup> This structural difference also points to a more pedagogical role for the ST. While the discussion of the waters above the firmament lacks a true *corpus* in *De potentia*, the depth and volume of discussion exceeds that of either the ST or the *Commentary*. This substantial change in the form is most likely attributable to the nature of these disputations. Not initially conceived as a written work, these documents are each a *reportio* of a somewhat freewheeling exercise conducted in an actual disputation. *De potentia* reflects an experienced Master holding multiple ideas in tension with each other simultaneously and fruitfully combining and recombining elements of the discussion. No group of beginners (*incipientes*) would have been able to keep up with such a discussion. Thus in the ST we see the same material treated in much smaller and accessible portions.

A simple numerical comparison of the sources indicates something of the character of this treatment with that in the other two works. In the *Commentary* the Augustine quote is only augmented with one other theologian, Ambrose, whose ideas are not adopted but put into the category of spiritual interpretation.<sup>28</sup> The primary sources which informed the conclusion were various works of Aristotle.

In ST I, 68, 2 Aquinas made particularly rich use of citations in comparison with other articles in the section.<sup>29</sup> He quoted Augustine from *Gen. ad litt.* three times, all from the beginning section of book II. He quoted Basil twice, both from his third homily in the

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<sup>27</sup>*De potentia* IV, 1ob 7 *terra erat inanis et vacua* Gen 1:2

<sup>28</sup> *Commentary*, II, IV, 1, 1c, *Sed hoc magis ad analogicam expositionem pertinet quam ad litteralem.*

<sup>29</sup> In I, 68, 3, the following article, the only patristic resource cited was Augustine, and only one occurrence.

*Hexaemeron*. He also included a reference to Origen, a quote from Aristotle's *De caelo* II, 4 and one citation of the *glossa ordinaria* which he attributed to Strabo.

The richness of the sources in ST I, 68, 2 was significantly surpassed, however, in *De potentia*. IV,1, obs1-7/ads1-7. Aquinas's citations ranged much more widely. He cited the same passage from Augustine *Gen. ad litt.* II which he used to form the first Objection in *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1. but he also cited *Gen. at litt.* IV and I, 15, 29; II, 1, 2; and II, 4, 7- 5, 9. He also cited a work as Augustine's which we now know to be pseudepigraphal<sup>30</sup> on two occasions. Basil is also cited, but not only from Homily III, but also Homilies II and IV. Aristotle's *De caelo* is likewise cited, but again from a much wider section of that text, with citations from books I and IV. In addition Aquinas referenced 'the Philosopher', as he likes to apostrophize Aristotle, from *Physics* I. Even Jewish interpreters make an appearance here with references to Rabbi Moses and Philo. The ST and *De potentia* seem to be attempting something different. The resources which undergird the arguments and the conclusions are far more complex and robust in *De potentia*.

This conclusion is reinforced when the two texts are subjected to a verbal comparison. In ST I, 68, 2c Aquinas very briefly rendered an opinion about the possibility of the waters above being ultra-rarified vapor and somehow ascending above the sidereal heaven. He addressed the same question in considerably more detail in *De potentia* IV, 1 ob5 and ad5. He clearly has the same argument in mind and uses the same terms to describe this idea. He labeled the idea "in every way impossible" (*omnino impossibile*) and "empty" (*vanum*) in the ST and used similar language to describe it inside *De potentia*: *omnino vana, nec iterum esset possibile, and omnino frivola apparet*. Despite the similar vocabulary for this one idea, when it comes to other ideas about the waters above and the waters below, the vocabulary is significantly stronger and more definitive in *De potentia* and much less definitive in the ST. In the ST, Aquinas approached the actual understanding of the waters above the firmament by accommodating the various theories put forward by patristic theologians to the Scriptural assertion in light of rationality and natural observation. In Aquinas words, there are a number of ways to

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<sup>30</sup> *Dial. quaest.* # LXV, qu 21.



define these waters.<sup>31</sup> In *De potentia*, on the other hand, the reader encounters repeated statements of conclusive argumentation: Conclusions are unavoidable (*necesse*); contrary ideas simply cannot be understood (*non posse intelligi*); or contrary ideas are inadequate or do not hold together (*non competat*). In *De potentia* the idea that the waters referred to are above the earth but below the heavens as clouds is dismissed (*non videtur pati litterae circumstantia*.) In ST I, 68, 2ad1 this idea is admitted as a possibility, but it requires one to amend Aristotelian understandings of the ordering of the elements and allow for what amounts to a subcategory of water (*oportet ponere alium ordinem in elementis quam Aristoteles ponat*.) This extremely charitable reading of an idea which Aquinas does not hold is nowhere to be found in the Objections and Responses of *De potentia*. Nowhere within this Article of the ST does one find a statement like this from *De potentia* IV, 1ad5 which addressed the corresponding Objection's appeal to the authority of Scripture and the assertion that the waters are there simply because God placed them over the sidereal heaven. In his Response Aquinas stated in no uncertain terms that he disagreed.<sup>32</sup> This exposition is "deficient" because it contradicts evident reason. In ST I, 68 2 Aquinas did not take the *incipientes* to that level of conclusion. This idea, which had been assessed as simply irrational in *De potentia*, was allowed, although only at the expense of recalibrating some Aristotelian thought. Aquinas expended considerable effort to allow for a conclusion which he expressly denied in a text written in preparation for the writing of this document.

It is the use and positioning of the Augustine quote from *Gen. ad litt.* II, 5, 9, however, which offers the clearest insight into the divergent purposes of *De potentia* and ST I, 68, 2c. This comparative exercise also offers an opportunity for an examination of Aquinas' sources though his use of this quotation. A comparison and analysis of Augustine's actual words, the Lombard's citation of Augustine and Aquinas' treatment of this citation is illuminating.

A comparison of the quotation further reinforces the assertion made earlier in this thesis that Aquinas was reading his sources carefully and thoroughly, not content to trust the Lombard's catalogue of citations but insistent upon delving into the source documents

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<sup>31</sup> I, 68, 2c., *Sed quales aquae sint, oportet diversimode definire, secundum diversam de firmamento sententiam.*

<sup>32</sup> *De potentia* IV, 1ad5, *Sed haec expositio in hoc videtur deficere, quod asserit quaedam per Scripturam sacram intelligi, quorum contraria satis evidentibus rationibus probantur.*

themselves. Furthermore the subtle changes to the quote suggest the importance of this passage for Aquinas' thought. He apparently had the quotation memorized, but has remembered it in simpler Latin than the original quote. One also notes that Aquinas has manipulated the quotation to emphasize elements he considered most important.

The original context for the quote from Augustine was within a larger discussion of problems raised by the text of Genesis 1:6-19. The section immediately prior (II, 4, 7) to this quotation in *Gen. ad litt.* includes a favorable evaluation of Basil's homilies on the hexaemeron by Augustine. In II, 4, 7, Augustine praised (*laude dignissimam iudico*) Basil's resolution of an intellectual problem surfaced by the Genesis assertion that there are waters above the firmament, without endorsing Basil's solution. In Augustine's estimation Basil's idea was concordant with the faith and intellectually plausible, but Augustine took some pains not to go so far as to say that it was correct, only that it could be correct and he could believe it.<sup>33</sup> In the passage which falls between the treatment of Basil's solution and the quotation considered below, Augustine noted other solutions, refusing to give priority to one over another. This sentence from Augustine then serves within his own work as a hermeneutical rubric for reading the prior material. The fact of the water should not be doubted, but there are multiple possible explanations for its exact nature and form.

Peter Lombard had roughly paraphrased the passage, combining it with a relatively faithful quotation from II, 4, 8 which immediately preceded the quotation under consideration. The admonition not to doubt is paraphrased, but the vaporization theory which formed one of the arguments allowed but not endorsed by Augustine is preferred and the other, alternative theories are not mentioned at all. The Lombard had an answer to the problem; it was one of several suggestions put forward by Augustine, probably the one preferred by Augustine, but still a solution which Augustine only argued as one plausible solution. For the Lombard, it was *the* solution.

In *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1 one notes that Aquinas had clearly read the passage in the original document as his quotation does not include the portion of the quote to which the Lombard alluded, but the adjoining material, leaving out entirely the admonition not

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<sup>33</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* II, 4, 7, *Quod enim dixit, neque contra fidem est, et in promptu posito documento credi potest.*

to doubt, but stating the premise upon which that doubt was excluded and converting the premise into a positive statement of fact.<sup>34</sup>

In *De potentia* the premise and the admonition against doubt was quoted after a paraphrase of the admonition against doubting the fact of the water above the firmament. But it should be noted that the quotation is even more precise in *De potentia* than the *Commentary's* quotation of the same passage; although, it is not an exact quote.

In ST I, 68, 2c, Aquinas included both elements of the Augustine quotation, closely quoting the Augustine text, however, reversing the two elements from the original, an editorial decision which served to emphasize the result, namely that the reader should not doubt that there are waters above.

See table below.

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<sup>34</sup> *Sentences 14, 1, 1 Ad primum sic proceditur. Videtur quod aquae super caelos sint. Quia, ut dicit Augustinus, major est sacrae Scripturae auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii perspicacitas. Sed Scriptura in pluribus locis aquas super caelos esse commemorat. Ergo videtur quod nulla ratione negandum sit.*

Table 1: Aquinas' treatment of the quotation of Augustine, *Gen. ad litt.* II, 5, 9

Augustine, <i>Gen. ad litt.</i> II, 5, 9	Peter Lombard, <i>Sentences</i> II, 14, 4	Aquinas, <i>Commentary</i> II, 14, 1, 1	Aquinas, <i>De potentia</i> IV, 1ad5	Aquinas, ST I, 68, 2
Quoquo modo autem et qualeslibet aquae ibi sint, esse eas ibi minime dubitemus: maior est quippe Scripturae huius auctoritas, quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas.	Si ergo <i>potest aqua, sicut videmus, ad tantas minutias pervenire, ut feratur vaporaliter super aërem aquis naturaliter leviolem; cur non credamus, etiam super illud levius caelum minutioribus guttis et levioribus immanare vaporibus?</i> Sed quoquo modo ibi sint, ibi esse non dubitamus.	Quia, ut dicit Augustinus, maior est sacrae Scripturae auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii perspicacitas.	Unde nec Augustinus aliquam de praemissis expositionibus asserit, sed sub dubitatione dimittit, dicens in eodem Lib.: <i>quomodo libet, et quales aquae ibi sint, esse ibi eas, minime dubitemus. Maior est quippe Scripturae huius auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas.</i>	Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut dicit Augustinus, II super <i>Gen. ad Litt., maior est Scripturae huius auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas. Unde quomodo et quales aquae ibi sint, eas tamen ibi esse, minime dubitamus.</i>

Close reading and analysis suggests that Aquinas used the quote from Augustine for different purposes within each of his treatments. He has manipulated both the content and the placement of this important quotation/citation of Augustinian material.

Aquinas' manipulation of this passage from Augustine for pedagogical purposes becomes even more apparent when one considers the location and role the quotation of *Gen. ad litt.* II 5, 9 played in each of the works. In *De potentia* IV this passage is used at the conclusion of the catalogue of various opinions about the waters above to explain why Augustine rejected all of the various opinions about water vapors. "Hence Augustine does not adopt any of these explanations but dismisses them as doubtful. He wrote: Howsoever these waters may be there and of what kind they may be, one thing is certain, they are there. For indeed, the authority of this Holy Scripture is greater than the entire capacity of human genius."

When presenting the same material in ST I, 68, 2c, the same quote from Augustine is used, but here it led off the discussion of the Article's *corpus*: "Reply: As Augustine observes 'The Scriptural text has more authority than any human theory. Therefore, however and whatever these waters may be, we cannot in any way doubt that they are there.' Not all writers give the same explanation of the nature of these waters..."<sup>35</sup> The effect of the Augustine quote from *Gen. ad litt.* II, 5, 9 within the ST is to cast the content of the Article into the sphere of hermeneutics and to conduct the discussion about the waters above inside a parameter dictated by Augustine. In *De potentia* the quote established Augustine's neutral position over against all the others while asserting the fact of the water. In ST I, 68, 2, Augustine's position has become the rule under which the others are considered.

In some respects, the ST mirrors the treatment in the *Commentary* which placed the Augustine quote as the first Objection and wrestled with its implications in the *corpus*. But even the *Commentary's* approach diverges from the ST in that within the *Commentary* Augustine's idea established a theological truth which was then placed into a tension with the natural philosophical understanding of the world. In ST I, 68, 2, the Augustine quote served to govern the attempted resolution of the tension created by other Objections and the contrary ideas raised by reason and philosophy.

When comparing the treatment of this quotation of Augustine within the ST and the *Commentary*, a second point must be considered as well. The *Commentary*, in contrast to the ST, reaches a conclusion: The waters above the firmament are the fifth essence. This hermeneutical approach in the ST also stands in contrast to the use of Augustine in *De potentia*. Aquinas used the same quote by Augustine in *De potentia* to provide justification for his preferred understanding of the waters above: "Wherefore one would prefer to offer an explanation which would leave the text of Scripture unassailable, by suggesting that those waters are not of the same nature as our elemental water, but are of the nature of the Fifth Essence..."<sup>36</sup> In Aquinas' estimation, Augustine did not

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<sup>35</sup> ST I, 68, 2c, *Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut dicit Augustinus, II super Gen. ad Litt., maior est Scripturae huius auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas. Unde quomodo et quales aquae ibi sint, eas tamen ibi esse, minime dubitamus. Quales autem sint illae aquae, non eodem modo ab omnibus assignatur.*

<sup>36</sup> *De potentia* IV, 1 ad5, *Et ideo aliter videtur dicendum ad hoc quod Scripturae veritas ab omni calumnia defendatur; ut dicamus, quod aquae illae non sint de natura harum aquarum elementarium, sed sint de natura quintae essentiae.*

subscribe to the other theories and resisted any attempt to spiritualize the waters, even though he did not hold to the quintessence theory of Aristotle and hence could not explain them in a rationally coherent sense. This use of Augustine's quote created a space in *De potentia* for medieval theologians to propose a model which allowed Augustine's dictum to obtain and which answered the objections of reason and observation of the natural world. To understand the waters above as the quintessence was clearly the "right" answer in Aquinas' estimation. Even though Augustine had not arrived at the proper conclusion in Aquinas' opinion, Augustine's insistence upon the inviolability of Scripture had left sufficient intellectual space for the proper conclusion to be reached by those who followed. Contrast this with the use of the Augustine quote in ST I, 68, 2 in which Augustine's dictum is asserted but the Article comes to no conclusion about the nature of those waters.

This distinction observed in a detailed analysis of this Augustine quotation is further reinforced when one turns to the treatment of other sources in both these three works, ST I, 68, 2; *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1; and *De potentia* IV, 1. In the *Commentary* Aquinas marshaled first this quote of Augustine we have under consideration in the first objection, but the tension is created entirely by logic, observation, and citations of Aristotle. Within the corpus Ambrose is credited with a metaphorical solution but Augustine's ideas form the principle point of discussion along with Rabbi Moses Maimonides. The solution to the problem is generated by an appeal to natural observation and the logic of Aristotle and demonstrated to be concordant with the faith by fitting under the rubric of Augustine's wise reluctance to espouse any of the prior solutions. Aquinas contends that subsequent development of philosophy and science has enabled him to "say it better"<sup>37</sup> with the quintessence.

Within *De potentia* the various theories which seek to explain the waters above begin with the same citation of Origen as one finds in the ST 68, 2. But while in *De potentia* Basil is also present, the quotations in ST 68, 2 are different and there are significant omissions of sources which would have substantively complicated the discussion. Maimonides, much of the substance of Basil's assertions, and another quote by Augustine, which peppered the *De potentia* discussion, are all absent from the treatment in ST I, 68, 2. Origen's idea of a spiritual essence for the waters above is put forward in

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<sup>37</sup> *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1c, *Melius possumus dicere*.

both texts,<sup>38</sup> but in *De potentia* this was not met by Basil, but by “others” with whom Rabbi Moses agreed. In both, Basil disagreed with Origen, but in *De potentia*, Aquinas located Basil within a larger group of those who simply offered up other ideas. In ST 68, 2c Basil’s role is increased. He is given the task of definitively refuting Origen’s spiritualization and asserting that the waters above are in fact water. Aquinas accepted that reality and proceeded to a catalogue of the several different ways one could understand these waters above. All these were put forward without any dependence upon a patristic source, but simply given as reasonable or possible solutions, assuming Basil is right and the waters are truly material.

The preceding analysis may be summarized in the following table:

	<i>Commentary</i> II, 14, 1, 1	<i>De potentia</i> IV, 1, ob1-7/ad1-7	ST I, 68, 2
Re: conclusion	Aquinas reached a definitive conclusion: the waters above are the quintessence	Aquinas reached a definite conclusion – the waters above are best understood to be quintessence.	Aquinas reaches no conclusion, does not use term “quintessence.”
Re: use of <i>Gen. ad litt.</i> II, 5, 9.	Aquinas used quote as the first objection to articulate the Article’s point of tension. The sacred truth of Scripture is in tension with the observed phenomena and this tension when examined yielded the refinement of understanding which was stated as the conclusion.	The Augustine quote is used at the end of the argument to justify the rejection of some alternatives. Augustine’s epistemic humility created space in which Aquinas posited the quintessence interpretation.	The quote from Augustine opened the <i>corpus</i> , and served as a hermeneutical umbrella under which the discussion took place: Whatever conclusion Aquinas’ reader may reach, that reading cannot deny the sacred truth which is Scripture, but multiple possible interpretation are allowed under that hermeneutical umbrella.
Re: use of other	His sources within	Aquinas’ use of	Aquinas limited his

<sup>38</sup> In the *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1c the spiritualizing interpretation was put forward by Ambrose and quickly dismissed.

sources	the rest of the Article are almost entirely from Aristotle ( <i>De anima</i> , <i>De physica</i> , and <i>De generatione et corruptione</i> ). The only other patristic source is a citation of Ambrose's metaphorical resolution in <i>De spiritu sancto</i> and a reference to "others" who offer various literal attempts at a resolution but which all fail for philosophical reasons	other sources was rich. He cited Augustine and Aristotle within the Objections; used two quotes of Augustine ( <i>De Trin.</i> and <i>Gen. ad litt.</i> ) within the <i>sed contra</i> 's; within the Responses to the Objections Aquinas quoted an expansive variety of patristic and non-patristic authors Augustine, Origen, and Basil's hexaameron sermons, Philo, and Maimonides.	sources, especially Aristotle. Within the <i>corpus</i> the ideas of Basil, Origen, Augustine, and Strabo are all considered under the hermeneutical principle laid down by the Augustine quote. Some ideas are rejected as contrary to Scripture, others as contrary to observation and natural philosophy. But no single idea was preferred.
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If *De potentia* were not extant, the differences between the *Commentary* and the ST might be attributable to the maturation of Aquinas and his ideas. But the fact that in *De potentia* Aquinas is still making the argument of the *Commentary*, indeed more robustly, suggests that he had not abandoned the conclusion. In truth, he had reinforced it and asserted it more emphatically. Yet, when he turned to the same material a few months later in Q 68 within the ST, the reader encounters no such conclusion. In fact, the conclusion preferred in both of the earlier works is not even one of the possibilities suggested. Nor is it plausible that Aquinas had, in the months between conducting the dispute which became *De potentia* and the writing of the ST, somehow abandoned the idea of quintessence, as he used the term and defended it in ST I, 66, 2, a mere two QQ prior to this discussion. It would seem that the only alternative at this point is to suggest that the discussion of ST I, 68, 2 is a deliberately shaped conversation, not with the goal of arriving at a specific answer, and certainly not Aquinas' preferred answer. It would appear the goal is to conduct the conversation itself. The primary objective here is not the identification of the waters above, but I would argue that the real goal of this Article is best seen in the role of Augustine and the hermeneutics which govern any interpretation of Scripture for Aquinas. As Aquinas used his words within this Question,



Augustine sets the parameters for the discussion. Aquinas desired the one who read this material to operate under this principle or rule: Whatever we might say about the creative event, we cannot deny Scripture's authority. That said, Scripture itself allows for multiple interpretations or understandings of that creative event which might be valid and true.

This Question and indeed all ten of the Questions of this section, for they are similar in this regard, do not compose a theological or philosophical writing which is seeking to answer the questions under which the discussions are conducted. It is a pedagogical exercise endeavoring to school the reader in how to ask the questions of patristic authorities and arrive at answers which are both fruitful and born of an appropriate epistemic humility.

#### 4. Subsequent Development

In the section of the ST which begins at Q 75 Aquinas took up his innovative discussion of the creation of the human being, in which he explored the assertion he had made in his *Commentary* that the human being is the horizon creature, the pinnacle of God's Creation, occupying the very point at which the physical and spiritual meet.<sup>39</sup> In addition to all we have already said, Aquinas has been laying groundwork for this discussion and more which followed as he explored the *reditus* of all Creation through the incarnate Christ. From these ten QQ we know, for example, that the human being is not inferior to the heavenly bodies.<sup>40</sup> The heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars, are not greater beings in that they are some great living intelligences looking down upon us from lofty heights. In Aquinas' estimation they are but the bodies which angelic beings push around the various spheres. They are not, like the human person, truly living beings, with a rational soul. The sun, moon, and stars are not truly alive and thus are inferior in a philosophical sense to the human being.

Though he has surely taken such steps to prepare the reader for the next section and moved the reader closer to the goals of the whole ST, it is also clear that there is a great deal of material in these questions which does not serve the purposes of simply laying a foundation of content which the reader will need for what follows. While the Christian

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<sup>39</sup> *Commentary* III, pro.

<sup>40</sup> I, 70, 3.

doctrine of Creation is pondered within these QQ, he does not make a substantive theological advance over the material presented in QQ 44-49. An otherwise efficient writer, Aquinas would not have taken such an excursus with no purpose. It is the argument of this thesis that these questions are less about content than they are about the theological method which Aquinas seeks to inculcate within his reader.

Aquinas was not so bound to the structure of the *Sentences* that he could not deviate from it, as he proved in the *secunda pars* and *tertia pars* of the ST. It has been our contention that the most logical reasons for such a treatment of the first chapter of Genesis have been pedagogical and to some extent, through the reader, apologetic. Aquinas was equipping his reader to be a *lector* with a theological text which avoided the meaningless repetitions of prior texts<sup>41</sup> and which avoided the detrimental separation of the doctrinal from the moral component. He sought to equip these *lectores* so they might serve the Dominican Order, the Pope, and Christ himself in a mission to which he was personally committed. He envisioned that they would enter the priories of the Order in order to inculcate the careful and reverential reading of patristic sources, a reading which reflects the serious theological engagement of a mature and competent theologian.<sup>42</sup> He was also writing in a context in which the order itself is repeatedly subject to the charge that it is undoing the faith which was built upon the shoulders of the patristic theologians. In his survey of the impact of the mendicants upon the medieval world, C. H. Lawrence quoted a contemporary of Aquinas in Paris:

“From the eminence of Ste Genevieve on the Mount, Stephen of Tournai looked down at the schools of Paris pullulating on the south bank and the island, and he did not like what he saw. ‘As if the works of the holy Fathers are not enough,’ he complained, ‘they dispute publicly against the sacred canons concerning the incomprehensible deity; they divide and rend the indivisible Trinity, and there are as many errors as there are masters.’”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> ST, I, *pro.*, *plurimum impediri, partim quidem propter multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum.*

<sup>42</sup> Jordan, 118-120.

<sup>43</sup> C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The impact of the early mendicant movement on western society* (London and New York: Longman, 1994) 13. Stephen of Tournai found in PL 211, 517.

The friars of the Dominican Order needed theological and patristic acumen to face such a critique.<sup>44</sup> Aquinas knew that critique from personal experience. His own inaugural lecture as a Regent Master of Theology at Paris had taken place amid violent rioting, incited by the sermons and publications of another Master of Theology, William of Saint-Amour. The situation was so tense that the king dispatched royal archers to serve as a security detail guaranteeing the safety of Aquinas and his fellow mendicants that day. Aquinas did not shrink from this contest. His first quodlibetal disputations in Lent of 1256 directly challenged the critique of the mendicants, and his first publication after his inception as a Regent Master was a rebuttal of William's argument against the mendicants: *Liber contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*.<sup>45</sup>

Such a spirited defense of the mendicant mission and the intellectual enterprise to which Aquinas was committed meant he also had to carefully prepare the friars he had defended. They would render his defense of the Order hollow if they had left their priories and had proven the validity Stephen of Tornai's critique by their mishandling of theology's primary materials: Scripture and the patristic sources.

It also has to be acknowledged that Aquinas may have viewed the inclusion of a primer on how to read patristic authority as necessary. It would have filled what might have been perceived as a serious lacuna within the content of the ST itself. He had abandoned a recast commentary on the *Sentences* in order to write the ST. While it was perhaps too difficult for his students in Santa Sabina, the real strength of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard was that it forced the reader to wrestle with the complexity of Scriptural interpretation by various patristic theologians. By setting aside the *Sentences* as a primary text and writing a more synthetic treatment of theology, Aquinas had stepped away from this valued facet of the Lombard's work. These ten QQ may have supplied that perceived gap in the ST's content.

It is the goal of preparing his brother Dominicans which has led him to write this exercise in reverential reading which one finds in QQ 65-74 of the *prima pars*. In Aquinas' estimation it was both simply good to do and necessary for the climate in

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<sup>44</sup> Lawrence, 84-88, discusses the Dominican Order's concern for the preaching task. He suggests that the purpose of the *studium provinciale* was purely utilitarian. It produced preachers as opposed to the *studium generale* which engaged in speculative theology.

<sup>45</sup> See Weisheipl, 82-89 and Torrell, 79-81.

which they ventured forth from the walls of their priory into the streets and squares of the burgeoning cities of Europe. Among the crowds who gathered to hear them preach would surely be the cinctured Cistercians, Benedictines, and Augustinians, along with local priests and scholars, all of whom might be looking for an opportunity to catch the preacher in some error. Even though that mendicant preacher could claim special papal authority, he also threatened the stability of their medieval world. In Aquinas' estimation his readers had to be able to inculcate this skill in the men who listened to their lectures in the priories of the *Ordo Praedicatorum*.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> At least one theologian thought the climate so dangerous he refused to speak on certain issues, in this instance in a *Quodlibetal* debate in the 1270's, lest he be "condemned." Torrell, 300.

## Chapter 5: Re-reading ST I, 65-74 in light of Aquinas' use of sources

### 1. Elementary principles of patristic reading: QQ 65-66.

In the first two QQ of this section, Aquinas introduced the reader to several basic tenets which guide the reading of the patristic theologians and outlined the basic shape of a reverential reading. Briefly stated, these are: patristic theologians can be in error (65, 2), and thus do not constitute an irrefutable authority such as Scripture for Aquinas. But the reader cannot assume that what appears to be an error is always an error (65, 3). In positing this charitable reading, Aquinas guided the reader toward a position of some humility before these authors. The reader, he insisted, must ask why this authoritative source has written these things and what has changed in the centuries which have transpired since those words were penned. Aquinas introduced his readership to basic issues of semantics (65, 4), historical context (65, 3), and intellectual context (66, 2 - 3). The reader will also want to take note that in Q 66, 1 he introduced the interpretations of Basil and Augustine which resulted in a clear expression of the need for the epistemic humility in 66, 4 after exhausting the semantic and philosophical tools of reconciliation.

Question 65 *de creatura corporali*

Article 1 *utrum creatura corporalis sit a Deo*<sup>1</sup>

Aquinas began his discussion of the Genesis 1 account of the Creation event with the weightiest of issues: Do material creatures come from God? This question had been the locus of some of Christianity's greatest battles since its inception and had continued to exercise Christian theologians for centuries prior to Aquinas. The importance of this question had not diminished by the thirteenth century. The Dominican Order had only recently<sup>2</sup> been birthed out of a necessity to confront the Cathar or Albigensian movement. In the minds of Aquinas and his peers, this dualist sect held that corporeal

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 1, 1, 1-3; *De potentia* III, 6; ST I, 44; and 45, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence, 13-15, Honorius III issued the Papal Bull which founded the Ordo Praedicatorum on Dec 22, 1216. Thomas was born 9 years later in 1224/5 and joined the order in 1244.

things did not come from God.<sup>3</sup> The Albigensian theology which the Aquinas and his peers rejected posited a schema of Creation in which only the spiritual truly came from God, the physical was not attributable to him. Eight centuries earlier this idea had been held by the Manicheans. Augustine had addressed much of his work, particularly early in his career, as an argument against this dualistic understanding held by the Manicheans. The importance of this relationship between the Creator and the Creation meant that this first Article addressed a question for which Aquinas had a definite answer. Indeed, in reading the article, no room for ambiguity is found herein. Aquinas made this very clear. Regarding the alternative to a divine source for the Creation he held that this position is altogether impossible.<sup>4</sup> Material Creation comes from God, says Aquinas.

In considering the sources to which Aquinas appealed, the absence of Augustine citations must be noted. Scripture is widely cited, but Augustine is entirely absent, at least in citation if not in theological content. For the reader who is considering sources this omission is odd because Augustine had spent so much of his career in conflict with the Manicheans, a movement which Aquinas and others considered to be a parallel movement to the Albigensian heresy and which had been met with a serious response. Just a generation prior to Aquinas the response to the Albigensians had culminated in a crusade within France from 1209-1229. It would seem that Augustine would have been a natural resource for this argument. Augustine had penned a commentary on Genesis which he had entitled “against the Manicheans.”<sup>5</sup> Augustine was certainly well known and well read for his anti-Manichean writings in light of the recent struggle against the Albigensians.<sup>6</sup> Yet, Aquinas made no use of Augustine in the article which addressed the Manichean and, at least in his mind, the Albigensian error. While an argument from

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Gregory Pegg, in *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom*, (Oxford: Oxford, 2008), has argued that the Cathar/Albigensian movement was in fact not a real heresy but a matter of perception. While a lack of documentary evidence means that it remains very difficult to know exactly what the Albigensians believed, it is very clear that Aquinas and his peers rejected the dualism which they ascribed to the Albigensians.

<sup>4</sup> ST I, 65, 1, resp, *haec autem positio est omnino impossibilis*.

<sup>5</sup> *Gen. contr. Man.*

<sup>6</sup> Edward A. Synan, “It Seems There is No God, 1256-1274” in *Studies in Medieval Culture, Vol. VIII & IX*, Eds.: John Sommerfeld and E. Roxanne Elder, (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute of Western Michigan University, 1976), 103-4.

silence is ever problematic, the absence of such a voice from this article is suggestive. Is Augustine perhaps being saved for something else? Considering the proliferation of Augustine citations which follow, it would seem so.

One could argue that the higher authority of Scripture supersedes and obviates the need for Augustine, but this does not accord with Aquinas' use of patristic and Scriptural sources elsewhere in the ST. They often mingle and co-exist in the course of his argumentation.<sup>7</sup> If our thesis is correct, and QQ 65-74 are indeed an exercise in the reading of patristic sources, Augustine's absence in this first article makes considerable sense. Aquinas intended within this entire section to allow both Basil's and Augustine's interpretation of Genesis 1 to stand. If he had appealed to Augustine's authority in settling this first and essential question, surely the ensuing debate could not have been held on anything like an equal footing. Had the goal of the section been to establish that Augustine's reading of the Creation event was indeed the correct interpretation, then surely Aquinas would have wanted to bolster his credibility and authority by including him within this Article. By not including him, he makes possible the disputation between the interpretational strands of Augustine and Basil which one finds in subsequent Articles.

