

Giles of Rome On Divine Knowledge and Divine Ideas

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Abstract

In this paper I examine the presence of Thomas Aquinas in Giles of Rome's discussion about divine knowledge and divine ideas in distinction 36 of book I of his *Commentary on the Sentences* (*Ord. I*, dist. 36). I first offer an overview of the presence of Aquinas in this work by Giles. The overview focuses on three general features of Giles's work: the topics of the questions, the contents of the questions, and the anonymous quotations. All these features show an extensive influence of Aquinas. I then single out the two most substantial cases in which Giles attacks Aquinas's views and give a detailed presentation of them. These are about God's knowledge of singulars and the cognitive role of divine ideas. This paper is intended as an ideal continuation of the superb work done by Concetta Luna on the presence of Aquinas in Giles's *Reportatio* on the *Sentences*.

Introduction

Concetta Luna devotes a long section of her magisterial Introduction to the edition of Giles of Rome's *Reportatio lecturae super libros I-IV Sententiarum* to the presence of Thomas Aquinas in Giles's work. This is Section V. "Tommaso d'Aquino nel corso di Egidio sulle *Sentenze*", in which Luna presents the results of her accurate and extensive investigation of the place and significance of Aquinas in Giles's *Reportatio*.¹ The initial but crucial task of her investigation is to identify Giles's (anonymous) quotations of Aquinas and hence arrive at a complete list of these quotations. The list turns out to be very rich: in quantitative terms, quotations of Aquinas are contained in 4 of the 9 questions of the *Reportatio* of Book I, in 24 of the 91 questions of Book II, in 8 of the 48 questions of Book III, in 6 of the 27 questions of Book IV. The analysis of these quotations shows that in almost all of them Aquinas is the polemical target of Giles. Hence the general conclusion that Luna draws from her solid textual work: "In conclusione, il rapporto tra la *reportatio* di Egidio e Tommaso d'Aquino si configura come una discussione e una critica delle posizioni tomiste da parte di Egidio".²

Because of the dominant influence of Aquinas in Giles's theology, the investigation of Aquinas's presence in Giles's theological works is of great importance to reach a comprehensive picture of Giles's profile as a theologian. While Luna's work on Giles's *Reportatio* marks a substantial step towards the goal of getting a complete map of the presence of Aquinas in Giles's theology, the map remains incomplete. One major reason for this is that the *Reportatio* as preserved in a single Munich manuscript transmits only a fragment of Giles's commentary on Book I. *Reportatio* I only contains 9 questions: qq. 1-7 from distinction 37 about the place

¹ Aegidii Romani *Reportatio lecturae super libros I-IV Sententiarum. Reportatio Monacensis. Excerpta Godefridi de Fontibus*, ed. C. Luna, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2003 (Aegidii Romani Opera Omnia III.2), pp. 50-75.

² Aeg. Rom., *Reportatio*, p. 57 Luna.

and motion of angels, and qq. 8-9 from distinction 39 about fate and divine providence.³ Thus, the *Reportatio* does not offer any information of the presence of Aquinas for most of Book I (distinctions 1-36, 38 and 40-48).

The goal of my paper is to offer a modest contribution to filling in this gap in our current information. Its focus is on distinction 36 of Giles's *Ordinatio* of Book I (*Ord.* I, dist. 36), the distinction about the central theological issues of divine knowledge and divine ideas.⁴ I will first provide an overview of the presence of Aquinas in Giles's work. I will then single out the two most substantial cases in which Giles attacks Aquinas's views and give a detailed presentation of them. These are about God's knowledge of singulars and the cognitive role of divine ideas. In my view, Giles's discussion of these two issues is his most substantial and original doctrinal contribution to the medieval debate.

1. Aquinas in Giles's *Ord.* I, dist. 36: An Overview

1.1 Topics of the Questions

The first step of this overview is the comparison of the topics of the questions raised by Giles in *Ord.* I, dist. 36 with those raised by Aquinas in the corresponding section of his *Sentences* commentary.⁵

Both Aquinas and Giles divide dist. 36 into two parts: the first about divine knowledge and the second about divine ideas.

A. Giles's questions about divine knowledge:

Q. 1 *Utrum Deus cognoscat singularia* (fols. 185rb-186ra)

Q. 2 *Utrum Deus cognoscat mala* (fol. 186ra-va)

Q. 2a *Uterius quaeritur utrum Deus cognoscat vilia* (fol. 186rb-va)

Q. 3 *Utrum res existant in Deo* (fols. 186va-187ra)

In the initial plan for this part Giles only lists Q. 1, Q. 2, and Q. 3. In the execution of this plan, however, Giles adds Q. 2a about God's knowledge of worthless things as subordinate to Q. 2.⁶

Qq. 1-3 are the same as those discussed by Aquinas about divine knowledge and in the same order. Thus, the only difference between Aquinas's and Giles's sets of questions on divine knowledge is Giles's additional question Q. 2a. I have not identified a question on this topic in other works by Aquinas.

B. Giles's questions about divine ideas:

Q. 1 *Utrum sit dare ideas* (fol. 187ra-va)

Q. 2 *Utrum sit dare pluralitatem idearum* (fols. 187va-188rb)

Q. 3 *Utrum ideae pertineant ad scientiam practicam vel speculativam* (fol. 188rb-vb)

³ Aeg. Rom., *Reportatio*, p. 9 Luna.

⁴ All references to Giles's *Ord.* I are to the edition Venice 1521, available online on <<http://capricorn.bc.edu/siepm/books.html>>.

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi Episcopi Parisiensis*, ed. P. Mandonnet, Lethielleux, Paris 1929, pp. 829-45. In the quotations from the editions of Aquinas's works I have introduced some minor changes in the punctuation.

⁶ Q. 2a is raised after the *pro* and *contra* arguments of Q. 2.

Q. 4 *Quorum sit idea* (fols. 188vb-189va)Q. 4.1 *Utrum mala habeant ideam*Q. 4.2 *Utrum materia prima habeat ideam*Q. 4.3 *Utrum accidentia habeant ideam*Q. 4.4 *Utrum singularia habeant ideam*

Qq. 1-2 and 4 are the same as those discussed by Aquinas about divine ideas and in the same order. As to Q. 4, about the range of divine ideas, Aquinas discusses it as a unitary question, without dividing it into sub-questions, as Giles does. However, the four problematic cases that Giles addresses in his sub-questions – bad things, prime matter, accidents, singulars – are exactly those that Aquinas selects for the *contra* arguments of his question about the range of divine ideas.

Thus, the only major difference between Aquinas's and Giles's sets of questions on divine ideas is Giles's additional question Q. 3 about whether ideas belong to practical or speculative knowledge.⁷

1.2 Contents of the Questions

The substantial overlap between the list of questions discussed by Aquinas and Giles offers a first suggestion that Aquinas's *In Sent.* I, dist. 36 is a major source of Giles's *Ord.* I, dist. 36. A look at the contents of the questions confirms this suggestion. Giles's questions present extended similarities with the corresponding questions of Aquinas, both in the *pro* and *contra* arguments and in the *responsio*. While Giles often shows some originality with respect to Aquinas, it is also clear that in most cases his discussion is a re-elaboration of material he finds in Aquinas. We shall give a clear example of Giles's use of Aquinas's commentary in the next section about Giles's discussion of God's knowledge of singulars.

