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Robert Grosseteste on God as Principle and End of Creation

With an edition of Book V and VII of the
Commentary on the *De divinis nominibus*

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“This is what Grosseteste as a scientist, philosopher, and theologian most desired: the unity of God and Creation stamped with the authority of the earliest Church. He found it in Denys” (Sir Richard William Southern)

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CHAPTER 0

Introduction

0.1 The Life and Scholarly Works of Robert Grosseteste

0.1.1 Life

On 27 March, 1235 Robert Grosseteste was elected bishop of Lincoln, an event that changed the life of this almost unknown English Archdeacon.¹ Grosseteste was born into a humble Anglo-Norman family in the county of Suffolk in England. His name appears for the first time in the historical record as a witness to a charter of the Bishop of Lincoln, written between 1189 and 1192. His title of Master of Arts indicates that he had acquired sufficient learning to be entitled to teach. He probably completed the first stages of his education at a cathedral school in England, perhaps Hereford. Assuming that Grosseteste would therefore have been in his early twenties, a suggested birth date would be around 1168. Circa 1192, in a letter of recommendation to the Bishop of Hereford, William de Vere, Gerald of Wales commends Grosseteste for his wide reading and skill in business and legal affairs, medicine, and the liberal arts, and remarks on his exceptional standards of conduct. Grosseteste appears as a witness to several of de Vere's charters over the next few years, but disappears from the historical record after de Vere's death in 1198. In 1229 he was made Archdeacon of Leicester and presented with a prebend in Lincoln Cathedral. Three years later, Grosseteste became seriously ill. Taking this as a divine warning against holding more than one benefice, he resigned from all, save his position of canon. During this period, Grosseteste also lectured on theology at Oxford.

There has been some controversy as to when he became a master of theology. Joseph Goering observes that there is no concrete evidence that Grosseteste taught at Oxford before the late 1220s, or that his teaching in the secular schools at Oxford was in theology, rather than the arts. Grosseteste's association with Oxford and chancellorship may indeed have only been in the late 1220s as a master of arts – the fact that he was a master in the lower faculty of arts, not the higher faculty of theology, would perhaps explain why he was not permitted to be

¹ I draw Grosseteste's biography from Callus 1955, McEvoy 1982, Southern 1986, Goering 1995, and McEvoy 2000.

called chancellor. In 1229/30 Grosseteste began a formal association with the Franciscans at Oxford as their first lecturer. The Franciscan chronicler, Thomas of Eccleston, wrote that Grosseteste's teaching was of considerable benefit to the convent, and this explains his influence on Franciscan theology for the century.

In 1235 he was elected Bishop of Lincoln. During his eighteen years as bishop, Grosseteste became known as a brilliant, but highly demanding, church leader. He insisted that all his clergy be literate and receive some training in theology. His high standards for Christian practice and ministry landed him in a number of disputes with various parts of his dioceses, especially monasteries, and most notably his own cathedral chapter. The 1240s marked an important period of ecclesiastical activity. Conflict between the papacy and emperor Frederick II had led pope Innocent IV to flee to Lyon in 1244, and relocate the papal court there until 1251. In the hope of resolving this conflict, among other pressing concerns, Innocent convened the First Council of Lyon in 1245. Grosseteste was included among the English delegation. Grosseteste returned to the papal court in 1250. Addressing the pope and cardinals, he bemoaned the failings of the church, which he believed lay in its deviation from its pastoral mission. In 1253, the last year of his life, Grosseteste addressed a famous and angry letter to the pope, wherein he, in no uncertain terms, emphatically refused to obey the pope's instructions; to confer a benefice on one of the pope's nephews, whom Grosseteste viewed as unfit for pastoral care. He died on 8/9 October 1253 with a reputation for sanctity, but all attempts to canonize him failed.

A peculiar aspect of Grosseteste's life – that will emerge in our work – is the conflation of a series of couples: the twelfth and thirteenth century; Oxford and Paris; the Latin and Greek Churches. The first couple is expounded upon by Dales: "Robert Grosseteste was one of the principal links between the thought of the twelfth century and the period of scholasticism. Born in or slightly before 1168 [...], he was undoubtedly educated according to the curriculum which had been established during the earlier part of the twelfth century. His works show an intimate knowledge of the *Timaeus* and Calcidius's commentary, of Priscian, and of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis*; writings which, although sometimes cited, declined drastically in popularity in the thirteenth century. He also shows a better knowledge of the classical authors than one usually encounters in a scholastic theologian, and he knows and uses Eriugena's *Periphyseon*, although he does not cite it by name."² Dales stresses the

² Dales 1986, 544. See also, for a similar opinion, McEvoy 1982, 373: "Grosseteste is the figure in whom the transition from the twelfth to the thirteen century is most visible."

twelfth century element, while it is also worthy to note that Grosseteste is one of the first medium's through which Aristotle enters the Medieval Latin world. Grosseteste's long life gave him the opportunity to absorb the various tendencies of both the twelfth and thirteenth century. On one hand he was fascinated by the new Aristotelian movement of the first half of the thirteenth century, and the commentaries on *Posterior Analytics* and on *Physics* showcase this. Even in regard to theology he held modern and innovative views – such as the absolute predestination of Christ and the Immaculate Conception – that would have success especially among the Franciscans.³ On the other hand, on numerous matters he thought the old way best, as is evidenced by his opposition to the scholastic trend towards Scripture, wherein he rejects the *divisio textus* and the multiplication of the *quaestiones*.⁴

The second couple concerns Grosseteste's relationship with Oxford and Paris. Grosseteste was an Englishman, but his life was not lived solely enclosed on the island. It is undeniable that most of Grosseteste's original ideas stem from an education that was partly different from one he could have received in Paris, but it is also undeniable that Grosseteste had spent some time in Paris. Scholars have proposed varied hypotheses regarding Grosseteste's life between approximately 1200 and 1230. For at least part of the years, 1208 to 1213, when England was under papal interdict, Grosseteste was in France. In a death-bed conversation he recalled having seen and heard in France the preaching of Eustace of Flay, James of Vitry, Robert of Courson and the exiled Archbishop Steven Langton. There is also an early thirteenth-century charter from Paris that names a Robert Grosseteste residing at a house in Paris; however, since this charter concerns the property claims of his children, some historians have suggested that this may be another Robert Grosseteste. According to the study of Joseph Goering, the most recent research on this matter, the sources used by Grosseteste in his theological writings, as well as his well-known relations with important Parisian thinkers, clearly support the view that Grosseteste's study of scholastic theology included at least some time in Paris in the 1220s. Possibly around 1225, after receiving his substantial prebend in Abbotsley, which made (and perhaps was intended to make) such a course of study possible.⁵ Furthermore, Grosseteste counted among his many friends a number of Frenchmen, including prominent figures like Thomas Gallus, William of Auvergne, and William of Cerda, who may have been companions, during his student years at Paris.

Finally, there is another couple that coexists in Grosseteste's speculation, namely the

³ See Horan 2011.

⁴ McEvoy 1982, 26: "It is somewhat paradoxical that, though he was for a period of years in the van of the new philosophical thinking of his time, the Aristotelian movement, he was by then already too old to conform to the changing pattern of academic expression."

⁵ See Goering 1995.

Latin and Greek Traditions. It is impossible to overestimate Grosseteste's debt towards Augustine, but at the same time Grosseteste was one of the few thinkers of the thirteenth century to have read (and translated) some important works of the Greek Fathers from their own language. The Greek school of thought did not remain extrinsic to his thinking; on the contrary, from the time he began to read the Greek Fathers, their subsequent influence upon him is evident in his writings.

0.2.2 Works

When reconstructing the thought of a thinker who lived for an extensive period, one may presuppose two problems: firstly, the large number of writings of different genres; secondly, the chronology of these works. The latter is far from resolved, due to the scarcity of information regarding Grosseteste's life before 1235.⁶ However, this problem is marginal for the present work, as I am interested in a simple distinction, namely the distinction between the works written before 1235 and those written after, rather than the exact order of the works. In 1235 Grosseteste was not only elected bishop of Lincoln, but had also quit teaching, and this had a significant influence upon his production of works, upon which I will later elaborate.