Article 2 *utrum sit facta (sc. creatio) propter bonitatem Dei*<sup>8</sup>

Having established that God was indeed behind the creation of material things, in the second Article, Aquinas undertook to explore the question how the Creation event happened. It is within this question that the examination of patristic resources began. In 65, 2 Aquinas posed the question which wondered if material creatures were made to manifest God's goodness. The first of the patristic resources was brought forward, Origen, the highly prolific, creative, and often controversial theologian of Alexandria from the third century AD. The choice of Origen to open this discussion is in itself interesting. Origen was a theologian whose ideas had come under suspicion by the end

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<sup>7</sup> While nearly any place in the ST could be cited as an example, consider Q 94 of the *Prima Pars* in which Aquinas addresses the intellect of the first man, Adam. In Article 1 he quoted, John of Damascus, five different passages from Augustine, and Peter Lombard. In the same article he also cites passages from I Corinthians, Ecclesiastes, and Genesis.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 1, 2, 2; ST I, 47, 2.

of the fourth century as a byproduct of the Trinitarian debates.<sup>9</sup> By the medieval period Origen had come to have an almost dual existence in medieval theological writing. His highly allegorical commentaries, especially on the Song of Songs, were widely read and lavishly praised. Bernard of Clairvaux seems to have depended extensively upon him. At the same time, and occasionally in the very same paragraphs in which they had just praised him, some medieval theologians could also refer to his “madness,” “heresy,” and “blasphemy.”<sup>10</sup> Within this Article, Aquinas used the obvious example of Origen to make the first assertion regarding the patristic theologians: they are not infallible, but may indeed err. The incipient theologian needs to develop the skill of discernment.

Aquinas examined a theological idea Origen had posited<sup>11</sup> in which he asserted that the creation of the corporeal beings was a punishment for the sins of spiritual beings prior to the Creation. Origen seemed to suggest that a heavenly body such as the moon was a prison for a disobedient angel. For Aquinas’ readers, this was clearly aberrant from the Christian tradition which had been received in the medieval period. It would appear that no one held this position in the 13<sup>th</sup> century within Aquinas’ sphere of readers or their acquaintances, making the discussion purely academic, or in this case, pedagogical. But this was not entirely an academic or theoretical issue. The medieval theologian needed to exercise discernment even here. The period had seen some extraordinary interpretations of Creation, the most outlandish perhaps being that of Bernard Silvestris in his *Cosmographia* which he presented to Pope Eugene III in 1147.<sup>12</sup>

Aquinas had his reader consider the position of Origen in order to apply two criteria for evaluating the theology of Origen. The first principle for evaluating the teaching of a patristic theologian was the witness of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> But Scripture alone, in this situation,

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<sup>9</sup> Michael A. Thomas, “Isaiah’s Vision of God: The Christian Interpretive Struggle of Isaiah 6:1-5 in Early Christianity.” (PhD Diss., Univ. of Virginia, 2008), 120-122.

<sup>10</sup> See Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, Vol. 1, Trans.: E. M. Macierowski, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 172-184, for his discussion of the translation of Origen into Latin and his wide dispersal throughout the west. Particularly note #167 in which he observed Aquinas’ dependence upon and suspicion of Origen. Later de Lubac placed Aquinas in the stream of medieval theologians who accepted Origen, 221.

<sup>11</sup> *Peri Archon* III, 5. PG II, 329.

<sup>12</sup> Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard*, Vol. I, (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1994), 306-309.

<sup>13</sup> I, 65, 2c, *Quae quidem positio erronea est. Primo quidem, quia contrariatur Scripturae...*



was not sufficient. Anyone who has listened to theological debates knows that every side appeals to Scriptural authority. Even the Manichees and Albigensians had appealed to Scripture. There was a second criterion: Origen's position would be difficult to reconcile with simple logic and the observable world.<sup>14</sup> He illustrated this with an example from nature. If the sun were indeed a prison for some angelic sinner, had there been two of the same sorts of angelic sinners there would have been two suns or three, or more. He concludes that this position is then in every way unsuitable or inappropriate.<sup>15</sup> On the one hand the theologian's comments are rejected because they contradict Scripture, and on the other because they are wholly unsuitable to the way things are. The reader will want to notice that the non-Christian philosophers, when they are cited, were primarily utilized to establish the "way things are."

This establishment of these two criteria of evaluation was not the end of this discussion. The evaluation of Origen's error gives Aquinas an occasion to talk about the final purpose, the *reditus*, of the Creation and particularly the role that the human being has to play within that final purpose. This orderly universe is arranged in its various parts to bring glory to God, Aquinas asserts. As the various parts work together, this glory magnifies. But at the top of this hierarchy of glory stand the rational creatures of God, who "have God as their goal in a special way, since they can attain him by their own operations of knowing and loving."<sup>16</sup>

Because this now touched upon the matter of the meaning of humanity, after the initial assertion of a theology of Creation in which God was the origin of the corporeal Creation, Aquinas took up the final cause of Creation (*finis omnium corporalium*) but in so doing began to establish the critical evaluation of the patristic theologians. The example was obvious, it required no great thought on the part of the reader, but it gave Aquinas the opportunity to lay down the two chief criteria for evaluating the debate which followed. The patristic theologians are not an absolute source but must themselves adhere to Scripture and present a theology which reflects what we also know from observing and understanding the created world in which we live. More such

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<sup>14</sup> I, 65, 2c, *Secundo, quia sequeretur quod mundi corporalis dispositio quae nunc est, esset a casu.*

<sup>15</sup> I, 65, 2c, *Haec autem sunt omnino inconvenientia.*

<sup>16</sup> I, 65, 2c, *quamvis creaturae rationales speciali quodam modo supra hoc habeant finem Deum, quem attingere possunt sua operatione, cognoscendo et amando.*

criteria followed as did an exploration of the obvious tension between these two elements, but these were his first and essential building blocks.

In order to further establish the pedagogical nature of this section, the reader should take note of the simplistic use of patristic sources within the Article. The treatment of Origen is extremely elementary. The pedagogical arc of the entire section can be seen in the fact that Aquinas has more to say on this subject, but reserves this for later in the document. In 73, 2 Aquinas imposed this issue onto an otherwise unrelated question under consideration through a quote of Dionysius on the very subject of God's goodness penetrating all of Creation.<sup>17</sup> Dionysius was clearly available to Aquinas on this subject and would be soon utilized, even forced into the treatment of an unrelated topic. If this were a quest for theological truth, that Aquinas would omit him here is particularly odd. But if this is a pedagogical exercise, the movement from simple to more complex treatments of authors makes this much clearer. Dionysius' words were not at all clear and would later be put into a very subtle tension with an interpretation on Augustine's part which Aquinas found somewhat problematic.

Article 3 *utrum sit facta a Deo mediantibus Angelis*<sup>18</sup>

In the third Article of Question 65, Aquinas asked whether God used angelic intermediaries for the production of the material universe. Again, Aquinas came to a conclusion. In his estimation God did not. In considering his treatment of sources, Aquinas here made use of patristic resources and the philosophers who played a supporting role. In the objections he cited three reasons why one might think that God used such intermediaries. In the first of these he posited that since it is wise to delegate things and since God is wise, he must have delegated this work. In support he cites Aristotle and Augustine in a parallel treatment. They both say the lower serves the higher, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*<sup>19</sup> and Augustine in *De Trinitate*.<sup>20</sup> The second objection asserted that the sheer diversity of the Creation suggests diverse creative

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<sup>17</sup> *De divinis nominibus* II, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 1, 1, 3-4; II, 18, 2, 2; IV, 5, 1, 3q3; *De potentia* III, 4; ST 44, 1; 45, 5; and *De substantiis separatis* 10.

<sup>19</sup> *Metaphysics* I, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *De Trinitate* III, 1, 4.

agents. The third objection was based on the idea that omnipotence is disproportionate to the effect and hence an inefficient use of omnipotent power.

The *sed contra* establishes a tension with this idea by simply restating Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*

Aquinas had in mind the belief of certain Neo-Platonists. William Wallace, the editor of the Blackfriar's edition, suggests Avicenna and Algazel.<sup>21</sup> The real argument is not the first objection in which Aristotle and Augustine are cited. The real argument is found in Objections 2 and 3 and in answering these objections to divine creative agency Aquinas made an important distinction. The corporeal Creation is not really diverse; it is in fact unified by the fact of its corporeality, the 'that-ness' of its being, often called "quiddity." Only the infinite power of God could possibly have created 'being.' Angelic powers might cause change within a being, but they are insufficient to cause being itself.

The inclusion of Augustine and Aristotle in the first Objection afforded Aquinas occasion to explore the reverential reading of sources. Whereas in the prior Article Origen was simply wrong, in this Article Aristotle and Augustine were marshaled in support of the losing side in the argument, but then carefully read to allow that what they said was also true. This is the beginning of the reverential reading which Aquinas developed throughout this section. In the Response to the first Objection, Aquinas carefully allowed both Aristotle and Augustine to be correct but potentially misunderstood. Their words require a measure of analysis and criticism on the part of the reader. Yes, there is order and wisdom to the Creation, but it is not found in the delegation of the creative task. That sort of delegation is "impossible."<sup>22</sup> The order and wisdom are reflected in the hierarchy of Creation.

As a result, in addition to establishing the divine act of Creation as properly belonging only to God, Aquinas also posited something about the reading of the patristic theologians. They can be read to support an error, but a reverential reading will ask what we know about the matter at hand and will seek to accommodate their words to it. Both Aristotle and Augustine noted that hierarchy is natural. Should one therefore

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<sup>21</sup> Wallace, 14, note b.

<sup>22</sup> I, 65, 4, ad1, *hoc enim impossibile est.*

deduce that Creation was done through a hierarchy of creative agents? Aquinas offered up a definitive conclusion. Because the act of creating is a properly divine act, the words of both Aristotle and Augustine must therefore refer not to some proposed hierarchy of creative agents but to a hierarchy that was itself created.<sup>23</sup> Their words were worthily said in Aquinas' estimation, but both needed to be carefully and charitably understood in light of what has been demonstrated to be true. They clearly would not have asserted the erroneous conclusion posited, namely that God created via some hierarchy of beings, despite the fact that they had not deliberately rejected it and some of their writings could be incorporated into an argument in support of it.

Article 4 *utrum formae corporum sint ab Angelis, an immediate a Deo*<sup>24</sup>

In turning to the fourth Article in Q 65, Aquinas asked whether the forms of corporeal bodies came from angels. Again his content addressed a problematic expression of Neo-Platonist realism. Aquinas understood the Creation event in terms of his Aristotelianhylomorphism. That philosophical understanding of the nature of matter held that forms do not exist independently of the composite. Aquinas seemed to understand that the actual thing was brought into being by the impartation of form to matter.<sup>25</sup> But this can hardly suffice as the reason for this Article. It is the consideration of Aquinas' utilization of sources which again bears fruit. Herein he demonstrates another step in their reverential reading. This time two theologians were superficially pitted against each other. Boethius, in the first Objection, asserted "forms that are in matter have come from forms that exist without matter."<sup>26</sup> Since immaterial forms are angels, argued the Objection, Boethius had asserted that angels are the forms for corporeal beings. In the *sed contra*, however, Augustine said, "it must not be thought that this corporeal matter

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<sup>23</sup> Again the absence of Dionysius needs to be noted. In this Aquinas is undoubtedly indebted to, but does not cite, Dionysius the Areopagite whose *Letter 8* posits the necessity of just such hierarchy in order that the Creation return to/with its Creator. See Rorem, 1 and 19-24.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 1, 1, 4; II, 7, 3, 1; II, 18, 2, 2; *De potentia* III, 4; SCG II, 43; III, 24, 69, 103; and ST I, 44, 1; I, 91, 2; I, 110, 2; *De malo* XVI, 9 and *De occultis operibus naturae*.

<sup>25</sup> Wallace, Appendix 4, 188-192.

<sup>26</sup> I, 65, 4ob1, *a formis quae sunt sine materia, venerunt formae quae sunt in materia*. Quoting Boethius *De Trinitate*, 2, PL 64, 1250.

is obedient to the angels, but rather to God.”<sup>27</sup> This statement is then argued to mean that since corporeal matter obeys the agent from which it receives forms, its forms cannot be derived from angels.

The *corpus* catalogues the opinions of several philosophers, noting that what they perceive as spiritual forms are for Christians angels. This of itself is significant in that the theologian has a clearer insight into the nature of these beings than the philosopher, reinforcing Aquinas’ hierarchy of sources. Aristotelian ideas about the nature of the composite, as noted above, were taken to be the best explanation and both Augustine and Boethius were carefully brought into concord with one another within this understanding of nature. Augustine was demonstrated from an earlier section of the same work to be developing an idea which harmonizes with Aristotle’s conception of the composite being. Boethius, in the Response to the first Objection is given a charitable reading as well. “By forms existing without matter Boethius probably means the ideas of things existing in the divine mind.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, Boethius may have used his language imprecisely, but one can still, reading him reverentially, bring his imprecise words into a harmony with the reality which one knows. Just to be sure that the point is clear; the Apostle Paul is quoted saying something similar to Boethius’ words.<sup>29</sup> If, Aquinas continued, Boethius did indeed mean angels when he said this and not the “ideas of things existing in the divine mind” (*rationes in mente divina*) which he supposed, this too can be harmonized with the world as we know it. For angels do indeed bring about corporeal forms, not as direct imparters of form, but as beings which can move or change corporeal beings from one form to another, bringing about a new being through change, but not through the creation of being itself.

Aquinas concluded the first Question at this point. He had developed the conceptual trajectory of the work by closing off several avenues which were theologically problematic. Creation is in fact a divine act; it thus has a divine telos. It is an act which

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<sup>27</sup> I, 65, 4c, *non est putandum angelis ad nutum servire hanc corporealem materiam, sed potius Deo*. Aquinas was quoting Augustine, *De Trin.* III, 8.

<sup>28</sup> I, 65, 4, ob1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Boethius intelligit per formas quae sunt sine materia, rationes rerum quia sunt in mente divina*.

<sup>29</sup> The quote is from Hebrews 11:3 which is not generally credited to Paul by contemporary scholars, but which was widely regarded as Pauline in the medieval period.

is proper to the divine being and not to some subordinate being, whether as an active agent or as a formal agent of Creation. But along with this trajectory of ideas, there is another strand discernable in the treatment of his patristic sources which might be recapitulated as follows:

Article 1 - The essential argument begins with Scripture and is settled there.

Article 2 – That essential argument, however, hardly exhausts the interpretive potential of the text. The patristic theologians who address these open questions can be quite wrong at times, their words must be held up to the standard of both Scripture and the truths which are evident from the Creation itself.

Article 3 – As with any author (Augustine and Aristotle are developed in parallel), theologians can be simply misunderstood. The reader must develop a reverential discernment which seeks to understand the words of the theologian in the best possible light.

Article 4 – Theologians sometimes appear to contradict each other directly as with the example of Boethius and Augustine. Natural philosophy can help settle the matter and allow for the reverential reading of the theologians.

Other than Origen, who was held up as a negative example, the patristic theologians are read with a great deal of care, construing their words into the most charitable manner. Augustine's objection in Article 3 was shown to be misunderstood and reconciled in the Response to the Objection. In Article 4, Augustine was shown to be quite right, and the reader of Boethius was given two means to understand him as reflecting the truth.

Thus far, however, Aquinas has only done in his treatment of sources that which any medieval theologian would have done. Indeed, what has repeatedly discouraged the theological readership of this section is the very fact that this is such an elementary treatment. Much of medieval theology was busy with the reconciliation of apparently opposing ideas and this treatment is not particularly a profound example of this medieval practice. His treatment of the Creation and the sources which we see here is not unusual nor in any way provocative or original. When we compare it to his earlier works, penetrating questions which were taken up in *Commentary* and *De potentia* are

left unexplored.<sup>30</sup> But if this is indeed written with the goal of inculcating this reverential reading of sources, such a basic beginning makes much more sense. Effective pedagogues start with the familiar and elementary material and from this build to more complex skills and concepts. What we see here is familiar. The pedagogical arc for this section of the ST is not yet discernible. We have only a starting point, but this is the proper starting point for a pedagogical work, the basic skills and knowledge of a beginner.

Question 66 *de opere distinctionis*

In question 66 Aquinas took up the question of how the creative act relates to diversification. The medieval theologian noticed a bipartite, threefold pattern or progression within the Creation event recorded in Genesis 1. The first triplet observed entailed the creation of being, the diversification of being into various forms, and the ornamentation of those diverse beings. This three-fold pattern was again depicted in two sets of three days, or triads. There is a direct correlation between the first triad and the second (see chart). This sense of order and structure was also perceived in the direction or movement of Genesis 1. The Creation account in Genesis 1 moves from higher to lower, from heaven to earth, descending from fiery elements and bodies through air and water to conclude in earthly elements and bodies. This structure appealed to sensibilities of the ancient and medieval theologians who commented on this text but it should also be noted that this structure was eminently teachable.

<b>Diversification</b>	<b>Ornamentation</b>
Day 1 – Light	Day 4 – Sun, Moon and Stars
Day 2 – Firmament (sky) and Sea	Day 5 – Birds and Fish
Day 3 – Land and Vegetation	Day 6 – Animals and Human Beings

Article 1 *utrum informitas materiae creatae praecesserit tempore distinctionem ipsius*<sup>31</sup>

In the first Article of Q 66 Aquinas introduced the disagreement which will occupy much of the remaining QQ and their Articles in this section but which will never be resolved: Was created matter formless for a time prior to its diversification? It is a

<sup>30</sup> See especially *Commentary* II, 12, 1-2 and *De potentia* 3.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 12, 4; *De potentia* IV, 1; ST I 69, 1; and 74, 2.

question which derives from the medieval understanding of the three-fold actions of God in Genesis 1: Creation, Diversification, and Ornamentation. With most theologians of the time, Aquinas read his text literally and with an assumption that this conveyed an actual event upon which a metaphorical meaning might be built, but which also stood as a literal truth. Genesis 1:1 states that God made heaven and earth. For Aquinas and for Augustine before him that is the creative moment when God created being itself. The actions of the next three days are not Creation *per se*, but diversification of the created matter which had been created in the event described in that first verse. Likewise the second set of three days is an ornamentation of the things diversified in the first three days. These days do not describe what Aquinas considered to be creative in a technical meaning of that word. These days describe the impartation of forms and motions to matter which had been given being in a separate action on God's part.

The question at hand in this article is whether there was a gap of any time, even a moment of time, between the creative event and the subsequent acts of diversification and ornamentation. As the Blackfriar's translator succinctly translates Aquinas's words: "On this the holy authorities differ."<sup>32</sup> Augustine, in his *Confessions*,<sup>33</sup> his influential commentary on Genesis, *Gen. ad litt.*,<sup>34</sup> and elsewhere had posited the idea that there was no actual time between the events recorded in Genesis 1:1 and those recorded in the subsequent verses, despite the use of the word "day" to delineate those events. In Augustine's conceptualization of the Creation event, the days mark out not temporal events but logical sequence. In another strand of patristic exegesis of this text stood the Cappadocian Basil the Great, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and others. These theologians also held that the first verse was the creative event, but that the days are just what a simple and literal reading would suggest them to be, days, periods of time, twenty-four hours long, during which the action of diversification and ornamentation took place.

For Aquinas this second position posed a potential problem which was rooted in his Aristotelian hylomorphic physics. Just as forms do not exist without actually being

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<sup>32</sup> I, 66, 1c, *circa hoc sunt diversae opiniones sanctorum*. Trans.: Wallace, 27.

<sup>33</sup> See *Conf.* XII, 29, 40.

<sup>34</sup> See especially *Gen. ad litt.* I, 9, 15.



imparted to matter, likewise matter does not exist without some form.<sup>35</sup> If the diversification and ornamentation of subsequent days is the impartation of form on matter, what was that matter prior to this diversification and ornamentation? Did God create some vast quantity of primordial matter on which he then imparted the forms of sun, trees, rocks, and other corporeal things? This was important for reading these theologians, for the implication of an unformed matter meant that the position of Basil and the others sounded strikingly similar to the ideas of certain pre-Socratic philosophers who fall under the term “monists.” These philosophers were generally considered to be atheists. Aquinas devoted considerable energies within this Q to extricate these theologians from that association.

Aquinas solved the apparent dilemma by reading Basil, Chrysostom, and others to be saying that the primordial matter was not entirely formless, but it simply had not been fully formed, it lacked the three fold beauty which would be imparted to it by light instead of darkness, shape instead of shapelessness, and fullness in place of emptiness. But in so doing let the reader take note of the fact that Aquinas conveniently passed over the first part of this Article’s *sed contra* in which he asserted that a perfect creator would not have created without perfect or completed form. This reading of Basil and his theological heirs was only reached through a charitable interpretation and some accommodation.

Clearly Augustine’s interpretation did not cause as many problems for Aquinas. The instantaneous Creation meant that while logically formlessness precedes form, it was not the case that relatively formless matter existed for a period prior to the reception of final form. But Aquinas took great pains in this rather long article to argue that the opinion of the other patristic theologians could also be faithful both to the Scriptural principle and to the Aristotelian hylomorphism which undergirded his conception of reality.

He also introduced but did not yet fully develop another important principle of reading Genesis, that of condescension. Aquinas perceived that the text of Genesis 1 was originally written for a primitive audience. The realities of that audience required that

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<sup>35</sup> Augustine had used this very issue to introduce his a-temporal interpretation of Genesis 1 in the *Conf.*, see XII, 3, 3 – 8, 8. Therein he described his own attempts to imagine a formless existence. Upon failure in that attempt, he invited the reader to join him in thinking about Creation in another way.

Moses write for them in terms which did not exactly fit into the more precise language of the patristic theologians, philosophers, or Aquinas himself.<sup>36</sup> This was an important tool in Aquinas' task of reconciling differences between the text and the statements of theologians and philosophers which he utilized on several occasions.<sup>37</sup> This was also a pillar within his argument about *reverenter exponitur* in the prologue of *Contra errores Graecorum*.

What stands out here, in contrast to the Articles which made Q 65, is that Aquinas resolutely refused to come to a conclusion, except to allow both of the interpretations to stand as possibilities. One might argue that Aquinas had the ability to make a judgment based upon the principle used in the prior Question. The Augustinian strand is much easier to reconcile with the philosophical conception of the nature of matter, thus it would seem the principle articulated above in 65, 2 could be used to argue that Augustine's interpretation is the correct one. But he did not bring himself to say that Basil's position is *erronea* or *omnia inconvenientia* as Origen's position was found in that earlier article. The reverential reading which found Boethius' assertion to be possible in 65, 4 is applied here. While he may have found it difficult to see how this would work, it is possible, in Aquinas' estimation, for the interpretation of Basil to be true.

Article 2 *utrum sit una materia omnium corporalium*<sup>38</sup>

The second article of Question 66 bore a superficial resemblance to the preceding article but also stood in a sharp contrast to it. In the second article Aquinas addressed the question of whether one type of unformed matter is common to all bodies.<sup>39</sup> This Article's argument developed around the medieval understanding of heavenly bodies which held that such bodies did not seem to undergo change and decay in the same way as earthly bodies. Here it is the natural philosophers who disagree. Interestingly, the phrase to describe this situation is exactly the same as that used to describe the differing

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<sup>36</sup> See I, 66, 1ad5.

<sup>37</sup> This principle will resurface in I, 67, 4c, where it received more extensive treatment. See also Gilson, *Thomism*, 204-205.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 12, 1; SCG II, 16; *De substantiis separatis* 7; and *In De caelo* I, 8.

<sup>39</sup> I, 66, 2, *Utrum una sit materia informis omnium corporalium*.

opinions among patristic theologians: *diversae opiniones*. The treatment of this, however, is quite different. The natural philosophers of antiquity and the medieval period are given their opportunity to state their case, much as the patristic theologians in the prior article were carefully reported and examined. But unlike the first Article, Aquinas concluded that Aristotle was correct. The other philosophers' were given means to be in accord with Aristotelian thought, but Aristotle's quintessence theory of heavenly bodies is clearly favored.

To the modern this question is difficult to appreciate on the basis of the content. The editor of the Blackfriar's edition noted that this entire article hangs on issues which only pertain to medieval scientific understanding.<sup>40</sup> From the perspective of post-Newtonian physics and atomic theory which undergird modern cosmology, the argument of this article borders on the risible. But the ancients had heated debates about the exact nature of heavenly bodies and these debates were still reverberating in the medieval world of Aquinas. Even within the Objections and the *sed contra* of this Question Aquinas noted Aristotle was arguing against himself.<sup>41</sup>

While one might appreciate the importance of this question for the medieval theologian; this entire article presents another challenge for the traditional reader of the ST. It does not really touch upon the ultimate *exitus* and *reditus* goal of the ST except perhaps with an eye toward man's position within the Thomistic universe but that seems farfetched. An interesting tangent for the theologian, its place in the whole trajectory of the summa is difficult to ascertain. It could be that Aquinas, after an exploration of the patristic theologians in the first Article is simply letting the natural philosophers have their say in this discussion of the nature of heavenly beings. In this reading of why Aquinas included this material the voices of the philosophers were loud enough that Aquinas felt they had to be given this space. But that idea suffers in that if this is so, Aquinas does not behave consistently in this regard. There are other places within this section of the ST in which the philosophers are quiet and in which one might expect them to have something to say. Another reading of Aquinas' motive might be that this Article is reflective of an essential character trait of Aquinas himself. Aquinas was clearly knowledgeable about ancient and medieval science. One cannot rule out the possibility

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<sup>40</sup> Wallace, 33, note a.

<sup>41</sup> See I, 66, 2ob2 and 2sc.

that this Article reflects a touch of the pride to which members of academe are often subject and he is simply showing off. But that also seems out of character for Aquinas.

The key to understanding this Article's rationale becomes clear through two comparisons. Aquinas had asked almost exactly the same question in his *Commentary*.<sup>42</sup> There the debate between the various philosophical voices was far more robust, but Augustine was entirely absent. The simplification of the philosophical debate and the insertion of Augustine suggest that the integration of Augustine's position is what Aquinas was really pursuing here.

The second comparison is internal to this Q, namely the disparate treatment of patristic sources between the first and second Articles of Q 66. The location and use of Augustine may offer another way to read this Article. In the first Article the natural philosophers appear briefly in the *corpus* of the Article as a sort of negative example of how the diversification of forms ought not to be understood. In the second Article, Augustine was cited in the first Objection and its Response, but nowhere else in the rest of this quite lengthy article, nor do any others of theologians. The citation of Augustine is from *Confessions*<sup>43</sup> and is interpreted to side with the more Platonic notion that the heavenly bodies are made of the same sort of material as the earthly bodies. In his conclusion Aquinas politely disagreed while admitting the other position could be admitted if one understood that the unity in substance was limited to the level of corporeality.

If one allows that this section of the ST is about reading the patristic theologians reverentially this appearance of Augustine becomes significant. Aquinas explored briefly the best ideas that the philosophers had to offer on the nature of heavenly bodies, located Augustine within that tradition, and disagreed with him. In order to read Augustine reverentially, Aquinas suggested that one had to accept that Augustine understood his world within a particular philosophical framework or context. Augustine had taken a side within a debate in which thinkers had engaged long before Augustine had been born and on which subsequent science had shed further knowledge and demonstrated that even Augustine could err.

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<sup>42</sup> *Commentary* II, 12, 1.

<sup>43</sup> *Conf.* XII, 12, 15.

“In this Augustine follows the opinion of Plato, who did not hold for a fifth essence.”<sup>44</sup> This little line furthered the point he had originally made with Origen in I, 65, 2 but now applied to an authority who was read favorably, Augustine himself. Even Augustine cannot be read as an absolute authority. Like all theologians past and present, in Aquinas’s estimation, a reverential reading of Augustine means that one has to allow him to be a product of his age and the information which was available to him at the time of his writing. In the prologue to *Contra errores Graecorum* Aquinas had noted that the patristic theologians often discussed a doctrine which subsequently would become a matter of controversy and debate. Their discussions of these controversial issues prior to resolution often lacked the theological precision which one would expect of theologians after the conclusive debate had taken place.<sup>45</sup> Aquinas argued for the reverential reading which took into account that these theologians did not have the benefit of the subsequent argument and the clarity it brought to the issue.

Augustine in the second Article of Question 66 is contextualized within the larger philosophical community. His theological commentary where it touched upon the essential nature of heavenly bodies was also part of another discussion, a discussion which continued long after his death. It so happened that Aquinas considered the side of the argument which Augustine favored to have been demonstrably wrong in its conclusion. But that was an opinion which benefited from the eight centuries of discussion which lay between Aquinas and Augustine. Augustine followed Plato in this regard and Aquinas read him accordingly.

Article 3 *utrum caelum Empyreum*<sup>46</sup> *sit concreatum materiae informi*<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> I, 66, 2ad1, *ergo dicendum quod Augustinus sequitur in hoc opinionem Platonis*. Trans.: Wallace, 39.

<sup>45</sup> This was especially true for the subsequent readings of Origen whose works prior to the Arian controversy and the Council of Nicaea were subsequent to the Councils read as potentially supportive of the Arian heresy. As a result many of his works were condemned. His many supporters in the ancient church would argue for just such a reverential reading, giving rise to what came to be called the Origenistic controversy which would sweep up many contemporaries of Augustine in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, including Jerome. For a more substantive treatment of this subject, see Michael Thomas, 138ff.

<sup>46</sup> For further discussion Aquinas articulation of the Empyrean heaven, see *Commentary* II, 2, 2 and the discussion of the Creation of angels in *De potentia* III, 18 and 19.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 2, 2, 1-2; II, 12, 1, 5; *De potentia* IV, 1ad15; and ST I, 70, 3.

This principle of reading a patristic theologian within the limits of his context gets further treatment in 66, 3 in which Aquinas addressed the co-Creation of the empyrean heaven. The empyrean heaven is a concept which roughly coincides with what most Christians would call heaven today. The empyrean heaven was for Aquinas the physical place in which the beatific vision was realized, where the human being beheld God for an eternity of bliss.<sup>48</sup>

The question under consideration revolves around three points which are addressed within the *corpus*. The first and primary point is whether this place was created at the first Creation or whether it will be created at the point of resurrection as part of a new Creation, a second divine creative act. As a sub-point, Aquinas also notes that there are some who have questioned whether this is a physical place or should be better understood as an intellectual activity or state of being, irrespective of physical location. Finally, in a second sub-point, Aquinas also addressed how this place related to the known spheres of heaven.

The resolution to these questions is simply stated: The empyrean heaven was part of the original Creation, it is a real place, but it has either no influence on the lower spheres which we can access through the senses or only a mediated, indiscernible influence. But these statements and their arguments occupy at most a handful of sentences within this fairly substantial Article. The bulk of the Article, especially the *corpus*, is more properly described as an evaluation of the arguments put forward by Strabo, Bede, Basil, and, lastly, Augustine who needed to be understood carefully in his philosophical context. For when Augustine referred to the empyrean heaven, he did not mean what Aquinas and other “modern” readers meant by this term.<sup>49</sup>

In reading the entire article, one quickly observes that Aquinas was not simply seeking to establish the answers to these three questions about the origin, nature, and location of the empyrean heaven. The answers to the questions are interestingly dealt with via arguments which are outside the discussion of the majority of the material. It is as if the actual answers to the questions are dealt with through a train of thought which is alien to

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<sup>48</sup> I, 66, 3c, *In cuius positione quantum ad aliquid conveniunt, scilicet quantum ad hoc quod sit locus beatorum.*

<sup>49</sup> I, 66, 3c, *nunc ponitur a modernis.*

the Article itself. The majority of the Article wrestles with what various theologians have said. Aquinas only found three, Basil, Bede and Strabo<sup>50</sup> who argue for his position. And he found their arguments weak: “These arguments are not completely convincing.”<sup>51</sup> When he turned to the arguments of the other patristic theologians, he found various opinions which seem to be answering a different question. In answering the question himself, Aquinas drew a “better argument”<sup>52</sup> from the condition of glory which is both the corporeal and spiritual reward. Because it is the place to which we are going, it is most fitting that the place, the goal, actually exists.

The topic, unlike the prior question of the nature of heavenly bodies, has a clear connection with the *reditus* of the ST which in part would explain its presence. But this question is not *prima facie* essential to the commentary on the first chapter of Genesis. The subject and its question must be introduced and hence, as a reader seeking philosophical or theological answers, it seems quite contrived. But while it did not make sense theologically or philosophically, the introduction of this material did allow Aquinas to develop another step of the reverential reading. Again this revolves around the reading of Augustine. At the end of the *corpus* Aquinas asks the reader to “notice”<sup>53</sup> that Augustine is quoting Porphyry who is working with a different referent for the empyrean heaven. This is “to correct any impression that Augustine held for an empyrean heaven as this is now understood by moderns.”<sup>54</sup>

Thus in Article 2, when the question did not directly impact the final purposes for the ST, the principle of a contextualized reading of the patristic theologian is established. In Article 3, when it directly impacts that question, the same contextualized reading allows Aquinas reverentially to set Augustine’s words aside; although, these same words could

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<sup>50</sup>Wallace, 40, n. 5, Although Aquinas believed the work he cited was by Strabo, it was not actually that of the theologian Walafridus Strabo, a monk of Fulda, who died in 849. It was not until relatively recently that this work was discovered to be that of Anselm of Laon (d. 1117) which may have in some part been derived from Strabo’s work. It appears that Aquinas worked with a copy of the *Glossa ordinaria* and other glosses which are not extant.