It can be noted that the similarities with Aquinas are stronger in Giles's questions on divine cognition than in the questions on divine ideas. One clear difference between Aquinas and Giles in the questions on divine ideas is the use of Augustine. For both Aquinas and Giles, as for all late medieval philosophers, the main *auctoritas* on divine ideas is Augustine's *Quaestio de ideis*, i.e., q. 46 of his *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*.⁸ However, while Aquinas tends to treat Augustine merely as an *auctoritas*, Giles instead gives a central doctrinal role to Augustine. Approximately, Giles uses Augustine's claims as assumptions and premises around which he constructs his own arguments about divine ideas. A clear example of this is Giles's argument for the existence of divine ideas.⁹

⁷ While absent from his *Sentences* commentary, Aquinas devotes a question to this topic in his more extensive discussion of divine ideas in *De Veritate* Q. 3, a. 3. See Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, ed. Leonina (henceforth *EL*), Editori di San Tommaso, Roma 1975 (*EL* 22, 1-3), pp. 106a-109b. There are some similarities between Aquinas's and Giles's questions.

⁸ For a detailed presentation of Augustine's *Quaestio de ideis*, see G. Catapano, "Augustine's Doctrine of Eternal Reasons: A Textual Dossier", in T. Manzon – I. Zavattero (eds.), *Theories of Divine Ideas: From the Church Fathers to the Early Franciscan Masters*, Aracne, Roma 2022 (*Flumen Sapientiae* 20), pp. 2-6.

⁹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 1, fols. 187vb-188ra.

1.3 Anonymous References

Passing now to the anonymous references to or quotations of other theologians, there are five cases in Giles's *Ord.* I, dist. 36. The first and the fourth ones are only briefly presented here because they will be the subject of a detailed discussion in the next two sections of this paper.

(i) The first anonymous quotation is in Q. 1 of the first part, the question about God's knowledge of singulars:

Quarto defecerunt aliqui in assignando rationem et declarando modum quo Deus particularia secundum quod huiusmodi cognoscit.¹⁰

This is a reference to Aquinas's account of God's cognition of singulars in the corresponding question of his *In Sent.* I, dist. 36 (q. 1, a. 1), as the full quote of Giles's passage in the next section will show.

(ii) The second anonymous quotation is in Q. 2 of the first part, the question about God's knowledge of bad things:

Et quia per bonum oppositum cognoscitur malum, cum opposita sunt apta nata fieri circa idem, voluerunt aliqui quod malum non opponitur bono increato oppositione speciali nisi forte quadam oppositione communi, ut bonum malo opponitur. Ideo dixerunt quod Deus non cognoscit mala per essentiam suam, sed cognoscit quae ab ipso sunt, et cognoscendo ea cognoscit mala et defectus eorum. Et si cognoscit mala per se ipsum, hoc est secundum quandam cognitionem communem, eo quod solum oppositione communi Deo opponuntur. Sed quia oppositione speciali opponuntur bonis participatis, ideo Deus cognoscendo bona participata cognoscit mala secundum specialem rationem.¹¹

This is a reference to Aquinas's view about God's knowledge of bad things in the corresponding question of his *In Sent.* I, dist. 36 (q. 1, a. 2, co., p. 834 Mandonnet):

Sed sciendum est quod privatio non cognoscitur nisi per habitum oppositum, nec habitui opponitur privatio nisi circa idem subjectum considerata. Cum autem lucem divinae essentiae impossibile sit deficere, non opponitur sibi privatio aliqua. Unde malum non opponitur bono, prout in Deo est, determinate, sed forte opponitur sibi secundum communem intentionem boni. Opponitur autem determinate bono quod est participatum in creaturis cui potest admisceri defectus. Unde per hoc quod Deus cognoscit essentiam suam cognoscit ea quae ab ipso sunt, et per ea cognoscit defectus ipsorum. Si autem essentiam suam cognosceret tantum, nullum malum vel privationem cognosceret nisi in communi.

In assessing the claim that God has knowledge of bad things, Aquinas appeals to a distinction between 'common' and 'determinate' good and bad. The occasion for introducing this distinction is the *auctoritas* of Dionysius, who in Aquinas's report claims that "Deus novit et bona et mala cognoscendo essentiam suam, sicut tenebrae cognoscuntur per cognitionem lucis" (*In Sent.* I, dist. 36, q. 1, a. 2, co., p. 834 Mandonnet). Aquinas feels that Dionysius's

¹⁰ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185va.

¹¹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 2, fol. 186rb.

claim that God knows bad things by knowing his essence needs some qualification. This is because, as Aquinas remarks in the passage quoted above, it is only the common bad and not also the determinate bad that is opposed to the good of God, so that in God there is only the opposition between good and bad in common. The opposition between determinate good and determinate bad is found in creatures, not in God. Given the general principle that a privation is known through its opposite habit, Aquinas concludes that God only has direct knowledge of the bad in common, while he has a derivative knowledge of the determinate bad, that is, God knows a determinate bad not just insofar as God knows his essence alone, but insofar as through the knowledge of his essence he also knows the creatures that are produced by him and their defects.

Giles rejects Aquinas's view. He first points out that the derivative way in which, according to this view, God knows determinate bad things is in contrast with the *auctoritas* of Dionysius:

Sed hoc est contra Dionysium, 7 *De divinis nominibus*, qui assimilat cognitionem divinam lumini. Unde sicut lumen si quid cognitivum esset, tenebras cognosceret non aliunde cognitionem accipiendo, licet tenebrae sint privatio luminis, ita Deus per seipsum mala cognoscit, cum malum sit privatio boni.¹²

Giles then attacks Aquinas's use of the distinction between common and special/determinate good and bad:

Et quod dicunt malum non opponi Deo oppositione speciali, falsum est. Nam sicut Deus causa est omnium communis in quantum omnia producit et omnia eum imitantur, et est causa omnium propria prout non omnia eodem modo imitantur ipsum, sic omnia mala opponuntur Deo in quantum ab arte sua discordant oppositione communi et opponuntur ei oppositione speciali in quantum non omnia eodem modo deficiunt. Igitur sicut per eandem artem ut per grammaticam cognoscimus congruitates omnes tamquam arti concordantes, et incongruitates tamquam ab ea discordantes, sic Deus per artem suam cognoscit omnia bona communiter in quantum omnia arti suae concordant, et specialiter prout non eodem modo eam imitantur, et per illam eandem artem non aliunde cognitionem accipiens cognoscit omnia mala communiter in quantum ab ea discordant et specialiter prout non eodem modo ab ea dissonant. Nec tamen propter hoc dicimus malum cognosci nisi per bonum contrarium quia ipsi bono increato malum contrariatur, iuxta illud Augustini, 9 *De civitate Dei*, capitulo 3: "natura non est contraria Deo sed vitium".¹³

Giles here objects to the restriction of the opposition between good and bad in God to the common good and bad maintained by Aquinas. Giles argues that God is both the common cause of all things and the proper cause of each of them; the distinction between these two kinds of causality correspond to the distinction between two ways in which creatures imitate God, namely, 'common' imitation and 'special' imitation: all creatures imitate God, but different creatures imitate God in different ways. This distinction gives rise to the distinction between common and special bad things: all bad things fail to imitate God, but different bad things fail to imitate God in different ways. Thus, just as God as intelligent creator of all

¹² Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 2, fol. 186rb.

¹³ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 2, fol. 186rb.

things knows both common good things and special good things, so he also knows how they depart from his model, that is, he also knows both common bad things and special bad things. Giles illustrates this point with the example of grammar, which is the art by which we know not only what a general grammatical mistake is but also the specific grammatical mistakes.

In the parallel question about God's knowledge of bad things in *ST I*, q. 14, a. 10, Aquinas appeals again to the *auctoritas* of Dionysius but accepts it as it is without resorting to the distinction between common and special bad things. He has not abandoned, however, the idea of the derivative nature of God's knowledge of bad things, which appears in the reply to a *contra* argument of this question.¹⁴

(iii) The third anonymous quotation is in a *contra* argument of Q. 2 of the second part, the question about the plurality of divine ideas:

Praeterea, cum idea sit idem quod essentia divina, cum non concedamus in Deo esse plures essentias, non debemus concedere in eo esse plures ideas.