The variety of Grosseteste's writings poses the question of whether it is possible to find a common feature, a *fil rouge*, that may connect, for example, a commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*, with a treatise in vernacular on the sacrament of Confession. A brief (and incomplete) overview of Grosseteste's works may help us to answer this question.⁷ The *De artibus liberalibus* is one of the earliest of Grosseteste's writings that has reached us. His psychological teaching, based largely on Augustine's *De musica*, is quite traditional, while the *De generatione sonorum*, written a few years later, already betrays the fact that he was influenced by Aristotelian psychology. When we consider the *De sphaera*, on the other hand, we find a natural philosopher at work. Grosseteste also wrote the *Computus correctorius*, a treatise on the calendar, which contains advanced scientific material, and this proves that it was not conceived as an elementary book for the ordinary arts student. Grosseteste was also interested both in astronomy (*De cometis*) and astrology (*De impressionibus aeris* also named *De prognosticatione*). He commented on two of Aristotle's works, *Posterior Analytics* and

⁶ Panti (2011, 3) is the most recent attempt to date Grosseteste's works written before 1235.

⁷ The complete catalogue of Grosseteste's works is in Thomson 1940. Thomson's distinction between the authentic and spurious work must be taken *cum grano salis*, because some of Thomson's conclusions have been corrected by the most recent scholarship.

Physics. We have no *reportationes* of his lectures; however, some of his works are very likely the outcome of his lectures having been edited; indeed echoes of *disputationes* can be found in works like *De libero arbitrio*, *De veritate*, *De ordine emanandi causatorum a Deo*. The last work of this incomplete list that needs to be mentioned is the *De luce*, a little treatise on cosmology and cosmogony that granted him fame among the historians of science also, especially after the theory of the Big Bang was developed centuries later.⁸

His theological works present the same variety of genres. According to McEvoy, this production may be classified in exegetical works, Greek translations and commentaries, pastoral works and Anglo-Norman works.⁹ In the first group we can count the *Hexaëmeron*, the most impressive and the only complete and finished example of Grosseteste's Old Testament exegesis. As further evidence for his exegesis of the Old Testament we have the extensive commentary on *Psalms* 1-100 and a comment on *Ecclesiasticus* 43:1-5 (probably fragmentary). Grosseteste also wrote two treatises dealing with biblical matters which also incorporated portions of biblical commentary: the *De cessationibus legalium*, based on a commentary on *Isaiah* 52:13 – 53:12, and on *Daniel* 9:24-27 (concerning the passion of the Messiah); the *De decem mandatis*, intended to be a commentary on the Decalogue of *Exodus* 20:1-17. Concerning his exegesis on the New Testament, all that remains is a commentary on *Galatians* and fragmentary glosses on the other Pauline epistles.

Grosseteste also achieved European celebrity-status by translating from Greek the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, an apocryphal of the Old Testament, several writings by St. John of Damascus, the *Letters* of Saint Ignatius, the *Corpus Dionysiacum* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Grosseteste is the author also of several writings on the sacrament of Confession and the most famous of them was *Templum Dei*. Grosseteste was also a prolific preacher as attested by his several sermons. It was Grosseteste's practice to preach in Latin to the clergy, and in the vernacular to the laity, but all the surviving material is in Latin. In addition to sermons, we also have a great number of *Dicta* that were defined by Grosseteste himself as "brief notes which I wrote down roughly, while I was in the schools, to preserve them."¹⁰ Some notes are real sermons, but many others are nothing else than *notulae*, that is, material for preaching. The chronology of his sermons or the occasions of their composition are unknown. Significant theological analyses can also be found in his collection of *Letters*. When Grosseteste became bishop, he composed a set of constitutions that were intended for

⁸ Bower 2014.

⁹ McEvoy 2000.

¹⁰ Thomson 1940, 214.

the parochial clergy of his diocese that were widely read in England for two centuries after him.

The last category of theological works is a series of writings written in Anglo-Norman, which includes in particular a brief work on Confession, two prayers and a poem entitled *Le manage des neuf filles du diable* ascribed to Grosseteste. However, the most famous of these works is a poem on the history of salvation in allegorical form, known as *Le Chateau d'Amour*.

As a result, it seems impossible to put Grosseteste's works into any definite literary genre or historiographical category. We may, however, wonder if he tried to systematize some of his interests in a coherent form, for example in a *summa*. Actually, there are two *Summae* ascribed to Grosseteste. It was debated if the *Summa philosophie* edited by Ludwig Baur was written by Grosseteste, but it is instead accepted today as a spurious work. More problematic is the authenticity of the *Summa theologiae*, a fragment containing four questions, edited by Daniel Callus.¹¹ However, the lack of systematic works should not induce us to think that Grosseteste was unable to organize the theological material at his disposal. In fact, during his period as regent master of the Franciscan school at Oxford, he completed the *Tabula distinctionum*, a theological index that reveals the extent of Grosseteste's reading program.¹² It is more than a simple index, because he did not simply arrange the *Tabula* in alphabetical order, as per usual, but also divided them into nine distinctions (ranging from God until the soul and its powers) and each distinction in several topics.¹³ The originality of this index culminates in the presence of ideographs for each topic, inserted in the margins of the books that he read. If one checked the symbols recurrent in Grosseteste's manuscripts with the *Tabula*, he would immediately have a list of other authorities on the same topic. Even though Grosseteste never fully marked up his own books, nor did he complete the index, however, he used it to write some of his own treatises.¹⁴

0.1.3 Scholarship

The scope and variety of literary genres, sources and topics is reflected in the

¹¹ Goering (1995, 24f), after reconsidering the historiographical debate, is inclined to accept the authenticity. In the present dissertation I will consider the *Summa theologiae* an authentic work of Grosseteste.

¹² The *Tabula* is printed in Grosseteste 1995.

¹³ See Rosemann 1995, 324f.

¹⁴ See Ginther 2004, 6.

secondary literature. No study has been devoted to comprehensively reconstruct the thought of this prolific and versatile author in all aspects. Many articles on selected topics and miscellaneous publications are however, thankfully available due to the efforts of the *International Robert Grosseteste's Society*. In this paragraph I will not consider these works, but limit my attention to the monographs that sum up the trends of Grosseteste's scholarship. Over the past thirty years, three monographs have been devoted to Grosseteste's life and works.

In 1982 James McEvoy wrote *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, based upon his doctoral dissertation, defended at the Université catholique de Louvain in 1974. As the title conveys, the perspective of this work is philosophical. The structure is directed by the theme of "light", which is treated in a threefold dimension: angelic, natural, and human. McEvoy analyzes: the world of the intelligences (or angels), that of material creation (as cosmology and cosmogony), and finally the philosophical anthropology.¹⁵

In 1986 Richard Southern wrote a biography *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe*, which especially focused on Grosseteste's intellectual development. Southern proposed an unconventional interpretation that gave rise to long and fruitful discussions. Many scholars have rejected Southern's main conclusions. According to Southern, Grosseteste was essentially an independent thinker, outside the main scholastic traditions. This is essentially a consequence of his humble origins and his "provincial" education: Grosseteste was an autodidact theologian, who never attended the schools of Paris, and embarked relatively late in life upon a teaching career at Oxford. One of the merits of Southern's controversial book is to have called attention to the insular roots of Grosseteste's thought; this emphasis, at the same time, is the limitation of Southern's book.

In 2004 a monograph by James Ginther, entitled *Master of Sacred Page: A Study of Theology of Robert Grosseteste, ca.1229/30-1235* appeared, and its originality is evident because it was the first and only monograph until that date dedicated to Grosseteste's theology, a part of Grosseteste's teaching that, as the author points out, has received little attention by scholars.¹⁶ The author reconsiders the meaning of theology for Grosseteste, and the institutional and intellectual role of a theologian, taking a stance against some simplifications that, on his reconstruction, did not give justice to the complexity of Grosseteste's thought. Even though the theological themes studied by Ginther had separately received close consideration by scholars, a unified synthesis was still lacking. It is a fact that

¹⁵ In 2000, McEvoy devoted another study to Grosseteste, with a particular emphasis on his theology. These monographs were more a collection of previous contributions than an original work.