<sup>51</sup> I, 66, 3c, *Hae autem rationes non sunt multum cogentes.*

<sup>52</sup> I, 66, 3c, *convenientior ratio* (or with some mss. read: *convenientius*).

<sup>53</sup> I, 66, 3c, *Sciendum est.*

<sup>54</sup> I, 66, 3c, *ne aliquis opinetur Augustinum caelum empyreum posuisse sicut nunc ponitur a modernis.*

be construed to contradict Aquinas' own conclusions. Because Augustine is following Plato and Porphyry, his ideas about the empyrean heaven do not apply to the discussion in which Aquinas is engaged.

Again one may take note of the pedagogical nature of this text. Having established a principle in a rather simple context within Article 2, the principle is then demonstrated in a more complex situation in Article 3. The reader who is searching only for theological truths or philosophical insights is left wondering why deep questions are so perfunctorily addressed, but the reader who observes the treatment of sources finds that an important principle of reverential reading has been articulated and demonstrated.

Article 4 *utrum tempus sit eidem concreatum*<sup>55</sup>

This Article returns the reader to the basic disagreement which was laid out in the first Article of the Question, the polarity in which the Augustinian position stands over against that of the "other theologians." The topic at hand is one which has long intrigued interpreters of Genesis 1. What is the relationship of time to the act of Creation? Augustine held that there were only two initially created things: Angelic nature and unformed matter. Basil, Chrysostom and others hold for a four-fold initial Creation. Along with angelic nature and unformed matter, they hold that time and the empyrean heaven had been created.

As Aquinas noted in the prior question, Augustine used the word "empyrean heaven" with a different referent than we do, thus Aquinas holds that he did not talk about the creation of an empyrean heaven. Augustine also held a very different idea about the creation of time, suggesting that it was not part of the creative act described in Genesis 1, which described a logical progression, not a temporal progression. The other patristic theologians think differently about this. Basil and Chrysostom and others hold that time was initially created and the days recorded in Genesis 1 are in fact days.

In the *corpus* of this question, Aquinas simply stated the two positions, explaining how each position was logically deduced by the respective theologians. Augustine's treatment requires a little more attention as it is a less intuitive reading of the text. It is within the Responses to the Objections that Aquinas addressed the real substance of this

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 12, 5; and ST 46, 3.



Article. In the Responses to each of the Objections, the statements of Augustine and Basil are carefully woven into the Aristotelian and Biblical framework. In the first reply Augustine's position has integrity, but one has to realize that it is based on concept that angelic nature and unformed matter precede time in "origin or meaning."<sup>56</sup> In the Response to the second Objection, which had focused on how time, which was measured by the cycle of light and darkness, could exist before God differentiated light from dark, Aquinas suggested that the gradual formation which Basil suggested might also apply to time. At the first, only crude days could be distinguished, but later, seasons, years, months, etc., could be delineated as time was more fully formed.

The Response to the third Objection is perhaps the most illuminating. The Objection was based on the fact that time was measured by the movement of celestial bodies. The Objection suggested that time could not exist without the movement of those bodies which were not created until the fourth day. Hence, time could not have been created at the beginning. Aquinas' Response, the longest of the five included in this question, suggested the possibility that since time is a measurement of movement, perhaps it was another, first movement which was measured. Aquinas' answer suggests that Aquinas himself was aware of the limitations of his own knowledge. There were movements and activities which were not recorded in the first chapter of Genesis or anywhere else in Scripture.

This fourth Article could then be seen to establish yet another principle for the reader of patristic resources: epistemic humility. This humility would prove essential to Aquinas' proposed reverential reading of the patristic theologians and to the enterprise of the whole ST. Confronted with solidly orthodox theologians who disagree on an essential doctrine of the Christian faith, Aquinas recognized a certain breadth of possibility and in so doing he makes an argument for intellectual space in a climate in which the boundaries of orthodoxy were constricting. There is much that is unknown, so much that one can read the differing conclusions of Augustine and other theologians about a basic doctrine such as Creation and be unable to conclude who is right and who is wrong. Even a literal reading of divine revelation leaves room to disagree.

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<sup>56</sup> I, 66, 4ad1, *natura angelica et materia informis praecedunt origine, seu natura, tempus.*

Question 66 has advanced the reverential reading of the patristic theologians in several important ways. Having briefly surveyed the generally accepted reading of the patristic theologians in Question 65, Aquinas established two important principles in this Question. The first principle is not yet fully developed, that of condescension in reading Genesis. The second principle receives a more thorough treatment, that of intellectual contextualization. Augustine was the subject here, especially as he dealt with the empyrean heaven. According to Aquinas, his words on this essential topic of the ST have to be read in his Neo-Platonic context, “he follows Plato in this.”<sup>57</sup> His words need to be carefully scrutinized in this philosophical context lest the reader think that Augustine understood the empyrean heaven to refer to the same thing as the moderns.<sup>58</sup> When Augustine referred to the empyrean heaven he was not referring to the same thing as other theologians. This principle was immediately demonstrated in the next Article as Aquinas noted Augustine only admitted two initially created things, angelic nature and unformed matter. Most added two more to that list, empyrean heaven and time. This Article posited a conflict between these two strands of interpretation, but the tension is resolved by the carefully reverential reading of Augustine in the two preceding Articles. Empyrean heaven has been placed in another category and time by the principle of contextualized reading. In the subsequent treatment of Genesis 1, the remaining disputed element of Creation, time, will become the focus of the distinction between Augustine and other theologians in Aquinas’ subsequent treatment.

At this point again, a comparison with Aquinas’ earlier treatment leads the reader to conclude that he was engaged in an activity which is quite distinct from his earlier treatments of this material, both within other works (*Commentary* and *De potentia*) as well as earlier within the ST (I, 44-49). This treatment, I am arguing, is pedagogical. More than ten years prior to writing these words, in the *Commentary*, Aquinas had been aware of this conflict between Augustine and the rest of the interpreters of Genesis 1. But unlike in the ST, he dealt with it immediately. Distinction 12 of Book II within the Lombard’s *Sentences* began the treatment of the six days of Creation. Aquinas *Commentary* treated the Lombard’s six Chapters in five Articles. In the second and third of these Articles Aquinas wondered if everything had been created simultaneously and

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<sup>57</sup> I, 66, 2ad1.

<sup>58</sup> I, 66, 3c.

then whether the distinction of the days according to Augustine's exposition was viable (*salvetur*). In the ST, Aquinas reserves the consideration of this direct conflict between Augustine's exposition and Basil's strand of interpretation until 74, 2, the penultimate Article of the entire section, in which he finally asked whether the Creation event was one day or seven days.<sup>59</sup> It is in the space created by delaying the answer to this question in which Aquinas argued for intellectual maneuvering room by having both Augustine's exposition and that of Basil and the many who understood Genesis 1 with him play out.

## 2. Q 67 as Further Development of Reverential Patristic Reading: Semantics.

In Q 67 Aquinas expanded upon the careful consideration of the words which patristic authorities employed. More than a recapitulation of what he had just said, this was a substantive advance upon his earlier treatment in 66, 3. Considering the creation of light recorded in the first day of the Genesis account, Aquinas carefully parsed both the literal and metaphorical meaning of this term. He established that there were indeed multiple ways in which the word "light" could be understood (67, 1). But there were also limits to that multiplicity of meaning. A word could not have just any meaning or it would cease to have meaning. Some meanings for the term light were philosophically impossible (67, 2). Having established both the possibility and the limits of semantic parsing, however, Aquinas asserted that there was a substantial field of meaning possible for the word. Augustine's and Basil's understanding of this word "light" presented something of a test case for the productive implementation of the semantic principles of reverential reading (67, 4). Article 3 of this Q is one of the Articles which are bracketed out of this process by the use of wide ranging Scriptural citation.

### Question 67 *de opere distinctionis secundum se*

In QQ 67-69 Aquinas took up the issues which surround what he understood to be the act of differentiation in Genesis 1, or the first three days recorded in Genesis 1. That rather nuanced distinction is important. While the more popular understanding of Genesis 1 read the days as calendar days, Augustine held that the first six days were not actual days, but logical markers which provided structure to the Creation account. Throughout these Questions, the temporal understanding of other patristic theologians

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<sup>59</sup> I, 74, 2, *Utrum omnes isti dies sint unus dies*.

and the non-temporal or logical progression understanding which was credited<sup>60</sup> to Augustine were both allowed to stand. Each was carefully worked into the interpretation of Genesis 1. If the reader should happen to think like Basil and the others, Aquinas demonstrated how that could be understood within the best scientific understanding of the day. The position of Augustine required far less treatment as it posed fewer intellectual and philosophical challenges for Aquinas, but it too was integrated into both the exegesis of the text and the understanding of current philosophy.

More than simply a demonstration of a reverential reading, Question 67 also developed the practice. While the contextualized reading of Question 66 continued, Aquinas deepened the examination of a principle of interpretation in this Question: that of sensitivity to language and especially its ambiguity. Words can have more than one meaning. The reverential reader of the patristic theologians had to take this semantic reality into account. Of course, this is not a new concept. Medieval scholastics spent a great deal of time and energy parsing the meanings and usages of various words. Their occasionally well deserved reputation for hair-splitting theology largely stems from this practice of carefully categorizing and noting minute differences in the words of a text.

This again is suggestive of an audience. This Article seems a likely candidate for Wallace's disparaging comments within his introduction to the Blackfriar's edition of the text and its translation.<sup>61</sup> This material would have been even more pedantic and simplistic to a scholastic audience of the universities of medieval Europe. This is not a treatment conducted at the university level, but is quite simplistic. But it makes a great deal of sense if Aquinas's audience were not schoolmen; rather, they were the young men who were streaming into the priories of the Dominican Order and the *lectores* who were charged with their daily education. It is true that students at the universities of medieval Europe would have spent years noticing the distinctions between words as they progressed through the Trivium, Quadrivium, and into the Bachelor and Master ranks. Young friars in a priory, however, who were engaged in theological reflection for the first time, would not have the benefit of the basic Liberal Arts curriculum which

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<sup>60</sup> This idea is not original to Augustine, but was already articulated in the first century by the Jewish interpreter Philo. See Fearghus Ó Fearghail, "Philo and the Fathers: The Letter and the Spirit" in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit* Eds.: Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey. (Dublin/Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1995), 50.

<sup>61</sup> Wallace, Intr. xx.

would have prepared them for this activity. The priories were busily educating young men who did not otherwise have access to the quite limited opportunities for education in the medieval world. In Q 67, at least in some small part, Aquinas sought to fill in that missing element.

Question 67 was dedicated to the consideration of the first day and hence revolved around the topic of light in four Articles. The third Article which carefully addressed whether light is a quality stands out from the other three Articles in this Question. Not so much an intellectual hinge, it is set apart in that the patristic theologians are only cited once, and this reference is a statement which seems to serve little purpose in the *sed contra*. This article seems to address different purpose in the larger goals of the ST. In Article 3 Aquinas honed important language. In this instance, he delineated exactly what is a quality or attribute. This was important for the subsequent discussion of the Incarnation in the *tertia pars* of the ST where Aquinas came to discuss the Sacraments (III, 60-90) and the Incarnation (III, 1-26).

The other three Articles, however, gave Aquinas an opportunity to explore another principle of reading reverentially, the nuanced understanding of a word's meaning. The intellectual tension within these Articles was again created by positing Augustine's position over against that of the other theologians. Augustine had taught that the light created on the first day was not the light which enables our physical eyes to see.<sup>62</sup> Augustine held that this first light was actually a term which described, and hence was a synonym for, the angelic nature, a spiritual light. In Augustine's view, the light which enables the physical eye to see was created with the celestial bodies that provide it on the fourth day. The other patristic theologians held that the light created on the first day was indeed the physical phenomenon with which we see today and the fourth day was an ornamentation of the first day's diversification.

It should also be noted that Aquinas treated this material in other works as well. These much richer and complex treatments again serve to illustrate that ST I, 65-74 are engaged in a different sort of activity. We will address several of these comparisons under each Article.

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<sup>62</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 21, 38 – IV, 34, 50.

Article 1 *utrum lux proprie in spiritualibus dici possit*<sup>63</sup>

Within the Objections and *sed contra* of this article Aquinas set up a weak tension between three authorities who asserted that light is a proper, not figurative, description of spiritual beings. Augustine said exactly this,<sup>64</sup> Dionysius said light was God's name.<sup>65</sup> Even the Apostle Paul, in one of the rare citations of Scripture outside of Genesis, is quoted to suggest that light is spiritual in a rather contorted reading of Ephesians 5:13. This is contrasted with a citation from Ambrose who says that splendor (*splendorem*) is metaphorically applied to God.<sup>66</sup>

The tension gave Aquinas opportunity to make a most elementary of statements: Words can have more than one meaning. He uses the word "vision" as an example, citing Matthew 5:8, the beatitude in which Jesus says the blessed shall "see" God. In a parallel construction, he then applied the principle it to the use of the word "light." The answer is a simple appeal to semantic contingency. The word has more than one meaning. So basic is the resolution to the issue that Aquinas broke with the usual form of an Article and dispensed with any Responses to the Objections. The tension created in the opening of the Article simply was not real, but the statement about multiple meanings for a word was a necessary foundation for what followed, as indeed it would have been foundational for almost all medieval theology. The more pressing question for the modern reader is the purpose of this material. For someone trained in logic, grammar, and other Liberal Arts at a university, this would have been extremely pedantic, even insulting, as if one's algebra teacher felt compelled in the middle of the term to insert a unit on basic addition and subtraction. Aquinas clearly did not consider it to be insulting to his audience.

Article 2 *utrum lux sit corpus*<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 13, 2; *In Joannem* I, 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 28, 45.

<sup>65</sup> *De divinis nominibus* IV, 5.

<sup>66</sup> I, 67, 1sc, *ponit splendorem inter ea quae de Deo metaphorice dicuntur.*

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 13, 3; and *In De anima* II, 14.

The second Article of the Question pondered the nature of light. Is light a body? Again, Augustine<sup>68</sup> and Dionysius<sup>69</sup> combine, but this time with Aristotle,<sup>70</sup> to form three Objections which are arranged to assert that light is indeed a body. The *sed contra* argues that since two bodies cannot occupy the same place at the same time, and since light and air occupy the same space, light cannot be a body.

This occasioned a substantial response from Aquinas in the *corpus*. He marshaled a three-fold argument, largely based on logic and medieval natural philosophy, to assert that light could not be a body (*corpus*). As such the argument is a thorough exploration of contemporary state of scholarship at the time and is notable in that it avoids some of the more fanciful treatments of light found at the time, most notably an interpretation commonly held at Oxford and formulated by an early contemporary of Aquinas, Robert Grosseteste (1168-1253). His ideas are expressly denied here,<sup>71</sup> reiterating a position which is found in a much more thorough treatment of this question in *Commentary II*, 13, 1, 3.<sup>72</sup>

It is in the comparison of these two treatments, however, that the pedagogical nature of ST, I, 67, 2 again becomes clear. The *Commentary* is far lengthier and detailed, exploring the philosophers in some detail, including the Arab commentators of Aristotle. The central arguments which form the core of the *corpus* in the ST are also found in the *Commentary*. It is in the Responses to the Objections which form the actual point of the Article in the ST. Augustine and Dionysius are extracted from difficulty by an appeal to the semantic differentiation noted in the prior Article. Interestingly, Aristotle is also and similarly extracted but with a notable distinction in that, unlike the other two, the reader is told that Aristotle may simply be ignored in these matters.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *De libero arbitrio* II, 3, 8. (Note that Wallace, 54, n. 2, erroneously places this citation in book III).

<sup>69</sup> *De divinis nominibus* II, 4.

<sup>70</sup> Wallace suggests *Topics* V, 4.

<sup>71</sup> See Wallace's appendix on "Medieval Optics," 193-196.

<sup>72</sup> The question of whether light is a body is not substantively treated within *De potentia*.

<sup>73</sup> I, 67, 2ad2, *Non tamen est multum curandum de eis exemplis quae Aristoteles inducit in libris logicalibus, quia inducit ea ut probabilia secundum opinionem aliorum.*

When considering the first two Articles of Q 67, Aquinas again did not resolve the dispute between Augustine and the other theologians, but in Articles 1, and 2, explored how various theologians and philosophers used the word “light.” This rather elementary material only makes sense as a pedagogical exercise. Not only is the intellectual tension negligible in these Articles but the Objections and their Responses are simple, almost child-like. Consider the statement of what would be obvious to a scholastic in the corpus of the first article: “Any term may be employed in two senses: one in keeping with its original imposition, the other with common usage.”<sup>74</sup> The implication is obvious. The reverential handling of the patristic theologians requires the reader to inquire about a word’s use in its context. In this case, light is a word which has multiple meanings in various contexts. It is a simple and appropriate illustration of the point which also happens to fit neatly into the sequence of Genesis 1.

These first two Articles of the Question themselves stand in a very simple relationship with one another, a relationship which continues to be familiar for anyone engaged in thoughtful reading. Article 1 asserts that words such as “vision” or “light” have different meanings to different theologians. Hence the reader must take this into account. The second Article then pushes back against this relativizing tendency by asserting that there are some things which cannot be said.<sup>75</sup> Other ideas are simply “ridiculous” and thus should be rejected.<sup>76</sup> That words have multiple meanings is obvious, but that does not mean words have no meaning. Aquinas does not propose some conceptual chaos in which all meanings are valid, but he does assert the basic principle that words are often given different referents in various authors. The reverential reader must practice a valuable skill in both contextualizing the word and evaluating it in light of what is known.

### Article 3 *utrum lux sit qualitas*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> I, 67, 1c, *Dicendum quod de aliquo nomine dupliciter convenit loqui: uno modo, secundum primam eius impositionem; alio modo, secundum usum nominis.* This is simply elementary level scholastic thinking and again might be seen as another reason why so many theologically erudite readers have passed over this material.

<sup>75</sup> I, 67, 2c, *Nec potest dici quod fiat in tempore imperceptibili.*

<sup>76</sup> I, 67, 2c, *Ridiculum est etiam dicere quod...*

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Commentary II, 13, 3; In De anima II, 14; and De 108 articulis 7.*



As noted above, the third Article in Q 67 seems to be engaged in a different sort of argument. The exploration of semantic nuance is suspended. Aquinas was on a quest for truth here, particularly the proper understanding of what is a quality (*qualitas*). As already noted, this would be an important facet of the Christological discussion which occupies the *tertia pars*. Other than John Damascene's statement in the *sed contra* the patristic theologians and the text of Genesis are completely absent. This is a philosophical discussion of a category. There is a correct answer and Aquinas logically proceeds toward it. Light is a quality, but more importantly, the understanding of exactly what is a quality is advanced.

But even the definitive answer is simplified for this audience. Aquinas had asked a similar question in *Commentary* II, 13, 3, *Utrum lux sit accidens*. There the treatment was much longer and cited Augustine, Dionysius, and several additional references to Aristotle and his commentators. One can presume that this Article from the *Commentary* was in fact undergirding this ST Article by virtue of the fact that the two Articles make use of an almost identical *sed contra* statement, citing the same passage from John of Damascus. The Augustinian and Dionysian materials were stripped out of this Article, leaving the philosophical material, but even that much simplified. Aquinas must have been writing down to an audience who were simply unable to attain to the level of the *Commentary*. This question had to be answered, and he felt compelled to retain some of the philosophical material, but the patristic material he removed, presumably because it would have complicated his treatment of those same patristic theologians in the prior two Articles. When Aquinas sought an important answer, he set aside the consideration of the patristic theologians.

Article 4 *utrum conveniens fuit prima die fieri lucem*<sup>78</sup>

After the interlude of the third Article in the Q, Aquinas returned to the reverential reading of the patristic theologians, examining in greater detail the principle of multiple meanings for a word. The Article established a tension which many have noted about the text of Genesis 1, the creation of light prior to the creation of the light-emitting bodies such as the sun and moon. Aquinas intensifies the tension with the prior Article's

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 13, 4; *De potentia* IV 1ad15; and ST I, 69, 1.

assertion that light is a quality, not a thing of itself. Aquinas argued that a quality is not properly created prior to the actual thing of which it is a quality.

Here the larger tension between Augustine's interpretation and that of the other strand of interpreters again is examined. Augustine had proposed that the light created on the first day was actually the creation of the angelic minds, which are best described as light in his opinion.<sup>79</sup> Aquinas simply stated this. Others (Basil in particular was singled out) suggested that the angelic nature is not mentioned here because God created that prior to the events recorded in Genesis 1. This second model assumed that the physical phenomenon of light was created on the first day. This position Aquinas felt compelled to defend at some length. He listed four reasons that this might be possible. The first was an appeal to the principle of condescension mentioned above. Chrysostom had noted<sup>80</sup> that the primitive audience of Moses was prone to idolatry, especially of heavenly bodies. As a result, Aquinas imagined that the language used to describe the Creation event had been distorted to prevent them from falling into this idolatry. This explained why the description of the creation of the sun, moon and stars was delayed until the fourth day. The second reason suggested that the formation of the created matter was gradual, reflecting the wisdom of God. The third reason, according to Basil,<sup>81</sup> was that light was necessary to see anything and hence had to be the first created thing. The fourth reason seems to have been Aquinas's own. Light is necessary for the enumeration of days and hence had to be the first thing created.

Beginning with the second Response, Aquinas catalogued how one might reasonably hold to the creation of light on the first calendar day. Some have suggested a luminous cloud which either returned to its unformed state after the creation of the celestial bodies or adheres now to the celestial bodies, or from which the celestial bodies were made. These explanations were rejected for Aristotelian reasons. The Neo-Platonist Dionysius provided<sup>82</sup> the answer which Aquinas preferred. It was indeed the light of the sun, but the material of the sun had not yet been fully formed. It could not yet distinguish

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<sup>79</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* 1, 1, 3; 1, 2, 4 and 1, 4, 9.

<sup>80</sup> *In Gen.* Homily 5, PG 53, 52.

<sup>81</sup> *Hex.* Homily 2, SC 28:142.

<sup>82</sup> *De divinis nominibus* IV, 4, PG 3, 700.

seasons and the moon could not yet mark off the months. The partially formed Creation had begun with the quality of light which was emitted in a waxing and waning oscillation. This oscillating light roughly approximated the 24 hour period of a day.

Basil did receive a critical reading<sup>83</sup> as well. He had suggested<sup>84</sup> that the day and night cycle of the first days was the product of emission and contraction and not the product of some motion. Augustine had objected to this<sup>85</sup> and Aquinas noted that elsewhere in the same work, Augustine had not countenanced an appeal to the miraculous.<sup>86</sup> Here Aquinas expanded upon Dionysius' suggestion that the further formation of the light and the light bearing bodies would result in the companion motions which determined the seasons and other motions by which time is measured. In the first three days, only days could be measured, the measurement of seasons, years, months, etc., would have to wait for the creation of the heavenly bodies by which they are still measured today.

The reverential reading has been advanced significantly in the fourth Article. The patristic theologians did disagree and occasionally one can determine that one was more "correct" than another. There are right answers, and there are answers which are more appropriate than others, but sometimes we do not know and must admit that there are multiple possibilities. Semantic nuance while valuable, has limitations and humility before the question is essential.

Augustine's position, which increasingly provided the creative tension with the other interpretational strand is reiterated and given further explanation in the reply to the fourth objection. Augustine did not hold that there was any interval of actual time and understood that the production of light in the first day was not the physical, but the spiritual light which are the angels. The light and darkness is the differentiation between the enlightened creatures first formed and the not yet formed creatures which were still

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<sup>83</sup> I, 67, 4ad3.

<sup>84</sup> *Hex.* Homily 2, SC 28:176-178.

<sup>85</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 16, 31.

<sup>86</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* II, 1, 2.

in a formless darkness. The other alternative, according to Aquinas, is that the darkness is the foreknown spiritual darkness of the devil.<sup>87</sup>

Question 67 then can thus be read as an exercise in reading theologians in a semantic-historical context. The meaning of their words must be understood as they were spoken, in the context of the theologian's intellectual ideas and the situations to which they were addressed. This reading incorporates the ideas which Aquinas had developed in the prior Articles of QQ 65-66. It must be reiterated at this point that none of this is novel in the time or particularly unique to Aquinas. Indeed, much of this material would have been as simplistic to a medieval audience of scholars as it is to the philosophers and theologians of this era. The distinctions and skills developed here were foundational for the discussions of the medieval scholastic community. As he is writing the First Part of the ST, however, Aquinas does not have that community in mind as an audience. From the prologue of *Contra errores Graecorum* one can deduce this was a concept which had recently exercised Aquinas. It appears, however, that he used this section of the ST as a pedagogical tool for inculcating this skill in his actual audience, the friars in the *studia* of the Dominican Order.

3. Reverential reading as a theological *habitus*: Condescension and the sensitive treatment of authority in QQ 68-72.

In the next several QQ, Aquinas substantively developed the theological *habitus* which is critical for success as a reader of patristic authority. Having established the basic tools of reading these documents in prior QQ, the reader was now equipped to enter the theological treatment of both Scriptural texts and the authoritative interpreters of those texts. In a complex interplay of Scriptural and patristic sources, Aquinas constructed a nuanced hermeneutic for his reader which honored authorities with appropriate questions and critical thought, but which did not forget the undergirding epistemic humility for which was arguing. Of primary importance for the reader is the authority of the Scriptural text itself. Aquinas posited that while Scripture remained inviolable (68, 2), human interpretation of Scripture needed to be carefully delineated from the text itself (68, 1). This, however, did not completely satisfy the interpreter, as occasionally it appeared that Scripture itself had erroneously described the created world. For these

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<sup>87</sup> I, 67, 4ad4.

situations Aquinas introduced the concept of condescension which would be an important tool in the hands of the interpreter (68, 3).

At several points the development of reverential reading moves into a demonstration both of technique and value. The reverential reader's humility and sensitivity conveyed substantive benefits. While a superficial reading of the patristic theologians could have resulted in the simplistic rejection of either Augustine or Basil, the reverential reader found the disagreements of the patristic interpretations not to be a liability but to be a benefit to the reader of theology. The diversity of opinion served to strengthen the interpretation (69, 1) and this can be clearly seen in efforts of both Augustine and Basil to answer difficult questions, (69, 1-2).

That appropriation of diversity, however, is only possible in the presence of deep and underlying unity (70, 1). Once recognized, however, this unity allows one to apply the reverential reading even to Scriptural authority. The tools of condescension and intellectual contextualization are not a rejection of the authority of Scriptural authors but positive tools which enable the reader to access the truth of Scripture (70, 2).

By its very nature, a *habitus* is more than an intellectual assent, but a practice which needs to be embodied.<sup>88</sup> In brief treatments of the fourth and fifth day (71 and 72), Aquinas demonstrated for the reader how both the interpretation of Augustine and that of Basil were compatible and how each mutually reinforced the understanding of the singular doctrine of Creation to which both subscribed.

#### Question 68 *de opere secundae diei*

Question 68 introduced the reader to another facet of the reverential reading of patristic theologians, especially as they strive to become preachers and the interpreters of Scripture, Aquinas's highest authority. Through wrestling with the issues which surround the creation of the sea and sky, waters below and above in verses 6 and 7 of Genesis 1, Aquinas grappled with the role of faith as a hermeneutic criterion.<sup>89</sup> The text

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<sup>88</sup> Charry, 19-26.

<sup>89</sup> This question has again come to the fore for the current generation of Christian theologians. Responding to Modernity, many have endeavored to reassert the validity of faith as a functional hermeneutic for reading Scripture. Frequently they are referred to as the "Narrative Movement." The reader is commended to the works of Brevard Childs, Hans Frei, Ellen Davis, Richard Hays, Robert Jensen, Richard Bauckham, et al.

of Genesis 1 asserted that there was water above the sky. Common sense, medieval physics, and simple observation made this a difficult proposition to maintain in the thirteenth century just as it is difficult for an educated human being in the twenty-first century to seriously entertain the idea. Humanity has visited and returned from outer space. There would appear to be no waters above the firmament (sky), yet the text of Genesis 1 asserts it.

The Question was broken into four Articles as it addressed the second day: Was the firmament made on the second day? Are there waters above the firmament? Does the firmament separate some waters from others? And is there only one heaven, or are there many? As we have noted above, within this fourth Article the Scriptural references suddenly and forcefully reappeared in the argumentation. Unlike the prior Article in which Scripture dominated, 65, 1, the patristic sources are not absent from this Article. Indeed the patristic theologians provide the tension for the Article. As also noted in chapter four,<sup>90</sup> this is the Question in which Augustine's Scriptural hermeneutic came to the fore as well.

A comparison with Aquinas' earlier treatment of this material will once more prove very fruitful. He treated the waters above the firmament in both the *Commentary* and *De potentia*. These two works afford us an opportunity to examine not only how Aquinas treated this material in other places but also how his own ideas grew as he matured as a theologian for his *Commentary* was written early in his career and *De potentia* was written immediately prior to the *prima pars* of the ST.

Article 1 *utrum firmamentum sit factum secunda die*<sup>91</sup>

The first Article of Question 68 combined the prior contextualized reading with yet another important principle for the reverential reading of the patristic theologians: while their faith moved them to speak of lofty matters, their knowledge was finite and limited to their conceptualization of the world in which they lived. To demonstrate this Aquinas brought up a seemingly simple question: was the firmament made on the second day? The text seems perfectly clear that it was indeed made on the second day, but he raised three substantive objections to this statement from logic. In the first Objection Aquinas

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<sup>90</sup> Pp. 114ff.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 1, 1, 6; and *De potentia* IV, 1ad15.

observed that the text already recorded the creation of heaven and earth in the first verse. This complaint is rooted in the fact that Aquinas' Latin text had referred to the firmament with the same word used in verse one for "heaven" (*caelum*). How can the creation of the "heaven" occur on the second day when heaven has already been created? In the second Objection, Aquinas observed that this was out of order as the firmament (*caelum*) is more primary than water or earth, both of which had been mentioned prior to the creation of light on the first day. Perhaps even more significantly, the third Objection noted that this places the creation of the heavens within the six days of Creation, but the Creation which is described in the biblical Hexameron is entirely corruptible, and heaven itself is incorruptible. The *sed contra* on the other hand, simply restates the text of Genesis 1:6-7 in which the firmament is made on the second day.

Thus far in the discussion the patristic theologians have not appeared. The discussion of their treatment of this question and how that relates to the various opinions of philosophers occupied the *corpus*, but in a treatment which diverges from that which has come before within this section of the ST, this examination of the various patristic opinions fell under the overarching rubric of Augustine's two-pronged statement which opened the *corpus*: the Scriptural text is always right and one should be careful in matters of speculation lest a later discovery forced one to defend in a futile manner an erroneous statement made too authoritatively.<sup>92</sup>

After stating Augustine's double hermeneutical point, Aquinas catalogued various philosophical opinions about the nature of the heavens which are visible to the eye. Each of them is, via the hermeneutic Augustine stated, brought into congruence with the text of Genesis 1. But Aquinas was not interested in bringing the Greek philosophers into congruence, but their patristic readers. Patristic theologians had based their expositions of the text upon these philosophical assumptions. In a *corpus* which is longer than usual for this section of the ST, Aquinas demonstrated how each philosophical explanation of the nature of matter and the firmament resulted in a

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<sup>92</sup> I, 68, 1c, *Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut Augustinus docet, in huiusmodi quaestionibus duo sunt observanda. Primo quidem, ut veritas Scripturae inconcusse teneatur. Secundo, cum Scriptura divina multipliciter exponi possit, quod nulli expositioni aliquis ita praecise inhaereat quod, si certa ratione constiterit hoc esse falsum, quod aliquis sensum Scripturae esse asserere praesumat, ne Scriptura ex hoc ab infidelibus derideatur, et ne eis via credendi praecludatur.* Aquinas paraphrased this material from Augustine, *Gen. ad litt.* I, 18, 36 – I, 21, 41.

particular theological position taken by a different patristic theologian. If one understood the world as Empedocles did, or Plato, or Aristotle, then a theologian would logically reach this or that conclusion. Aquinas thus built on the prior Q as he demonstrated the philosophical underpinnings of various theological conclusions: Dionysius seemed to follow Aristotle; Basil understood this in a slightly different way.