Praeterea, *si dicunt hoc esse ratione respectus*, unde propter pluralitatem respectuum ad creaturas sunt in Deo plures ideae, contra: temporale non est causa aeterni; sed cum creaturae sint temporales, <et> ideae ponantur in Deo ab aeterno, pluralitas creaturarum non arguet pluralitatem idearum.¹⁵

The opinion reported in this *contra* argument attempts to reconcile the unity of the divine essence with the plurality of divine ideas by positing that divine ideas are relations of God to creatures. This is not a reference to Aquinas's view but to an opinion reported by Aquinas himself in the corresponding question of *In Sent.* I, dist. 36 (q. 2, a. 2, arg. 1 and 2, pp. 840-841 Mandonnet):

Ad secundum sic proceditur. 1. Videtur quod non sint plures ideae. Idea enim dicitur similitudo per quam cognoscitur res. Sed, sicut supra habitum est, Deus cognoscit omnia per essentiam suam. Cum igitur essentia sua sit una, videtur quod idea sit tantum una.

2. Si dicas quod sunt plures respectus ad res, contra: relationes quae sunt Dei ad creaturam sunt realiter in creaturis, et non in Deo. Creaturae autem non fuerunt ab aeterno; ergo nec relationes Dei ad creaturam. Ergo ideae non fuerunt plures ab aeterno. Sed Deus non alio modo cognoscit res factas quam antequam faceret, ut habitum est ex verbis Augustini, lib. V *Super Gen. ad litt.*, cap. xv, col. 332, t. III. Ergo modo non cognoscit res per plures ideas, sed per unam tantum.

Thus, the third anonymous quotation is a case of Giles's "utilizzazione dossografica" of Aquinas, that is, a case in which Giles takes from Aquinas the quotations of other opinions. Concetta Luna has recorded many cases of this phenomenon in the *Reportatio*.¹⁶

The same view about divine ideas as relations is reported by Aquinas in the corresponding question about divine ideas in *ST I*, q. 15, a. 2, arg. 3 (p. 201a ed. Leon.), and in *De Veritate*,

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima pars*, ed. Leonina, Typographia Polyglotta, Roma 1888 (*EL 4*), q. 14, a. 10, ad 3, p. 182b: "Ad tertium dicendum quod, licet malum non opponatur essentiae divinae, quae non est corruptibilis per malum, opponitur tamen effectibus Dei, quos per essentiam suam cognoscit, et eos cognoscens, mala opposita cognoscit".

¹⁵ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 2, fol. 187vb.

¹⁶ Aeg. Rom., *Reportatio*, p. 57 Luna.

q. 3, a. 2, arg. 7 (pp.102b-103a ed. Leon.). However, Giles's quotation is much closer to Aquinas's *contra* argument in *In Sent.* I, dist. 36 than to the versions in the other two works. The immediate source of Giles then is definitely Aquinas's *In Sent.* I.

(iv) The fourth quotation is in Q. 3 of the second part, the question about whether divine ideas belong to practical or speculative science:

Respondeo dicendum quod ut quaesiti appareat veritas oportet nos videre quomodo idea se habeat ad cognitionem. Ad quod dicunt aliqui quod idea non est id quo Deus intelligit sed solum habet rationem intellecti.¹⁷

Giles rejects this view about the cognitive role of ideas. This reference is not verified in Aquinas's *In Sent.* I, dist. 36. However, as we shall see in the specific discussion of this case in section 3, it is very probably a reference to Aquinas's view in his question about the plurality of divine ideas in *ST* I, q. 15, a. 2.

(v) The fifth anonymous quotation is in Q. 4.1 of the second part, the question about whether God has ideas of bad things:

Habent enim mala ideam in Deo non cum qua concordant sed a qua discordant. Nam eo ipso quod per illam eandem ideam per quam Deus cognoscit bonum velut illi concordans cognoscit etiam malum velut ab ea discordans, malum quodammodo ideam habet, ut loquamur secundum quod Philosophus, 4 *Metaphysicae*, t.c. 4, loquitur, qui privationes appellat entia quia sunt negationes entium; verum quia non habent mala ideam quam imitentur, non simpliciter ideam habent. Unde ab aliquibus propter hanc causam dicuntur ideam non habere, quod etiam non est inconveniens, cum sciri a Deo aliquando negentur.¹⁸

The opinion reported by Giles denies that God has ideas of bad things. Giles presents this opinion as the conclusion that some people draw from the claim, endorsed by Giles, that bad things do not have ideas that they imitate but only ideas from which they depart. Although different from his own view, Giles does not think that this opinion is absurd and does not reject it.

Giles here does not seem to refer to Aquinas. In the corresponding question of *In Sent.* I, dist. 36, Aquinas appeals to the privative nature of the bad, as Giles does, and maintains that there is an idea of a bad thing in God, but not insofar as this thing is bad but insofar as it is thing, so that "ipsum malum per oppositum bonum cognoscitur a Deo, a quo res privationi subjecta deficit" (a. 3, *ad* 1, p. 844 Mandonnet). The same view appears in different formulations in the corresponding questions of *ST* I, q. 15 (a. 3, *ad* 1) and in *De Veritate* q. 3 (a. 4, *ad* 7). There is no compelling textual evidence for Aquinas's authorship of the anonymous reference of Giles. Aquinas's account of God's knowledge of bad things is very similar to that of Giles.

In conclusion, four of the five anonymous references in Giles's *Ord.* I, dist. 36 are to Aquinas, and in three of them Aquinas is Giles's polemical target whereas in the remaining one Aquinas is Giles's doxographical source. The dominant presence of Aquinas confirms Richard Cross's assessment that Giles "adopts a rather idiosyncratic approach to the

¹⁷ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 187rb.

¹⁸ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 4.1, fol. 189ra.

theologian's dialectical task. It was typical to engage with a large range of contemporaries and (...) to have as positive influences a rather syncretic group of theologians. What stands out in Giles's theology is a focus on just one figure: his (probable) teacher, Thomas Aquinas".¹⁹

2. *God's Knowledge of Singulars*

Giles begins his *responsio* to the question about God's knowledge of singulars pointing out that "circa veritatem quaesiti invenitur multipliciter aliquos defecisse".²⁰ He then substantiates this critical remark by giving a short review of some major defective views on this issue. He considers four defective views, which he presents as ordered according to decreasing degrees of their shortcomings.²¹ The first and most defective view listed by Giles is that which denies that God has any knowledge of singulars altogether. This is the view of Averroes. The second view posits that God has some knowledge of singulars, but not a proper knowledge of them: God knows singulars in a universal way and not insofar as singulars. This is the view of Avicenna and Algazel, illustrated with the example of the eclipse. The third view posits that God has perfect knowledge of singulars qua singulars, but it is defective in its defence of this claim against standard objections. For this view merely appeals to the radical difference between our knowledge and divine knowledge so that "aequivoce dicitur 'scientia' de scientia Dei et scientia nostra, et ratione huius aequivocationis omnia inconvenientia volebant effugere".²² This is the view of Rabbi Moyses.