¹⁶ Ginther 2004, 89.

in Grosseteste's bibliography, the theme of 'God' does not occupy first place.¹⁷ The difficulty to pursue this kind of research was principally due to the lack of edited texts. In 1912, Ludwig Baur published two volumes containing Grosseteste's philosophical works, and they remained as almost the unique primary source for several years. In 1940, Samuel Harrison Thomson prepared a catalogue of Grosseteste's authentic and spurious works with the list of the extant manuscripts, after a long examination of manuscripts in many European libraries. From that moment, a series of editions appeared, especially in the theological field, like the edition of Grosseteste's theological masterpiece, i.e. the *Hexaëmeron*, and the edition of the *Commentary on the De mystica theologia*, while many others still remain unedited.

The present dissertation proposes to unify the approaches of these three monographs: it is a philosophical study of the subject-matter of theology for Grosseteste, namely God, and His relationship with the created world, but close attention will be also paid to the historical evolution of Grosseteste's writings.

0.2 The object of this dissertation: God and Creation

0.2.1 Filling a gap in scholarship

Ginther's monograph on Grosseteste's theology does not consider the life and works of Grosseteste after 1235. This does not mean that Grosseteste did not write on theology after that date; Ginther's choice is rather due to the fact that the context of Grosseteste's theological investigation changes, for his late writings are no more the result of his pedagogical responsibilities, but instead the outcome of his episcopal office, namely the care for the clergy and laity. Ginther concludes that "the need to explain the changes to his institutional and intellectual contexts really warrants another volume."¹⁸ This necessity was already expressed by McEvoy: "When we compare his writings up until c. 1240 with those after that date, not a few notable and novel elements in the latter are seen to derive from his reading of Dionysius. No complete assessment of Pseudo-Dionysius's contribution to Grosseteste's thought has been attempted as yet."¹⁹ The present dissertation aims to take a first step in filling in that blank sector in Grosseteste's scholarship.

¹⁷ The most complete bibliography is Gieben 1962, revised and updated in Gieben 1995.

¹⁸ Ginther 2004, 8.

¹⁹ McEvoy 1982, 115.

It is a difficult task to fulfill McEvoy and Ginther's wishes, and write a comprehensive study of Dionysius's influence on Grosseteste. Once again, the difficulty is due to the scarcity of edited texts. Specifically, most of Grosseteste's commentaries on the treatises of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* (henceforth *Corpus*) are not available in a critical edition. The *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia* was edited as a PhD thesis by Candice Taylor Hogan (Cornell University 1991), but as a diplomatic edition. The *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia* was edited separately, as an appendix to their theses by James Stanley McQuade and James McEvoy. The former edited the first nine chapters in his doctoral thesis (Belfast University 1961) while the latter edited the other six chapters in his master thesis (Belfast 1967) although in this case the critical edition by Declan Lawell has been published by Brepols at the end of 2015.²⁰ The *Commentary on the De mystica theologia* was edited by Ulderico Gamba in 1942. It is a good edition, based upon four manuscripts of the thirteenth century, and supported by the collation of four other witnesses. In 2003 McEvoy revised the text, alongside the other manuscripts that were unavailable to Gamba. With respect to the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, finally, there is only a transcription of the first Book prepared by Francis Ruello.²¹ I revised and completed the transcription of Grosseteste's *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, of which, a little part will appear in the appendix of the present dissertation – initiated by Professor Jean-Michel Counet, to whom I would like to express here my gratitude for having shared with me the result of his work.

A great part of the texts discussed in the dissertation are drawn from Grosseteste's *Commentary on the Corpus Dionysiacum* (henceforth *Commentary*) in its entirety, and on other works from his episcopal period, but I will consider all Grosseteste's works in order to reconstruct the development of his thought. From the reading of the *Commentary*, it emerges that most themes that characterize Grosseteste's intellectual life, such as creation, the transcendence of God, angels and so on, tend to recur; but other topics like the problem of naming God, and that of evil, are fully developed for the first time. The former, in particular, has been considered by Francis Ruello in an article that contains the edition of Book I of the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, and by Jean-Michel Counet.²² The latter problem, however, has not received attention from scholars, since it is not treated in any of his edited works. Grosseteste devotes the second part of his *Commentary* on Book IV of the *De divinis nominibus* to theodicy.

This dissertation, however, does intend to be a disorderly collection of topics drawn

²⁰ Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to use the critical edition in the present work.

²¹ Ruello 1959.

²² Ruello 1959; Counet 2012.

from the *Commentary*. The notion that brings together the separated parts of my thesis is the concept of ‘God’.

0.2.2 God as Principle and End of Creation

0.2.2.1 *The threefold scheme: moné-próodos-epistrophé*

The *Hexaëmeron*, written by Grosseteste during his regency as master of theology at Oxford, is one of the last works of the first period of his life, since it dates between 1230/1235. In the very first pages of this work, Grosseteste presents his idea of theology:

Unde et ab hoc **uno** sic aggregato et unito, tamquam a subiecto, potest esse descensus ordinabilis in trinitatem, et trinitatis unitatem, et Verbum incarnatum, et corpus eius quod est ecclesia, et in deiforme nostrum cum Trinitate. [...] Creature eciam omnes, in quantum habent essentialem ordinem ad dictum unum huius sapiencie subiectum, hoc est in quanto ab hoc uno **fluunt** et in hoc unum **recurrunt**, ad istam pertinent sapienciam.²³

Grosseteste explains that everything comes from God, called the ‘One’. The unity of God is the origin of the Trinity, namely, the relationships among the three Persons are founded on the unity of the substance. God as unity is also the origin of the incarnate Word and his body, which is the church. Finally, He is the principle of all creatures, in so far as they have an ordering of essence of the aforesaid One. Creatures flow from this One and return to this One, and both of them belong to the domain of theology, even though, according to other characteristics, the creatures could belong to other domains. Everything pertains to theology because everything derives from God and returns to Him, and theology is the science that concerns these relationships. In the text quoted above, the words in bold refer to the typical Neoplatonic (i.e. Proclean) scheme of *moné-próodos-epistrophé*, and Grosseteste gains access to this tradition through Dionysius. James Ginther does not note this scheme and its Neoplatonic source, while in my work I will prove that Grosseteste’s theological thought is inscribed within this scheme.

The same triad recurs in the treatise on Confession, known as *Deus est*. The preamble presents the whole economy of Salvation enclosed in the Anselmian definition of God as “that than which nothing better could be thought,” which opens and concludes the work. From this

²³ *Hexaëmeron* I, i, 2-3, 50.

definition it follows, according to Grosseteste, that God did not content Himself with staying alone in His absolute perfection: although God remains the same in Himself and does need anything other than Himself, however, because of His overabundant goodness, He called things from non-being to being in order to participate in His excellence.²⁴ This overflow of goodness and being extends through various degrees and thus establishes a hierarchy of beings. The preamble continues with the issue of angelical and human fall, and concludes with the work of redemption realized by Christ. Since Christ cannot die a second time, He established the sacraments to free those who could fall into sin again. The sacrament of Confession, in particular, represents the beginning of the development of good in the sinner, on her/his pathway returning to God.

The triadic movement of the First Principle (remaining-procession-return) combines the *Hexaëmeron* and the *Deus est*, but, as I will demonstrate, the *Commentary* is the work in which Grosseteste directly borrows from the Neoplatonic source, namely Dionysius, his own theological view and develops it further.

0.2.2.2 Theology and philosophy

The object of this dissertation is God, who is considered as the principle and end of creation. The analysis of this object leads us to a meditation on Grosseteste's view on theology. According to Grosseteste, the subject-matter of theology is something more than "whole Christ" (*Christus integer*), that is, Christ and His members, the Church.²⁵ Grosseteste extends the subject-matter of theology by keeping together three unions: the union of God and humanity in Christ, the union of Christ and the Church in Christ's assumed human nature, and the reunion of Christ and the Church through the sacrament of Eucharist. These unions include not only God, but also the whole created world, since every creature is related to God as its creator.

Grosseteste is a creative theologian that elaborated a theology different from the twelfth-century, biblico-moral, theology. Twelfth-century theologians tend to consider creatures merely as symbols of the divine, so that nature is more a medium for attaining God than an object of knowledge in itself;²⁶ Grosseteste, instead, concedes more autonomy and

²⁴ *Deus est*, 239f: "Deus est quo nihil melius excogitari potest, cuius posse maximum, scire verissimum, et velle optimum. Est enim aeternus in essentia, simplex simpliciter, et invariabilis in manentia, alio non indigens sed sibi et aliis sufficiens in gloria. Igitur propter exuberantiam bonitatis propriae placuit ei alia a non esse in sui praesentiam vocare, ut haberent tantae excellentiae participationem."