Near the end of the *corpus*, Aquinas returned to the governing hermeneutic of Augustine which began the *corpus* with these important words, “Granting this interpretation, none of the above opinions holds any unacceptable consequences.”<sup>93</sup> They are all possible because they do not transgress the two-fold dictum established above. The authority of Scripture is maintained because each interpretation allows the reader to confess the creation of the firmament on the second day in the various ways that day is understood, and thereby the text of Scripture is allowed to stand. What is more, the reader acknowledges that different philosophical presuppositions result in different literal interpretations of the text.

In light of what followed, the reader should also take careful note of the treatment of Augustine. Within the *corpus* Aquinas noted that all this difficulty is eliminated if one followed the reading of Augustine who held that these days are markers of logical sequence and not temporal, calendar days. This would seem to favor Augustine’s point of view. That preference, however, is tempered when one comes to the last words of the *corpus* in which Aquinas quoted Augustine’s favorable opinion of Basil’s view. He again directly quotes Augustine “I judge this view (Basil’s) most worthy of praise, for what it maintains is not contrary to faith and can readily be believed on the basis of this text.”<sup>94</sup> Despite the fact that Aquinas considered Augustine to have the obviously superior interpretation, Aquinas pointedly demonstrated that Augustine had not excluded the interpretation of Basil. This balance between Basil and Augustine was consistently and carefully maintained throughout this section.

The sense that this entire Article is a pedagogical exercise increases when one arrives at the response to the first Objection. Chrysostom, in his sermons on Genesis, suggested

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<sup>93</sup> I, 68, 1c, *Et secundum hanc expositionem, nihil repugnans sequitur cuicumque opinioni*. Trans.: Wallace, 75.

<sup>94</sup> I, 68, 1c, *Hanc considerationem laude dignissimam judico; quod enim dixit, neque est contra fidem, et in promptu, posito documento, credi potest*. Trans.: Wallace, 75. Aquinas quoted *Gen. ad litt.* II, 4, 7.



that the first verse was simply a figure of speech, much as the builder of a home might say he built the house and then go on to describe the various stages of that construction.<sup>95</sup> This particular insight on Chrysostom's part essentially removes the dialectic tension from the Article. Using this observation of Chrysostom, Aquinas carefully integrated various interpretational strands and thus resolved all the tension of the first and subsequent Objections. Indeed, so thorough was Chrysostom's answer that Aquinas took the unusual step of not even bothering to write a separate Response to the second and third Objections.<sup>96</sup> The resolution of the tension which formed the Article established in the Objections and *sed contra* had been in his hand the entire time, but he withheld that element in order to use the tension to provide a field for Augustine's dictum to work out. Chrysostom's observation of a builder and his house elegantly and simply allowed both the Scriptures to be true and for the theologians to speculate without committing to a position which would later be considered erroneous. Aquinas, however, did not immediately leap to Chrysostom's elegant solution, but used the tension to illustrate Augustine's hermeneutic.

Article 2 *utrum aliquae aquae sint supra firmamentum*<sup>97</sup>

The second Article asks a question which might seem more pertinent than the first Article. The quest for the answer to this second Article, however, required a careful application of the faith presupposition which had been established in the first Article. The patristic theologians may have indeed been circumscribed by the limitations of their knowledge, but they wrote in faith. The Article simply asks: Are there any waters above the firmament?<sup>98</sup> The modern reader who has witnessed the scenes from telescopes and spacecraft finds the struggle with this assertion from Genesis's account of the second day intensified. While astronomers tell us that icy water is found in the soils of Mars or within the shadows of some lunar crater, the overwhelming image one has of space is arid. For Aquinas the objections to the waters above the firmament were observational and logical. Aquinas' understanding of his cosmos suggested that since water is heavy,

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<sup>95</sup> *In Genesim*, homily 2, PG 53, 30.

<sup>96</sup> I, 68, 1ad2 et ad3, *Ad secundum et tertium patet solutio ex supra dictis*.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 14, 1; *De potentia* IV, 1; and *Quodlibet* IV, 2.

<sup>98</sup> I, 68, 2, *utrum aquae sint supra firmamentum*.

it should flow down toward the lower position it occupied beneath the air. In order for it not to flow down, he could only conceive it would require a container of some sort, but there was no container to be seen. Even more problematic for Aquinas, this water above would serve no purpose and that too is contrary to the nature of God. The *sed contra* is again simply a restatement of the text of Genesis 1:7.

Once more Augustine's words begin the *corpus*, this time placing a more forceful Scriptural limit on reason and reasoning. "The authority of Scripture is greater than the capacity of every human talent. Therefore whatever and what sort of waters might be there, nevertheless that they are there we can in no way doubt."<sup>99</sup> This seemingly authoritarian, almost fundamentalist, response could potentially be used to end the debate, but this is not how Aquinas utilized this sentence from Augustine. Origen is cited for an opinion that the waters above are actually spiritual beings, but Basil cited parallel Scriptural words which indicate that hail, fire and other similar objects are up there. Aquinas was not happy with either opinion. Strabo<sup>100</sup> and others argued that this refers to the sidereal heaven and hence this water does not refer to the element of water at all. But then one has to account for the fact that the text said that this day involved a division of water above from water below. If Augustine is correct and the water simply referred to unformed matter, then Aquinas allowed that it might work. On the other hand, it might be that these waters above simply refer to the water vapors which evaporate and form the clouds. Augustine had tried to have it both ways, suggesting that the water vapors ascend as far as the sidereal heaven which Aquinas finds simply preposterous (*omnino impossibile*).<sup>101</sup>

All this is simply left to stand. No resolution is reached. The actual conclusion seems to be located in that very failure of resolution. Aquinas continued to assert the possibility of more than one reading. But as with prior Articles, he also used this question to refine the technique and the limits of those possible readings. While it is possible within the

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<sup>99</sup> I, 68, 2c, *Major est scripturae hujus auctoritas quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas. Unde quomodo et quales aquae ibi sint, eas tamen ibi esse, minime dubitamus.* Aquinas here paraphrased a passage from *Gen. ad litt.* II, 5, 9 *Quoquo modo autem et qualeslibet aquae ibi sint, esse eas ibi minime dubitemus: maior est quippe Scripturae huius auctoritas, quam omnis humani ingenii capacitas.* See fuller discussion within this thesis, Pp. 114ff.

<sup>100</sup> Wallace, 79, n. 9, suggests, *Glossa ordinaria super Gen 1, 1*

<sup>101</sup> I, 68, 2c.

constraints of thirteenth century natural philosophy and knowledge to follow either path without a mutually excluding conflict ensuing, occasionally both camps put forward ideas which had to be rejected. These are not such, however, that they invalidate the entire model, but are simply errors within the model of understanding words under consideration. In terms of a reverential reading, Aquinas may have simply been seeking balance here. Basil was the corrector of Origen's error; Augustine, while not completely refuted, was noted for his erroneous view on the evaporation of water. One might wonder if Augustine, who had been the champion of earlier Articles was here "dethroned" lest in the course of this disputation in miniature he become too weighty an authority. This was more clearly the case in Q 73 where Augustine's words were once more found to be insufficient (*alia expositio est principalior et prior*).<sup>102</sup>

Again one can note that the real intent of the Article seems to be found within the Responses to the Objections. These Responses gave Aquinas an opportunity to heal the breach between the theologians created in the *corpus*. As Aquinas carefully accommodates the various positions to both the best science of the day and the text of Genesis 1, he does not assert that one is right over against another's ideas, but in so doing suggested that we can respect all of these ideas put forward by these faithful readers of the text. The reader has encountered the limits of human ingenuity (*humani ingenii capacitas*) in this Article which forces the reader to adopt a position of interpretational or epistemic humility.

That is not to say that all the answers are possible. Aquinas held that there are limits to the deference which one might accord to the patristic theologian. The appeal to the "God of the Gaps" sort of a theory is rejected. One cannot simply assert that the waters are up there because God miraculously holds them there. That is not the way God works, at least in Aquinas' estimation, an estimation for which he credits his indebtedness to Augustine.<sup>103</sup> An answer needed to be logically consistent and concordant with the observable world. The approaches of Basil and Augustine were demonstrated to be logically consistent with a variety of possible solutions. Perhaps the water is not the same sort of water as envelops the earth. Perhaps it is heavenly water which rests on the firmament as the liquid water rests upon the earth. In an insight

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<sup>102</sup> I, 73, 2ad3.

<sup>103</sup> I, 68, 2ad1 quoting *Gen. ad litt.* II, 1, 2.

which demonstrates Aquinas' own humility, he suggests that perhaps the observer's perspective prevents a true observation. In this suggestion the objection based on the spherical shape is simply founded on an erroneous assumption about one's ability to observe it. From our perspective what looks like a sphere may in fact be another shape because we are beneath it. It would seem that the operative principle at play throughout this discussion is the multiplicity of possibilities. Strangely, and it must be stressed that this is very unusual in the ST, Aquinas came to no conclusion, but the reader was left with many more questions than he initially brought to the discussion. It is as if Aquinas simply wanted the reader to pause for a moment and realize that there are many questions for which he did not and, in truth, no one had an answer.

This article plays a critical role within the conclusions of this thesis that the best way to read these QQ is as a pedagogical text, a primer of some sort on the proper use of patristic resources. What brings one to the inescapable conclusion that this is in fact a pedagogical exercise and not a quest for truth *per se*, is that in fact, as has been demonstrated earlier in this thesis,<sup>104</sup> Aquinas actually did have an answer to the quandary posed by the tension within this Article. Within both the *Commentary II*, 14, 1, 1 and *De potentia IV*, 1, ob1-7 and ad1-7, Aquinas had argued forcefully and consistently that the waters above were in fact what Aristotle would have called the fifth element, the quintessence. Philosophically, theologically, and rationally, this answer made the most sense to Aquinas. Yet, he steadfastly refused to offer up this answer here. All the opinions of the theologians are examined, fitted into the philosophy and theology of the day, and allowed to stand.

This re-reading of these questions in light of what was discovered in our earlier examination suggests that reading these questions as a quest for truth may reflect an erroneous presupposition. In reading a document on a quest for truth, an author who deliberately withholds answers to questions can only be considered dishonest and untrustworthy. But that is not the case in reading a text which has the formation of the reader in mind. The most obviously compelling answer for this behavior on Aquinas part is his desire to inculcate a habit of theological inquiry among his readers. Any master of a subject area may hold a debate among his students which seeks to answer a question which he, by virtue of his more advanced studies, has already solved. The

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<sup>104</sup> Pp. 117ff.

purpose of such debates, common in any classroom, is not really the answer, but the student's ability to arrive at such answers through the processes of the discipline. These QQ of the ST give the modern reader a window by which to see into the way that Aquinas thought about Genesis 1, but also into medieval pedagogy and Aquinas' theological method.

Article 3 *utrum firmamentum dividat aquas ab aquis*<sup>105</sup>

In Article three of Q 68, Aquinas raised what seems to the modern reader to be an example of the stereotypical scholastic dissection of meaningless minutiae. He asked: does the firmament separate some waters from others? For the modern who has dismissed even the existence of such waters, this would seem a waste of time. The question apparently is not really what Aquinas is after either, as the treatment of the question is not particularly profound, especially when compared to his other treatments of this question. As such this Article could serve as another example which occasions the theological and philosophical readers of these QQ to despair. But when read through the lens of a pedagogical primer, it becomes clear. Aquinas was integrating prior skills and expanding the application of an idea he had introduced earlier, the principle of condescension.

The Objections raised three philosophical and rational points gleaned from his earlier treatments, but not exhausting the Objections raised in those earlier treatments. This is very much a constrained, even managed dispute. The divided waters should touch both sides of the thing which divides them. If the substance on one side is other than one the other side, these waters are then essentially different. There can be no act of truly separating what is already distinct. A second Objection suggested that it does not make sense that there are waters above and below, a single species should occupy but one place. What is more, continued the third Objection, if there are waters above, should we not see such water up there? From his treatment of the Article, it might be argued that even Aquinas saw these as trivial Objections, but this arcane dispute in miniature gave him the occasion to expand upon the reverential reading of the patristic sources.

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<sup>105</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 1; *De potentia* IV, 1, ob5, ob15, ob17, and ob20 with corresponding Responses; *De potentia* IV, 2, ob31, ad31, and *corpus*; as well as *Quodlibet* IV, 2, 2.

After dismissing the philosophers, particularly Thales and his monistic assertion that all was water, Aquinas re-introduced the reader to an important hermeneutical principle he had used earlier in the treatise, in I, 66, 1ad1: Moses accommodated his descriptions to the understanding of the people to whom he was writing. The language is particularly strong here. Moses' original audience is described as ignorant (*rudis*) and he must condescend to their intellectual weakness (*imbecillitas*).<sup>106</sup> Aquinas concluded that the interpreter of Genesis 1 cannot demand of Moses the same philosophical precision which we might use in light of what we have learned about the physical universe.<sup>107</sup> The implications of this are enormous for Aquinas. The objections were all disposed of with this device. The word "waters" becomes then a term which would have been understood by Moses audience but which might have stood in for any number of actual things. Perhaps, as Augustine speculated, it was unformed matter. Perhaps the division refers to different species of water, perhaps it does not refer to water at all.

This principle of admitting that Moses wrote for a particular audience and his words were therefore conditioned by the needs of that audience might have broken the fundamentalist reasoning of Basil and the other patristic authorities who insisted on a six-day Creation event. If everything that Moses said was actually an accommodation of the limitations of his audience, then what of this account could be read as historical? It would seem that Aquinas had in his hands at this point the very tool one would need to dispense with any sort of a fundamentalist reading in favor of the Augustinian interpretation which he found much more congenial to his philosophical concepts. But that is not what happened in the course of the ST; rather, Aquinas let the more literalistic reading stand as one possibility, but without the fundamentalist assertion that such a reading is the only literal and legitimate reading of this text.

Aquinas appears here to ask his reader to combine and integrate into their reading at least three of the prior principles which he had earlier posited:

1. From 68, 1 and 2, he asserts that the text of Scripture remains absolute. No interpretation of Scripture can violate that faithful assertion. There are waters

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<sup>106</sup> I, 68, 3c, *Sed considerandum est quod Moyses rudi populo loquebatur, quorum imbecillitati condescendens, illa solum eis proposuit, quae manifeste sensui apparent.*

<sup>107</sup> I, 68, 3c.

above the firmament and whatever understanding of those waters we may hold cannot deny their existence. The final words of the third Response make this clear, the waters, however understood, are there.<sup>108</sup>

2. From I, 68, 1, Augustine asserted that an interpretation of a dubious or difficult passage should be made humbly, so as to allow for the possibility that one is mistaken. Within this article several opinions are again examined, all of them allowed to stand. There is more than one possible answer.
3. From 67, 1 and 2, in which Aquinas explored the multiple meanings of words. How one understands the division of these waters to take place depends on how one defines the word “water.”

These three are then integrated with the tool of condescension as a viable means to read the various patristic theologians reverentially.

The treatment of these patristic theologians is growing more and more complex. The anticipated pedagogical arc is now able to be charted. From the simplistic rejection of Origen’s ideas in 65, 2, the reader has advanced to a far more sophisticated evaluation of seemingly contradictory statements by various theological authorities. The philosophical authorities have also had their say, but their place is certainly subservient. They may shed light upon the dispute, they may help the reader understand something which the theologian has said, but the disputes between the theologians are the disputes which really matter here.

Article 4 *utrum sit unum caelum tantum, vel plures*<sup>109</sup>

The fourth and final Article of Question 68 asked the question of how many heavens exist. Aristotle set up the tension, noting that when you have an entity made up of one element, such as the sea is made up of water, no matter how vast it is, there is truly only one sea. But again the stated question of the Article and the Objections are better seen as a pretext for the discussion which followed. In this instance, however, the nature of the Article is markedly different than earlier articles. The patristic theologians provided

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<sup>108</sup> I, 68, 3ad3, *Et sic manifestum est quod ex utraque parte firmamenti, qualitercumque accepti, sunt aquae.*

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *Commentary II*, 14, 1, 4; *In De caelo I*, 17-20; *Super Joannem VI*, 4; and *Super II Corinthios XII*, 1.

a brief diversion as Basil and Chrysostom seem to disagree, but this was easily resolved through an appeal to literary devices. What was really at stake was a question about the nature of heaven. The patristic theologians receded into the background and wide-ranging Scriptural citations reasserted themselves. As we have argued earlier, this question touched upon the goal of the entire ST, the *reditus* of the Creation toward the Creator. Because this was a point which needed a definitive answer, the level of the authorities which Aquinas cited increased. Beginning with the *sed contra* which is a quotation from Psalm 148, Aquinas drew upon citations from throughout the text of the Bible, Isaiah 14:13, Matthew 5:12, Psalm 8:9, and II Corinthians 12:2. The claim that this represents an increased level of authority is buttressed by the fact that these citations are taken from central passages of these works. Isaiah is theologically significant, the Psalter the most frequently used biblical text in liturgy, Matthew is quoted from the Sermon on the Mount, and Paul was speaking of his conversion experience, one of the key events of the New Testament. Even within the hierarchy of Scriptural witnesses, these passages carry significant weight.

For the purposes of the ST, the article was important because it established the definition of the third heaven, over against the sky and the sidereal heaven. The third heaven is understood to have multiple meanings, but all of those meanings involve the presence of God. Exactly what Aquinas intended to make of this is unfortunately inaccessible to us. Aquinas broke off his writing of the ST on the sixth of December, 1273,<sup>110</sup> in the middle of his treatment of Penance, and died three months later without having treated the beatific vision at the end of the ST.<sup>111</sup>

#### Question 69 *de opere tertiae diei*

Following his hexameral pattern, Aquinas turned to the third day in his treatment of Q 69, which is recorded in Genesis 1:9-13, and addressed this material in just two Articles. This unusual, although, not unheard of, brevity requires comment, especially as it

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<sup>110</sup> Weisheipl, 320-327. O'Meara, 31, notes that there are several explanations for this cessation. Aquinas' contemporaries attributed it to a mystical experience, but, while some continue to argue that point of view, many today consider a stroke or some other neurological event more likely.

<sup>111</sup> Weisheipl, 362, Aquinas' secretary (*socius*), Reginald of Piperno, oversaw the completion of the remaining questions (*Supplement*), primarily drawing from Aquinas' earlier treatments of the same material.



resurfaces in QQ 71 and 72 which take the very unusual form of *articulus unicus*. While earlier Articles within prior sections of the ST are treated with some brevity, QQ 71 and 72 are first instances within the ST in which a Question is treated in only one Article.

It appears that in these QQ Aquinas is adhering to the hexameral form but does not actually have a great deal of material to consider, or at least material that served his purposes here. This is borne out by a comparison with the treatment of the third day in both the *Commentary* and *De potentia*. In *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 5 the third day occupies a single Article and its material is substantively repeated here in the ST. Aquinas divided the single Article in the *Commentary* into two Articles in ST, but this was a logical division as the earlier treatment had really dealt with two questions, the propriety of the division of waters to fashion dry land and the appropriateness of the vegetative creation on this day. *De potentia* IV, 1 and 2 devoted even less attention to the third day, including mention of the gathering of waters and the creation of plants as secondary issues in only two Objections and their Responses.

A closer examination of the sources cited and discussed in the ST, however, again reveals a marked divergence from the earlier treatments. The two articles in ST I, 69 are substantially longer than the single article in the *Commentary*; although, the Objections are almost identical. This is unusual in that normally the Articles in the *Commentary* are far longer than those in this section of the ST. The *corpus* in each article was expanded. The additional material was entirely devoted to an examination of the two interpretational strands of Augustine and Basil. In the first Article, the question asked was completely subsumed into the discussion of Augustine and other “saints” (*sanctorum*).<sup>112</sup> The second Article begins with three sentences which restate the essence of the material in the *Commentary* and then once more takes up these two differing opinions of Augustine and Basil.<sup>113</sup> The reader who observes the treatment of sources may conclude that this Question of the ST is not as much about the answers to questions raised by the Genesis material as it is about the treatment of these patristic theologians. Aquinas had addressed the questions of the third day, those answers were

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<sup>112</sup> I, 69, 1c, *Respondeo dicendum quod hic oportet aliter dicere secundum expositionem Augustini, et aliorum sanctorum.*

<sup>113</sup> I, 69, 2c, *Sed tamen circa productionem plantarum, aliter opinatur Augustinus ab aliis.*

touched upon here, but the Article invests very little intellectual energy into these answers.

When one compares the authorities cited, Basil, who is extensively examined in ST I 69, never appeared in the corresponding material within *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 5, nor, for that matter, do any other patristic sources save one comment by Augustine who is cited for his idea that God created the seeds (*semen*) of the plants without actually creating the plants in their final form. This important idea of Augustine's was more fully articulated in I, 69, 2. Within the *Commentary* Aristotle's works are cited most frequently. In Q 69, Aristotle is almost completely absent. Wallace credits<sup>114</sup> Aristotle as the source behind a single reference to "some philosophers" in the fourth Response of the first Article, suggesting a work which is not cited in the *Commentary*'s Article on the third day.

As a reverential reading, Aquinas does not introduce new principles of such reading here, but seems to be demonstrating what he has earlier proposed, namely that a careful application of semantic nuance, philosophical contextualization, condescension, and other basic principles of medieval patristic reading allowed for either strand of interpretation to stand. The ideas of Augustine and Basil are further developed and refined in the understanding of the reader, potential problems are addressed, but both were deemed acceptable alternatives. It is perhaps in the use of intellectual space that this Question stands out. Aquinas seems to use that space created in the prior QQ to develop one of Augustine's more ambitious ideas, that of the *rationes seminales*.

Article 1 *utrum aquarum congregatio convenienter dicatur facta tertia die*<sup>115</sup>

In the first Article Aquinas framed his question, "whether the gathering of waters is appropriately described as being done on the third day?" Modern readers of patristic and medieval theology frequently find this sort of question frustrating. Patristic theologians regularly appealed to what is "fitting" or in the Latin of this question *convenienter*.<sup>116</sup> This is the adverbial form of the common verb *convenio* which has

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<sup>114</sup> Wallace, 99, note k.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 5; *De potentia* IV, 1.

<sup>116</sup> According to the *Index Thomisticus*, Aquinas uses the term 262 times in the ST alone. (accessed via Internet, November 15, 2013.)

many uses which revolve around something being proper or fitting. A marriage might be *convenienter*, so might a speech or a dwelling. For the modern reader, Aquinas seems to be addressing an inappropriate question. S/he wants to know if something is “true” not whether it is “fitting.” But of course, in rendering this judgment, the modern is engaged in the very assignation of the title “fitting” which s/he deplors in the medieval scholar.

Aquinas and many others<sup>117</sup> approached the text of Scripture with an expectation that God works *convenienter*, “appropriately” or “fittingly.” Having this expectation, Aquinas frequently framed his questions with this device. It is not the case that Aquinas stood in some sort of critical judgment of the text of Scripture; rather, the discovery of something “unseemly” became an occasion to wonder “Why?” When the text transgressed the perception of what was fitting, it was grounds for an exploration of meaning. Aquinas and many theologians of the ancient and medieval world found this to be particularly fruitful in the development of their theology, often serving to expand their preconceptions of what was “fitting” for God.

Within this Article, Aquinas established a tension between simple logic and the text of Genesis 1:9 which he does not even bother to quote in the *sed contra* but tersely asserts: “On the other hand, the authority of Scripture suffices in this case”<sup>118</sup> Some of the objections to the gathering of the waters seem banal. Aquinas objected that the word “gathered” seems to be poorly chosen since water is not in fact gathered in one place as there are many different bodies of water.<sup>119</sup> If the earth was in fact covered in water, how could it be gathered in one place if the water was deep enough to cover the whole face of the earth? Where did it all go?<sup>120</sup> Further, to Aquinas, this seemed to be simply a matter of movement, hardly a matter of the creative process at all. Aquinas noted that it

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<sup>117</sup> Brian Daley S. J., “Is Patristic Exegesis Still Useable?” in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, Eds.: Ellen F. Davis and Richard Hays, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 78-80, addresses the frequent appeal to arguments which derive from this sense of what is “fitting” and the issues such a reliance raises for the post-enlightenment interpreter.

<sup>118</sup> I, 69, 1sc, *sed in contrarium sufficit auctoritas Scripturae*.

<sup>119</sup> I, 69, 1ob3.

<sup>120</sup> I, 69, 1ob2.

would have happened without God commanding it, as water naturally flows downward without any command of God.<sup>121</sup>

More substantively, the Latin text had described the divine action on the third by utilizing a different vocabulary.<sup>122</sup> It also seems to contradict the action of the first verse which had already spoken of the creation of the heaven and the earth. In a repetition of the same argument regarding the creation of the firmament in 68, 1ob1, Aquinas wondered how could earth (*terra*) be created again.<sup>123</sup> This last objection is in fact one of Augustine's principal objections to the literal reading of Basil and others. His contention<sup>124</sup> was that they had not read the text truly literally because they had not accounted for this very question of how the first verse related to the later text which also spoke of the creation of the earth. Basil and those who read the text with him followed what was perhaps a more straightforward reading which rested on the precedent of earlier interpreters who had read the first verse as a literary device.<sup>125</sup>

Thus, inside this Article, Aquinas set up conflict, however artificial it sounds to the modern ear. The *corpus* of the Article explored how both interpretational strands can answer this question.<sup>126</sup> Augustine poses little or no problem here for the question of whether this is fitting.<sup>127</sup> Because he did not presuppose a temporal progression in the text, but a logical progression, it is in fact fitting that water and earth be discussed after angelic beings (light) and the heavenly realms of the first two days. The other patristic sources were also not difficult to fit into this, in Aquinas' opinion but they did require a little more effort. Presupposing a temporal progression, they had assumed that the

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<sup>121</sup> I, 69, 1ob4.

<sup>122</sup> 1, 69, 1ob1, within the Latin translation Aquinas was using, the verb used to describe the divine action of days one and two was *facio* but in day three the Latin text uses *congrego*.

<sup>123</sup> I, 69, 1ob5.

<sup>124</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 9, 15.

<sup>125</sup> John Chrysostom, *In Gen.* Hom. 2, had likened this initial verse of the Genesis account to a carpenter saying he "built" a house and then going on to explain that he laid the foundation, then framed the walls, then established the roof, etc.

<sup>126</sup> I, 69, 1c, *Dicendum quod hic oportet aliter dicere secundum expositionem Augustini et aliorum Sanctorum.*

<sup>127</sup> I, 69, 1ad2, *patet solutio secundum Augustinum.*

creation of partially formed matter on the first day meant that subsequent days would involve the imposition of increasingly specific form. It was not the case that water and earth were perfectly formed the first day, but these elements were thus perfectly formed by the third day resulting in the water's coming to rest in its appropriate place and revealing the dry land. The separation of the waters was not an actual movement of water so much as it was the imposition of proper forms upon the matter which had only been partially formed.

The number of possible explanations proposed in order to render the temporal understanding possible stands out to the reader of this Article. Aquinas called upon Maimonides<sup>128</sup> to suggest some sort of equivocation as one solution.<sup>129</sup> Aquinas' presentation of Basil's ideas is particularly noteworthy as Aquinas consistently framed the discussion so that the readers knew that Augustine was drawing on the prior ideas put forward by Basil.<sup>130</sup> No single idea was asserted as the only possible or even the best solution, rather the reader was presented with a catalogue of possibilities. The Article's initial question, which Aquinas had dealt with elsewhere, has become a pretext for Aquinas to address two different patristic concepts of Creation, evaluate them both, and declare that both of them had merit.

Article 2 *utrum plantarum productio inconvenienter tertia die facta legatur*<sup>131</sup>

Likewise the second Article of Question 69 asks a question of propriety: "Is the production of plants improperly described as taking place on the third day?" Again, as in the previous article the objections are all from simple observation and are drawn from those found in *Commentary* 14, 1, 5. As living creatures they should be described with the other living things on the sixth day.<sup>132</sup> Since plants are specifically mentioned as part of the curse of the earth in Genesis 3, they should not be described here.<sup>133</sup> And finally he says that this seems to be only focused on one part of the Creation. There is

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<sup>128</sup> *Guide to the Perplexed* II, 30.

<sup>129</sup> I, 69, 1ad5.

<sup>130</sup> I, 69, 1ad2 and 1ad5.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 5; ST I, 70, 1; and I, 102, 1.

<sup>132</sup> I, 69, 2ob1.

<sup>133</sup> I, 69, 2ob2.

no discussion of the creation of minerals or stones (*lapides*) which could be presumed in the creation of dry land.

Once more this rather pedestrian question presented Aquinas with an opportunity to demonstrate his reverential reading. The answers at which he had arrived in the *Commentary* were not particularly profound and it appears that this was not an issue which excited Aquinas or his peers. The resolution of the tension within the Objections and *sed contra* is speedy. What had started out as formless and empty (void) is now given shape by the arrangement of land and water and clothed by the creation of plants. Were the question as simple as that, this Article would be short indeed. But the reverential reading of the prior QQ and the immediately prior Article afforded Aquinas space to delve into the “opinions of Augustine and others” which “differ.”<sup>134</sup>

Quickly dispensing with the tension of the Objections and *sed contra*, Aquinas almost immediately began an explication of an important idea about the Creation event: Augustine’s suggestion that the Creation involved embedding the ability<sup>135</sup> to produce such plants within the earth itself, analogous to seeds, not the creation of the plants themselves.<sup>136</sup> Obviously for the modern reader who is versed in the evolutionary theories and understandings of contemporary science, this is quite suggestive.<sup>137</sup> It must be remembered that Aquinas was not an heir of the Enlightenment and did not engage this argument with anything like the scientific depth which a modern reader would desire. But despite that contextual reality he may have delivered the larger and intellectually more significant message to his readership and the modern reader.<sup>138</sup> Augustine’s idea was provocative and interesting, but in the final analysis Aquinas did

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<sup>134</sup> I, 69, 2c, *aliter opinatur Augustinus ab aliis*.

<sup>135</sup> I, 69, 2c, *Idest producendi accepisse virtutem and non ergo in tertia dei productae sunt plantae in actu, sed causaliter tantum*.

<sup>136</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* V, 4, 9-10 and VIII, 3, 6.

<sup>137</sup> A search through the Internet will reveal many sites which address the implications of Augustine’s idea for the current Creation and evolution debates. For a recent treatment by a scientist and theologian, consider an article posted May 8, 2009 on the Christianity Today website by Alistair McGrath of King’s College, London. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/may/22.39.html>.

<sup>138</sup> Wallace, *Intr.* xxii, while he does not cite this passage specifically in his introduction, one has to consider that this is what Wallace had in mind when he held up Aquinas as an early exemplar of careful science.

not adopt it nor reject it. Both the more common literal reading of a six day Creation and the more unconventional, alternative literal reading of Augustine were both permitted to stand. Both were examined in regard to this question and found to be congruous with both the text of Scripture and the hylomorphic understanding of physics to which Aquinas and his medieval scholastic peers subscribed.

Within Q 69 Aquinas has applied the principles of reverential reading rigorously to the third day of Creation recorded in Genesis 1. Unlike his treatment of Origen in Q 65, however, he has not come to any preference for one answer over another. Even more striking, unlike his treatment of the same issues and same questions in other works, he has persistently refused to favor Augustine's non-temporal but still literal reading over that of the temporal literal readings of Basil and those who followed his interpretational strand.