In singling out these three traditional views Giles follows Aquinas very closely. For the same three opinions are those presented by Aquinas in his doxographical review about God's knowledge of singulars in the corresponding question *In Sent.* I, dist. 36 (q. 1, a.1, co., pp. 830-831 Mandonnet). But Giles adds a fourth view to his list. In Giles's report:

(T1) Quarto defecerunt aliqui in assignando rationem et declarando modum quo Deus particularia secundum quod huiusmodi cognoscit. Dicunt enim quod Deus non solum producit formam sed etiam materiam, alia autem agentia produciunt res inducendo formam, non creando essentiam materiae. Et quia a forma sumitur rei universalitas, a materia particularitas, eo quod materia sit individuationis principium, Deus res non solum universaliter sed etiam particulariter cognoscit. Nam si artifex archam producendam non cognoscit particulariter prius quam eius cognitionem a sensu accipiat, hoc est quia solum formam inducit in materia; quod si tamen ipsam materiam produceret cognitionem archae particulariter haberet. Addunt autem quod ideo philosophi erraverunt in determinando Deum particularia cognoscere quia vel negaverunt Deum producere totum, quia posuerunt materiam ingenitam et incorruptibilem, vel quia dixerunt Deum agere mediantibus secundis causis et res non immediate producere.²³

There is no doubt that this fourth view is that of Aquinas, as the strong textual parallelism with Aquinas's text in the next quote shows. After rejecting the three traditional views about

¹⁹ R. Cross, "Theology", in C.F. Briggs – P. S. Eardley (eds.), *A Companion to Giles of Rome*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2016 (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 71), p. 34.

²⁰ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185rb.

²¹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185rb-vb.

²² Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185va.

²³ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185va-vb.

God's knowledge of singulars, Aquinas presents what he regards as the correct view (q. 1, a.1, co., pp. 831-832 Mandonnet):

(T2) 1. Unde procedendum est per viam quam docet Dionysius, vii cap. *De div. Nomin.*, § 2, col. 867, t. I. Dicit enim quod, cum Deus cognoscit res per essentiam suam, quae est causa rerum, eodem modo cognoscit res quo modo esse rebus tradidit. Unde si aliquid est in rebus non cognitum ab ipso, oportet quod circa illud vacet divina operatio, id est, quod non sit operatum ab ipso.

2. Et ex hoc accidit difficultas philosophis propter duo. Primo, quia quidam ipsorum non ponebant Deum operari immediate in rebus omnibus, sed ab ipso esse primas res, quibus mediantibus ab eo aliae producuntur; et ideo non poterant invenire qualiter cognosceret res quae sunt hic nisi in primis causis universalibus. Secundo, quia quidam eorum non ponebant materiam esse factam, sed Deum agere tantum inducendo formam. Et ideo cum materia sit principium individuationis, non poterat inveniri apud eos quomodo Deus singularia in quantum huiusmodi cognoscat.

3. Sed quia nos ponimus Deum immediate operantem in rebus omnibus, et ab ipso esse non solum principia formalia, sed etiam materiam rei, ideo per essentiam suam sicut per causam totum quod est in re cognoscit, et formalia et materialia. Unde non tantum cognoscit res secundum naturas universales, sed secundum quod sunt individuae per materiam, sicut aedificator si per formam artis conceptam posset producere totam domum, quantum ad materiam et formam, per formam artis quam habet apud se cognosceret domum hanc et illam. Sed quia per artem suam non inducit nisi formam, ideo ars sua est solum similitudo formae domus; unde non potest per eam cognoscere hanc domum vel illam, nisi per aliquid acceptum a sensu.

Aquinas's argumentation in this passage is nicely articulated. Aquinas feels that for a fair understanding and assessment of the views about the specific issue of God's knowledge of singulars we need a guiding principle about the general issue of what God can know. Aquinas finds this guiding principle in Dionysius's claim that God has perfect knowledge of all things that he produces so that only what is outside God's production is outside God's essential knowledge (1). Aquinas then applies this general principle to the specific case of God's knowledge of singulars. He first shows in (2) that the 'Dionysian' principle explains the difficulties that philosophers encounter in accepting the claim that God has knowledge of singulars. The defects in God's knowledge of singulars that the philosophers perceive derive from assumptions about defects in God's production of singulars. Aquinas claims that there are two such defects, according to the philosophers. One is that God does not produce singulars directly but only by means of other causes, which are universal causes. Therefore, God does not know singulars directly but only in their universal causes. The other is that God does not produce matter, but only form. Matter, however, is the principle of individuation, so that the full production and hence the full knowledge of singulars require the production of both matter and form. But these two obstacles to God's proper knowledge of singulars do not arise in the Christian view, as Aquinas points out in (3). For in this view, God is an immediate cause of singulars, and he produces not only their form but also their matter. Thus, in the Christian view defended here by Aquinas, God has perfect knowledge of singulars because God produces singulars immediately and produces their matter too.

In text (T1) above, Giles gives a faithful summary of Aquinas's view. He then turns to explaining why Aquinas's defence of God's proper knowledge of singulars is defective:

(T3) 1. Sic dicentes autem, licet inter ceteros magis ad veritatem appropinquent, non tamen in assignando causam dicti rationem per se assignant. Nam, ut habitum est,²⁴ *particularia non cognoscuntur particulariter nisi ut determinantur per actuale esse*. Quantumcumque igitur Deus producat materiam et formam, vel Deus non cognoscat res particulariter vel oportet eas determinari per actuale esse ut particulariter cognoscantur, et ita ex progressu rerum in esse aliquid accrescet divinae scientiae.

2. Et quod dicunt philosophos negasse cognitionem particularium a Deo quia negaverunt Deum producere materiam et formam, plane apparet esse falsum, quia non dixerunt philosophi materiam ingenitam quia non haberet principium productivum sed quia caruit durationis initio. Nam Commentator, qui inter ceteros de aeternitate mundi magis praesumptuose locutus est, dicit, 2 *Metaphysicae*, unum esse ens et per se ens et per se verum, et omnia alia esse entia et vera per esse et veritatem eius. Nam etsi nos poneremus mundum aeternum, diceremus materiam ingenitam et incorruptibilem, ut philosophi posuerunt, et tamen cognitionem perfectam particularium a Deo negare non deberemus.

3. Sic etiam frivolum est quod addunt quod quia aliqui posuerunt Deum producere res mediantibus secundis causis, cuius opinionis videtur fuisse Avicenna, ideo dixerunt particularia particulariter ignorare. Non enim ex hoc, ut patet, Deum negaverunt particularia cognoscere, sed propter determinationem actualis esse, quod satis manifestum est, si diligenter consideretur declaratio Avicennae.²⁵

At the beginning of this passage Giles makes explicit what the defect of Aquinas's view is. Aquinas has not identified the real cause of God's proper knowledge of singulars. Aquinas maintains that it is because God produces matter and not only form that God knows singulars qua singulars. In this explanation Aquinas tacitly assumes that for the proper knowledge of a singular it is sufficient to have knowledge of both its matter and form. Giles disagrees. He maintains that the proper knowledge of a singular also requires that the singular is known in its actual being, as it exists here and now. And in Giles's view, it is the requirement that a singular is known in its actual being that is the major obstacle that the philosophers encounter in dealing with the issue of God's knowledge of singulars, and not, as Aquinas maintains, the requirement about the production of matter. Actually, according to Giles, Aquinas is wrong when he ascribes to the philosophers the view that matter is not produced by God (2). While the philosophers maintain that the world is eternal, they also assume that the eternity of the world only implies that matter does not have a temporal beginning but not also that matter is not produced by God. The most relevant philosophical *auctoritas* here is Averroes, who, according to Giles, maintains both that the world is eternal and that matter is produced by God. Finally, according to Giles, Aquinas is also wrong about the other 'philosophical' obstacle to God's knowledge of singulars, that is, God's indirect production of singulars (3). The reference here is to the view of Avicenna and Algazel. According to Aquinas, these philosophers posit that God knows singulars only in a universal way and not also qua singulars because God produces singulars not directly but by means of secondary (universal) causes. Giles regards this explanation of the philosophers' view given by Aquinas as worthless (*frivolum*). He thinks that Aquinas has completely missed the motivation of this

²⁴ The reference here is to Giles's discussion of Avicenna's and Algazel's view. See text (T4) below.