²⁵ The first to use this definition was probably Gilbert of Poitiers, cf. Ghinter 2004, 36.

²⁶ On the relevance of symbols in the twelfth century theology, cf. Gaybba 1988, 23ff.

dignity to the created world and even as a theologian, considers it necessary to continue his studies of the physical world. This is demonstrated by his interest in Aristotle's writings even in the very late years of his long life. In the 1240s, Grosseteste returned to the writings of Aristotle on which he had previously commented upon in the 1220s.²⁷ The translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, one of Grosseteste's later works, was made because Grosseteste considered it as a source for pastoral education.²⁸ But Grosseteste did not abandon his own scientific-philosophical interests: indeed one of his last works was a translation of substantial parts of Aristotle's *De Coelo* and Simplicius's commentary on it. Such interest can be found also in his *Commentary*, where he devotes some digressions to the movements of planets or the characteristics of the four elements.²⁹ Grosseteste's enduring interest in philosophy and science must be understood, not as an interest in those disciplines as such, but as an interest in disciplines that can serve a function with respect to the ultimate goal of human life, namely salvation.

An emblematic text that explains this idea is the *notula* to chapter twenty-four of Grosseteste's translation of John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*. Facing a fault in the textual tradition of the work, Grosseteste explains:

These two chapters, namely the twenty-fourth about seas and the twenty-five about winds, are omitted in some Greek manuscripts; perhaps because they did not seem to contain a theological subject. But according to truly wise men, every notice of truth is useful in the explanation and understanding of theology. Therefore, having found those chapters in a Greek manuscript, we do not want to omit them, for we are sure that so great an author would not have written them in this book, had he not recognised some utility for holy scripture.³⁰

The study of seas and winds surely reminded Grosseteste of his previous scientific works. The fact that he finds those studies in a theological authority, confirms his conviction that every secular type of knowledge, even if it maintains its autonomy, has to be brought back to theology. The passage above is consistent with Grosseteste's idea about the

²⁷ Lewis 2013.

²⁸ See Ginther 2004, 14. McEvoy (1982, 24) believes that the reason of Grosseteste's translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was to win a place in the uprising Aristotelian movement in the school. However, the reason conflicts with what he says some pages later: "[...] as he grew older he wrote more and more for himself and cared less whether his writings would find a public" (at p. 27).

²⁹ See *DN IV*, M 199vb-200va.

³⁰ "Haec duo capitula, scilicet vigesimum quartum de pelagis et vigesimum quintum de ventis ommissa sunt in quibusdam exemplaribus graecis; forte quia non multum videntur esse materiae theologiae, cum tamen secundum vere sapientes omnis veritatis notitia utilis est ad theologiam exponendam et intelligendam. Ideo nos invenientes haec exemplari in graeco nolumus ea ommittere, tenentes pro certo quod tantus auctor ea in hoc libro non scripsisset nisi eorum utilitatem aliquam in sacra scriptura cognovisset", in *Biblioteca Vaticana*, MS Chigi A.VIII.245, fol. 16va. English translation is from Gieben 2003, 236f.

relationship between philosophy and theology. Unfortunately he has not devoted a specific text on the matter, but we may infer his point from the authority that he quotes in his *Tabula*.³¹ The biblical authority mentioned in the *Tabula* is a passage from *Deuteronomy* that deals with the law of war. The text that Grosseteste has before his eyes is the following one: “If you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured” (*Deuteronomy* 21:11-13). The passage’s meaning, according to Grosseteste, is that one may fall in love with a captive woman, who is an image of the pagan wisdom, but she needs to be purified. It is not stated what this purification comprises of. What remains constant in Grosseteste’s account of the relationship between philosophy and theology is the idea that the former is a pale image of the latter, and that philosophy’s most serious lack is of moral matter.³²

The present dissertation, therefore, concerns Grosseteste’s theology, in the sense that it studies the relationship between the Creator and the creatures, however, adopting a philosophical point of view. This means that I shall search for Grosseteste’s *argumenta* that account for this relationship and that are beyond the authority of the Scriptures. Finally, the present dissertation is a work about history: the personal history of a man who passed from being a master of arts, to being a master of theology, and then the bishop of Lincoln.

0.2.3 Why did Grosseteste comment on the *Corpus Dionysiacum*?

Grosseteste translated and commented on the *Corpus* from 1239 till 1243, when he was already in his seventies, which ought to be highlighted as a rather impressive biographical feat. One may question what possibly moved Grosseteste to pursue such an undertaking at a time when his life was already filled with every kind of vexation and administrative drudgery. As some historians pointed out, his task as a bishop was complex, since he was the ecclesiastical ruler of about one-fifth of the total population of England. His pastoral work was so impressive that at his death he was considered a saint.³³ Contemporary scholars

³¹ Gieben (1963) has studied all the biblical authorities mentioned in this sub-distinction of the *Tabula*.

³² On the first aspect, Grosseteste says: “Ante Christi vero adventum quasi sol et lux mundi fuit in tota gentilitate philosophorum sapientia. Sed iste sol sapientiae philosophicae a luce doctrina Christi et apostolorum mirabiliter obscuratus.” (unedited sermon quoted in Gieben 1963, 525f.). A similar idea is stated in *Dictum* 147. On the second aspect see *Dictum* 118 (analysed below at § II.2.2).

³³ Hylson-Smith 2000, 174.

adduced several reasons to explain Grosseteste's interest for the *Corpus*, and each of them is correct in partiality. Some scholars say: it partly provided a welcome relief from the endless business of his diocese; partly, it gave him an opportunity for that large and far sighted use of his episcopal resources too, which was perhaps the main enjoyment that his position gave him; partly, because Dionysius dealt with topics that were important to Grosseteste, like the connection between Greek and Latin Churches, the Apostolic Age and the present day, Platonism and Christianity; partly because Dionysius's work satisfied Grosseteste's instinct for seeing order in a vast array of details.³⁴ The Dionysian emphasis on the role of the hierarchy (interpreted by Grosseteste as bishop) also supported Grosseteste's role as a religious leader.³⁵ All aforementioned reasons feature in this dissertation, but I would like to add another possible reason, and to stress this particular one amidst those just mentioned.

A possible reason for explaining Grosseteste's interest for the *Corpus* is that it could be used to combat heresies. All scholars agree that "the most fundamental of Grosseteste's ideas is the supreme importance of the cure of souls; this is the key to all the rest".³⁶ If this were granted as being true, what could the pastoral aim of the Commentary on the *Corpus* be? Unlike Ulderico Gamba, I do not believe that Grosseteste's aim in commenting on Dionysius was to make the *Corpus* more accessible; if this were the case, he would have rendered it in a more readable Latin, as he did in the *Testaments of the twelve patriarchs*.³⁷ The reason lies in the *Commentary* itself, and in the works written in those years, especially in the sermon on Redemption called *Ex rerum initiarum*, which dates to almost the same years of the *Commentary*. In this sermon, Grosseteste makes a comparison between the physician and the preacher: "A preacher is a far better physician: by healing the leprosy of heresy, the gout of obstinacy etc."³⁸ The first duty of a preacher is to "heal" from the heresy. Some pages later, when he expounds on the ecclesiastical hierarchy, from the lowest grades to the Pope, he explains that the lowest among the *ordines inferiores* is the ostiary, who must prevent unworthy persons from entering the church. This implies, according to Grosseteste, an adequate knowledge of heretical sects, sins and vices.³⁹ This aspect of Grosseteste's pastoral care is quite underestimated by contemporary scholars.⁴⁰ If we pass on considering the *Commentary*, Grosseteste's interest in heresy becomes manifest. Some (rare) digressions

³⁴ See Southern 1986, 202f.

³⁵ Hogan 1991, 117f.

³⁶ Pantin 1955, 179.

³⁷ Gamba 1944, 127.

³⁸ *Ex rerum initiarum*, 108.

³⁹ *Ex rerum initiarum*, 117.