When one considers that Aquinas was here stepping back from conclusions he had espoused mere months prior in the writing of *De potentia*, one is compelled to ask why he would do this. In *De potentia* Aquinas clearly had favored the interpretation of Augustine as the one which provided the best answer, but he did not posit that conclusion here. The only reasonable conclusion, it seems, is that Aquinas wanted to continue in his examination of the literal interpretation of Basil, and if he simply declared it to be inferior to Augustine's, he would be crippling that further examination. But if he honestly believed Augustine's interpretation be superior, it seems only logical that setting aside Basil would have allowed him to explore Augustine's ideas in even greater depth. One might argue that the tension provided by Basil was a tool, a foil, for Aquinas to use while examining Augustine's idea, but further reading will reveal that at no time does he exclusively prefer Augustine to Basil. One might argue that Aquinas was simply responding to the pressure of his peers who overwhelmingly favored Basil's conclusions. But considering that he will later label most of those peers "Nestorians," this also seems unlikely.<sup>139</sup> It is the contention of this thesis that in maintaining the validity of both Basil's and Augustine's positions, Aquinas was carving out intellectual space for inquiry. Not only does Aquinas appear to be equipping his reader to approach the discipline of theology with appropriate humility by demonstrating that there are many unanswered questions, he also seems to have insisted that certain conclusions

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<sup>139</sup> Wawrykow, "Hypostatic Union," 222-251, esp. 246.

assumed within the theological community of his day were in fact still open questions. Against the Augustinian faction, Aquinas was creating the possibility that it is both intellectually honest and theologically faithful to think about a foundational doctrine such as Creation differently from the majority of his peers.

#### Questions 70-72

Aquinas addressed within these questions the second triad of the Creation story, what he understood to be the ornamentation of the now differentiated physical world. Only in Q 70, which treated the fourth day, did Aquinas engage the implications of the Genesis text in any depth. Having established the rules of reverential reading, in these three Questions he continued to demonstrate this technique by examining both traditions and striving to place both within the parameters of what he thought to be true of the natural world and the truth he believed to be revealed in the Christian Scripture. It has already been noted that QQ 71 and 72 are very brief, only one Article each. Q 70, on the other hand, is treated in three Articles of some substance. Aquinas treated Question 70 differently because it was important to him. It dealt with the nature of heavenly bodies, the relationship of human beings to the Creation, and thus, at least to some extent, the *reditus* of the ST.

His treatment of sources in each of the three Articles is also illustrative. Having noted that the two strands of interpretation indeed diverge, in Q 70 Aquinas stressed the unity of the patristic sources, even when faced by what appeared to be direct contradictions. Having indulged in the prior two Questions in the exploration of the differences between the two interpretational strands, in these three Questions, the fundamental unity of the disparate interpretations is again emphasized and explored. The reader paying attention to the use of sources notices that the principle of a unifying faith behind both interpretational strands asserted itself.

#### Article 1 *utrum luminaria debuerint produci quarta die*<sup>140</sup>

This Article addressed a number of objections to the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day. It was not uncommon for ancient critics of the Biblical account to focus on the account of this day as problematic. Augustine had been prompted within his

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<sup>140</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 15, 1, 1; *De potentia* IV, 1.



treatments of Creation to address such criticisms as expressed by the Manicheans.<sup>141</sup> Aquinas acknowledged this extensive prior history as he catalogued several “problems” within the Objections: Since, as he believed, the heavenly bodies are incorruptible, they should have been made prior to the earth and plants which are subject to corruption. These heavenly bodies should have been made on the first day with light, since they are containers of light. They should have been made on the second day with the firmament, since they reside there. He also held to the medieval idea that the sun was causative of vegetative life, he objects that it is out of order to have the effect (plants) precede the cause. Finally, demonstrating his knowledge of the best of medieval science, he noted that some stars are in fact larger than the sun and moon and hence these two bodies should not be called “greater lights.” The *sed contra* again does not quote the text but simply asserts the authority of Scripture.<sup>142</sup> Within the Objections, no patristic authorities nor any philosophers are cited and they remain almost entirely absent from the *corpus*.

This *corpus* also presents something of a departure for Aquinas from prior Articles within this section. He effectively ignores all the objections and the minimal tension created by the *sed contra*. His material here is rather an explanation of the difference between diversification and adornment. He pointed out the double triad structure of the six days. At the conclusion of the *corpus*, without addressing any of the Objections, he noted that there was no tension among the patristic theologians. This again is suggestive of his audience. Because it is so elementary, no readership within a university would benefit from this material. Aquinas could not have had such an audience in mind. Again, we propose, the only audience for which this would not have been intellectually insulting would be a body of readers who had not benefited from the medieval Liberal Arts tradition. The most logical place for Aquinas to have encountered such a readership would have been the priories of the Dominican Order whose educational program he had been charged with revising.

When one turns to the Responses to the Objections in I, 70, 1, an examination of how various patristic authorities answered these questions comprises the entirety of this material. Aquinas had already noted that none of the patristic theologians substantively

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<sup>141</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* II, 14, 28 – 18, 38; *Gen. contra Man.* I, 14, 20-23.

<sup>142</sup> I, 70, 1sc, *sed in contrarium sufficit auctoritas Scripturae*.

disagree.<sup>143</sup> With no patristic tension to speak of, Aquinas resorted to the natural philosophers, especially Ptolemy, for the tension against which their ideas might contend. The patristic theologians, Basil, Chrysostom, Denis, and, of course, Augustine, are all given their chance to answer one of the rational objections. Not cast in tension with each other, they each serve to fill or complement the understanding of the creation of the luminous heavenly bodies. This Article, especially these Responses, reads more like the *catenae* which Aquinas and others wrote at the time in which they strung together patristic quotes around verses and themes of the Scriptures. While the tension between the two interpretational strands of the theologians was referenced<sup>144</sup> it did not serve as the focus of this Article, rather the unity of the theologians was on display, as if to suggest that those who posited different interpretations might also be found to agree. Key to this unity was the insight of Chrysostom that the creation of the heavenly bodies was delayed for theological reasons, to inoculate Moses' original audience from idolatrous worship of these bodies.<sup>145</sup>

This rationale for the delay is worthy of note. Aquinas saw the material in Genesis 1 being shaped by the needs of Moses' audience, not by some effort to convey the events in some strictly literal sense as the modern reader would define it. He is quite comfortable suggesting here that the material in Genesis 1 has been purposefully shaped to avoid what he considered to be a heretical idea. In this case it appears that the creation of the heavenly bodies may not have actually occurred on the fourth calendar day, but it is recorded here because of an imagined propensity to the idolatrous worship of these heavenly bodies within the audience of Moses.

The modernist reader who operates with the contemporary definition of literal finds this incomprehensible. In the context of an author who is not reliably conveying historical truth, the literal reading collapses. But Aquinas and his peers would have found the modernist's objection to be a *non sequitur*. The historical record may have been deliberately modified for the sake of the audience, but the word on the page is still *verbum dei* and thus deserving of close scrutiny.

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<sup>143</sup> I, 70, 1c, *In productione luminarium non discordat Augustinus ab aliis Sanctis.*

<sup>144</sup> I, 70, 1ad1 and 1ad2.

<sup>145</sup> I, 70, 1ad1, *ut per hoc removeat populum ab idololatria, ostendens luminaria non esse deos, ex quo nec a principio fuerunt.*

The reader interested in sources notices within this treatment of the authorities a departure from what has taken place in prior Articles. Aquinas has, up to this point, been highlighting the tension created by these two interpretational strands, a tension which he has steadfastly refused to reconcile, but has simply let stand. It would appear within this Article, that he is appealing to unity of these authorities to validate this approach by demonstrating the usefulness of each strand. Here one finds an argument for letting both approaches to Genesis 1 stand as possibilities. If, as an example, one were to favor Augustine's reading over that of Basil, then Basil's ability to serve the needs of the current interpreter by answering these rational objections to the biblical account of the fourth day would be compromised. By allowing both traditions to stand as possible readings, Aquinas seemed to be demonstrating that the interpreter of the text can draw freely upon insights of theologians who have subscribed to one or the other tradition.

But what is the basis for this unity? If the two interpretational strands indeed are in logical tension with each other, it would appear that the answers given by one or the other must be somehow suspect. But Aquinas apparently did not think so. In this he was simply embodying the epistemic humility which he had learned from Augustine. The following Article, then, can be read as an exposition of how it can be valid to draw on both interpretational strands for insight.

Article 2 *utrum inconvenienter causa productionis luminarium describatur*<sup>146</sup>

In the first Article Aquinas had addressed the propriety of the creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day. In this Article he wondered whether this act of ornamentation is in fact appropriately described. Aquinas had presented the patristic theologians united in their refutation of the various Objections of the first Article. From this unity in the patristic witness Aquinas proceeded to apply the principle of condescension and the value of this multifaceted reading through a reverential reading of Moses himself in the second Article of Q 70. The Objections address the wording of the Genesis text which had ascribed to the sun and moon the purpose of being signs for seasons and illuminating the earth. A sign was a technical term for anyone who had read Augustine and the sun and moon did not seem to Aquinas and to fit that technical category. Not

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 15, 1, 1.

only had Scripture elsewhere enjoined us not to treat the heavenly bodies as meaningful signs,<sup>147</sup> the heavenly bodies ought better be described as causes, not signs. He furthermore objected that the sun and moon were superior bodies to the earth, hence they should not serve it, but rather earth ought to serve their needs. In the fifth and final Objection Aquinas noted that the moon had to have been made new, and a new moon is dark, and thus it could not have ruled over the night.

Moses' description, as characterized in the Objections, thus seemed to be deficient. He had only presented one of the multiple categories of a cause. To a medieval theologian well versed in the intricacies of Aristotelian logic and dialectic reasoning, this would have been an inexcusable lapse or indication of incompetence. Aquinas instead brought the reader back to the important issue of condescension which had also occupied the first Article of this question. Moses may be excused for his incomplete treatment of the causes because he first and foremost was combating an idolatrous impulse among his readership who were used to worshipping these heavenly bodies.<sup>148</sup> The reader should not expect Moses, and by extension any biblical text, to answer these questions according to such a standard.

The application of this principle to Moses himself is significant. This is one of the lynchpin arguments of Aquinas in the prologue to the inaptly named "Against the errors of the Greeks"<sup>149</sup> which had been composed contemporaneously with this section of the ST. Therein Aquinas argued that one could not hold patristic theologians to the same exacting standard which theology had developed in the subsequent centuries through its contentions with heretics and others.<sup>150</sup> One had to contextualize the author to the audience and the state of theological discourse at the time in which that author had written. By applying the principle of contextual reading to another and higher level in the hierarchy of authority, even to Moses himself, Aquinas bolstered its application to

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<sup>147</sup> I, 70, 2ob1 citing Jeremiah 10:2, one of the few quotations of Scripture outside of Genesis 1 in this section of the ST.

<sup>148</sup> I, 70, 2c, *Sed Moyses, ut populum ab idololatria revocaret, illam solam causam tetigit, secundum quod sunt facta ad utilitatem hominum.*

<sup>149</sup> *Contra errores Graecorum.*

<sup>150</sup> *Contra errores, pro.* See Chenu, *Toward Understanding Aquinas*, p. 130ff, and Jordan, p. 28ff for further discussion of Aquinas' treatment of this concept.

the patristic theologians. If one had to read Moses this way, presumably Augustine or Basil could be read this way as well.

This undergirding of the condescension principle does not exhaust Aquinas' purposes for this Article. Aquinas made a singular specific reference within this Article to a patristic authority. This was a citation of Augustine in the Response to the fifth Objection which had questioned whether a new moon could be said to rule the night when it was dark. Aquinas responded with an argument that while created things do tend to progress from incomplete to complete, Creation is an entirely distinct category of change in which completion is the initial state. Thus, the moon was most likely created full and hence properly described as ruling the night. But Augustine, he noted, had no problem with God creating something less than complete.<sup>151</sup> Aquinas likely has in mind<sup>152</sup> a section of Augustine's *Gen. ad litt.*<sup>153</sup> in which Augustine had addressed this very issue and asserted this idea in reference to the creation of the moon. But what the reader who is focused on sources finds interesting is that Augustine, within this same paragraph of his literal commentary, rather forcefully made Aquinas' argument on the creation of the moon in its full phase. His rationale is exactly the same as that put forward by Aquinas; yet, Aquinas does not cite Augustinian authority for this idea, instead Aquinas pointed out that Augustine had proposed a different idea, when, in fact, they were in agreement on the larger issue which was under consideration. He casts Augustine to be in error, but cites as the far more important issue another of Augustine's ideas, stated immediately next to the erroneous idea cited.

Again, we would point to the reader to implications for the identification of Aquinas' audience. Aquinas must realize that they are not familiar with the text by Augustine, otherwise the whole Article loses some of its integrity. What is more, he must not have been terribly concerned that his readers would have read Augustine's own words on the subject. While no one who has ever taught young scholars should ever underestimate their predilection for intellectual sloth, Aquinas had lived long enough in the intense intellectual world of the University of Paris to know that this would be challenged

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<sup>151</sup> I, 70, 2ad2, *Augustinus tamen hoc non asserit, quia dicit non esse inconueniens quod Deus imperfecta fecerit, quae postmodum ipse perfecit.*

<sup>152</sup> Wallace, 118 n. 15.

<sup>153</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* II, 15, 30.

eventually. As a quest for truth, this treatment of Augustine would have to be evaluated as problematic. But as a conditional treatment put to pedagogical purposes it serves a purpose. The student in whom the theological *habitus* had been inculcated, however, would eventually come back to this material, read Augustine for himself, and be on that quest for truth.

The careful reader of sources has noticed that Aquinas has manipulated his sources. Clearly Aquinas was aware of the Augustinian root of his idea, as he quotes from the adjacent passage for another idea. When reading these QQ it is clear that Aquinas is strongly attracted to the idea put forward by Augustine. It philosophically made more sense to Aquinas. But it appears here and elsewhere that Aquinas took pains to avoid putting Augustine into a dominant position and frequently treats his material with a notable sense of reservation in order to maintain some semblance of balance. The widely accepted and more problematic strand of interpretation championed by Basil and others was allowed to stand and in order to achieve that, Aquinas was willing to diminish his presentation of Augustine's material. Here one notes that by not citing the source of the answer which is clearly Augustinian, but pointing to a tension with Augustine's words, the *incipientes* for whom he wrote would have been better able to access both strands of theology.

Aquinas also inadvertently posited a principle which the twenty-first century reader does well to remember when reading Aquinas on this very Article. He pursued a line of inquiry which was respectable among scholastic theologians of his day but which is risible in the eyes of most today. Aquinas devoted considerable attention in the *corpus* of Article 2 to whether the moon had been created full or new. Relying on an idea which has become synonymous with much that is wrong with pre-enlightenment thinking, he presupposed spontaneous generation<sup>154</sup> and, as if to compound his scientific ignorance, cited approvingly in the subsequent article that Anaxagoras was condemned by the Athenians for suggesting that the sun was just a ball of burning rock and not a God.<sup>155</sup> Some have read such things in Aquinas and seen them as occasions to turn their attention elsewhere, despairing of anything of substance within these pages.<sup>156</sup> But to

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<sup>154</sup> I, 70, 3ob3.

<sup>155</sup> I, 70, 3c.

<sup>156</sup> Wallace, Intr. xx-xxii.

ignore Aquinas for this reason is to miss this point entirely. The author of a prior generation has to be read within the context of his times and the limitations of what he knew at the time; and this applies to the modern reader of Aquinas as well. Indeed such a charitable reading is all that any modern author can hope for from his readership in generations to come.

Article 3 *Utrum luminaria caeli sint animata*<sup>157</sup>

The third Article of question 70 repeated a pattern already demonstrated earlier in our treatment of the ST.<sup>158</sup> Aquinas here applied the principle addressed in an earlier article to a more difficult and important question which held serious implications for the reader and in this instance for the entire thesis of the ST: Are the luminous heavenly bodies living beings?<sup>159</sup> While to a post-enlightenment reader educated in basic science this question seems risible, this was an important question for Aquinas which he had treated extensively in other works. The precise nature of these heavenly bodies concerned the larger goals of the work, most especially the *reditus* of the Creation to the Creator but also the *exitus* of the Creation from the Creator. He noted that neither philosophers nor patristic theologians agree among themselves on this issue.<sup>160</sup> As noted above, Aquinas used the example that Anaxagoras had thought the sun to be inanimate but Platonists held it to be a living creature. Likewise a number of theologians held either position.

Within the *corpus* of Article, Aquinas does come to a conclusion. He does not believe that heavenly bodies are living, but his answer is unusually well developed for this section and as such provides a window into ideas he would more fully develop later within the ST. This development stands in marked contrast to his treatment of this question in the *Commentary* where he treats this question on at least two occasions.

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 3; SCG II, 70; *De veritate* V, 9; *De potentia* VI, 6; *De spiritualibus creaturis* 6; *De anima* 8ad3; *Quodlibet* XII, 8; *In De caelo* II, 3; and II, 13.

<sup>158</sup> Consider Aquinas' treatment of Origen in I, 65, 2, as a case study in the principles of identifying error in a patristic theologian which was then applied in the Article which immediately followed.

<sup>159</sup> Wallace, 118-119, note a, and Appendix 8, 5, 217. Just as the objections to the Creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day had been a stock objection raised by the Manichees, this question was also traditional, but may have taken on a new relevancy in light of recently received works by Islamic commentators on Aristotle, particularly Averroes who had argued that the spheres were "intelligences" which emanated from one another.

<sup>160</sup> I, 70, 3c, *diversa opinio*.

Aquinas first broached the subject in the *Commentary* under the question of whether the heavenly bodies are moved by an intelligence.<sup>161</sup> Therein Aquinas argued that they were moved by a mind, but it was the intelligence of angelic beings who were proximate causes of the movement.<sup>162</sup> It is not quite the same question posed here, but almost exactly the same answer.

He uses the conclusion he reached in *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 3 on two subsequent occasions. In the next Distinction Aquinas addressed the possibility that the heavenly bodies had an effect upon corporeal bodies.<sup>163</sup> There the issue was subsumed into a polemic against astrology, a practice which he contended was based upon a manifold error (*multiplex error*).<sup>164</sup> He again denied this idea in *De potentia* but there as well it was a minor point in a more pointedly polemic discussion about the nature and potential effects of angelic and demonic bodies.<sup>165</sup> The treatment of the question in ST I, 70, 1 is far more robust. While he had arrived at this point via another question in *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 3, he did so asking whether the movement of the heavenly beings was attributable to intelligence. In I, 70, 1 he has asked a subtly different question.

In 70, 1 Aquinas was not addressing the errors of astrology or delving deep into the nature of angels and demons, but he had entered into an exploration of the nature of what it means to be a living being and the relationship of the soul to the physical body. After much wrestling through the attendant issues he concluded that the only possible purpose which a living soul would have for these heavenly bodies, which he believed to be immutable, would be physical motion. But motion can be achieved simply via an application of power and is an insufficient purpose for a soul to be joined to a body. The heavenly bodies, therefore, are not themselves living, but propelled in their respective spheres by living servants of God, angels, exactly the conclusion reached in *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 3.

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<sup>161</sup> *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 3 *Utrum motus caeli sit ab intelligentia*.

<sup>162</sup> *Commentary* II, 14, 1, 3c, *Et ideo Angelos, qui movent orbis proxime, possumus motores dicere, non formas vel animas*.

<sup>163</sup> *Commentary* II, 15, 1, 2c.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *De potentia* VI, 6, 2c and 2ad10.



But whereas that earlier discussion had focused the attention of the reader upon angelic nature, this treatment has given Aquinas a moment to reflect on the *exitus* and to posit separation of the object moved from the mover, especially important when discussing the “first mover” of Creation. But it also has given Aquinas an opportunity to discuss the relationship of a soul to the body with regard to the heavenly bodies, a matter which he discussed in much greater detail in the next section of the ST with regard to the human being.<sup>166</sup> Aquinas has his mind on what comes next within his schema for the work and within this Article prepared the reader for what follows. He has identified the purpose and the nature of the soul which will undergird that subsequent discussion. The human soul is in the body in order to be sentient and nutritive. This is a reality which does not apply to heavenly bodies, and for this reason the heavenly body is not a truly living thing. The human being has not been deposed from his place at the pinnacle of physical Creation. The heavenly bodies are not like humans, horizon creatures who live in both the spiritual and the physical realms. The heavenly bodies are simply the inanimate objects of forces applied by spiritual intelligences which obediently cause the cosmos to function according to the divine plan.

In terms of the questions of this thesis’ focus on sources the opening and concluding lines of the *corpus* are significant. Aquinas began by noticing that the theologians were in disagreement. Origen and Jerome had asserted that the heavenly bodies are living. Basil and the Damascene said they were not. Augustine, true to form, demurred, refusing to take a position. Aquinas’ response here is interesting: “In such a diversity of opinions, in order that the truth in some part be known, one must keep in mind....”<sup>167</sup> Herein he began his treatment of the relationship between a body and a soul, concluding that the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies are not alive, but simply pushed in their orbits by some angelic force. It is clear (*manifestum est*) and obvious (*patet*) that one cannot call them living except in some equivocal sense (*aequivoce*). Aquinas is not in doubt about whether these beings are living or not. The language he used within this Article has become much more specific and forceful.

Having just explained that the heavenly beings cannot be living, however, he then excuses the patristic theologians who assert the contrary with an appeal to the slippage

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<sup>166</sup> ST I, 75-80.

<sup>167</sup> I, 70, 3c, *In hac autem opinionum diversitate, ut veritas aliquatenus innotescat, considerandum est...*

of language. “Thus between those who hold that the heavenly bodies are alive and those who deny it, there is not a real but merely verbal disagreement.”<sup>168</sup> Even though Aquinas has come to see that there really is a conclusion to be reached here, those who hold what appear to be opposing positions are again read “reverentially.” The difference is semantic (*in voce tantum*), not in substance. There is no cause to contend over this issue. It is so manifest that Jerome, despite what he actually wrote, must have been speaking metaphorically when he called these heavenly bodies “living.” While the patristic theologians at some points do differ, Aquinas also noted a fundamental unity, a unity which he would in this instance arbitrarily enforce. But it should be noted that Aquinas was not alone in this practice. His own mentor, Albert the Great, seems to have advocated that one occasionally needed to “do violence” (*vim facere*)<sup>169</sup> to a patristic source in order to bring their works into line with orthodoxy.<sup>170</sup>

#### QQ 71 and 72

QQ 71 and 72, were treated by Aquinas as single Articles. While not unheard of in the ST, this is quite unusual. Aquinas was here following the pattern set forth in Genesis 1 and which had been part of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard and other treatments of the hexaemeron. The reader who comes to the text looking for theological or philosophical answers might reasonably despair at this point. On the surface, it would appear that Aquinas did not have much to say.

#### Question 71 *de opere quintae diei*<sup>171</sup>

In Q 71 the question posed through the Objections lacks real tension. Aquinas wondered if the description of the fifth day was “fitting.” The *sed contra* is not even a quote, but simply an appeal to the authority of Scripture.<sup>172</sup> It is only in the response to the first

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<sup>168</sup> I, 70, 3c, *parva vel nulla differentia invenitur in re, sed in voce tantum*.

<sup>169</sup> Albert the Great, III *Commentaria in III sententiarum* d. 15, A10c. Cited and discussed by Chenu, *Toward understanding St. Thomas*, 146-7.

<sup>170</sup> For more on Aquinas’ use of the unity and the plurality of the literal sense see also Thomas Prugl “Thomas Aquinas as Interpreter of Scripture” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, Eds.: Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow. (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2005), 395-6.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 15, 2, 2; *De potentia* IV, 2, ob33 and ob4, *corpus*, and Responses.

<sup>172</sup> I, 71, 1sc, *In contrarium sufficit auctoritas Scripturae*.

Objection that Aquinas' intellectual fires were seemingly lit as he addressed a commentator on Aristotle, Avicenna,<sup>173</sup> over the issue of whether the earth was latently capable of producing life or whether some exchange of genetic material is always required. Unfortunately for the reader, Aquinas' conclusions about the spontaneous generation of insects through the process of putrefaction does not likely hold an enduring place in either theology or natural philosophy.

But when one returns to the consideration of sources, another pattern begins to emerge. Augustine and the theologians of Basil's more literal stream of interpretation each have valid contributions to make to this discussion and certainly pose no insurmountable problem for the reader of Genesis 1. The description of the fifth day can fit within either approach and benefits from reading through both approaches. Those who held to a Creation over six calendar days would say that the animals were created in actuality on this day. Augustine had suggested a Creation in potentiality. But both of them are useful in correcting the error of Avicenna, who had asserted that the elements themselves were capable of generating life.

Question 72 *de opere sextae diei*<sup>174</sup>

Q 72 repeated the pattern. Augustine and members of the other strand of interpretation were arranged into a mild conflict which was again resolved by the reader simply understanding that Augustine saw this differently from the others. Both ideas were allowed to stand, both were acceptable. Sometimes Basil's answer to an objection is cited<sup>175</sup> and at other times Augustine is cited.<sup>176</sup> Again, this may be the essential point to be made here. Had one rejected Basil in favor of Augustine, his valuable insights into

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<sup>173</sup> Avicenna, *De anima* 15, 1.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 15, 2, 2.

<sup>175</sup> I, 72, ad1. This objection centers on the relative intelligence of various animals and was it "fitting" to describe the Creation of fish and birds before more intelligent creatures such as are found in many land mammals. One can begin to discern the incipient sciences in that Aquinas himself begins to question this premise. He notes in this response that some lower creatures, ant and bee colonies, are quite "clever" (*sagacitates*).

<sup>176</sup> I, 72, ad6. This is an extended quote from Augustine's *Gen. contra Man.* I, 16, 25 in which he likens poisonous plants and animals to sharp tools in a craftsman's workshop. The unskilled who pick them up may well hurt themselves.

the way Scripture spoke of the hierarchy of animals would not have been heard.<sup>177</sup> Conversely, had the approach of Basil been assumed and Augustine ignored, the lengthy quote of Augustine which explained the creation of poisonous animals would not have been heard.<sup>178</sup> Aquinas seems to be demonstrating in both of these Questions an important principle. Deciding that one strand was correct and the other wrong effectively silenced the strand of interpretation which had fallen out of favor. That impoverished the interpreter. The interpreter who retained the validity of both these strands met the challenges posed by error and misunderstanding with the resources of both strands at his or her disposal.

Critical to this endeavor is the idea that a literal interpretation can lead one into at least two very different understandings of the text. Both are legitimate, both are viable. Specifically to QQ 70-72, however, the treatment of the fifth and sixth days embodied how the interpreter would hold the discreet interpretations within a unity which was forcibly observed in the prior Question. Thus, Aquinas has posed and demonstrated a limit to the idea that there is a plurality of literal senses. They may have reached different literal readings of the text, but the patristic theologians are still subject to the words of the text itself and the rules of logic and the natural world. They cannot posit something impossible, such as, in this instance, that heavenly bodies are living creatures. If they do, the medieval interpreter might simply appeal to the hermeneutical tools of the equivocation of language or the condescension to the original audience. At the same time, this unity does not preclude diversity. Augustine held that the creation of living creatures was in potentiality while others contended that this creative act was in actuality. Both strands of interpretation, for all their differences, fall within the theological unity, despite their apparent and real differences. That diversity of interpretation is not a liability for the interpreter, but a valuable resource.

It would seem the young friar or *lector* is ready to engage in the reading and teaching of patristic texts with a number of critical tools at his disposal. However, Aquinas was not done. The final two QQ will take the reading of patristic sources into a much more complex arena. Temporarily this will necessitate setting aside the conflict between Augustine's and Basil's interpretation. After this interlude, however, Aquinas returned

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<sup>177</sup> I, 72, ad1.

<sup>178</sup> I, 73, ad6.

his reader, somewhat chastised one would think, to the primary discussion which had governed his treatment to this point.

#### 4. The Reverential Reading Fully Formed: Humility and Potential in QQ 73-74.

The final two QQ of this section of the ST challenge the reader on several fronts. Q 73 significantly diverged from the prior QQ. For three Articles the tension between Augustine's interpretation and that of the other group of theologians led by Basil disappears. The discussion of the seventh day was addressed in a completely different way. Q 74, on the other hand, resumed the attention paid to the interpretation of Augustine and Basil, but the very structure of the ST was altered, a structure which had otherwise been extraordinarily consistent. We have already noticed in QQ 70 and 71 that the structure of Questions and Articles was not always a perfect fit for this exegetical project, but we also noted that Aquinas was willing to force the material into the ST's basic shape even if that meant writing Questions with only one Article. In the first and third Articles of the final Question, however, the structure of the Articles themselves is distorted. The disputation in miniature format which has dominated the ST to this point no longer was utilized. Aquinas opted for another shape for this material, a singular departure from his treatment of the prior 73 QQ which he had divided into 322 Articles and to which he would return for the subsequent thousand and more Articles.

These differences will necessitate an examination of these QQ which also diverges from what has already been done. These structures contain some very provocative content. We will need to ask what Aquinas said and how he treated his sources, but we also need to ask why he diverged from his earlier treatment, and how this might be best understood.

#### Question 73 *de iis quae pertinent ad septimum diem*

Like many commentators, Aquinas extended his treatment of the hexaemeron into the seventh day. This was not unusual. Certain textual issues associated with the seventh

day<sup>179</sup> had long interested the interpreters of Genesis 1 and many scholars who undertook to write a *hexaemeron* had also treated this day prior to Aquinas. The subjects addressed by the three Articles within the Question were not original to Aquinas but reflected Peter Lombard's treatment in the *Sentences*.<sup>180</sup> The Lombard had organized his material under the three verbs which are attributed God in the Latin text of Genesis 2:1-3. Already within his commentary on the *Sentences* of Lombard Aquinas had noted different approaches to the seventh day.<sup>181</sup> The material Aquinas produced in ST I, 73 drew heavily upon that earlier treatment, but a comparison of the two suggests that Aquinas did not simply recapitulate his prior work.

A comparison with the *Commentary* brings to light several striking omissions of content. Aquinas excised any mention of the rationale for worship which the Scripture itself<sup>182</sup> made regarding God's activity on the seventh day. In *Commentary* II, 15, 3, 3c Aquinas had asserted two arguments which would explain why God sanctified the seventh day. The first argument is repeated within the ST, namely that God's injunction to multiply and fill the earth began that day and required divine blessing but not direct divine activity. But more the more forceful argument within the *Commentary* attributed the blessing of the seventh day to the Scriptural mandate to worship.<sup>183</sup> This is completely absent from the ST's treatment of the same question. This absence is puzzling. Aquinas had not changed his mind in this regard. In ST II-II, 122, 4, in

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<sup>179</sup> The LXX and Hebrew text differed slightly from the Vulgate in the description of the completion of God's work on the seventh and the characterization of God's "rest" on that day. The Vulgate located the cessation of activity on the seventh day while the LXX and Hebrew texts indicated that God ceased his labors on the sixth day.

<sup>180</sup> *Sentences* XV, 7, 8, and 10.

<sup>181</sup> *Commentary* II, 15, 3, 1-3.

<sup>182</sup> Exodus 20:10-11, by no means an obscure passage, it falls within the statement of the Ten Commandments.

<sup>183</sup> *Commentary* II, 15, 3, 3c, *In sacra enim Scriptura sanctificatio interdum dicitur ex hoc quod aliquid ad cultum Dei dedicatur: sic enim dicitur tabernaculum sanctificari, et vasa ejus et ministri; et ita etiam dies septimus sanctificatus est, idest ad cultum Dei dedicatus est; ut sicut scilicet Deus, qui res condidit, non in ipsis rebus conditis quasi in fine quievit, sed a rebus conditis in seipso in quo beatitudo sua consistit: cum non sit beatus ex hoc quod res fecerit sed quod factis non eget, in seipso sufficientiam habens: ita etiam et nos non in operibus ejus aut in operibus nostris discamus quiescere sicut in fine; sed ab operibus in ipso Deo in quo beatitudo nostra consistit: propter hoc enim institutum est ut homo sex diebus laborans in operibus propriis, septimo die quiesceret, ejus cultui vacans.*

treating the Decalogue and the command to observe the Sabbath, Aquinas concluded his argument with a quotation of this very verse of Genesis and once more made the strong connection between the description of the Creation event and the divine command to worship.<sup>184</sup>

As we have stated earlier, it appears that Aquinas intentionally shaped and simplified his treatment of material to suit the needs of an unsophisticated readership (*incipientes*) for whom unnecessary complexity may have overwhelmed their abilities or distracted from the point Aquinas sought to make. It also appears, however, that the simplification process was not limited to redacting his own material.