²⁵ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185vb.

restriction in God's knowledge of singulars. The motivation is another, as Giles explains in more detail in his report of Avicenna's and Algazel's view:

(T4) 1. Motivum autem istorum esse potuit quia *cognoscere particulare secundum quod particulare est ipsum cognoscere secundum actuale esse*. Ex hoc enim videtur differentia inter universalia et particularia, quia particularia actu sunt, universalia autem esse non habent nisi ex eo quod in particularibus existunt, nec proprie actu sunt, sed actualitatem et formam ab intellectu suscipiunt. Et quia particularibus secundum quod huiusmodi competit actu esse, et rebus competit esse hoc aliquid ex eo quod actu sunt, cognoscere particularia secundum quod huiusmodi est ea cognoscere secundum actuale esse; quae ergo non habent actuale esse cognoscere particulariter, ut videtur, est implicare contradictionem. Oportet ergo ea determinari per actuale esse ad hoc quod secundum quod particularia cognoscantur.

2. Ergo de duabus viis secundum hoc oportet eligere alteram: vel quod Deus non cognoscat particularia ut particularia sunt vel quod aliquid divinae scientiae accrescat ex eo quod determinantur per actuale esse. Et quia alterum videtur omnino impossibile, videlicet quod aliquid accrescat divinae scientiae ex progressu rerum in esse, elegerunt praedicti philosophi Deum non cognoscere particularia secundum quod huiusmodi, hoc est, secundum quod habent actuale esse, sed ea cognoscere in suis causis, quod patet ex declaratione positionis eorum.²⁶

As Giles states at the beginning of this passage, the reason why these philosophers deny that God has knowledge of particulars qua particulars is the principle that the proper knowledge of a particular qua particular is the knowledge of the particular in its actual being. Giles then expands on this compressed initial statement by first presenting an argument in support of this principle about the knowledge of particulars (1) and then explaining the obstacle that arises from it for God's knowledge of particulars (2).

Giles's argument for the principle appeals to the distinction between the being of particulars and the being of universals. It is only particulars that have actual being of their own in extra-mental reality, whereas universals do not have actual being of their own but only as components of particulars or in virtue of the mind, i.e., as concepts, but not in extra-mental reality. Since actual being is the being distinctive of particulars versus universals, then the distinctive knowledge of particulars qua particulars versus the knowledge of particulars qua universals is the knowledge of particulars in their actual being. The conclusion of this argument, as Giles puts it, is that particulars must be determined in their actual being in order to be known qua particulars. The problem with this conclusion, as Giles explains in (2), is that it seems that the knowledge of particulars qua particulars is incompatible with the immutability of God's knowledge. Unlike universals, particulars do not have stable actual being, that is, they do not always actually exist, but they come into existence and pass away. Thus, if God's knowledge grasps a particular in its actual being, it seems that God's knowledge is also subject to a change corresponding to the change in the actual being of a particular. As Giles puts this point, the progress of things into actual being would result in an increase in God's knowledge. For example, if God knew Socrates qua particular, i.e., in its actual being, then the coming into being of Socrates would produce an increase in God's knowledge,

²⁶ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185va.

because God did not know Socrates qua particular before Socrates came into being. Hence the philosophical dilemma: either God does not know particulars qua particulars or God's knowledge is subject to change. Confronted with this dilemma, philosophers like Avicenna and Algazel reject the second option, as they deem that a change in God's knowledge is absolutely impossible, and opt for the first option so that they deny that God has proper knowledge of particulars.

Giles's own positive account of God's knowledge of particulars addresses this philosophical dilemma and shows that it can be solved. The crucial move of Giles's solution is to resort to the doctrine of the identity of nature and being in God. According to Giles, it is this distinctive property of God that makes it possible to reconcile God's proper knowledge of singulars in their actual being with the immutability of God's knowledge. Let us see in some detail Giles's elaborate presentation of his own view.

Giles's starting point is an appeal to the general principle that "modus actionis rei sequitur modum naturae", so that the kinds of action that an agent is able to perform are regulated by the nature itself of the agent. Giles remarks that this general principle requires some qualification in the case of external actions, because these actions are determined not only by the nature of the agent but also by the nature of the patient, that is, the thing external to the agent on which the agent exerts its actions, but it is valid without qualification in the case of internal actions, since they do not have an external patient, and so they are regulated by the nature of the agent alone. Therefore, this principle is absolutely true in the case of cognitive acts, which are internal acts. Thus, as Giles concludes the first step of his account, "non tamen videtur habere calumniam utrum actus intelligendi declarandus sit ex natura intelligentis".²⁷ Giles then turns to the nature of the intellect, namely, the agent responsible for the knowledge of singulars, and he identifies the relationship between the nature itself of the intellect and the being of the intellect as the feature of the intellect that determines the kind of knowledge of singulars appropriate to it. What makes the difference in the knowledge of singulars is whether the intellect responsible for it is the same as its being or whether it is distinct from its being. Giles first explains what happens in the latter case:

(T5) Omnis ergo intellectus cuius natura determinatur per actuale esse res in suo actuali esse naturaliter cognoscere non poterit antequam per tale esse determinetur. Ideo omne sic intelligens vel non cognoscit particularia particulariter vel ex progressu rerum in esse aliquid scientiae accrescit. Ideo dato per impossibile quod aliquod agens agat non ex suppositione materiae, ita quod non solum formam induceret sed essentiam materiae crearet, si haberet naturam distantem ab esse, quia modus intelligendi sequeretur modum naturae eius, ut cognosceret res secundum actuale esse oporteret eas determinari per tale esse, sicut et natura eius per actuale esse determinatur.²⁸

²⁷ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185vb: "Est ergo alia via incedendi. Notandum igitur quod modus actionis rei sequitur modum naturae, et ideo diversitas actionum arguit diversitatem naturae, ut potest haberi a Damasceno, libro 3, c. 15. Nam cum agere praesupponat esse, et esse naturam, modus agendi rei ex esse eius et natura ipsius declarari habet, quod, si de actionibus transeuntibus in exteriorem materiam aliquo modo habet calumniam, eo quod, cum talia non sint perfectio agentis sed acti, modus ipsorum non solum ex natura agentis sed etiam acti declarari habet, non tamen videtur habere calumniam utrum actus intelligendi declarandus sit ex natura intelligentis, sicut actus transiens in exteriorem materiam".

²⁸ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185vb.

The complex train of thought in this passage requires some clarification. For Giles, the crucial question arising from the philosophical dilemma is whether the proper knowledge of singulars in their actual being requires that the singulars are determined in their actual being, that is, that they actually exist, so that they are not known in their actual being before they progress into being. The philosophical dilemma takes it for granted that this question only admits of a positive answer, that is, singulars are known in their actual being only when they actually exist. Giles instead feels that this issue requires further investigation. According to the general principle about the dependence of the mode of action on the nature of the agent invoked by Giles in the first step of his account, the determination-in-being condition for the proper knowledge of singulars must be traced back to a feature of the intellect subject to this condition. For Giles, this feature is the determination in being of the intellect itself. By the determination in being of the nature of an intellect Giles means that distinction between the nature and the being of that intellect, that is, in his words, a nature that is distant from its being. The determination-in-being condition for the knowledge of singulars derives from the determination-in-being condition of the nature of the intellect itself. This is Giles's crucial statement at the beginning of the passage above. This statement is very suggestive. Giles makes an effective use of it against Aquinas in the thought experiment about an agent producing matter but with a nature distant from its being in the final part of the passage. But this statement needs to be proved. Giles turns to the difficult task of proving it in the next step of his account:

- (T6) 1. Nam intelligere quod competit rei cuius esse est distans a natura de necessitate quantum ad praesens duo habet ex eo quod est in tali natura sive in supposito talem naturam habente. Primo quia non est actus purus sed admixtus potentiae, cum sit in re in cuius natura potentialitas habet esse. Secundo non est ipsum esse. Nam nulli rei est actio essentialis ita quod suum agere sit suum esse, si habeat esse distans a natura.
2. Ex eo autem quod tale intelligere admixtam potentialitatem habet, non est de se omnino determinatum, et ideo oportet res per tale intelligere intellectas secundum suum esse determinari, ut in suo esse determinate cognoscantur. Rursum, quia non est ipsum esse, non reservatur in eo omnis ratio essendi, propter quod non poterit in seipso absque alia determinatione res secundum suum esse cognoscere, et ideo nisi per esse res determinentur sic intelligens eas in suo esse cognoscere non poterit.²⁹

Giles here considers the act of understanding, the *intelligere*, of an intellect whose nature is distinct from its being. In the first part of the passage (1) he singles out two relevant properties that the act of understanding inherits from the nature of an intellect of this kind: (i) it is not a pure act but involves some potentiality; (ii) it is not the being of the intellect. In the second part of the passage (2) Giles shows that each of these two properties entails that this kind of intellect is subject to the determination-in-being condition for its knowledge of singulars. Both these properties are associated to some kind of lack of determination of the act of understanding; this lack of determination needs to be removed for the proper knowledge of a singular; and it is the determination of a singular in its actual being that confers to the act of understanding the determination required for a proper knowledge of it.

²⁹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 185vb.

Giles's proof is very abstract and obscure and leaves much to be explained. It seems to be a very original application of the doctrine of the distinction between essence and existence in creatures to the special issue of the cognition of singulars. A proper investigation and assessment of it is for another occasion. What Giles formulates with great clarity is the conclusion to be drawn from his analysis, namely, that the philosophical dilemma about the cognition of singulars applies only to creatures but not also to God:

(T7) Et quia cognoscere particulare ut particulare est ipsum cognoscere secundum suum actuale esse, cognoscere autem ipsum universaliter est ipsum scire solum secundum esse quod habet in suis causis vel secundum suam rationem quidditatis, omne igitur habens naturam distantem ab esse vel non cognoscit particulare particulariter vel, si cognoscit ipsum, aliquid accrescit scientiae suae ex eo quod res progrediuntur in esse. Deus igitur, cum sit ipsum esse et suum intelligere et non habeat potentialitatem admixtam sed in eo reservetur omnis ratio essendi, poterit res cognoscere etiam particulariter, et ex eo quod res progredientur in esse nihil accresceret scientiae suae.³⁰

Clear evidence of the strong presence of Aquinas in Giles's discussion is that Giles concludes his positive account of God's knowledge of singulars from where Aquinas started his own, that is, the *via Dionysii*:

(T8) Et hoc concordat cum via Dionysii, 7 *De divinis nominibus*, qui dicit Deum omnia existentia ab ipso cognoscere in quantum omnibus est causa essendi. Nam ex hoc omnibus est causa essendi quia est ipsum esse et habet naturam indistantem ab esse propter quod in eo omnis essendi ratio reservatur, quod diligenter considerandum est, quia ex hoc, ut patebit, quaestiones quam optime dissolventur.³¹

Here Giles seems to suggest that Aquinas is certainly right when he takes Dionysius's claim about the correspondence between God's causality and God's knowledge as a guiding principle of his investigation. But Aquinas goes wrong in applying this principle to the specific case of God's cognition of singulars because he mistakenly thinks that the crucial issue is God's causality with respect to matter. For Giles, instead, the crucial issue is God's causality with respect to being in its entirety, which is due to the identity of nature and being in God.

3. *The Cognitive Role of Divine Ideas*

Following the teaching of Augustine and Dionysius, the two main theological *auctoritates* about divine ideas, Giles maintains that the divine idea of a creature is an essential element of both God's knowledge and God's production of that creature.³² Positing ideas of creatures in God is necessary to explain that God has perfect knowledge of creatures and that he acts as a rational agent in his production of them. Translated in Aristotelian terms, a divine idea

³⁰ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fols. 185vb-186ra.

³¹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 1, q. 1, fol. 186ra.

³² For some recent comprehensive works on the medieval discussions about divine ideas, see J.F. Falà – I. Zavattero (eds.), *Divine Ideas in Franciscan Thought (XIIIth-XIVth Century)*, Aracne, Rome 2018 (Flumen Sapientiae 8); Manzon-Zavattero (eds.), *Theories of Divine Ideas* (above, n. 8). For a very fragmentary and short presentation of some aspects of Giles's view, see C. Trifogli, "Thomas Wylton against Thomas Aquinas on divine ideas", *Studi sull'Aristotelismo Medievale* 2 (2022), part. pp. 175-6.

belongs to both God's speculative knowledge and practical knowledge. As Giles expands on this statement in his *responsio* to the question *Utrum ideae pertineant ad scientiam practicam vel speculativam*:

(T1) Et quia idea est id quo Deus cognoscit modo quo dictum est et est id ad cuius imitationem alia formantur, cum scire divinum sit causa rerum in quantum Deus agit per cognitionem, non ex necessitate naturae, idea potest pertinere ad scientiam practicam et speculativam. Pertinet enim ad speculativam prout per eam res Deus cognoscit, non considerata prout per eam Deus res producit et producere potest. Si vero consideratur idea prout per eam res Deus producit vel producere disposuit, sic pertinet ad scientiam practicam actu.³³

While Giles does not perceive any serious problems with the practical side of divine ideas, the speculative side instead is a matter of great concern to him. He thinks that the cognitive (speculative) role of divine ideas has not been correctly understood. At the very beginning of his *responsio* he reports an erroneous opinion on this topic:

(T2) Respondeo dicendum quod, ut quaesiti appareat veritas, oportet nos videre quomodo idea se habeat ad cognitionem.

Ad quod dicunt aliqui quod idea non est id quo Deus intelligit sed solum habet rationem intellecti.

Sed cum divina essentia prout est imitabilis ab aliqua re dicatur idea illius et similitudo eius, cum ex hoc entia creata cognoscantur a Deo quia similitudines omnium sunt in ipso, simpliciter negare ideam esse illud quo Deus intelligit non sapit doctrinam sanam.³⁴

This opinion claims that a divine idea is not that in virtue of which God understands a creature, that is, the *quo* of God's understanding, but that which is understood by God, the thing understood, the *quod* of God's understanding. Giles then argues that this view is not sound (*sana*), because it conflicts with the notion of a divine idea of a creature as a likeness (*similitudo*) of a creature, the likeness that expresses the essence of God as capable of being imitated by a creature. The likeness of a creature is that in virtue of which God knows a creature; thus, it cannot be denied altogether that a divine idea is a *quo* of God's cognition.

Although Giles's report of this opinion is very short, it is highly plausible that his polemical target is Aquinas. In *ST I*, q. 15, a. 2 Aquinas deals with the traditional issue of how to reconcile the plurality of divine ideas with the simplicity of God. Aquinas's reconciliation appeals to the distinction between the *quo intelligitur* and the *quod intelligitur* and consists in denying to the divine ideas the status of the *quo intelligitur* and giving them the status of the *quod intelligitur*. As Aquinas explains (a. 2, co., p. 202a ed. Leon.):

(T3) Unde sequitur quod in mente divina sint plures ideae.