⁴⁰ The most extensive study on Grosseteste and pastoral care is by Boyle 1979, but there is no mention of Grosseteste's engagement against heresy.

become comprehensible only if we consider heresies like Catharism in the background. It will be clear that Grosseteste shares with some of his contemporaries, an optimistic view of reality. For him, whatever is created is good, because the Creator left His imprint on it. The Dionysian doctrine that Goodness rather than Being (as said in *Exodus* 3:14) is God's most proper attribute, is perfectly appropriate to reject any kind of dualism.

Amidst the reasons listed by Southern, I would like to stress and specify the last one, namely the search for unity. The opening passage from the *Hexaëmeron*, where the subject matter of theology is expounded, demonstrates that the key concept is union, in particular, union between the human and divine realm. I will show that in the *Commentary*, Grosseteste elaborates a sort of summary of theology that encompasses the three moments indicated in the prologue of the *Hexaëmeron*: he proposes an analysis of the way to approach the transcendent One, the source of everything (in particular in *De mystica theologia* and *De divinis nominibus*); an analysis of the processions flowing from that source (in particular in *De divinis nominibus* and *De coelesti hierarchia*); and finally, an analysis of the way of returning to that One, in Church, through the sacraments – with a particular emphasis put on the conformity of human beings to this model (in particular, this is contained in *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* and in *De coelesti hierarchia*).

0.3 The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into four Chapters. The first Chapter is a presentation of Grosseteste, as translator and commentator of the *Corpus*. Grosseteste has knowledge of the entire *Corpus* before commenting on it, in particular the *Hierarchies* (§ I.1). In 1239, he began to translate and comment on each treatise. He demonstrated having knowledge of all the translations available at his time (§ I.2), but he decided, then, to approach the original Greek text, and produce a new translation (§ I.3). Grosseteste realized that it was impossible to convey Dionysius's thought with a mere translation, and for that reason he wrote a commentary as a necessary part of his work (§ I.4). Grosseteste's method of translation is based on a specific idea of language that the work of translation helps to develop (§ I.5).

From Chapter II to Chapter IV, I analyse the three moments of the Thearchy (remaining-procession-return). The analysis of each reveals an evolution in Grosseteste's thought, from the doctrines of works written before the *Commentary* to those present in the

Commentary itself, and in the coeval works. After presenting two definitions of God (§ II.2.1), the focus of Chapter II considers God in His transcendence. In order to approach God's mystery as close as a man can, Grosseteste observes that knowledge needs to be strengthened by pure love for Him, based on the principle that intelligence goes hand in hand with will (§ II.2.2). The transcendence of God challenges the capacity of human language, that is called to meaningfully express a transcendent, totally simple spiritual being (§ II.2.3). The first issue of the *Commentary* to be studied, is Grosseteste's theory of the human capacity to know God (§ II.2.1). Having realized that intellectual knowledge is not enough, the role of love is taken into consideration (§ II.2.2). The limit of human knowledge is reflected in the limited capacity of human beings to name God, because there is no name that could express God's transcendence; nevertheless, there is a method that guides human language, namely negative theology (§ II.2.3).

The third Chapter concerns the idea of God as the cause of everything. In particular, I shall analyse Grosseteste's definition of God as the form of everything that guided Grosseteste's theology in the first part of his life. In particular I will explain the meaning of 'God is *form*' (§ III.2.1), that He is the *first* form (§ III.2.2), and that He is the form of everything (§ III.2.3). The second part of the Chapter will deal with the idea of procession in the *Commentary* (§ III.3.1), and its consequences for religious language (§ III.3.2).

The fourth Chapter deals with the return of all of creation, to God. This is possible because of two elements: the first is that everything is comprehended, in some sort, in humanity (§ IV.2.1); the second is the Incarnation of the Son that completed the universe, and united the nature of the Creator and creatures (§ IV.2.2). Unsurprisingly, Grosseteste shows particular interest in the return of men to God. This process is realized at the resurrection (§ IV.3.1), and consists in the recovery of the image of God (deification), which was lost because of sin (§ IV.3.2).

After a general Conclusion, two texts will be inserted in the Appendix, namely: Book V (dedicated to the theonym 'Being') and Book VII (dedicated to the theonym 'Wisdom') of Grosseteste's *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*. The edition of these texts is based on a transcription from the manuscript Oxford, Merton College 86, corrected against the manuscripts Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 1620, and Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, A v. 129.

Abbreviations and notes

List of abbreviations

In the foot notes I have used the following abbreviations:

CH: Robert Grosseteste's Commentary on the *De coelesti hierarchia*.

EH: Robert Grosseteste's Commentary on the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*.

DN: Robert Grosseteste's Commentary on the *De divinis nominibus*.

MT: Robert Grosseteste's Commentary on the *De mystica theologia*.

DCL: *De cessatione legalium*.

InPoAn: Robert Grosseteste's *Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum libros*.

InPhy: Robert Grosseteste's *Commentarius in VIII Libros Physicorum Aristotelis*.

In the texts quoted from Grosseteste's *Commentary on the Corpus Dionysiacum*, the words of Dionysius are in italics.

Translations

CH: English translation in J. Stanley McQuade (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste's Commentary on the "Celestial Hierarchy" of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite*, Thesis (Ph. D.) Queens' University of Belfast, 1961.

MT: McEvoy J., *Mystical Theology: the Glosses by Thomasus Gallus and the commentary of Robert Grosseteste on "De Mystica Theologia"*, Leuven 2003.

Hexaëmeron: Robert Grosseteste, *On the Six Days of Creation: A Translation of the Hexaëmeron*, C. F. J. Martin (ed.), Oxford 1996.

Le Château d'Amour: Mackie E.A., *Robert Grosseteste's Anglo-Norman Treatise on the Loss and Restoration of Creation, commonly known as Le Château d'Amour: An English Prose translation*, in Maura O'Carroll (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste and the beginning of a British Theological tradition*, Roma 2003, 151-179.

The other translations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

CHAPTER I

Robert Grosseteste: translator and commentator of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*

I.1 The *Corpus Dionysiacum* before the *Commentary*

Daniel Callus has demonstrated that Grosseteste's *Commentary* was completed in 1243 and began at the earliest in 1238. Grosseteste first wrote the translations and commentaries on the *De coelesti* and the *De ecclesiastica hierachia*, then those on the *De divinis nominibus* and the *De mystica theologia*.⁴¹ Grosseteste translated the marginal *scholia* attributed to Maximus the Confessor but not the *Epistulae*. Assistants helped him in translating; and because of this fact, it has led nineteenth century scholars to cast doubts on the authenticity of Grosseteste's works. But after the studies of Ezio Franceschini, no one doubts Grosseteste as the author of translations and commentaries belonging to him.⁴² He knew the previous translations of the *Corpus*. In his time, there were hints that suggest that there were more than three extant translations, namely, those of Hilduin, Eriugena, and Sarrazin because there are some references to other translations not ascribable to these three authors.⁴³

Grosseteste began his work on Dionysius in his mature age. It is hard to think, however, that he did not know anything of the *Corpus* before this period since Dionysius was already an authority among theologians.⁴⁴ In general, scholars tend to underestimate Grosseteste's knowledge of the *Corpus* before his *Commentary*, especially because there are few references to it in Grosseteste's earlier writings. One of the most significant proof of his knowledge of the *Corpus* can be found in the *Tabula*, where Grosseteste refers to the *Hierarchies*. The editor of the *Tabula* supposed that the *Hierarchies* have to be identified with the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* and *De coelesti hierarchia*.⁴⁵ Here is the list of Grosseteste's references to Dionysius in the *Tabula*:⁴⁶

⁴¹ See Callus 1947, 196.

⁴² See Franceschini 1933.

⁴³ See Franceschini 1933, 37.

⁴⁴ On Dionysius's reception in the Middle Ages, see De Andia 1997 and more recently Coackley – Stang 2009.

⁴⁵ Rosemann 1995, 345.

⁴⁶ Every box reports the title of the sub-distinction, the page of the *Tabula*, and between brackets the reference to the chapter or the book of the treatise. The letter case follows that of the *Tabula*.