The comparison which yields more dramatic evidence of editing is a comparison of ST I, 73 with book IV of Augustine's *Gen. ad litt.* Augustine had devoted substantial attention to the issues of the seventh day and the enumeration of the Creation days. Because he had not held these to be actual calendar days, he considered the description of the creative act in six days and the description of the seventh day to be spiritually significant and the number six occupied much of his interpretational energies. At times Augustine indulged in extraordinary interpretations based upon Neo-Platonic numerological mysticism and other devices.<sup>185</sup> Aquinas demonstrated what Wallace calls "considerable restraint" in his approach to this issue in Q 73. Augustine's ideas were not entirely ignored, nor were they too fulsomely embraced.<sup>186</sup> Is this, as Wallace suggests,<sup>187</sup> evidence of Aquinas' suspicion of Neo-Platonism? Perhaps, but it would seem that the pedagogical reasons which we have noted in the prior questions also may

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<sup>184</sup> ST II-II, 122, 4c, *Et quia praecepta Decalogi sunt quasi quaedam prima et communia legis principia, ideo in tertio praecepto Decalogi praecipitur exterior Dei cultus sub signo communis beneficii quod pertinet ad omnes, scilicet ad representandum opus creationis mundi, a quo requiescere dicitur Deus septimo die, in cuius signum, dies septima mandatur sanctificanda, idest deputanda ad vacandum Deo. Et ideo Exod. XX, praemisso praecepto de sanctificatione sabbati, assignatur ratio, quia sex diebus fecit Deus caelum et terram, et in die septimo requievit.*

<sup>185</sup> Augustine's explication of the significance of the number six runs through *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 1, 1 – IV, 7, 14, a full nine pages in Hill's 2002 translation of Augustine's works on Genesis, (241-249). In *Gen. contra Man.* I, 23,35 – I, 25, 43, Augustine used the six days to support a notion of multiple stages in the history of the world and also of the multiple phases of a human life. None of this material is reflected or even explicitly rejected in Aquinas' treatment, but had been part of the medieval discussion of this material, e.g. in Bede (see in this thesis P. 98).

<sup>186</sup> Wallace, Appendix 11, pp. 230-233.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

be cited as a cause when one considers the sort of use to which Aquinas puts Augustine in the second Article.

Within these three Articles, Augustine is cited only once;<sup>188</sup> however, these three Articles are heavily dependent upon Augustine's thought. The conclusions reached in each Article can easily be attributed to a careful and thorough reading of Augustine's *Gen. ad litt.* IV, but Aquinas did not attribute this to Augustine, nor did he fully replicate Augustine's thoughts. This is a treatment of the seventh day which relies heavily upon Augustine, but it is a heavily edited and redacted version of Augustine's material. At several points Aquinas chose to ignore the argument Augustine made, eliding large sections, especially when Augustine delved into the perfection of the number six. At other points, however, the elements of Augustine's commentary were taken apart and recombined. The most obvious example of this is in the first Article in which Aquinas largely ignores all the issues which Augustine had raised regarding God completing his work and imported insightful conclusions about Creation and Eschatology which Augustine had treated under the locus of God's rest on the seventh day.

It is not only Augustine who is oddly treated here, but the reader notes that the entire and rich corpus of patristic theology on this subject is nearly silenced. As noted, Aquinas cited Augustine once in the second Article<sup>189</sup> and to this he added a brief reference to a single passage of Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus* in the same Article, a citation which he reused in the third Article.<sup>190</sup>

One more comparison bears fruit. When compared to this section's prior Questions and Articles these three Articles could be seen to be altogether *sui generis*. His primary commentator, Wallace, also notices this distinctive nature, dedicating an appendix to Aquinas' treatment of the seventh day.<sup>191</sup> The tension between Augustine and the other interpretational strand championed by Basil is entirely absent. But when one looks at the admittedly limited treatment of the patristic theologians herein one begins to notice a

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<sup>188</sup> I, 73, 2c.

<sup>189</sup> I, 73, 2c, Wallace suggests *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 8, 15.

<sup>190</sup> I, 73, 2c and I, 73, 3ob2, at which points Wallace suggests *De divinis nominibus* IV, 4 and 20.

<sup>191</sup> Wallace, Appendix 11, 230-233.



familiar pattern emerging. Just as we noted in Q 68, Aquinas reached back into his earlier work for a quotation but put that same quotation to purposes in the ST which are at some variance from how that source had been used in prior treatments. Here, it will be the quote from Dionysius which he relocated from a minor supporting role in an Objection within the *Commentary* to a far more significant role within the *corpus* of 73, 2.

Based upon the foregoing, the analysis of the individual articles which follows will engage in a three-fold comparison.

1. The analysis will compare and consider the instances in which Aquinas' treatment mirrors and diverges from Augustine's treatment of this material in *Gen. ad litt. IV*.
2. The analysis will further compare and consider instances in which Aquinas repeats or diverges from his earlier treatment of this material in *Commentary II*, 15, 3, 1-3.
3. This analysis will continue to compare the treatment of sources within these Articles to the treatment of sources in the preceding QQ of this section of the ST as well as within other works.

The results of this comparative analysis will suggest that the while this material diverges significantly from the prior QQ, certain elements remain the same. The hierarchy of authorities which has already been noted is retained, especially evident in the first Article. But once that question was firmly answered, Aquinas appeared once more to be not so interested in making theologically final statements about the seventh day as much as he was interested in the inculcation of a theological *habitus* within his audience.

When one turns to the comparison of this Question with the material from Augustine and his earlier treatment in *Commentary*, this comparative process will reinforce earlier conclusions. The only plausible explanation for his editorial decisions seems to be that this served his purpose to prepare his audience (*incipientes*) for the preaching task and furthering his audience's ability to handle complex patristic texts, in this case the significant work of Augustine. Throughout the prior eight QQ of the ST Augustine had been compared with other theologians. While Aquinas never asserted that Augustine

was “right” and the others “wrong” in so many words, it had become increasingly clear that Augustine’s interpretation was indeed more concordant with Aquinas’ natural philosophy and theology. Within the second and third Article of Question 73 Augustine was subjected to the very principle of epistemic humility for which he so frequently and eloquently argued.<sup>192</sup> Aquinas’ readership would have thus been enabled to come to their own reading of Augustine’s work equipped to be critical readers of this significant authority figure. Much of what Augustine said was good in Aquinas’ estimation, but some could be passed over and other elements could be creatively recombined. None of it was a final word.

Article 1 *utrum completio divinatorum operum debeat septimo diei adscribi*<sup>193</sup>

As already noted, Aquinas treated the seventh day by organizing his material upon the three verbs which his Latin text of Genesis 2 attributed to God on that day: complete, rest, and bless (*compleo*, *requiesco*, and *benedico*). In verse 2, the Latin text which Aquinas used recorded that God completed (*compleo*) his work on the seventh day. And while the Article superficially retains the question of whether this ought to be ascribed to the seventh day, this question does not generate tension nor is it meaningfully treated within this Article.

When one compares this to the treatment of Augustine one notices that Aquinas has shifted material. Whereas the idea of completion had prompted Augustine to delve into the spiritual significance of the number six and particularly the perfection of that number, the idea of completion gave Aquinas occasion to address both the activity of God in the present and God’s future activity in light of eschatological anticipation. Significantly Aquinas did not address the textual issue which the Lombard had noted, namely that Augustine appears here to follow the pre-Vulgate version of the Latin text of Genesis 2:2 which asserted that God completed his work on the *sixth* day.<sup>194</sup>

Aquinas also omitted the extensive Augustinian reflection upon the number six as a perfect number, jumping ahead in the Augustinian material toward the eschatological implication. Yet, while he does not treat this significant element of Augustine’s material

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<sup>192</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 19, 39 – I, 20, 40.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 15, 3, 1.

<sup>194</sup> Wallace, 230.

the way Augustine did, Aquinas' discussion of the seventh day remained very much in keeping with Augustine's treatment of this material in Book IV of *Gen. ad litt.*

Augustine had also connected the seventh day to current divine activity and eschatological promise. He had located the discussion of current and eschatological divine activity, however, he had done so in the discussion of the divine rest,<sup>195</sup> which Aquinas treated in the following Article. Aquinas, in contrast, began the eschatological discussion immediately, under the heading of "completion." Aquinas has conveyed the Augustinian material, but substantively reshaped it, redacting and recombining elements in a significant divergence from Augustine's treatment.

But while Aquinas' ideas were rooted in the Augustinian intellectual framework, the reader also notes that this Article differs sharply from the material which is read in the QQ which immediately precede this Article. Aquinas stated these things and defended them as truth from the text of Scripture without any credit given to Augustine. Perhaps more significantly, this material is placed into no substantive tension with any other opinion. Basil and the other strand of interpretation which he represented are completely absent. In fact, Aquinas attributes none of this material to any patristic theologian by name or even by one of the many anonymous formulae to which he had frequently resorted.

The reader who considers Aquinas' treatment of his sources is faced with a lack of patristic citation within this Article, but not with a lack of citation. Scripture, not the patristic theologians, dominates the first Article in a full range of biblical citations from the New and the Old Testament. As we have noted above,<sup>196</sup> this use of Scripture seems to coincide with Articles whose content occasioned Aquinas to set aside the lessons on reverential reading and address themes important to Aquinas and the whole ST, questions to which the answers were significant. When Aquinas sought to settle issues definitively, when those issues rose to the necessity of a firm answer, Aquinas ascended the hierarchy of the authorities at his disposal and increased the authority level of the material he cited. He turned to Scripture.

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<sup>195</sup> This begins with *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 8, 16 and is woven through the rest of book IV.

<sup>196</sup> See my earlier commentary on 65, 1; 67, 3; and 68, 4.

This model for explaining these changes in the handling of sources, that is the increased breadth of Scriptural citations and the reduction in patristic citations, also holds true here. The first Article immediately gives the reader an indication that Aquinas had turned his attention toward the themes of the entire book (*exitus/reditus*). As Wallace noted within his commentary, this material is “set apart” from the rest of this section and should be numbered among eleven loci in which Aquinas touched upon eschatology throughout the ST.<sup>197</sup>

It should be mentioned that the four Articles in which extra-Genesis 1 Scriptural citations are found could prompt another line of inquiry. Does one notice a progression in the treatment of Scripture as a resource which is similar to the progression we note in his handling of patristic resources? While four Articles do not provide one with sufficient material to make a definitive conclusion, it does not appear that these four Articles can be read this way. The treatment of Scriptural citations in I, 73, 1 when compared to the treatment of Scriptural citations in I, 65, 1 does not appear to be discernibly more robust, complex, sophisticated or complete.

But this Article also can be distinguished from Articles 65, 1; 67, 3; and 68, 4 which share the breadth of Scriptural citation with this one. Unlike those earlier Articles in which the Scriptural citations were noted within these QQ, this Article does not truly make an argument with which the reader is compelled to agree. It reads much more like an exposition of a theological point than the usual disputation in miniature which is the normal character of an Article within the ST. The question which is stated for the Article, whether the completion of the works of Creation should be ascribed to the seventh day is almost completely ignored. The Article devotes most of its attention to explicating the fact that there are two different categories of completion. The Creation could be said in one sense to be complete on the seventh day and yet not complete in another sense. The “new Creation” which had begun in the Incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth is necessary for the final, creative completion to take place, the beatific vision of the last day.

One may discern this other character and content of this Article most fully in the response to the first Objection which had suggested that completeness should only be

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<sup>197</sup> Wallace, 230-231. Aquinas never comprehensively addressed the eschaton as a topic, having broken off his writing of the ST prior to reaching that section of the *tertia pars*.

attributed to the final end of all things. It is worthy of full quotation here. I would have the reader notice that Aquinas introduced several topics to this discussion without making any argument or cause for their inclusion: nature, grace, beatitude, and Incarnation. These are not points of argument, but assumed as fact and used to explain how Creation could be described as complete and yet leave room for a fuller eschatological completion.

As we have said, the first sort of completeness is the cause of the second. Since to attain blessedness, two things are required, nature and grace, the consummation of beatitude will take place at the end of the world, as we have said. But this consummation pre-existed causally, on the side of nature, at the first forming of things, and on the side of grace, in the Incarnation of Christ, because *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*. (John 1:17) Thus on the seventh day came the consummation of nature; in the Incarnation of Christ, the consummation of grace; and at the end of the world, the consummation of glory will come.<sup>198</sup>

While several rationales for this article might be advanced, it seems most likely that the word “complete” sparked a contemplation of last things for Aquinas. A broader reading of the ST has led most scholars<sup>199</sup> of Aquinas to the conclusion that the work had been conceived and written with an eye toward understanding all of theology in light of this consummation. In this first Article of the Question, the seventh day reminded Aquinas of the reason he wrote the work, striving toward a day when he believed that we would no longer “see through a glass darkly.”<sup>200</sup> Perhaps the better understanding of this Article is that herein Aquinas reminded the reader that the reverential reading of the

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<sup>198</sup> I, 73, 1ad1, *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, perfectio prima est causa secundae. Ad beatitudinem autem consequendam duo requiruntur, natura et gratia. Ipsa ergo beatitudinis perfectio erit in fine mundi, ut dictum est. Sed ista consummatio praecessit causaliter, quantum ad naturam quidem, in prima rerum institutione, quantum ad gratiam vero, in incarnatione Christi, quia gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est, ut dicitur Ioan. I. Sic igitur in septima die fuit consummatio naturae; in incarnatione Christi, consummatio gratiae; in fine mundi, consummatio gloriae.* Trans.: Wallace, 141.

<sup>199</sup> While it has not gone unchallenged; the *exitus/reditus* model of M.-D. Chenu remains dominant within the field and is assumed for the purposes of this thesis. See also the introduction to this thesis.

<sup>200</sup> I Corinthians 13:12 “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” (English Standard Version) This verse was a frequent quote within the patristic theologians whom Aquinas read.

patristic theologians is but a tool toward that final goal. If so, this Article is perhaps seen far more naturally as less a medieval disputation in miniature and more a reflection upon theological mystery. One might say that the writing here borders on the devotional. Aquinas affects the posture of one standing in awe, contemplating the idea of the beatific vision, not yet being able to partake of it. There is a consummation of both nature and grace which will fully transpire but has not yet fully transpired outside of Christ. Before this reality Aquinas waits in anticipation. This devotional posture is at the heart of the epistemic humility which Augustine had asserted and which Aquinas sought to inculcate within these *incipientes* to whom he wrote.

The absence of patristic sources in this Article may not be accidental. The patristic authorities, along with Aquinas and the reader, stand in the same position. In the following two articles two authorities of considerable *gravitas* will make an appearance by name: Augustine and Dionysius. Aquinas' reader was likely already familiar with Augustine's *Gen. ad litt.* and quite likely had read and puzzled over Augustine's reflection on the perfection of the number six and role of God's rest within the created order. But even if Augustine had not yet been read, the student of Aquinas would have been forced to acknowledge Aquinas' muted treatment of Augustine's material when he did eventually read Augustine's text. When he came to the seventh day, Aquinas said far less than Augustine.

It would seem that as he began to dethrone Augustine's work from the ascendant position which it may have assumed in the prior Articles, and before he completed this task in the subsequent Articles, Aquinas engaged in a profound reflection upon matters which touched upon the very reason for theology's existence. He paused to bring the final goal of his theological reflection back into focus and establish its priority for the task at hand. Within this first Article Aquinas has also himself embodied the principle which he seems to have explored in the following two Articles. He addressed the deep mysteries of his Christian faith cogently and rigorously and at the same time acknowledged that this Creation which always includes both the theologian and his reader, awaited its final consummation. There are limits to what theologians can say.

Article 2 *utrum Deus septima die requievit ab omni opera sua*<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 15, 3, 2; and *Super Hebraeos* IV, 1.

The second Article engaged the second verb attributed to God on the seventh day: rest (*requiesco*). The three Objections of this Article again demonstrate both Aquinas' indebtedness to Augustine's commentary and his redaction of the Augustinian material. The first Objection, without citing Augustine, quotes John 5:17 in which Jesus states that his divine father has been working continuously up that point. Augustine had wrestled with this very question in *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 11, 21 – IV, 12, 23. But whereas Augustine posited two explanations for the apparent contradiction raised by John 5:17, Aquinas only restated one, and that very briefly. Augustine's first answer had been that this was a figure of speech by which God was pointing forward to Christ resting in the tomb on the seventh day of the week.<sup>202</sup> Aquinas ignored this and opted instead to summarize briefly the second explanation, namely that the rest referred only to the fact that God made no new creatures. God was still engaged in the essential sustenance of the universe. Aquinas' passing over the connection to the image of Christ "resting" in the tomb is especially odd in light of the preceding Article in which he had asserted that Christ's Incarnation was essential to the completion of God's work. It could have, to use Aquinas' own words, been appropriately (*convenienter*) applied here.

The second Objection and Response also reflected Augustinian material. Here the question is more philosophical than textual. How can God, who is the unmoved cause, be said to rest since rest implies a cessation of movement? Augustine had considered this question at some length.<sup>203</sup> His conclusion is summarized in the Objection and *corpus* of the article, but, within the *corpus*, Augustine is credited for the subtle discussion of what it means to rest "from" and not "in" his works.

Aquinas considered one more Augustinian point in the third Article. In *Gen. ad litt.*<sup>204</sup> Augustine had proposed a rather strained reading of the biblical text, a technique which he would utilize in other places as well.<sup>205</sup> Augustine had argued that the verb "to rest" attributed to God could not actually be said of God since God neither desired nor

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<sup>202</sup> See Hill, *On Genesis*, 256, n. 30. Hill notes that this is the only place in which Augustine expressed this idea. He treated the injunction to rest on the Sabbath in several sermons but never proclaimed this rationale for resting in any extant sermon.

<sup>203</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 8, 16 – IV 10, 20.

<sup>204</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 9, 17.

<sup>205</sup> *De Trinitate* 1, 12, 23.

labored and hence could not be said to rest. He argued that Moses had used a type of literary device to describe God bestowing rest upon his Creation, especially humanity.

Anyone who has read the opening paragraph of *Confessions* knows how important this concept of rest was to Augustine. He potently articulated humanity's final goal as simply to rest in God. He therefore saw that the Genesis text under consideration is not truly about God's rest as much as it is a figure of speech which pointed the reader toward God's gift to humanity. God had given cause for humanity and indeed the whole Creation to rest. Aquinas did not disagree, but he carefully distanced himself from this argument and suggested that this was only a partial answer to this Article's question and it may not be the best answer.<sup>206</sup>

Aquinas addressed this argument of Augustine's without attributing it to Augustine, who was nowhere associated with this idea by name within the Article. In the Objection Aquinas objected to the Augustinian idea with an argument rooted in consistency. He posited that "God rested" cannot mean God made humanity to rest, since the text surely does not mean that God gave humanity to create when it says God created. The Response allows the interpretation, but places it in a secondary position, after other arguments which had been put forward in the *corpus* and which reflect other Augustinian material.

The comparison of this Article to Aquinas' treatment of sources within this section of the ST is also fruitful. As already noted, the tension between Augustine and Basil is not found. But one does find within the *corpus* another patristic source quoted, Dionysius.<sup>207</sup> These two are not put into the same sort of obvious tension as Augustine and Basil had been earlier, but the introduction of Dionysius' ideas is initially puzzling. It does not seem to add anything to the argument.

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<sup>206</sup> I, 73, 2ad3, *Est ergo conveniens expositio,...Sed non est haec sola ponenda; sed alia expositio est principalior et prior.*

<sup>207</sup> I, 73, 2c. See the earlier discussion of Dionysius' role under "Patristic Sources" above. This instance might be read to support an observation by Paul Rorem that within medieval theology Dionysius was either extensively quoted or only "fleetingly" referenced as here. When he is extensively quoted it almost always involved the author misappropriating Dionysius' material for a political end. Rorem, 30, asserts that in the fleeting references medieval authors communicated Dionysius' ideas most accurately.



Denis, as Aquinas referred to him, was significant for Aquinas for two reasons. He was a patristic source who spoke of all Creation in terms of *exitus* and *reditus* and was a source for the epistemic humility which this author believes is the central issue here. Dionysius had championed apophatic theology, asserting that one could not assert any positive truth about God univocally, but only speak negatively of the true nature of God. That said, he also asserted that God, as the creator of language, used language to communicate positive truths about himself, in a process that Dionysius seemed to understand almost incarnationally or sacramentally. In a sense, Dionysius collapsed the semiotic theory of Augustine which relied upon the distinction between “things” and “signs.” For Dionysius the sign could also be the thing. While the elements of a sacrament could not be in any way called God, yet, Dionysius asserted, the elements were the communication of God himself. When applied to words, especially Scriptural metaphors, these words contained meaning which transcended the words themselves and thus were often more than what intellectually was attainable.<sup>208</sup> This idea seems to be behind what Aquinas meant in this Question as Dionysius twice is called upon to assert that the nature of goodness is to diffuse throughout all things, hence the things become not merely signs of the good but the goodness itself.

Here the comparison with *Commentary II*, 15, 3 is again illuminating. Aquinas had used this same citation from Dionysius there as well, but as was typical for him he also made use of quotations from a wide range of Scriptural books, multiple works of Aristotle, Moses Maimonides, Gregory, and others. This citation fell in the second Objection of the third Article of Question 15 and was a rather small part of that Article. In a similar action to which we drew attention in Question 68, Aquinas took a minor citation in the *Commentary* and brought it forward to the *corpus* in the ST and greater prominence. Here Dionysius’ idea about the diffusion of good throughout the Creation was set into a relationship with Augustine’s insight into God’s rest.

In Aquinas’ estimation, Augustine’s interpretation of the seventh day had merit (*conveniens expositio*), but that interpretation ultimately cannot be said to communicate the entirety of what the Scriptural text contained. The resting of God might have something to do with this strange diffusion of goodness, a motion which not only

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<sup>208</sup> See Dionysius, *Epistle 9* and especially the commentary by Rorem from my prior note, 25-27.

continues unabated, but which challenged Augustine's entire understanding of things and signs.

Article 3 *de benedictione et sanctificatione huius diei*<sup>209</sup>

The third Article of this Question is remarkable for its brevity. On the seventh day Genesis records that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. Aquinas asked whether blessing and sanctification belonged to the seventh day. This brevity in itself merits attention for it again reflects both the redaction of the Augustinian material and the simplification and reduction of the material which Aquinas had already written within *Commentary II*, 15, 3, 3. In that earlier treatment Aquinas had marshaled Gregory and multiple citations of Aristotle to argue that blessing did indeed belong on the seventh day. His argument was based on a finely parsed understanding of blessing and rest. In the second element of the *corpus* he had firmly connected the divine blessing to the establishment of the Sabbath. If one takes a step back from the details of this analysis of the ST and considers this material in light of the entire ST, this Article in the *Commentary* is the Article one would have expected Thomas Aquinas to have written because it is a thorough and rigorous treatment of a topic important to Aquinas. But this is not the Article which one finds within the ST.

When compared to Augustine's *Gen. ad litt.*,<sup>210</sup> one again notices a dependence upon the Augustinian treatment and considerable omissions, some of which are puzzling. Reading Augustine's treatment of God blessing the seventh day could have again given Aquinas an occasion to comment upon the legitimacy of the mendicant orders, a subject in which he was personally and professionally invested. As we have already noted within this thesis<sup>211</sup> the defense of the mendicant orders was important to Aquinas. From Aquinas' earliest days at the University of Paris, he had contended with local clergy and academics, particularly William of St. Amour over the mendicant, non-working, status of the Dominicans and Franciscan orders. In the conflict over Aquinas' assumption of the Chair of Theology in Paris in his first regency, Aquinas had written one of his only truly polemical tracts, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, in

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<sup>209</sup> Cf. *Commentary II*, 15, 3, 3.

<sup>210</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 13, 24 – IV, 17, 30.

<sup>211</sup> Pp. 42-50.

1256.<sup>212</sup> Herein he addressed this very question at considerable length.<sup>213</sup> That God rested on the seventh day and blessed that day of rest would seem to provide an occasion to address William's assertion that no man who is not in a monastery<sup>214</sup> should eschew work as the mendicants did by begging.

Reading Augustine might also have provided an occasion, as it did for Aquinas in the *Commentary*, to discuss another favorite medieval subject: worship on the Christian Sabbath. Aquinas engaged neither of those avenues of argumentation. While the initial question about whether it is proper for God to have blessed and sanctified the seventh day is addressed, these two issues are oddly absent.<sup>215</sup>

Augustine, on the other hand, had addressed under God's blessing of the seventh day both the contemplative life and the Sabbath command in *Gen. ad litt.* IV. He made a pointed comparison and contrast between the blessings of work and rest or contemplation based upon the story of Mary and Martha recorded in Luke 10:38-42.<sup>216</sup> The potential presented by this story was not lost on Aquinas. He had already extensively used it within both the *Commentary*<sup>217</sup> and *Contra impugnantes*<sup>218</sup>. Nor can it be argued that he had changed his mind on the matter for in ST II-II, 182, 1 Aquinas used this very account and comparison of Mary and Martha to form the heart of an argument for the contemplative life. Despite all of Aquinas' attention<sup>219</sup> to the story of

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<sup>212</sup> See discussion in Weisheipl, 79-80 and Torrell, 79-83.

<sup>213</sup> *Contra Impugn.* II, 4.

<sup>214</sup> Torrell, 80, notes that William, Aquinas' opponent, did not seem to recognize the distinction between a monk and a friar, insisting that all members of a religious order were bound by the Rule of Benedict.

<sup>215</sup> Wallace in his commentary on the Section also notes the absence of any such questions, 148.

<sup>216</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 14, 25.

<sup>217</sup> *Commentary* III, 35, 1, 1sc1 and III, 35, 1, 3, qc3.

<sup>218</sup> *Contra impugn.* II, 4c and III, 4ad6.

<sup>219</sup> An evaluation of Aquinas' treatment of Luke 10:38-42 should also include his commentary on the four Gospels which was contemporaneously written with this section of the ST. Therein Aquinas read Augustine's carefully nuanced theology of work and rest. In *Catena aurea in Lucam*, 10, lect. 10 Aquinas had collected comments of eight individual theologians around this passage from Luke 10. Aquinas placed Augustine in tension with his fellow patristic theologians, defending the service of Martha as good and also worthy of praise over against those who would have used the praise of Mary to elevate the contemplative life over the life of labor.

Mary and Martha and his close reading of Augustine on this matter in relationship to the seventh day, this story and the conclusions which Aquinas drew from it with Augustine are not found within ST 73, 3.

As we noted above, Augustine had also addressed the Sabbath command within book IV, weaving the rest of God and the blessing of the seventh day into a complex excursus on the nature of God's rest and the rationale for that rest. He had argued that the divine rest had in fact been creative of the human rest which was the ultimate goal of humanity. That had precipitated a brief excursus into the nature of the Christian Sabbath on the part of Augustine.<sup>220</sup>

Aquinas addressed neither of these two issues in this brief article. He limited himself to applying the two ways to understand the rest of God which necessitated the use of the term "blessing" (*benedico*) to describe the divine activity on the seventh day. In an analysis of the treatment of sources, 73, 3 is notable in that it has only one patristic source cited, the same passage from Dionysius,<sup>221</sup> which was utilized in the prior article.

Aquinas' treatment of material in this Question may be read as something of an interlude in the inculcation of reverential reading, but I would argue this is not the case. It clearly is a break from the examination of the competing ideas of Basil and Augustine. Yet, reverential reading remained at the center of this Question. We have already demonstrated this in the second Article as Aquinas insisted upon subjecting Augustine to a hermeneutic of epistemic humility, a humility which he had gleaned from the apophatic theology of Dionysius. Augustine's more ambitious and optimistic application of Neo-Platonist ideas to the text had been treated with considerable caution. Augustine may be right, but in Aquinas' estimation Augustine had overstated his case (admittedly, an evaluation which Aquinas does not make in so many words but which can be reasonably deduced from his redaction of the Augustinian material). In the third Article one might read such epistemic humility and restraint personally applied as Aquinas, confronted with opportunities to enter the fray of medieval politics and theology, opted for an exceedingly muted treatment. Able to draw upon no less of an

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<sup>220</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 13, 24.

<sup>221</sup> *De divinis nominibus* IV, 4 and 20.

authority than Augustine, Aquinas refused to press Genesis 1 into the service of contemporary conflicts, even stripping such material out of his prior treatment.

Question 74 *de omnibus septem diebus in communi*

In the final Question of this section, Aquinas returned to the reverential reading of both Augustine and Basil which occupied QQ 66-72. He address here the seven days of the Creation event as a group. The subject matter is varied and covers the entirety of the Creation narrative. The section is drawing to a close and the inattentive reader might conclude that Aquinas had a few things to address which he was determined to include within this section but that his mind was already looking ahead to the anthropological section which followed these QQ. At some points, especially in the final Article, this Question appears to be little more than a disjointed collection of items. But I argue for another reading of this Question. Having established in prior Questions the fact that both of the patristic readings, the reading by Augustine and the reading by Basil, are congruent with a faithful and thoughtful reading of the text, and having revisited the goal of the whole document in 73, 1, Aquinas in this Question put to the test the very reverential reading which he had sought to establish and he put the reader him/herself to the test. Or, in a more pedagogical understanding, he led the *lector* and the friars whom he taught into a laboratory of theology so that they might now learn through experimentation. In so doing Aquinas stretched to the breaking point the basic structure of the ST which had heretofore obtained consistently throughout the work and to which he would return in the QQ and Articles which followed this section. In the first Article, any tension between the Objections and the *sed contra* is entirely missing. That tension returned in the second Article, but the treatment of that tension in the *corpus* and in the responses to the Objections is deliberately designed to thwart the format's normal resolution. There simply is no *corpus* nor a *sed contra* to be found in the third Article.

It would seem that Aquinas had something different in mind for this Question. It is my contention that it is an exercise in the reverential reading he had developed over the prior nine QQ and an opportunity for the reader to develop skills through the practice of such a reading. Indeed, one might speculate that the absence of a *corpus* in the last Article is an invitation for the student to write one or to see the pairs of Objections and Responses as opportunities to hold the sort of disputations which resulted in more formal Objections, Responses, *sed contra* and *corpus*.

Article 1 *utrum sufficienter isti dies enumerentur*<sup>222</sup>

The first Article of this section asked whether the number of days recorded in Genesis 1 is sufficient. The objections posed and what is marked as the *sed contra* are in a particularly strange relationship. They both posed problems with the biblical depiction of seven days, but very different problems. The Objections suggest that the enumeration is improper because the act of Creation does not actually have a day ascribed to it while the acts of differentiation and ornamentation have three each; the elements do not each receive proper treatment, but water and earth are described more fully than fire and air; and birds and fish are lumped together when they differ from each other as much as they do from animals which are treated on a separate day. The *sed contra* on the other hand does not, as one would expect, cite biblical or other authority that the seven days of Creation are proper. It does not present a logical argument that the days are properly numbered at all but posed further problems with the Genesis text. The first *sed contra* points out the problem of light being differentiated on the first day but the heavenly bodies on the fourth. In an unusual<sup>223</sup> second point in the *sed contra*, Aquinas posited the observation that nothing actually happened on the seventh day and hence it should not be included in this enumeration. The result of this is that the Article does not convey the intellectual or rhetorical tension as other Articles we have examined. This is carried through to the Responses, which respond not only to the Objections but, in another departure from usual form, include Responses to the two *sed contra*. In this respect, the first Article is very similar to the third Article of this Question, but this Article does have a *corpus*.

Within the *corpus* the two interpretive strands reassert themselves, are again held up to the Objections presented to the enumeration of the seven days, and each interpretative strand is fitted into both the text and the philosophical underpinnings with which Aquinas worked. The majority of theologians who followed Basil's understanding are called upon to provide one answer to the question the number of days. The double triad neatly includes both extremes and the middle in a double treatment. This is supported by a citation from the "Pythagoreans" and deemed to be a quite acceptable answer.