Hoc autem quomodo divinae simplicitati non repugnet facile est videre, si quis consideret ideam operati esse in mente operantis sicut *quod intelligitur*, non autem sicut *species qua intelligitur*, quae est forma faciens intellectum in actu. Forma enim domus in mente aedificatoris est aliquid ab eo intellectum, ad cuius *similitudinem* domum in materia format. Non est autem contra simplicitatem divini intellectus quod multa intelligat, sed contra

³³ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188vb.

³⁴ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188rb.

simplicitatem eius esset si per plures species eius intellectus formaretur. Unde plures ideae sunt in mente divina ut intellectae ab ipso.³⁵

The fact that Aquinas here describes divine ideas as likenesses reinforces the hypothesis that he is indeed Giles's polemical target. For, as we have just seen, Giles's objection to the opinion is that the notion of a divine idea as likeness of a creature is in contrast with denying the status of *quo intelligitur* to a divine idea altogether. There is another aspect of Aquinas's explanation that confirms our hypothesis. Aquinas identifies the *quo intelligitur* with a form that actualizes the intellect (*forma faciens intellectum in actu*). As we shall see, it is this identification that Giles strongly rejects in his own account of the cognitive role of divine ideas. He argues that not all kinds of *quo intelligitur* are forms that actualize the intellect. Indeed, the crucial ingredient of Giles's account is a distinction between two kinds of *quo*.

As Giles presents his main thesis:

(T4) Notandum igitur quod illud quo cognoscens cognoscit dupliciter potest accipi. Primo per comparationem ad cognitionis actum, secundo per respectum ad cognitum. Nam id a quo egreditur cognitionis actus est id quo cognoscimus, et id per quod nobis aliquid cognitum innotescit quo cognoscimus dici potest. Est autem idea quo Deus cognoscit, non per comparationem ad actum, sed per respectum ad cognita.³⁶

Thus, for Giles, we need to distinguish the *quo* with respect to an act of cognition and the *quo* with respect to the object cognized, the act-*quo* and the object-*quo* for short. In this passage Giles gives a very general and compressed description of these two *quo*: the act-*quo* is something from which the act of cognition comes about, that is, a principle or cause of the act; the object-*quo* is something in virtue of which the cognized object becomes known to us through the act of cognizing it, that is, approximately, that which accounts for an act of cognition of a thing to result in the cognition of that thing. The distinction becomes clearer when Giles applies it to the specific case of a divine idea and defends his main thesis that a divine idea is a *quo* of God's cognition of a creature, although not an act-*quo* but an object-*quo*.

Giles first argues for the negative part of his thesis that a divine idea is not an act-*quo*. His argument appeals to the comparison and contrast between human cognition and divine cognition. The focus of the comparison is the notion of likeness. Both human cognition and divine cognition involve likenesses of the things cognized but with the crucial difference that such likenesses are act-*quo* only for human cognition but not also for divine cognition. As to human cognition:

(T5) Intelligit autem anima nostra non solum intellectu sed etiam specie intelligibili, accipiendo ea quae sunt immediatum principium actionis. Causa autem quare requiritur huiusmodi species ad talem actum est quia intellectus noster non est actus purus; et quia agens agit secundum quod est in actu, cum aliqua actualitas conferatur intellectui vel animae nostrae ex eo quod conformatur rebus, ipsae similitudines rerum in anima existentes sunt id quo anima intelligit, etiam per comparationem ad actum, quia sunt causa et principia actus

³⁵ On Aquinas's view, see G.T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. 2008, pp. 100-3.

³⁶ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188rb-va.

intelligendi. Quod si tamen animae nostrae nulla actualitas tribueretur ex eo quod rebus aliis conformatur, [et] ex similitudine rei in ea non posset accipi ratio actus intelligendi.³⁷

In this passage Giles uses the standard technical expression “intelligible species” for the likenesses of things existing in our intellect. His crucial point is that the likenesses in human cognition are *act-quo* because they confer some actuality to our intellect. More specifically, the likenesses existing in an intellect make the intellect ‘similar’ to the things cognized, or, in Giles’s words, make the intellect ‘conformed’ to the things cognized (*conformatur rebus*). In the human case, this ‘conformation’ to the things cognized actualizes our intellect. The idea here is that our intellectual power is not sufficient of itself to produce an act of cognition because it does not have the appropriate degree of actuality required for causing such an act. The intrinsic actuality of our intellect needs to be complemented by a further actuality, and this additional actuality is that conferred by intelligible species as likenesses or ‘conformations’ of the intellect to its objects. According to Aquinas’s more explicit description in (T3), an intelligible species is a form that makes our intellect in act. And Giles agrees with Aquinas on the actualizing role of likenesses insofar as human cognition is concerned. But when it comes to divine cognition likenesses do not have this role because there is nothing for them to actualize. The intellect of God, unlike the human intellect, is a pure act. As Giles explains:

(T6) Quae si ad divina transferre volumus, satis apparet ideam non esse id quo Deus intelligit per respectum ad actum, cum nulla ratio principii sit in idea ut idea est respectu actus cognitionis divinae... quia, ut dicebatur, tota causa quare similitudines rerum habent causalitatem super actu intelligendi nostro sumitur ex eo quod aliqua actualitas tribuitur animae nostrae quia conformatur rebus. Sed si anima nostra esset actus purus, quia nulla actualitas tribueretur ei ex conformatione ad aliquid aliud, similitudo ut similitudo non esset ratio et principium actus, sed ipsa substantia. Et quia Deus est actus purus, et ex eo quod est imitabilis a rebus nullam actualitatem suscipit, sed res ipsae esse actuale recipiunt quia ei conformantur, licet idem sit idea et substantia in eo, tamen respectu actus intelligendi non habebit rationem principii substantia ut idea, cum ex eo quod est idea ei nulla actualitas tribuatur.³⁸

Giles here points out that the crucial difference of the divine intellect compared to the human intellect is that the divine intellect is pure act. He then nicely presents the contrast between the conformation of the intellect to things in human cognition and in divine cognition resulting from this difference: the conformation of the human intellect to the things actualizes the human intellect, but the conformation of the divine intellect to the things actualizes the things, not the divine intellect. The divine conformation is the ground of the actual being of creatures because it expresses God’s essence as imitable by creatures, and this imitability is required for the production of creatures.

Having established the negative part of his thesis, Giles then turns to the positive part of it, namely, the claim that divine ideas are *object-quo* of divine cognition:

(T7) Quod autem idea sit ratio cognoscendi ex parte cognitorum sic ostendi potest quia sicut similitudines existentes in cognoscente sunt ratio cognoscendi ex parte actus in quantum

³⁷ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188va.

³⁸ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188va.

quandam actualitatem cognoscenti tribuunt, sic[ut] sunt ratio cognoscendi [ex parte actus, in quantum quandam actualitatem cognoscendi] ex parte cognitorum prout cognita repraesentant. Quia divina essentia ut est idea et similitudo rerum res repraesentat, licet ex hoc ei nulla actualitas tribuatur, dicendum est quod idea non est id quo Deus intelligit per comparationem ad actum, sed per comparationem ad cognitum. Nam non omne id quo quis intelligit habet causalitatem respectu actus intelligendi.³⁹

The important premise of Giles's argument is about the role of an intellectual likeness as the *quo* of cognition. In the case of human cognition, the intellectual likeness has a double role: it is an act-*quo* and an object-*quo*. In the case of divine cognition, the intellectual likeness, i.e., the divine idea, is not an act-*quo* but it is indeed an object-*quo*. Giles makes explicit here the feature of an intellectual likeness that makes it an object-*quo*: this is that a likeness is a representation of the object. Divine ideas then qualify for being object-*quo* because they are representations of their objects. Unfortunately, Giles leaves the notion of representation here unexplained. He also takes it for granted that the representation of an object has a causal role in the cognition of that object, without offering any motivation for this. This is an issue to which he devotes great attention in his mature works.⁴⁰ His major concern here is to defend the view that there are *quo* of cognition that are not act-*quo*, that is, as he puts this point at the end of the (T7), not everything in virtue of which someone understands is a cause of the act of understanding. In support of this view, he presents a case of a *quo* that is not an act-*quo* taken from human cognition:

(T8) Quia cum per propositiones universales et magis confusas intelligamus propositiones se per ordinem habentes ad illas, dicere possumus propositiones universales esse id quo intelligimus, cum sint nobis magis nota confusa magis, et tamen propositiones non simpliciter habent rationem principii respectu actus intelligendi, cum ex actu intelligendi formentur. Nam sicut intellectus intelligendo simplicia format definitionem, sic intelligendo composita format enunciationem, quod si tamen nostrum intelligere esset simplex, et uno intuitu intelligeremus omnia, salvato hoc ordine quod per propositiones universales ex actu intelligendi formatas simul intelligendo eas intelligeremus propositiones ordinatas ad ipsas, propositiones communes sic essent quo cognosceremus per comparationem ad cognita, quod non essent quo intelligeremus per respectum ad actum intelligendi.⁴¹

The case presented here is that of universal propositions. Giles maintains that these are the *quo* with respect to the particular propositions subordinate to them, because it is through the 'confused' cognition of universals that we reach the 'clear' cognition of particulars. Universals propositions, however, are not an act-*quo* because they are the result and not the cause of an act of intellection, and specifically the act of composition and division of predicate and subject. Giles builds this case on an authoritative foundation, that is, Aristotle's methodological

³⁹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188va.

⁴⁰ On Giles's view about cognition in his mature works, see G. Pini, "Cognition", in Briggs–Eardley (eds.), *A Companion to Giles of Rome* (above, n. 19), pp. 150–72. See also C. Trifogli, "Giles of Rome on Sense Perception", *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 20 (2020), pp. 89–104; C. Trifogli, "Giles of Rome on Intelligible Species and Phantasms", in V. Braekman – A. Petagine (eds.), *Les anges dans la philosophie médiévale et moderne*, Aracne, Roma 2023 (*Flumen Sapientiae* 21), pp. 153–69.

⁴¹ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188va–vb.

remarks at the beginning of the *Physics*.⁴² The original element that Giles introduces in his use of this Aristotelian *auctoritas* is the emphasis on propositions: while Aristotle speaks of universals and particulars, Giles speaks of universal and particular propositions. The reason for this change is clear: a proposition is an evident case of the result of an act of intellection, not a cause of it.

After presenting the case of a *quo* in human cognition that is not an act-*quo*, Giles returns to the case of divine ideas to conclude his account of the cognitive role of divine ideas:

(T9) Et quia Deus unico intuitu intelligit se et intelligit se imitabilem ab omnibus entibus, et intelligendo sic se imitabilem et similitudinem omnium intelligit omnia, idea, quae supra divinam essentiam secundum modum intelligendi talem imitabilitatem et respectum videtur addere, ita est id quo Deus intelligit per comparationem ad cognita quod non est id quo intelligit per comparationem ad actum.⁴³

From the theoretical point of view, this passage is a clear recapitulation but does not add new substantial points. I think, however, that it is very important for the assessment of the presence of Aquinas in Giles's discussion. For Giles here seems to address and reply to Aquinas's positive account of the cognitive role of divine ideas as *quod intelligitur*. This is contained in the passage immediately following (T3), where Aquinas explains the final claim of (T3) that divine ideas are in divine mind as *intellectae ab ipso* (ST I, q. 15, a. 2, co., p. 202a-b ed. Leon.):

(T10) Quod hoc modo potest videri. Ipse enim essentiam suam perfecte cognoscit, unde cognoscit eam secundum omnem modum quo cognoscibilis est. Potest autem cognosci non solum secundum quod in se est, sed secundum quod est participabilis secundum aliquem modum similitudinis a creaturis. Unaquaeque autem creatura habet propriam speciem, secundum quod aliquo modo participat divinae essentiae similitudinem. Sic igitur in quantum Deus cognoscit suam essentiam ut sic imitabilem a tali creatura, cognoscit eam ut propriam rationem et ideam huius creaturae. Et similiter de aliis. Et sic patet quod Deus intelligit plures rationes proprias plurium rerum, quae sunt plures ideae.

In Aquinas's explanation, the divine idea of a creature is a likeness of that creature, and this likeness has the status of a *quod* in divine cognition. God's complete knowledge of his essence entails that he also has knowledge of his essence as likeness of a creature, that is, as imitable by a creature. In (T9) Giles agrees so far with Aquinas, but he also adds a crucial point, namely, that by understanding himself as a likeness of all creatures God understands all creatures. That is, the likeness is a *quo* and not only a *quod* of God's cognition because it is by knowing that he is a likeness of a creature that God knows that creature. According to Giles, this is a crucial point about the cognitive status of an intellectual likeness which Aquinas misses in his account and which results in an inconsistent view.⁴⁴

⁴² Arist., *Phys.* I 1, 184a17-b5.

⁴³ Aeg. Rom., *Ord.* I, dist. 36, princ. 2, q. 3, fol. 188vb.

⁴⁴ In his question on the plurality of divine ideas in *De Veritate* (Q. 3, a. 2, p. 104a-b ed. Leon.) Aquinas distinguishes two *quo*: a *primum quo* and a *secundum quo*. My provisional assessment is that Aquinas's distinction is not the same as that of Giles, although the difference between the two views requires further investigation. For a presentation of Aquinas's view in *De Veritate*, see Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas* (above, n. 35) pp. 88-93.

4. Conclusion

The detailed analysis of the last two sections sheds some light on Giles's profile as criticizer of Aquinas. The picture emerging from it is a complex one. Giles's initial attack of Aquinas is quite harsh. In the case of God's knowledge of singulars, Giles adds Aquinas's view to the list of the three 'defective' views that Aquinas himself had considered;⁴⁵ in doing so Giles intends to point out that Aquinas too has failed to provide a satisfactory account of this issue, just as the theologians that he explicitly criticizes have done. In the case of the cognitive role of divine ideas, Giles describes Aquinas's denial of the status of *quo Deus intelligit* to divine ideas as not sound (*non sapit doctrinam sanam*).⁴⁶ From the strongly negative tone of Giles's polemical remarks one would expect a total and quick dismissal of Aquinas's views. But this is not what Giles does. Giles's alternative views on both issues are still very much influenced by Aquinas. More precisely, Giles shapes his own positive account of these two issues according to the framework that Aquinas had set for them. Clear example of this approach is Giles's adaptation of Aquinas's appeal to *via Dionysii* in the investigation of God's knowledge of singulars.⁴⁷ Another clear example is Giles's use of Aquinas's view of divine ideas as likenesses of creatures for ascribing to them the status of *quo Deus intelligit*.⁴⁸ Giles's approach is conservative and constructive. While he is very firm in getting rid of those elements of Aquinas's views that he thinks are unsatisfactory and replaces them with different ones, he keeps all the others and rearrange them in a way that accomodates the new elements in a consistent picture. The analysis of the last two sections confirms the suggestive description that Richard Cross gives of Giles's approach as "catlike: he tugs at loose threads in Thomas's weave, and keeps pulling to see how much will come unravelled. Unlike his feline analogues, however, Giles spends a great deal of time trying to reknit the materials into some new and better fitting garment".⁴⁹

⁴⁵ See above, p. 804.

⁴⁶ See above, p. 811.

⁴⁷ See above, p. 810.

⁴⁸ See above, pp. 812-13.

⁴⁹ Cross, "Theology" (above, n. 19), pp. 34-5.