Dionisius Ierarchia	Super Ierarchiam	Dionisius Ierarchia ecclesiastica	Dionisius Ierarchia angelica	Ierarchia: dei	Dionisius	Hugo super Ierarchiam
De virtutibus cardinalibus, 279 (c. 15, Commentum super l'10)	De essencia et simpliciter, 272 (l'3.4.7.8.9.10)	De baptismo, 307	De angelis bonis et malis, 278 (Ierarchia angelica per totum et commentum per totum)	De excommunicatione, 306 Ierarchia: dei. 19.21.23	De unitate multitudinis, 292 (l'I.3.9)	De trinitate, 266
De contemplatione, 291 (l'1 c.3)	De laudando deum, 272 (l'4- l'7)		De silentio, 294 (c.15, hugo super eam l'10)	De testamento, 306 (2)		De magnalibus dei, 267
De silencio, 294 (l'I.c.4)	De caritate, 282 (l'3)			De Ieiunio, 310 (4)		De eternitate, 272
De libero arbitrio, 298 (l'.c.9)				De ordinibus, 310 (19.21.23. 24.25)		De ordinatione ecclesie, 300 (l'1)
De eligendo prelatum, 302 (l'.I.c.3)				De irregularibus ad ordines, 310 (26)		De perfectione sacre scripture, 311 (l'I)
De perfectione sacre scripture, 311 (l'I.c.1)						De superbia, 319
De modo exponendi scripturam, 311 (l'Ic.1.2.4)						
De prophicia, 313(l'.I.c.4)						
Quomodo philosophia accipienda sit a nobis, 313 (l'.I.c.2)						
De modo discendi vel docendi, 314 (l'.I.c.2)						
De lapsu a iusticia et de peccato, 315 (l'.I.c.9)						

As one can see from the table, there is only one explicit reference to *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* and two to *De coelesti hierarchia*.⁴⁷ The *Tabula* also contains some explicit references to the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia* by Hugh of St. Victor and three references to an unspecified *Super Ierarchiam*. It could probably be identified with Hugh's *Commentary*, but it is also possible that Grosseteste refers to Eriugena's *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia*. As McEvoy demonstrated, Grosseteste knows Eriugena's *Commentary* and follows its method on many occasions.⁴⁸ *Pace* the editor, the eleven references to "Dionysius Ierarchia" or those to "Ierarchia: dei" are so generic that it is difficult to say what Dionysian passage Grosseteste had in mind when he wrote the *Tabula*. Moreover, they could recur in more than one Dionysian treatise.⁴⁹ However, some references are clear. For example, among the sources quoted in the sub-distinction, "De libero arbitrio," the entry "Dionysius Hierachia c. 9" is surely a reference to Book IX of the *De coelesti hierarchia*.⁵⁰ But my impression is that many occurrences of the heading "Dionysius Ierarchia" are in fact a reference to the other treatises, namely, the *De divinis nominibus* and the *De theologia mystica*.⁵¹ Upon closer examination, the reference given by Grosseteste can support this supposition. For example, in the sub-distinction "De contemplatione," Grosseteste refers to "Dionysius Ierarchia.I.c.3." There is no reference to contemplation in the third Book of the *De coelesti hierarchia*. It could be a reference to the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Book III, where there he hints to the contemplation of the Eucharist, or it could refer to the *De divinis nominibus*, Book III, where the word 'contemplation' occurs twice.⁵² But, very likely, Grosseteste was thinking of the *De mystica theologia*, Book III, where Dionysius describes the ascension to God.⁵³ There are at least three possible references to the *De divinis nominibus* in the *Tabula*, which could prove that Grosseteste was acquainted with such a work when he was

⁴⁷ Grosseteste considers the *EH* as a source for the sub-distinction on the Baptism (cf. *Tabula*, 307). The *CH* is quoted among the sources for the sub-distinction on good and evil angels (cf. *Tabula*, 278) and on silence (cf. *Tabula*, 294).

⁴⁸ See McEvoy 1987, 200f.

⁴⁹ See *Tabula*, 311: in the sub-distinction "*De perfectione sacrae scripturae*" the heading "Dionysius Ierarchia.I.c.1" could refer to *CH* as well as to *EH* and *DN* because the first chapter of each treatise has a reference to the Scripture and its necessity for the treatise.

⁵⁰ See *Tabula*, 298. The passage from Dionysius is in *Dionysiaca*, 905 ("neque enim coactam habemus vitam..."). Cf. *Tabula*, 302: in the sub-distinction "*De Eligendo prelatum*," the heading "Dionysius Ierarchia.I.c.3" probably refers to *EH* Book III.

⁵¹ It is not unusual for a medieval author to call the treatise on divine names 'hierarchy' as the *Commentary* of William of Lucca shows. Between 1169 and 1177, William wrote a commentary on the *De divinis nominibus* entitled *Commentarium in tertiam Ierarchiam Dionisii que est de divinis nominibus*. For an edition and study of this text, see Wilhelmus Lucensis, *Commentarium in tertiam ierarchiam Dionisii que est de divinis nominibus*.

⁵² See *Tabula*, 291. The occurrences of 'contemplatio' are at *Dionysiaca*, 130 and 142.

⁵³ *MT* III, 99.

a master of theology.⁵⁴ I said ‘could’ because this treatise is not explicitly mentioned in the *Tabula*; in fact, the *De divinis nominibus* does not appear in those sub-distinctions where it would be expected to occur like those on “unde malum” or on “de nominibus dictis de deo.”

The *Tabula* is not the only work that informs us about Grosseteste’s sources. It is an inventory of sources, and we know that it was not completed and that many other works were not listed in it. As stated, no reference to the *De divinis nominibus* is present in the *Tabula*. However, in his treatise *De libero arbitrio*, written in the late 1220s or on the very beginning of the 1230s, Grosseteste quotes a passage from Book VII of the *De divinis nominibus* on divine wisdom according to Eriugena’s translation.⁵⁵ Despite the little number of quotations and the difficulty of identifying the references, it seems undeniable that Grosseteste had some knowledge of the *Corpus* and its commentaries already in the 1230s before starting the enterprise of translating and commenting on it. The treatise on Confession *Deus est* bears witness to the doctrinal continuity between the late period of his teaching career and the episcopacy, as well as, to his increasing interest for Dionysius. The editor dates this work between 1215 and some years before 1250. Further researches have shown the presence of Pseudo-Dionysius’s doctrines in this work and the similarities between it and Grosseteste’s *De cessatione legalium*. From this presence, some scholars suggested dating the treatise after 1230, probably in the period of Grosseteste’s episcopacy, after 1235.⁵⁶ This new date does not imply that the *Deus est* was written during or after the *Commentary*. It could have been one of the first treatises that Grosseteste wrote as a bishop, a work dedicated to a theme that he had already treated in the past and that vividly manifests the influence of a source, Dionysius, that was latent in the previous works.

Some years after his consecration, Grosseteste begins a serious work on the *Corpus* as we shall show in the following paragraphs. He does not want to limit himself to study and compare all the older translations (§ I.2), but he wants to go directly to the Greek text, elaborating a new and original way of translation (§ I.3). He realizes that it is impossible to render Dionysius’s thought only by way of a literal or even sense-translation. Dionysius’s style and doctrine are complex; and for that reason, he decides to write commentaries for each Dionysian treatise, considering them as necessary parts of his work of translation (§ I.4).

⁵⁴ (1) Cf. *Tabula*, 294: in the sub-distinction “*De silencio*” the heading “*Dionysius Ierarchia.I.c.4*” might refer to *DN* Book IV with two occurrences of ‘*silentii*’ (*Dionysiaca*, 153; 270). (2) Cf. *Tabula*, 313: in the sub-distinction “*Quomodo philosophia accipienda sit a nobis*” the heading “*Dionysius Ierarchia.I.c.2*” might refer to *DN* Book II, where Dionysius writes about *nostra philosophia* (*Dionysiaca*, 68). (3) Cf. *Tabula*, 313-314: in the sub-distinction “*De modo discendi et docendi*” the heading “*Dionysius Ierarchia.I.c.2*” might refer to *DN* Book II where Dionysius speaks on “learning from the Scripture” (cf. *Dionysiaca*, 57).

⁵⁵ See *De Libero Arbitrio* I, cap. 4, p. 43. Dionysius’s text is in *Dionysiaca*, 389-399.

⁵⁶ See Goering 1995, 34; McEvoy 2000, 143.

Roger Bacon will make this aspect clear observing that his master, Grosseteste, was the only translator who had, at the same time, a great intellectual acuity.⁵⁷ Not only is the content of Grosseteste's work on the *Corpus* philosophically relevant as I will show in my discussion, but also his method of translation and commentary raises interesting questions on his philosophy of language (§ I.5).