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<sup>222</sup> Cf. *De potentia* IV, 2c; ST I, 70, 1; and *Super Hebraeos* IV, 1.

<sup>223</sup> It should be noted that multiple *sed contra* statements are unusual in the ST, but not in his other works, especially *De potentia* in which a single Article may have up to six or seven contrary statements.

Augustine, on the other hand, was also given an opportunity to answer this question. He agreed on the second triad of days, but differed on the first. His conception of the perfection of the number six meant he wanted to see the first day distinguished from days two and three, thus mirroring that number's perfection. Augustine was referring to the fact that six is the sum of its aliquot parts or factors. The factors of six are one, two, and three, which, added together, make six. Thus the first day was the creation of heavenly beings (light) and the next two days established the heavenly and earthly extremes, and days four through six ornamented the top, middle, and bottom of that heavenly schema. For Augustine this perfection of the number six was the reason that the days were thus enumerated.<sup>224</sup>

What is important here for the incipient theologian is to see that both strands of theologians, though they differ, are not pitted against one another. They offer up useful ways to understand this text. Both strands are able to answer the objections raised. The rejection of one or another strand as "untrue" would have left the interpreter without useful wisdom and insight and the dispute between Augustine and Basil would have distracted from the text itself.

The rationale for this article seems to be the inclusion of Augustine's counter-intuitive argument about the six days. Aquinas, writing to the lectors of the various priories of the Dominican order, knew from personal experience the impulse to literal and legalistic readings of patristic theologians and Scripture. He had encountered that impulse first hand in the period of his first regency in Paris. He saw them at work even as he wrote these words in his dealings within the Papal court.<sup>225</sup> He lays out this mystic

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<sup>224</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* IV, 7, 14: "That is why we cannot say that the reason the number six is perfect is that God perfected all his works in six days, but rather the reason God perfected his works in six days is that six is a perfect number. And so, even if none of these existed, it would still be perfect, while unless it were perfect these would not have been completed and perfected in accordance with it." Trans.: Hill, *On Genesis*, 249. See Richard Bauckham "Humans, Animals, and the Environment in Genesis 1-3" in *Genesis and Christian Theology*, Eds.: Nathan MacDonald, Mark W. Elliot, and Grant Macaskill, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 175-178, for a contemporary reflection on the enumeration of the days of creation and the structure of Genesis 1.

<sup>225</sup> One can certainly deduce that Aquinas was concerned with conflict rooted in literalistic readings of patristic theologians from his argument in the prologue of *Contra errores Graecorum*. This conclusion is reinforced by his intense interest in procuring accurate translations of Greek patristic and philosophical works during this period. But this seems to have been limited to patristic and philosophical texts. He did not express dissatisfaction with the Latin translation of Scripture he used. See discussion in Weisheipl, 163-176.

interpretation by Augustine, without rendering any judgment as to its validity or propriety. Other theologians were noted within this Article, and it is moreover affirmed that this agrees with the philosophers, especially the Pythagoreans, but Augustine and his mystical reading of the number six predominates.

The *lector* or friar who came to this Article of the ST in teaching the friars of his Priory would have been both equipped to answer their questions and lead them in a discussion of this thought provoking passage in Augustine. Aquinas did not script the conversation. He did not provide the “right” answer, but simply provided, within the various Responses, a few parameters for the discussion. If there is a “right” answer, it would seem to be that there is no “right” answer. Even something as strange as what Augustine had said could be the Truth to which they all were moving, the consummation of the whole of Creation.

Article 2 *utrum omnes isti dies sint unus dies*<sup>226</sup>

In the second Article of Question 74, Aquinas broached the subject of whether the Creation account is really instantaneous or actually stretches over multiple days. This question had been lurking in the background of the discussion throughout this section, and at this point Aquinas formally brought it to the surface. Was Creation an event which transpired over six calendar days or was it an instantaneous event which is logically broken into six phases, phases or logical markers which happen to be called “days?”<sup>227</sup> Finally, it appears, Aquinas would have to answer the question of whether Augustine or Basil was the correct reading.

Aquinas increased the tension with Scriptural quotations and presented both interpretational strands, now reduced to this one critical question which stood at the heart of the divide. The objections took Augustine’s position and made use of one of Augustine’s favorite passages, Ecclesiasticus 18:1 in which the text stated that God had made the entire universe “at the same time.”<sup>228</sup> This had been the Scriptural lynchpin of

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<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Commentary* II, 12, 2-3; *De veritate* VIII, 16; *De potentia* IV, 2; and *Super Hebraeos* IV, 1.

<sup>227</sup> This idea has a close contemporary correlation between those who suggest that the “days” of Genesis 1 are more than 24 hours long. In fact some postulate that these are eons or epochs which are millions of years in length, e.g., <http://home.att.net/~jamspsu84/ttocday.html>.

<sup>228</sup> *Qui vivet in æternum creavit omnia simul* <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/vul/sir018.htm#001>  
Most current translators, cf NRSV, treat the LXX Greek (Ὁ Ζῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἔκτισεν τὰ πάντα κοινῇ)



Augustine's argument. The *sed contra* posited what seems like a clear statement in the text of Genesis 1 which enumerates multiple days and surely would have been the primary text utilized by those who challenged Augustine's idea and would have likely referenced Basil's reading of Genesis 1.

The theologian or philosopher who has come to this question eager for resolution must leave it with a measure of disappointment. The *corpus* does not resolve the tension so much as discuss it. In this matter, "these two opinions ... differ widely."<sup>229</sup> Aquinas clearly understood the tension and made sure the reader clearly understood the tension as well. But he steadfastly refused to assert one interpretive strand over against the other; in fact the tension is not resolved as much as it is bracketed into a point of some irrelevancy. Augustine and the other patristic theologians clearly disagree. But there is also an essential agreement: "But if these two opinions refer to the manner in which things were produced, there is no great difference between them."<sup>230</sup> Agreement on the fact of the Creation does not necessarily imply an agreement on the manner of Creation. Both interpretational strands assert that God created, but they understand<sup>231</sup> this to have happened differently. That disagreement is simply left to stand because it does not negatively affect the larger point. Aquinas clearly wanted to place the assertion of the quiddity of Creation into a hierarchically higher position than the discussion of the mode of Creation. Indeed, the contest regarding the mode of Creation might simply be a distraction from the far more important discussion of Creation's quiddity.

What is perhaps most interesting to the reader interested in Aquinas' use of sources is a particular line which is found at the end of the *corpus*: "So as not to prejudice either view, we must deal with the reasons for both."<sup>232</sup> The Responses which follow this

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idiomatically as "he made the whole universe" but not Jerome's Vulgate translation upon which Aquinas relied.

<sup>229</sup> I, 74, 2c, *hae duae opiniones,...magnam diversitatem habent.*

<sup>230</sup> I, 74, 2c, *Sed si istae duae opiniones referantur ad modum productionis rerum, non invenitur magna differentia.*

<sup>231</sup> The Latin *intelligo* is used to describe those who adhere to both strands.

<sup>232</sup> I, 74, 2c, *Ut igitur neutri sententiae praejudicetur, utriusque rationibus respondendum est.* In his commentary, Wallace notes that this quite unusual for Aquinas, but reflects his "cautious reserve on the entire subject of cosmogony and Scriptural exegesis." 159, note j.

statement clearly and deliberately refused to take a side, but demonstrated how both understandings could accurately reflect the biblical text and current philosophical understandings of the nature of matter and the world. Imagining that this is a manual or text for the instructor, it seems Aquinas was anticipating the question of the perceptive student for the sake of the *lector*. Having given the *lector* the prior exercise with his students, Aquinas equips the *lector* with an answer to the question of his brightest students.

Article 3 *utrum Scriptura utatur convenientibus verbis ad exprimendum opera sex dierum*

The last Article of the section is noteworthy for its peculiar structure. The Article is no more than list of seven objections which are then addressed in seven responses. There is no *sed contra* or *corpus*. Aquinas made no attempt to explain this nor offered up any potential purpose for this peculiar alteration of the otherwise very uniform ST pattern; yet, this change is noteworthy. This is the 325<sup>th</sup> Article in the ST. Aquinas was very regular in his form, very seldom deviating from the disputational structure of Objections, *sed contra*, *corpus*, and Response. Most of the deviations from that form were noted by Aquinas within the text of the Article itself. In I, 1, 4; 32, 4; 43, 8; 52, 1; and 52, 2 he omitted the Responses, simply indicating that there was no need given the content of the *corpus*.<sup>233</sup> In I, 39, 8 and 54, 5 he does not formally break off the *corpus* to compose Responses but incorporates the Responses into the *corpus*. On three occasions, I, 5, 3; 14, 15; and 41, 1 the *corpus* is very brief, but still a discreet unit, set apart from the subsequent elements in the Article by the usual formula (*responsio*).

Cajetan, Aquinas' most significant commentator in the period of the Reformation, thought this so odd that he forced the Article into an approximation of the ST paradigm by treating the first Response as a *corpus*.<sup>234</sup> Aquinas' modern commentator, Wallace,

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<sup>233</sup> I, 1, 4c, *Et per hoc patet responsio ad obiecta*.

<sup>234</sup> Cajetan, *Commentaria* I, 74, 3 found in *Summa Theologiae. Opera omnia iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita, t. 4-5: Pars prima Summae theologiae* (Ex Typographia Polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, Romae, 1888-1889). *Nota quod, cum quaestio sit de omnibus, in corpore, (quod est etiam responsio ad primum) s. Thomas respondet de communibus ad creationem et alia, in quantum Deum respiciunt. In responsionibus vero argumentorum, ad alia verba descendit.*

also notes this structural anomaly and Cajetan's solution, and poses no other solution or explanation for this.<sup>235</sup>

It seems inconceivable that Aquinas would have simply neglected or forgotten the structure to which he had assiduously adhered for the prior 324 Articles already addressed in the *prima pars* of the ST. Yet, this idea seems to lie behind Cajetan's attempt to force Aquinas back into a proper, disputational shape, as if Aquinas somehow had been in error or had forgotten what he was doing and needed his commentator to repair this apparent lapse. Wallace's failure to comment or explore the issue seems to be rooted in his own admitted indifference to Aquinas treatment of this material.<sup>236</sup>

It would seem a reasonable line of inquiry to ask why Aquinas might have altered the very format of his work at this point. Is this structural shift significant? It cannot be asserted that the subject matter necessitates it. The question posed within the Article does not diverge from the sort of questions which had been asked in earlier QQ. Aquinas here returned to a familiar topic as he wondered if the description of the seven days as a whole makes use of fitting language (*convenientibus verbis*). It thus cannot be asserted that the content is strikingly different from those earlier Articles and necessitated a singularly different treatment. Nor can one justifiably suggest that this material did not merit a *corpus* or a full treatment. The third Objection and its Response are as long as some of the briefer Articles and the material, the Trinitarian implications of the Creation event, is theologically rich.

One might better attribute this abrupt change in structure to the location of this Article at the conclusion of this section. Its place at the end of this exegetical material may better explain the cause of the structural changes. One potential solution might be that this peculiar Article is something of an omnibus Article, a collection of matters which Aquinas did not address at earlier points within the treatment of the Creation account but which he considered worthy of treatment. Yet this rationale also suffers upon closer examination. The Objections can each be logically placed under this question and address apparent points at which the descriptions within the seven days are problematic.

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<sup>235</sup> Wallace, 162-163, note: a.

<sup>236</sup> Wallace, Intro, xx-xxii.

That said, if this question about proper language is a real question, these points could have been addressed far more forcefully throughout the earlier exegesis of these verses in Genesis, either as additions to existing Articles or as Articles themselves. As an example, consider the first Article which could have easily been developed into an entire Article under Q 65. Consider also the second Objection which complains that the creation of water is never explicitly mentioned and therefore the Creation is poorly described. This Objection and Response would have been a logical subject for inclusion within 68, 1, 2, or 3 since these Articles address creation of the firmament and the division of the waters into the waters below and the waters above that firmament. The reader may remember that this occasioned significant inquiry into the exact nature of these waters and how this problematic verse was to be read. It is a reasonable conclusion to think that a question about the sort language employed to describe that water would have been important to any real quest for theological or philosophical truth at that point. Yet, Aquinas did not mention this objection in Question 68 but reserved this observation and the problem it raised for this final Article within this section.

I assert once more that the pedagogical purpose for this section provides a clearer justification for what Aquinas wrote. For the instructor who has spent time with any contemporary text book, the purpose here seems clear. This is a list of exercises for the *lector* and his students to hone their reverential reading skills. Aquinas listed an Objection to the Biblical content, clarified the issue in the Response with an appropriate citation from the patristic theologians, and then moves the reader onto another example. Each of these could have presented an *incipiens* with an opportunity think about the text within the parameters of reverential reading which Aquinas had proposed. While there is no rubric inside the text which describes how this might be used, one can imagine that here at the end of this whole exercise on reverential reading, the *lector* would pose an objection and ask his students to answer it reverentially. The responses are the “answers” in the teacher’s edition.

When one considers those “answers” in light of his use of patristic sources, the indebtedness of these Responses to what has preceded within this section is clear. The first Objection had complained that the description of the Creation was deficient because the second person of the Trinity, the “Word of God,” was insufficiently described. The Response carefully addressed the question from the Augustinian perspective of the Creation event and that of the “others” (*alii*). Likewise, the second

Objection's complaint that water was not created is treated by Augustine, Basil, and others.

The theologically significant third Objection and its lengthy response also explore the various ways that these patristic theologians interpret this material, but Aquinas wove in an additional element for the student. The complaint of the Objection focused the reader's attention upon the fact that the text does not record God's approval, i.e., "and God saw that it was good" on the second day. In a complex explanation in which Aquinas dwells upon Augustine's reading of the first day<sup>237</sup> he concluded that the first and second days were an adumbration of the Trinity.<sup>238</sup> The other patristic theologians are briefly mentioned at the very end of the Response as offering a "mystical explanation" (*rationem mysticam*), but in a substantial paragraph immediately before that end, Rabbi Moses Maimonides<sup>239</sup> is credited with a three-fold answer to the objection. Considering the complexity of Augustine's answer and the exceedingly brief treatment of the "Others" at the end of the section, one cannot but notice that Rabbi Moses was made to sound much clearer on this matter than anyone else. Did Aquinas introduce a Jewish interpreter at this juncture intentionally? This is an especially provocative idea since in ST I, 13, 2 Aquinas had taken the unusual step of rejecting Maimonides' particular expression of the *via negativa* in no uncertain terms. His understanding of Maimonides may have been flawed, but within the ST Aquinas had already cast this Jewish philosopher into a category of suspect sources.<sup>240</sup> Augustine had led the interpreter down a complex path which only a Christian could traverse with its Trinitarian implications. The "others" had chosen a mystical but not terribly convincing option. This unexpected source, a Jewish interpreter, may sometimes help the incipient theologian more than the patristic theologians.

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<sup>237</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 8, 14.

<sup>238</sup> See Emery, 62-67, for discussion of Aquinas' treatment of this topic in other places both within the ST and his other works.

<sup>239</sup> *Guide to the Perplexed* II, 30.

<sup>240</sup> Jennifer Hart Weed, "Maimonides and Aquinas: A Medieval Misunderstanding" in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 64:1 (2009), 385-386. For a more positive approach to Aquinas' use of Maimonides see Warren Zev Harvey "Maimonides and Aquinas on Interpreting the Bible" in *Proceedings for the American Academy of Jewish Research*, 55 (1988), 69ff.

Rabbi Moses made his second appearance in the Article in the Response to the fourth Objection in which Aquinas had complained that to describe the Spirit of God in a physical place, in this instance the Spirit of God hovering “above the waters” was not a proper description. Rabbi Moses suggested that this was simply a divinely moved wind or air.<sup>241</sup> Against this backdrop, Augustine’s understanding of the waters as unformed matter is cited,<sup>242</sup> and Basil was credited with suggesting that the Spirit of God quickened the waters and injected his vital powers into it.<sup>243</sup> Here Rabbi Moses, having been accredited in the prior Response by providing a clearer answer, serves as an intellectual grounding for the rather speculative ideas of both Augustine and Basil. Aquinas seemed to say that Augustine and Basil could apparently both be wrong and that this “Spirit of God hovering over the waters” might simply be so much wind.

Was Aquinas endeavoring to keep his incipient theologians grounded here as well? The temptation to rather florid exegesis has plagued Christian biblical interpretation since its beginning. One is here reminded of Aquinas’ rejection of Origen’s postulation that the heavenly bodies were prisons for disobedient angels in I, 65, 2 and his refusal to incorporate Augustine’s mystical explanation of the number six in the Articles immediately prior. Aquinas’ use of Moses Maimonides seemed to be reminding his students that there may be a very simple answer to objections raised, and that simple answer might be found in surprising places outside the Christian tradition.<sup>244</sup>

The Responses to the fifth, sixth, and seventh Objections are brief and catalogue the various ideas of Augustine, Basil and Chrysostom in response to the questions raised within the Objections. The section is coming to a close and these final Objections and their Responses have the feel of some loose ends which are being gathered up before the ST moves on to its next subject.

##### 5. Summary of QQ 65-74.

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<sup>241</sup> *Guide to the Perplexed* II, 30.

<sup>242</sup> *Gen ad lit* I, 7, 13.

<sup>243</sup> I, 74, 3ad3, *vivificabat aquarum naturam, ... vitalem virtutem his quae foventur injiciens.*

<sup>244</sup> Pieper, 27.

The reader who has persevered through this re-reading of these ten QQ of Aquinas' ST has been given an occasion to notice several elements:

1. The theological and philosophical reading of these questions is frustrated. At several points Aquinas has edited, redacted and removed material from his earlier and fuller treatments. This has frequently left important questions either unaddressed or insufficiently addressed. Aquinas is not questing for theological or philosophical truth as he does in *De potentia* or his *Commentary*.
2. These QQ are almost exclusively focused upon the use of patristic sources. When the answers matter to Aquinas, he sets them aside and argues from Scripture, only to return to the patristic sources once more.
3. Aquinas argued consistently for the validity of multiple literal readings of the Creation narrative. Augustine's counter-intuitive reading and Basil's more traditional reading were both held to be valid and consistent with the text of Genesis and the best scientific understanding of the day. The question of which one was "right" was a question which Aquinas refused to answer.
4. The complexity and sophistication of the reverential reading increased as the QQ progressed. The ease with which the reader is given to reject Origen's ideas about the nature of physical bodies in I, 65 is slowly transformed into the subtle and sophisticated reading of Augustine's *Gen. ad litt.* IV, in ST I, 73.

As we have argued from the beginning of this thesis. The reader who turns from this material because he or she finds a more robust and sophisticated argument being made in Aquinas' *De potentia*, *Commentary* or ST I, 44-49, may have valid reasons for doing so in a quest for Aquinas' most profound treatments of Creation. But that turning away from these QQ is also missing something else. The simplification of material and the focus on careful reading of patristic sources is highly suggestive of a pedagogical purpose for these QQ. Aquinas' deliberate manipulation of sources and argumentation suggests that this simpler treatment was not a product Aquinas failure to pay attention to his subject matter adequately. Rather, it suggests that he had carefully arranged this material, had marshalled his important arguments regarding Creation under an earlier section (ST I, 44-49), and had here an opportunity to do something other than he had done there.

## **Conclusion: Letting Augustine Carry the Day by Not Winning the Argument**

In the final paragraph of the first book of *Gen. ad litt.*, after he had raised many questions about the Creation account, Augustine imagined a conversation with a skeptical reader in which that reader demanded to know the benefit of all his questioning about the Genesis.<sup>1</sup> We have come to a similar moment of reckoning within this thesis. While the discussion of Aquinas' use of Augustine within these QQ and other elements of his *oeuvre* could continue, it is time to recapitulate and consider the material which has heretofore been presented.

### 1. Recapitulation and Summary

We have made several interlocking assertions within this thesis which we have demonstrated through exemplars and the comparative study of texts. These assertions have led to the conclusion that ST I, 65-74 merits reconsideration by the academic theological and philosophical communities through a re-imagined hermeneutical lens. We have constructed that lens and conducted that rereading, demonstrating that Aquinas had both a pedagogical and an apologetic goal in mind for his treatment of the Creation narrative within these QQ which need to be considered prior to a more traditional quest for exegetical, philosophical, or theological truth. This reading has enabled us to posit a heretofore unconsidered hermeneutic for these QQ which the academic community of Thomistic scholarship has found frustrating and hence neglected.

It should not be assumed from this assertion that the fundamental questions of the exegesis of Genesis 1 were of no import to Aquinas. Just twenty QQ prior to this section, Aquinas had engaged in a substantive exploration of the doctrine of Creation in QQ 45-49. Many of the issues which remain critical to reading Genesis 1 were treated there, including *creatio ex nihilo* (45, 1); the eternity of the universe (46, 1) and the relation of evil to the good creation (48, 1-48, 5). Notably, these were all issues which could be addressed in an exegesis of Genesis 1, but are not addressed in QQ 65-74. The problems addressed in these QQ are really the problems of creation itself as much as they are the problems occasioned by the text of Scripture and its literal reading. Thus, the section under consideration remained an exegesis of a biblical text whose

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<sup>1</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 21, 41, Dicet aliquis: Quid tu tanta tritura dissertationis huius, quid granorum exuisti? quid eventilasti?



understanding and interpretation were important to Aquinas and his contemporaries. The conclusions which Aquinas reached herein were therefore substantive and important for understanding this text of Genesis 1. Reading QQ 65-74 purely as an exegetical exercise, however, does not adequately explain the content which the reader finds within these QQ. The failure to resolve issues which had been resolved elsewhere in Aquinas' works, even within the ST, suggests another goal than simply explicating the text. It is this persistent sense that Aquinas had another goal in mind which occasioned this research initially and which has born this fruit.

Before further recapitulating the findings of this research, two problematic readings of this thesis and Aquinas need to be addressed. The preceding thesis could be misconstrued as proposing an anachronistic reading of Aquinas. The observation that Aquinas refused to conclude that either Basil or Augustine was correct may lend some credence to the idea that Aquinas held for the idea of a *duplex veritas* or *multiplex veritas*, as if both interpretational strands represented by Basil and Augustine were correct in their expositions. I do not read Aquinas to be saying this. While he respects both of these interpretational strands, he is, within these QQ, asserting an epistemic humility, not multiple truths. Aquinas did not believe humanity has the basis in revelation or in native rational ability to determine which interpretation is the correct interpretation, at least not definitively. From his treatment of these materials in both *De potentia* and *Commentary* it is clear that he personally prefers the interpretation of Augustine when engaged in theological exploration. Within these QQ, however, he refuses to assert that as a conclusion or even as a probability. Both interpretational strands may be, in Mark Jordan's words, a "refraction of the truth"<sup>2</sup> but Aquinas deliberately refuses to endorse one over the other. In Objections 3 and 4 of the final Article, and particularly in the Responses to those Objections, he seems to have gone even a step further and asserted that both Augustine and Basil could in fact be in error.<sup>3</sup> It is our conclusion that this section of the ST is best understood as a treatment of the proper handling of patristic resources.

A second and related approach to Aquinas' treatment of these two strands also must be addressed and ultimately rejected. One could posit that Augustine represented for

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<sup>2</sup> Jordan, 23.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 222-223.

Aquinas a more philosophical or rational source of knowledge and that Basil therefore represented a more “faith based” approach which simply appealed to a revealed truth over observation and philosophical truth. In this misconstrual, Aquinas is cast, again anachronistically, into a post-enlightenment faith and reason or religion and science debate. Aquinas did not conceive of a tension between faith and reason in anything like the categories in which many within post-enlightenment Christianity have considered this tension since the days of Hume, Descartes, and Locke. The tension between faith and reason, in so far as there is a tension for Aquinas, was a dialectical opportunity to think deeply about a very rational faith, not an occasion to pit one against the other into a conflict which demanded a winner.

Aquinas did not appear to have considered that Augustine represented for the reader a sanitized philosophical reading of Genesis 1 while Basil’s interpretation was contrasted as the faithful reading of the text. Not only does this presume a modern bifurcation of theology and philosophy which Aquinas did not truly recognize, it is not present in the text itself. At numerous points, both Basil and Augustine are situated within philosophical communities.<sup>4</sup> Both of them were shown to diverge from philosophical truth in light of scriptural revelation. Aquinas was careful to maintain the distinction between the philosophical community and the theological community, and at no point does he more closely associate Augustine with the philosophers.<sup>5</sup> Both Basil and Augustine were consistently named within the theological community. The debate presented in these ten QQ took place inside the interpretational tradition of Christianity and not between Jerusalem and Athens.

For Aquinas, there were two valid literal interpretations of Genesis 1 which could not be eliminated on the bases of reason or Scripture. It is not the case that Aquinas saw them both as true; rather, he saw that the human being could not render a final judgment about whether one was the correct interpretation. Both Basil and Augustine had faithfully read the text, both had applied sound and rational theological skills to the text. They each had come to radically different conclusions about how to read Genesis 1.

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<sup>4</sup> ST I, 66, 2ad1; 66, 3ad3; 68, 1c; 70, 3c; et al.

<sup>5</sup> Jordan, 73

As we have demonstrated, Aquinas' assertion and insistence on this point is surprising because in earlier works, he had clearly favored the interpretational strand of Augustine and within his own more speculative theological works had espoused definitive conclusions which were not reached within these QQ of the ST.<sup>6</sup> This self-restraint subsists at the core of this thesis' assertion that this section of the ST is pedagogical and apologetic. Unlike his previous works, Aquinas was not ultimately on a quest for final truth here as much as he was engaged in inculcating a *habitus* within the *incipientes* for whom this book was written. It seems that after exploring the necessarily final statements about Creation in QQ 45-49, he returned to the primary scriptural locus of Creation to make another point. Instead of building upon prior statements and furthering what he had said, he seems to be exploring and establishing an epistemic boundary. He may consider that Augustine is correct, but he cannot say it so conclusively as to exclude Basil's very different interpretation of these same words. For these 10 QQ he has insisted that both approaches can be used to explicate the text faithfully and reasonably, but not in a way which is exclusive of the other.

It should be noted as well that this goal for Aquinas would not have been a lesser goal than the quest for philosophical truth in these QQ. At the end of the *prima pars*, in Q 117, Aquinas takes a rather surprising excursus into the question of whether human beings can actually teach.<sup>7</sup> He rejects several philosophical approaches to teaching and settles on a mystical discussion of teaching in which the teacher participates instrumentally in the divine creative act. Later in the ST, in the discussion of Christ's mind, Aquinas posited that the ability to learn was essential to being truly human.<sup>8</sup> Aquinas appears to have observed his students learning with something of a holy awe. Creating a virtual disputation which explored the limits and possibilities of that learning process would have been quite in character and congruent with his own attitudes and expressed statements about learning itself.

The academic community, failing to notice Aquinas' method and purpose for this section, has neglected these questions, despite repeated pleas for the integration of

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<sup>6</sup> See: pp. 115-130, 144-147, and 217-219

<sup>7</sup> Boland, 294.

<sup>8</sup> ST III, 12, 2c.

Aquinas' exegetical works into the understanding of his theology and philosophy. As we demonstrated in the introduction, multiple authors labored to establish important conclusions about Aquinas' doctrine of Trinity and his hermeneutics which, had they utilized these ten QQ, they might have been made much more simply and convincingly.<sup>9</sup> We have asserted that the most reasonable explanation for this neglect is predicated upon an assumption on the part of most modern readers that within these QQ Aquinas was on a quest for philosophical or theological truth. We have concurred that if this was the primary goal of these QQ and if that is why one reads them, their neglect reflects a reasonable estimation. As a quest for truth, these QQ are insufficiently robust, shallow, and leave far too many exegetical questions unaddressed or inadequately addressed. But we have questioned the validity of the presupposition which leads to that conclusion. Having noted the stated goals of the *prima pars* and the fact that Aquinas had already dealt with the philosophically and theologically significant content of the Creation topic in QQ 45-49 of the ST, we posited that these QQ need to be read in light of the assertions we have made immediately above.

An examination of the historical and intellectual context in which Aquinas wrote the *prima pars* confirmed and strengthened the assertion that these QQ were written for purposes other than as a quest for truth. These findings were gathered into three categories: Identification of the *incipientes* who were the first audience;<sup>10</sup> Aquinas' own vocation as a Dominican;<sup>11</sup> and the intellectual climate of the middle decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century when Aquinas wrote.<sup>12</sup>

Aquinas composed these QQ after his first regency in Paris and toward the end of his decade among the priories and *studia* of the Italian province of the Dominican Order. Because the students whom Aquinas was charged with teaching in Santa Sabina were struggling to assimilate the standard material of the medieval university, namely the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Aquinas had altered his plans and embarked upon writing the ST. His newly conceived work, the ST, bore similarities to the *Sentences* in

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<sup>9</sup> See pp. 9-15.

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 26-40.

<sup>11</sup> See pp. 40-43.

<sup>12</sup> See pp. 43-48.

arrangement and scope, but treated the material more synthetically and frequently reflected a simplification of the argumentation and complexity of resources within his prior *Commentary*. It is this audience of young men whom the *Ordo Predicatorum* was training to be preachers who were the intended beneficiaries of the ST, especially its *prima pars*. With perhaps only a single year of training before licensure to preach, they were in need of an intensive and broad-ranging education. Aquinas' own experience of anti-mendicant conflict and hostile audiences in Paris impressed upon him the need for these young men to have epistemic humility and the ability to handle patristic sources carefully and adroitly before they embarked on their vocations as public preachers.

Research into Aquinas' person led us to conclude that his devotion to the Order likely drew his attention to this portion of Scripture. Forged as a mission to reconvert Albigensian apostates, the followers of Dominic had been necessarily focused on the doctrine of Creation. For Aquinas Creation remained a life-long object of study and one which he had placed into the service the Dominican Order.<sup>13</sup> His treatment of Creation remained consistent throughout his career, both in terms of its relative importance and in terms of his approach to Creation.

As early as his *Commentary* Aquinas had formulated his larger synthetic treatments of theology around an *exitus* and *reditus* motif. Most modern readers of Aquinas concede that to some degree this motif operates as an organizing principle of the entire ST. As such, these ten QQ fall within a treatment of the *exitus*, the created world originating with God. However, the *exitus* is rarely present without some acknowledgement and treatment of the *reditus*, the teleological goal of Creation, also being present.

Integrating Aquinas' use of sources and this *exitus* and *reditus* motif into a filter while reading these ten QQ yielded important results for this thesis. By their very nature, every Article addressed the *exitus* of creation in some way. At important junctures, however, when an individual Article touched upon the *reditus*, the character of the Article and the resources utilized by Aquinas underwent an important shift. Aquinas raised the level of authority and quested for definitive answers.<sup>14</sup> Within the three Articles cited (65, 1; 67, 3; and 73, 1) the patristic resources all but disappear, replaced

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<sup>13</sup> See pp. 57-59 and 130-132.

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 84-92, 134-136, 162, and 198-207.

by Scripture, and the primary arguments which occupied the Articles prior and subsequent to each of these Articles is suspended and then resumed. When these Articles were bracketed out of the flow of the section, a particular pattern began to emerge which suggested that Aquinas was engaged in a particular goal for this section which would have served those *incipientes*. It became clear that the primary object of this exegetical exercise was not best understood as the explication of the text itself, but the integration of two interpretational strands which had been received from Christian patristic theologians and which were embodied by the works of Augustine on one hand and on the other hand Basil who was joined by John Chrysostom, John of Damascus, and others in minor and supporting roles.<sup>15</sup>

A close comparative reading of this section of the ST with neighboring sections of the *prima pars* also yielded important observations. What marked this particular section of the ST apart from its neighboring sections is the fact that a tension runs throughout most of these Articles which is never resolved. The tension is between Augustine's a-temporal interpretation of Genesis 1 and Basil's more traditional reading which saw the six days of the Creation narrative as six 24 hour periods which correspond to what humans experience as days in this time. Any final resolution of the tension is explicitly denied at several points and the reader is forced to accommodate both interpretational strands to the dual criteria of the Scriptural witness and natural reason. At no point is one favored,<sup>16</sup> indeed, at several points, it appears that when one strand of interpretation was threatening to overwhelm another, Aquinas deliberately undercut the authority of that patristic theologian to create a parity among the disputants.<sup>17</sup> Aquinas appeared to be conducting a form of artificial disputation which valued the process more than the conclusion. He deliberately maintained an open question.

Further research into the historical and intellectual climate of the middle decades of the thirteenth century also led us to posit that Aquinas' use of Augustine's extensive treatments of Creation as a central element within this hexaemeral treatment may have

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<sup>15</sup> See pp 92-99 and 144-147.

<sup>16</sup> See ST I, 74, 2c and discussion thereof on pp. 13 and 218-219.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 166-170.

served another goal than purely pedagogical; although, this secondary motive was complementary to the pedagogical goal.

The theologians of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were generally moving toward more careful and thorough reading of patristic authorities. This was often articulated as a reaction to Aristotelian influences and especially Latin Averroism. Aquinas occupied an almost unique place within this reactionary movement. His mentor, Albert the Great, had been instrumental in the reintroduction of Aristotelian material to western thought. Aquinas himself, however, we have noted was far more reserved and careful in his treatment of Aristotle.<sup>18</sup>

But Aquinas never lost sight of the value of Aristotle and his commentators for himself or for his readership. To the end of his writing career he apparently engaged in commenting on Aristotle's works.<sup>19</sup> Some see these commentaries as an attempt to rescue Aristotle and the Arts faculty of the University of Paris from Averroism.<sup>20</sup> Even if this is true, he is not advocating for the rejection of Aristotle nor for the rejection of all that Averroes had written, for both Aristotle and Averroes are found cited within the ST. Aquinas was seeking a path of moderation between two occasionally complimentary and occasionally conflicting forces which were rising in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. On one hand he concurred with the return to patristic sources, expanding his own use of them extensively.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, he was committed to the value of all knowledge, even the knowledge of those outside the Christian faith such as the pagan Aristotle, the Jewish Rabbi Moses Maimonides, and Islamic commentators such as Avicenna and Averroes, all of whom are cited repeatedly within the ten QQ under consideration here and throughout the ST and other works by Aquinas. In his second posting to Paris, Aquinas combatted an excessive Averroism, perhaps even coining the term. Yet, he did not stop reading Aristotle or Averroes as some, including Bonaventura, were advocating.

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<sup>18</sup> See pp. 52-53.

<sup>19</sup> Torrell, 228-239 and Weisheipl, 316.

<sup>20</sup> Weisheipl, 280-281.

<sup>21</sup> Torrell, 245-246.

Bonaventura, a former colleague of Aquinas at the University of Paris and at this time serving as the Secretary General of the Franciscan Order, was advocating for the exclusion of Aristotle and all Aristotelian works from the teaching of Theology.<sup>22</sup> It is this over-compensating reaction to Averroist excess which frequently asserted the all-sufficiency of Augustine's thought. While the primary documentary evidence of the Augustinian movement dates from slightly after Aquinas wrote this section, but it is not plausible that the Augustinian movement sprang full grown from the heads of men such as John Peckham and Stephen Tempier in the 1270's, within five years of Aquinas' death and less than a decade from the writing of these QQ. Already in the late 1260's this growing Augustinian movement coupled with an existing anti-mendicant reaction threatened both Aquinas' academic projects as well as the mission of the *Ordo Praedicatorum* to which he and his Dominican students were devoted. His vantage point of serving as a theological resource to the popes of the 1260's would have given him ample opportunity to witness and participate in the fierce debates of the time which revolved around these issues.

The complex interplay of these interlocking contextual factors led us to propose a bipartite hermeneutical lens for the reading of these QQ. The primary element of this lens was pedagogical. The *lectores* of the Order would have found within these QQ a potent tool for the inculcation of the reverential reading of patristic sources in their own students in the priories. The inculcation of this skill served their primary vocation as preachers to the burgeoning cities of the High Middle Ages. A treatment of the reverential reading of patristic sources also served to restore one of the important elements of the abandoned commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. This pedagogical purpose was evidenced in the increasing sophistication of the treatment of sources as the QQ progressed and the synthetic integration of interpretational principles which had been introduced in prior Articles. We also noted structural elements which were more easily integrated into the pedagogical schema: Articles which seemed to demonstrate prior principles, e.g., Q 71-72, and the peculiar structure of the final Article (I, 73, 3) in the section which seemed to be a list of exercises.

The apologetic element of the hermeneutical lens was revealed in the close reading of sources, particularly Augustine. While Basil's conclusions regarding Genesis 1

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<sup>22</sup> Weisheipl, 285.



generally were the received teaching of the Church at the time, Augustine was being held up as the authoritative source for all theology. Aquinas did not use Augustine to refute Basil; rather, he used Augustine, the preferred theologian of the Augustinian movement, to create the very space the Augustinians were seeking to constrict. This required delicate balance. Augustine would be allowed to “win” but only in heeding his call for an epistemic humility which denied the possibility that Augustine was right at the expense of Basil.

Aquinas accomplished this through multiple devices. At several points within the treatment, Augustine’s considerable contribution to the subject under immediate consideration was reduced and even silenced, e.g., I, 65, 1 or I, 73, 1. This silence cannot be attributed to an ignorance of Augustine’s works, since, in prior treatments of the same issues, Aquinas had made use of Augustine to answer these very questions. Augustine’s writing on Creation had been prodigious, but while he wrote far more than any other theologian on this subject, he was not allowed to overwhelm other ideas.

A second device involved the casting of a tension between Augustine and Basil. The majority of Articles within these QQ saw Aquinas placing Augustine’s ideas about a-temporal creation into a tension with the temporal interpretation of Basil and other theologians. Aquinas carefully balanced the approaches of these theologians in order to prevent one or another treatment from gaining a position of dominance.<sup>23</sup> When Augustine’s conception of the creation, which Aquinas personally favored, seemed to be dominating, Aquinas brought forward an idea of Augustine in an Objection (e.g., I, 66, 2ob1) which could be refuted or he carefully demonstrated that Augustine was dependent upon the ideas of Basil (e.g., I, 68, 1c.)

Near the end of the document, Aquinas engaged in a third device which served to restrict Augustine’s influence while maintaining his appeal for humility. When it appears that Augustine’s ideas are simply better and easier to accommodate to reason and Scripture, Aquinas abandons the tension of the prior Articles to address specifically the authority of Augustine in Q 73.<sup>24</sup> In the second and third Article Augustine’s material from *Gen. ad litt.* IV is substantively repeated, but it is reshaped and not

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<sup>23</sup> See pp. 155-156, 163-165, 184-185.

<sup>24</sup> See pp. 198-214.

credited to Augustine. Within those two Articles the singular reference to material credited to Augustine is subordinated to an idea which is taken from Dionysius. It appears that Augustine's authority is being contained, even when it stands behind much of what Aquinas himself thought. Augustine appears to have been subjected to the very epistemic humility to which he had himself appealed.

We noted that Aquinas' treatment of the Augustinian material in Q 73 is puzzling, but makes a great deal more sense when read in light of a context in which Augustine was being put forward as the answer to every question.<sup>25</sup> At the end of the section which had been inculcating a reverential reading of patristic theologians, Augustine was given the most critical attention. This critical reading was not antithetical to a reverential reading but is necessary for that reverential reading. For Aquinas, the reverential reading involved just such a critical process. The patristic theologian who was read reverentially was not placed into a position of undue authority, but was read as an authority among many. Augustine was here subjected to a critical analysis in light of Dionysius. Some of his material was used, other elements ignored. Augustine had his voice, but not more than was reverentially due.

The apologetic and pedagogical purposes in which patristic sources were employed became yet more clearly demonstrated in the comparative analysis of Aquinas' use of those same resources. Particularly fruitful was a comparison of these QQ with parallel treatments in both his *Commentary* and *De potentia*.<sup>26</sup> Frequently when treating the same question or disputed item, in the ST Aquinas removed complicating material creating an artificially simplistic intellectual arena in which the question might be contended. Patristic sources were manipulated and relocated within arguments to emphasize the skill of reverential reading instead of the quest for the answer to the contested question (e.g., Augustine quotation in I, 68, 2-3.)<sup>27</sup>

In taking a step back from the parsing of individual Articles and comparison of the instances of recourse manipulation within those Articles, one must not lose sight of the larger observation. Perhaps the most important element of this treatment of patristic

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<sup>25</sup> See pp. 54-56.

<sup>26</sup> See pp. 67-75 and 114-130.

<sup>27</sup> See pp. 114-124.

sources is not to be found in the conclusions reached or the demonstrable shifting of resources within the argumentation of the individual Articles. The element which sets these Articles apart from the rest of the ST and his treatments of this material in other works is that Aquinas never reaches any conclusion which resolves the tension between the interpretation of Basil and Augustine. In his lectures at the University of Notre Dame, Thomas O'Meara O.P., once declared to this student that there was never a contradiction or tension which Aquinas could not resolve. Yet within these QQ he resolutely and deliberately refused to do so. For one who is seeking theological and philosophical truth, this lack of resolution is frustrating. For one who is beginning the life-long quest for that truth or a career as a proclaimer of truth, however, this humility which these QQ embody may be absolutely essential.

## 2. Reading and Studying Aquinas in Light of Epistemic Humility and Reverential Reading

This thesis has challenged presuppositions and assumptions which are demonstrably governing Thomistic scholarship. As should be clear by this point, this author contends that the neglect of these QQ is predicated upon a faulty presupposition. Much earlier in this thesis, we began with Etienne Gilson's mournful estimation of these QQ in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and noted that his estimation was substantively repeated in the mid-twentieth century treatment of this section by William Wallace, O. P., Aquinas' most recent English language translator and commentator on these QQ. Wallace despaired of finding anything of value for the modern reader in these pages. Those two estimations continue to this day as was demonstrated by the more recent journal articles of Mark Johnson and Giles Emory. We have noted that contemporary scholarship has consistently disparaged and neglected Aquinas exegetical treatment of Genesis 1 in particular while it explored his words on Creation with intense interest.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously this author dissents from that assessment of these QQ. I do, however, not because I believe the conclusion to be in error, but because the presupposition which undergirds the questions asked of the text are faulty. Along with other students of Aquinas and Augustine, I have lamented the fact that Aquinas' ST has become something it was never intended to be, primarily a systematic theological text and

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<sup>28</sup> See pp. 11-16.

frequently a source book for those who would score points in theological debates. Aquinas intended the ST as a means to inculcate the *habitus* of a theologian, a way of thinking, praying, reading, and proclaiming divine truth to what he perceived as a world desperately in need of what he and his confreres of the Dominican Order were preaching.

The inculcation of *habitus* in a reader and student is not so easily parsed via word searches and comparative analyses of disparate texts. It requires a much more holistic reading. Furthermore, reading a text which is intended to produce the aretogenic results envisioned by Ellen Charry through the hermeneutical lens of systematic theology which focused on fact and final conclusion leads to misrepresentation and misunderstanding.<sup>29</sup> It has in the reading of these questions and it likely has throughout the ST. In the case of these QQ the scholarly community has become exasperated with Aquinas' exegesis of Genesis 1 and elected to ignore him in QQ 65-74, even when he is speaking relatively plainly to the issues at hand. Neglect, however, is only one problematic result of such errant expectations; albeit, perhaps the most evident in these QQ. Even a friendly reader of Aquinas like Gilson, whose estimation of this section was noted above, could allow his need for scholarly categories to interfere with his reading. On a quest for philosophical and theological truth, Gilson concluded that the entire section was about the hermeneutical principle of condescension.<sup>30</sup> While condescension does indeed occupy two of the 29 Articles within QQ 65-74, it is but one element of Aquinas' approach to the interpretations put forward by Augustine and Basil. As we suggested earlier in this thesis,<sup>31</sup> Gilson's reading of Aquinas could have meshed with his own preferred pedagogical methods, but he does not perceive Aquinas as a teacher, only a philosopher. He did not notice that Aquinas was teaching his students in much the same way that Gilson taught his own students some 700 years later, through an inductive method which placed into their hands the very material of the discipline under the guidance of a mentor.

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<sup>29</sup> See pp. 4-5 for discussion of Charry's work.

<sup>30</sup> Gilson, 204-205. For fuller treatment within this thesis, see pp. 15-16.

<sup>31</sup> See p. 4.

Thus, Gilson, whose work I generally admire and appreciate, misread these QQ, mistaking one of many elements for the central thrust of the entire section. This misreading, however, was not simply an erroneous finding. Misunderstanding this section, he placed it into a category of work which did not suit the purposes of a 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher. Condescension, necessary to answer pre-Enlightenment questions, was not useful to him in his context. Had he approached this through the lens of patristic sources and as a pedagogical exercise, however, he might have discovered that the epistemic humility for which Aquinas argued was quite helpful for one who was seeking a way out of the modernism controversy of that period of Roman Catholicism's intellectual history.

The same estimation could be applied to William Wallace, who is, like Aquinas, a Dominican and hence might be expected to offer up a charitable reading of his Order's most notable member. His mid-twentieth century estimation, however, is wholly dependent upon an evaluation of Aquinas' scientific knowledge, primarily the inadequacy of Aquinas' knowledge. These QQ are thus reduced to a useful data point in the ongoing history of scientific development and Aquinas is read as a good proto-scientist for his refusal to embrace some of the more risible medieval scientific conclusions.<sup>32</sup>

Like Gilson, Wallace missed the point that Aquinas was embodying and inculcating an epistemic humility and reverential reading of the fathers which would have served his mid-twentieth century generation well. The neglect of these QQ within the *studia* of the Dominican Order, noted by Wallace, might have been an occasion to question the character of that educational system. Instead, it was taken as established fact that these QQ had little offer the person seeking after divine truth.

To this point, we have deliberately limited this discussion to these ten QQ. While our research has extended beyond these QQ, the material covered and conclusions reached have amply sufficed for this project. That said, however, one cannot but wonder if other portions of the ST also suffer from the failure of the scholarly community to take into account the pedagogical or aretogenic nature of this work. Vivian Boland O. P. has suggested as much by asserting that the best way to apprehend the ST properly is in a

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<sup>32</sup> See pp. 9-11.

community which is as devoted prayer and reflection as it is to study and reading.<sup>33</sup> Mark Jordan as well has lamented that the readers of Aquinas have for centuries missed the point that Aquinas was writing a text which had as a goal the inculcation of theological *habitus*.<sup>34</sup> This appeal by Boland and Jordan for a reading of Aquinas which is embedded into a pastoral and spiritual context further suggests the importance of this section of the ST for their project. Torrell locates the root of Thomas' spirituality within his understanding of Creation.<sup>35</sup>

Both Boland and Jordan, like earlier citations of Charry and others, make their congruent points based on both the *prooemium* of the ST and generalized observations about the ST. This thesis seeks to contribute to the general thrust of their arguments by suggesting that this aretogenic and pedagogical character of the ST is discernable in an examination of these ten QQ in detail. The pedagogical character of the questions is necessary for the fruitful reading of these ten QQ.

Expanding the scope into a somewhat wider field, this research also suggests a potential line of inquiry for the study of Aquinas and Augustinian reception. Of particular interest to this author would be the suspicion that Augustine's treatment of Genesis 1 has become something of a meme or motif within the ST, functioning as a placeholder for the concept of epistemic humility. In the discussion of the incarnate Christ's knowledge (ST III, 9) Aquinas endeavored to posit a theologically daring conclusion related to the intellect of the incarnate Christ. In the third Article of that Q he incorporates an otherwise unnecessary quotation from *Gen. ad litt.* into the *corpus* of the Article. The suspicion of this author is that Aquinas has included this quotation because alluding to Augustine's treatment of Genesis 1 has become a shorthand means for Aquinas to introduce epistemic humility to arguments in which such humility is necessary. Because these quotations are often subtle and the *Corpus Thomisticum* does not provide the ability to search patristic citations, pursuit of this notion would require painstaking and careful reading of the ST for other occasions in which Aquinas made potentially controversial points and then commentaries of the text which have noted the sources of

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<sup>33</sup> Boland, 302-304.

<sup>34</sup> Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 53 and 193.

<sup>35</sup> Torrell, 163-164.

allusions and citations. It is anticipated that the digitizing of more resources, particularly these commentaries, would enable a computerized search which would greatly facilitate this sort of research at some point in the near future.

A second line of inquiry would be the exploration of medieval pedagogical theory and whether Aquinas was reflecting that theory or seeking to establish a pedagogy which was based upon a different theory of learning. As Vivian Boland pointed out, Aquinas had a somewhat mystical understanding of what happened when a teacher taught and a student learned. Aquinas furthermore considered that the ability to learn was essential to the human condition (see ST III, 9 cited above.) While the pedagogical nature of the *prima pars* has been widely acknowledged, it has not been thoroughly integrated into the reading of this document.

A third line of inquiry might pursue the reception of these QQ within the Dominican *studia* of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Analyzing the catalogues of texts at various universities, *studia*, and other centers of learning has suggested that the *prima secundae partis* and *secunda secundae partis* were far more widely distributed and presumably more widely read as well. It would be interesting to ask if the institutions in which the *prima pars* was read produced scholars with a noticeably more refined reverential reading of patristic sources.

A fourth line of inquiry could involve reading and researching the vast *summa* genre of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. While all these documents were ultimately part of the educational mission, did they include anything which might be construed as a hermeneutic for reading sources? Was Aquinas unique in this? Was he patterning his work on something else? Did others create primers on patristic sources? Did others seek to reign in the authority of Augustine or another patristic theologian this way?

### 3. Larger Significance for Academic and Public Spheres

Pushed by his imagined interlocutor in the passage cited at the beginning of this conclusion, Augustine proffered up two rationales for his winnowing (*eventilare*) of the Genesis text. He first asserted that he had learned to give the answer which could be given regarding the text of Scripture which corresponds to the faith.<sup>36</sup> When it came to

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<sup>36</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 21, 41, *Cui respondeo, ad eum ipsum me cibum suaviter pervenisse, quo didici non haerere homini in respondendo secundum fidem.*

Creation, there were things he could and needed to say. In Augustine's estimation, something important, people's faith, depended on these answers. But he also learned a second thing by gleaning through the text of Genesis 1. Sometimes that answer was not entirely obvious or clear. There were times when the authorial intent was not evident.<sup>37</sup> In such situations, Augustine felt not an obligation to silence or some sort of equivocation, but that the text itself, capable of many meanings, supported any meaning which was congruent with both the letter of the text and the faith of Christianity. Reading book XII of *Conf.* and later sections of *Gen. ad litt.* one does not find that Augustine argued that he was right and others wrong, but he would only go so far as to say that his interpretation was in fact a possible interpretation. He exhorted the reader to evaluate it and submit it to the governing hermeneutic which he had articulated in *De Doctrina Christiana*, the twin loves of God and the fellow human being.<sup>38</sup>

Aquinas' treatment of the six days of Creation permitted Augustine's more significant hermeneutical idea to carry the day by refusing to assert his exegetical conclusions. In QQ 65-74 Aquinas saw to it that Augustine's more important hermeneutical point ultimately succeeded by not declaring a winner in the argument which was apparently under discussion. Aquinas clearly preferred Augustine's novel approach to the Creation narrative, but he was not about proving which of these two traditions had the better answer. He was able to admit his own humility before this subject and admit that both interpretive strands were congruent with natural philosophy and scripture as he understood them both. Both of them had a legitimate claim to be a literal and authentic reading of the text.

Even a casual familiarity with the ongoing debates about origins which take place at the intersections of the sciences such as Biology and Geology and religious communities suggests that Aquinas' appeal for epistemic humility remains valid. In the very week in which this author set out to make final revisions to this document, William E. Carroll, made just that argument in an online article published in *First Things*.<sup>39</sup> The small,

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<sup>37</sup> *Gen. ad litt.* I, 21, 41, *Si utrumque vitetur, perfecte se habet fructus legentis: si vero utrumque vitari non potest, etiam si voluntas scriptoris incerta sit sanae fidei congruam non inutile est eruisse sententiam.*

<sup>38</sup> *De Doctr. Chr.* I, 36, 40.

<sup>39</sup> William E. Carroll, "Modern Cosmology and Creation," in *First Things: Web Exclusives* 23 June, 2014. <http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/06/modern-cosmology-and-creation>



Christian, Liberal Arts university at which this author teaches has at times been sorely conflicted by this issue. The fact that two philosophers and theologians of the acknowledged stature of Augustine and Aquinas found an appeal to this epistemic humility valuable in their time should give us an occasion to reflect on our times as well.

The epistemic hubris which drives the conflict between religious communities and scientific/academic communities has proven both distracting and destructive to both scientific inquiry and religious mission. Since the Enlightenment an increasingly reductionist materialism has posited a powerful narrative which some have sought to employ as the explanation of everything. In response, religious communities have often posited an equally hubristic paradigm for knowledge based upon an interpretation of divine revelation. Both sides of this conflict predicate statements upon the false premise of a complete knowledge. Having personally engaged in such conversations and lamented the silent alternative to such conversations after they have concluded badly, it seems that any hope for the future lies in the frank admission of our limitations and the appropriate boundaries of respective disciplines. In short, the way forward will depend upon an adoption of epistemic humility.

This epistemic humility must begin internally, it cannot authentically be imposed. Aquinas saw the need for this epistemic humility in his confreres of the Dominican Order. While Aquinas believed in the mission of the Order, argued vigorously on its behalf, and served it with considerable energy, he knew that the Order's success depended upon the humble preaching, service, and scholarship of his fellow Dominicans. This humility was not a capitulation to the arguments or premises of those whom he opposed in his tracts. Rather, this epistemic humility which he learned from Augustine was the foundation which allowed him to make the arguments and engage his opponents on the intellectual battle fields of the medieval period.

Aquinas himself put this into practice. As he completed the *prima pars*, Aquinas was posted once more to Paris for an unusual second regency (1268-1272) on the university faculty. While he was there, in addition to serving the Order as the primary articulator of the Dominican response to the threat against the mendicants and in addition to his duties as a Regent Master, Aquinas mediated and helped to resolve a controversy in the Liberal Arts faculty which was rooted in an uncritical adoption of some of Aristotle's

ideas.<sup>40</sup> It was the reaction to this Aristotelian excess and similar ideas which resulted in the condemnations of 1277. Aquinas was also troubled by what he heard and wrote a polemic against the principle articulator of these ideas on the Arts faculty, Siger of Brabant,<sup>41</sup> in which he may have invented the label “Averroists”.

But the polemical exchange was hardly the end of the matter and it is to his adoption of epistemic humility that we owe a far greater debt to Aquinas. Aquinas also argued on behalf of the Arts faculty. While he disagreed with the conclusion about the eternity of the world based upon his reading of Scripture, particularly Genesis 1, he also was able to understand the Aristotelian point. The problem was not Aristotle but a hubristic reading of the Stagirite and his commentators which was leading the young men within the Arts faculty to heretical conclusions. Weisheipl labels Aquinas actions in his second regency over against the Liberal Arts faculty a type of “academic apostolate.”<sup>42</sup> His more recent biographer, Torrell, does not go so far, but acknowledges the significant role of this conflict for Aquinas.<sup>43</sup> Aquinas, in addition to his duties as a Theology faculty member, the primary articulator of the Dominican response to the anti-mendicant forces, and his continuing work on the ST’s *prima-secundae partis* and *secunda-secundae partis*, also undertook a complete commentary on all of Aristotle’s works on behalf of the Arts faculty. So frenetic was his publishing and writing that Weisheipl suggests that Aquinas physical breakdown, which happened shortly after his return to Italy, was a result of exhaustion brought on by excessive work and the emotional toll of this apostolate.<sup>44</sup>

Aquinas efforts to “rescue” the Arts faculty would have been impossible if he had not the ability to enter the conceptual world of his opponents, an ability which was made possible by this epistemic humility. His efforts were also largely successful. The condemnations of 1277 which were the result of the Augustinian agitation were, for the most part, welcomed by the very faculty it presumably condemned in 1277. Perhaps an

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<sup>40</sup> Torrell, 188-190 and Weisheipl, 272.

<sup>41</sup> *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, (1270). See Weisheipl, 272 and 385.

<sup>42</sup> Weisheipl, 280-281.

<sup>43</sup> Torrell 182-190

<sup>44</sup> Weisheipl, 279-282.

even greater indication of the effect Aquinas' advocacy on behalf of the Arts faculty had is a letter written to the Dominican Chapter (Lyon, 1274). Upon hearing of Aquinas' death, the Arts faculty at Paris requested of the Dominicans that his body be interred in Paris so as to be guarded by the members of the University. Realizing this was not entirely plausible, they also requested that the capitular fathers send them any of Aquinas' philosophical treatises, commentaries on Aristotle, several of which they had reason to believe had been begun in Paris and completed in Italy in months following his departure.<sup>45</sup>

Aquinas, embodying epistemic humility, modelled something which this generation and his own generation desperately needed: the means to cross deep divides between conflicted groups of people. In ST I, 65-74 Aquinas both embodied that epistemic humility and sought to inculcate that humility in a body of students. Neglected by the community of Aquinas readers, these QQ may in fact convey a most significant contribution of Friar Thomas Aquinas for all who quest for truth.

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<sup>45</sup> Weisheipl, 332.

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## Abbreviations

### Cited Works of Augustine

<i>De Doctr. Chr.</i>	<i>De Doctrina Christiana libri quattuor</i>
<i>Gen. ad litt.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad Litteram libri duodecim</i>
<i>Gen. contra Man.</i>	<i>De Genesi contra Manichaeos libri duo</i>
<i>Gen. ad litt. Imperf.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad Litteram imperfectus liber</i>
<i>De Trinitate</i>	<i>De Trinitate libri quindecim</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessionum libri tredecim</i>

### Cited Works of Thomas Aquinas

<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Scriptum super Sententiis</i>
<i>Contra errores</i>	<i>Contra errores Graecorum</i>
<i>Contra impugn.</i>	<i>Contra Impugnantes</i>
<i>De potentia</i>	<i>Quaestiones Disputatae: De potentia</i>
ST	<i>Summa Theologiae</i>
SCG	<i>Summa contra Gentiles</i>

### Frequently cited works by other authors

Basil, <i>Hex.</i>	<i>In Hexaemeron</i>
John Chrysostom, <i>In Gen.</i>	<i>In Genesim</i>
John Damascene, <i>De Fide</i>	<i>De fide orthodoxa</i>

### Other abbreviations

Ad.	Response (e.g. l, 65, 2ad2.)
c.	<i>corpus</i> (e.g l, 65, 2c.)
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i>
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</i>
CCT	<i>Corpus Christianorum Translation</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
Ob.	Objection (e.g. l, 65, 2ob2.)
O.P.	<i>Ordo Praedicatorum</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , Ed.: Migne.
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , Ed.: Migne.
Pro.	Prooemium (Introduction)
Q, QQ	Question(s)
sc.	<i>sed contra</i> (e.g. l, 65, 2sc.)
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>

### Technical terms utilized within this thesis:

- Article** – The basic literary unit of the ST and much of medieval theological writing. Within an Article an author posited conflict and normally resolved this conflict for the reader. Within medieval theological literature, Articles take on a variety of shapes, but all were an effort to encapsulate the basic element of medieval education, the disputation. Comprised of four elements, Objections, *sed contra*, *corpus*, and Responses, Articles within the ST are normally quite uniform in structure. Departures from this structure are noted within this thesis.
- Chapter** – In addition to the normal contemporary usage of this term to designate a portion of this thesis, the term is also used to designate an official gathering of leaders of the Dominican Order, either on behalf of the whole Order or on a provincial level, to make administrative decisions. These “chapters” are distinguished from one another by noting the location and year of the gathering, e.g. Anagni, 1265. The leaders gathered at a Chapter are frequently referred to as “capitular fathers.”
- corpus** – Aquinas’ response to the intellectual tension created by the Objections and *sed contra* within an Article. Normally in the ST the *corpus* offers a resolution of the tension.
- Disputation** – Refers both to the academic exercise and the genre of literature which reported the proceedings of disputations held. Disputations were an essential building block of medieval academic research and education. Arranged thematically, the academic disputation was a serious quest for truth by a master and his students. Aquinas conducted several academic disputations in Rome in preparation for writing the *prima pars*. The term was more broadly used, however, in the medieval period. In the case of the formal inception of a new faculty member at Paris it was a highly stylized debate. Quodlibetal disputations, at which Aquinas was said to excel, involved an opportunity for members of the audience to pose difficult questions to the one who was presiding over the disputation.
- Distinction** – The second largest division of the Lombard’s *Sentences*. Each of the *Sentences*’ four Books was further divided into a number of Distinctions. Aquinas retained this term in his *Commentary*. When referring to material within the *Commentary*, the first Arabic numeral refers to the Distinction. Example: II, 14, 1, 1, could be written out more fully as Book II, Distinction 14, Question 1, Article 1.
- Friar** – A brother in one of the mendicant orders. This term is frequently confused with but should be distinguished from “monk.” The monastic (monk) tradition was contemplative and ideally was practiced in some isolation from the world. The friars, while also contemplative, did not practice that contemplation through isolation but engagement with the world.
- Hexaemeron** – This term may have one of three referents. The six days of the Creation narrative are named the hexaemeron. This term has also been applied to both the genre of commentary on the six days and as a title of works within that genre. Thus, Bonaventura’s *Hexaemeron* was a hexaemeron (commentary) on the hexaemeron (six days of Creation).
- lector** – Every priory of the Dominican order was obligated to appoint one member to be a *lector* who was charged with conducting daily lectures on Scripture.



Objection – The initial element of every Article was a series of Objections raised to the assertion made either explicitly or implicitly within the title of the Article.

*pars* – The largest element of the ST, Aquinas initially conceived of his work in three parts, but due to the expansion of the material in the second part, he subdivided that element, creating the first (part) of the second part (*prima-secundae partis*) and the second (part) of the second part (*secunda-secundae partis*).

Priory – the basic communal unit of the Dominican Order, not to be less than 12 members, a priory was the home of the friars who served under a prior at which they studied and sang the daily office.

*prooemium* – Introduction to a work.

Province – The largest division of the Dominican Order, at the time of Aquinas there were five provinces.

Question – A literary unit within the ST which normally includes multiple Articles under a single theme or topic expressed as a question.

Regent Master – A Regent Master of Theology was both acknowledged as qualified by his peers and licensed by ecclesial authority to “reign” over the education of students and the preparation of Bachelors and other Masters. The period which an individual served on the faculty of a university was frequently referred to as the period of his “regency.”

Response – After addressing the tension created between the Objections and *sed contra* statements in the *corpus*, Aquinas normally addressed each Objection with a Response.

Section – Clearly delineated but not specifically named as such by Aquinas, QQ are grouped into clusters around topics. These clusters of variable size are often referred to by the term “section.”

Sentence – A sentence in medieval theology was an authoritative opinion or conclusion rendered about a Scriptural passage.

*sed contra* – After listing multiple Objections Aquinas posited a contrary authority, observation, or fact. This “but on the other hand...” statement articulated the Article’s intellectual tension in tandem with the Objections.

*studium* – a Dominican house of theological study, frequently, but not always, associated with a university. There were several kinds of *studia*. The most important was the papally licensed *studium generale* such as St. Jacques associated with the University of Paris. Most provinces also operated a second tier of schools, the *studium provinciale*, which trained friars within the Province. Aquinas taught at the *studium generale* in Paris and later at the *studium provinciale* in Naples and then at Santa Sabina. Some (Boyle and Torrell) have posited that Aquinas was operating a *studium personale* or an experimental school at Santa Sabina.

### Capitalization

The elements of the ST are subdivided into various smaller units, Questions, Articles, Objections, etc. Because these are also terms which are frequently employed in any discussion of this material, I have endeavored to capitalize these elements throughout the document when indicating one of these literary divisions of the ST: Question (Q, QQ), Article, Objection, and Response. Following convention and in the absence of a suitable English term, I have retained the Latin titles for *corpus (c.)* and *sed contra (sc.)*, indicating all Latin terms with italics. The only exception to this is the term "section." Aquinas himself did not recognize or distinguish this literary unit nor is it a term which he used to designate the various conceptual clusters within the ST. For this reason I have elected not to capitalize this term.

Because certain theological terms function as more than one grammatical element within this discussion, I have capitalized these terms when referring to theological topics, e.g., Creation, Trinity, Incarnation, etc.