I.2 *Aliae translationes*

When Grosseteste becomes bishop, he has the financial means to collect manuscripts from Greece and this availability gives him the opportunity to correct the previous translations of the *Corpus*. Grosseteste works first on the Latin versions and then compares them with the original Greek. His favourite Latin translation is that of Sarrazin, but he knows and compares all the previous Latin versions of the *Corpus*. In this paragraph, I will give some examples of how Grosseteste uses each of them.

The most ancient translation of the *Corpus* is that of Hilduin who, around 835, coordinated the translation made by a little group of Byzantine monks at Saint Denys, in Paris.⁵⁸ The translation was extremely poor as shown by Théry.⁵⁹ Grosseteste knows Hilduin's translation, as it is clear from the following passage:

Et stans et immobilis ipse enim dicit: «Ego deus et non mutor [*Malachias* 3,6]» et de eo dicitur «deus stetit in synagoga deorum [*Psalms* 81,1]» et similia multa. Aliud autem exemplar habet «et stans et mobilis», «omnibus enim mobilibus mobilior est sapientia [*Wisdom* 7,24]».⁶⁰

The other exemplar (*aliud exemplar*) mentioned in the text is Hilduin's translation⁶¹ (for Dionysius's 'ἀκίνητος' is translated as *immobilis* by Grosseteste and as *mobilis* by

⁵⁷ Franceschini (1933, 9-13) has collected some passages where Bacon speaks of Grosseteste as translator and makes a critical analysis of them.

⁵⁸ See Théry 1932, 4-9. For the edition, see Théry 1937. On the Dionysian influence on the Greek studies in the Latin West, see W. Berschin 1980, 62. Berschin underlines that during the Middle Ages, the interest in Greek language was born from the demand to read and comprehend Dionysius and not the classics of Greek literature.

⁵⁹ See Théry 1932, 123-134.

⁶⁰ *DN IX*, M 256va. Some other occurrences of Hilduin's translation are at: *DNI* §14, p. 138 (*Dionysiaca*, 10): Grosseteste 'formatione,' Hilduin 'plasmatione,' *DN I* §65, p. 158 (*Dionysiaca* 36f): Grosseteste 'unius deitatis et unius bonitatis,' Hilduin 'unideam et unibonam.'

⁶¹ *Dionysiaca*, 451.

Hilduin). Grosseteste tries to make sense of Hilduin's reading that says exactly the opposite of Dionysius, and he finds another verse of the Bible that supports Hilduin's reading. As often happens, Grosseteste does not develop the consequences of this difference. But this is a characteristic of Grosseteste's method, and it follows from a fundamental conviction. Reconciling two opposite readings is an application of his understanding of Dionysius's affirmative and negative theology. Grosseteste believes that it is possible to affirm and deny, one in the same, an attribute of God.⁶²

Around 860-862, John Scotus Eriugena realized a new translation of the *Corpus*. Even though it conveys the meaning of the text better than Hilduin's version, Eriugena's translation is still too complex in what concerns the structure of the period and it is overburdened with Greek words transliterated into Latin. Eriugena was immediately aware of the imperfections of his work, especially due to his rigid fidelity to the letter of the text in spite of the spirit. This led him to revise the translation of the two *Hierarchiae* while the translations of the other works were done only superficially.⁶³ As a result of it, we have an older version of Eriugena's translation (*versio vetustior*) and a revised version, which is the version used and improved by Anastasius Bibliothecarius.⁶⁴ Grosseteste borrows from Eriugena his method of translation. Like Eriugena, he refuses to "gloss over difficulties in the original text, thus taking their translations somewhat opaque, and very dependent on the accompanying commentary."⁶⁵ Grosseteste, however, thanks to the availability of a great number of manuscripts, has the opportunity to correct Eriugena.⁶⁶

In 875, Anastasius revised Eriugena's translation and enriched it with the *scholia* by Maximus the Confessor and John of Scythopolis, also with the addition of some personal interlinear notes. Anastasius's work was mostly lexical for he suggested synonyms or clarified some headwords.⁶⁷ Grosseteste translates those marginal notes and puts them, explicitly or

⁶² See § II.3.3.1.

⁶³ See Dondaine 1953, 63-64.

⁶⁴ Anastasius became cardinal about 848 after gaining prominence as a Greek scholar. He stood for a short time as antipope to Benedict III (855-858). After reconciliation, Anastasius became papal librarian and disputed with the Greek Orthodox theologian, Photius.

⁶⁵ Kavanagh 2012, 61.

⁶⁶ For some examples of these corrections, see Kavanagh 2012, 57-58. Some other references to Eriugena's translation are at: *DN I*, § 53, p. 154 (*Dionysiaca*, 28): Grosseteste 'intelligibilia,' Eriugena 'invisibilia,' *DN IV*, M 200rb (*Dionysiaca*, 160): Grosseteste 'substantie,' Eriugena 'latitudine,' *DN IV*, M 203rb (*Dionysiaca*, 175): Grosseteste 'excedens,' Eriugena 'continens,' *DN IV*, M 204rb (*Dionysiaca*, 180): Grosseteste 'fulgoris,' Eriugena 'claritatis,' *DN IV*, M 210vb (*Dionysiaca*, 206f): Grosseteste 'pretiosiores omnino sunt,' Eriugena 'pretiosores omnibus sunt,' *DN IV*, M 219vb (*Dionysiaca*, 260): Grosseteste 'dependet,' Eriugena 'aufertur,' *DN V*, M 232 va (*Dionysiaca*, 324): Grosseteste 'ipsius supersubstantialis deitatis,' Eriugena 'per se supersubstantialis deitatis,' *DN V*, M 236vb (*Dionysiaca*, 348): Grosseteste 'completio,' Eriugena 'judicium,' *DN V*, M 238vb (*Dionysiaca*, 358): Grosseteste 'germinabilia,' Eriugena 'fecunda,' *DN V*, M 239rb (*Dionysiaca*, 360): Grosseteste 'predeterminationes,' Eriugena 'predestinationes.'

⁶⁷ See Dondaine 1953, 59-62.

implicitly, in his commentary. Most of the references to Greek grammar or antiquities are derived from this source.⁶⁸ McEvoy states that, albeit useful, those marginal notes are not a determinant in Grosseteste's comments.⁶⁹ The *scholia*, however, at times help Grosseteste in clarifying Dionysius's thought. Consider, for example, the following reference: in Book VI of *De divinis nominibus*, devoted to the name 'Life', Dionysius applies the biblical verse "take back their breath and they die and revert to dust" (*Psalms* 104,29) to animals and plants. Grosseteste resorts to the *scholium* for explaining Dionysius. He argues that, as the *scholium* says, the verse has to be applied to every living creature, even to angels. This means that every form of life, not only the lower ones, are strictly dependent on and come from God.⁷⁰

In the twelfth century, the increasing interest in Dionysian thought and the difficulties of Eriugena's translation led John of Salisbury to ask his friend, John Sarrazin, for a new translation of the *Corpus*. Sarrazin does not plan to write a completely new translation. He proposes to check Eriugena's version, as enriched by Anastasius, using a Greek manuscript as reference text only in a few cases.⁷¹ It has been said that Grosseteste adopts Sarrazin as his reference text and that they both complain about the insufficiency of Latin language to translate Dionysius's writings.⁷² This statement is essentially true, but it has to be corrected on one point. One must keep in mind that Grosseteste always reads the Latin translations on the back of the Greek manuscripts, and this allows him to correct the mistakes, even those shared by Sarrazin and Eriugena. For example, in Book II of the *De divinis nominibus*, Dionysius attaches two couples of opposites to God. Eriugena translates them as *ineffabile, multivocum, ignorantia*, and *omne invisibile*.⁷³ Sarrazin replaces the last attribute with *perfecte non intelligibile* (not perfectly intelligible). Théry suggests that Sarrazin's choice is due to the fact that he wants to weaken the radical, Dionysian agnosticism.⁷⁴ It is clear that both Eriugena and Sarrazin misunderstand the point because Dionysius meant quite the opposite.⁷⁵ Sarrazin clearly follows Eriugena's translation without checking the Greek manuscript in this case. Grosseteste instead sees the error and correctly translates *omne intelligibile*. He is guided only

⁶⁸ See Franceschini 1933, 38-29.

⁶⁹ See McEvoy 1982, 87.

⁷⁰ *DN* VI, M 241ra: "Et quod illud intelligit Dionysius in animalibus irrationalibus et plantis solum manifeste dicit scolium maxime generale ex greco sumptum potest tamen quod hic dici et predictum psalmicum generaliter comprehendere omnia corporalia viventia inter que comprehenditur et homo. Et potest esse auctoris intentio manifestare quod omne vivere creatum, seu primum seu renovatum seu incorporalium ut angelorum et animarum seu corporalium ut hominum et irrationalium sensibilibus et plantarum, est a divina vita." For further explanations on this passage, see § IV.3.1.3.

⁷¹ On Sarrazin's method of translation, see the previously quoted articles by Théry and Dondaine.

⁷² McEvoy, 1982, 77.

⁷³ *Dionysiaca*, 77.

⁷⁴ Théry 1950-1951, 82.

⁷⁵ Dionysius wrote παννότητον.

by the desire of finding the true author's mind, and therefore, he has no intention to adjust the translation in order to make Dionysius closer to the Western mentality.

Another example will make this point clearer. In a passage from Book V of the *De divinis nominibus*, once again Sarrazin tries to make Dionysius's agnosticism less radical. Eriugena translated παντελῶς ἀνέκφαντον to *universaliter inexplanabile*, but Sarrazin modifies Eriugena's translation and renders it as *perfecte non manifestabile*. Contrary to what Eriugena's translation suggested, Sarrazin does not state that God is completely unknowable or completely not-manifestable, but only that He is not perfectly knowable or manifestable. Grosseteste translates such an expression as completely not-manifestable (*omnino immanifestabile*), much closer to Dionysius's thought.⁷⁶ By this intervention, Grosseteste seems to suggest that the translator must respect the author's mind and never betray it; any disagreement must be reconciled in the commentary.⁷⁷

This is not the only point of divergence in their method. A second feature of Sarrazin's translation is his attitude to divest the Oriental nature of Dionysius.⁷⁸ Sarrazin wants to erase every reference or allusion to the Oriental mysteries. For example, *ieron* is translated as *sacrum* by Eriugena but as *sanctum* by Sarrazin. *Theosophi* becomes *periti deitatis* or *Dei veneratio* in Sarrazin's version, while Eriugena keeps the transliteration *teosophi*. Grosseteste does not share with Sarrazin this attitude. In the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, where he perceives the distance between the liturgy of his times and that of Dionysius, Grosseteste remains as close as possible to Dionysius's authority and vocabulary, preferring to leave to the commentary the explanation of the terms.⁷⁹

Just as in the case of Hilduin, Grosseteste resorts to other translations, even wrong, if they can help him in interpreting Dionysius. For example, speaking of the excellent light of God, Grosseteste says:

Superexcellentiam invisibilis luminis vel secundum aliud exemplar [*i.e.* Sarrazin] «visibilis luminis». Attribuentes enim deo caliginem significamus ipsum esse lumen inaccessible propter superexcellentiam luminis eiusdem nobis invisibilis propter suam supereminentiam ad nostram

⁷⁶ *Dionysiacae*, 322.

⁷⁷ Some other explicit references to Sarrazin's translation are: *DN IV*, M 202ra (*Dionysiacae*, 168): Grosseteste 'profundo,' Sarrazin 'plantatione;' *Ibid.*: Grosseteste 'in quod omnia,' Sarrazin 'ad quod omnia;' *DN IV*, M 219vb (*Dionysiacae*, 260): Gross 'dependet,' Sarr 'segregatur.'

⁷⁸ Théry 1950-1951, 79.

⁷⁹ See *EH V*, 774: "*Theurgie*, id est divine operacionis creatricis omnium et gubernatricis, *theophanie* id est divine apparicionis et revelacionis divinorum, *sacrologie*, id est racionis et sermonis sacros efficientis." On Grosseteste's acknowledgement of the differences between the rites in Dionysius's times and in his own times, cf. *EH II*, 397 (on Baptism) and *EH VII*, 849 (on Exequies).

videndi possibilitatem, secundum sui tamen manifestum maxime intelligibilis.⁸⁰

Grosseteste keeps together two opposite readings of Dionysius to express a fundamental belief, namely, that God is invisible to us due to his inaccessible excellence; but at the same time, He is the most knowable object in Himself.⁸¹

I.3 Grosseteste's translation

The examination of the relationship between Grosseteste and the previous translators of the *Corpus* has revealed some important features of his method of translation. A number of books have been written on Grosseteste as a Greek scholar.⁸² In what follows, I will give an overview of Grosseteste's method as translator and then show its originality.

Grosseteste's translation of the *Corpus* had not received great success. For example, Albert the Great who will comment on the *Corpus* some years later, and certainly knew Grosseteste's translation, mentions it a few times preferring to adopt older versions.⁸³ Thomas Aquinas does not consider Grosseteste at all. The reason of this failure is very simple: Grosseteste's Latin is clumsy and hard to read.⁸⁴ Grosseteste himself acknowledged the limits of his work;⁸⁵ but he was also sensible to the criticisms as it appears from the preface to the translations of the *Corpus*.⁸⁶

The theoretical roots of his method are in the *Vulgate*, where Jerome sacrificed the classical canon of taste in order to stay as close as possible to the original text in a word-for-word kind of translation.⁸⁷ Grosseteste's declared aim is to render the author's intention and

⁸⁰ *DN VII*, M 245vb – 246ra.

⁸¹ On this point, see below § II.3.1.1.

⁸² Besides fundamental study of Franceschini and the others already mentioned, important works are Dionisotti 1988 and McEvoy 1998.

⁸³ Curiello 2013, 132f.

⁸⁴ Franceschini (1933, 74-84) shows all Grosseteste's "offenses" to Latin language.

⁸⁵ *CH XV* (English translation in McEvoy 2012, 23): "But if anyone should accuse us of exceeding the proper limits of discourse, and nevertheless having expressed ourselves without much grace and clarity, we confess that it is true."

⁸⁶ Grosseteste says: "Even if people who do not know Greek might on occasion expound ambiguous meanings of this kind and bring out true interpretations [...] their only title of superiority in their own estimation might be that when it comes to ambiguities they are better at guessing and conjecturing!" (*Prologue*. English translation in Kavanagh 2012, 58-59). Kavanagh (2012, 59) thinks that those words are addressed to Eriugena's errors, but Eriugena knew Greek and Grosseteste was very respectful with the previous translators of the *Corpus*. It is more plausible that this criticism was addressed to Thomas Gallus as suggested by McEvoy (2012, 26).

⁸⁷ Kavanagh 2012, 46-48.

the beauty of the speech (*mens auctoris et venustas sermonis*),⁸⁸ but his adherence to this principle is strict in such a way that the outcome at times looks bizarre. Every element of language has its semantic value so that it needs to be translated. Take, for example, the case of the Greek article that Grosseteste renders by way of a relative pronoun, or the use of the double negation, which Grosseteste endorses although he acknowledges it to be redundant in Latin.⁸⁹ He let the Greek shine through his Latin, but he help the Latin reader with his commentaries, which are conceived as necessarily joined with the translations.⁹⁰ In the commentary, he explains Greek grammar and the reasons for his choices. Moreover, he translates the *scholia*, which contain not only linguistic but also historical notes that may help the reader approach the Greek culture.

It is worth noting, however, that not all Grosseteste's translations are made according to these criteria. In fact, he produces a flowing, readable version of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which was destined for a wider Latin readership. The *Testaments* is one of the few works that he translates directly from the Greek, without the help of any previous Latin translation.⁹¹ The translation of the *Corpus* and that of the *Testaments* are different: their different methods reflect a difference in purposes. When translating the *Corpus*, Grosseteste's aim is to produce a version for study, not simply for reading.⁹² Grosseteste was offering to Latin scholars – in particular cultivated priests, probably those who belonged to his *familia* – a new kind of instrument, a text that could allow them to go beyond what they already knew about Dionysius.

According to the fundamental study of Ezio Franceschini, it is possible to classify Grosseteste's notes on his own translation in the following categories: spelling and phonetics;⁹³ comparison between Greek and Latin;⁹⁴ etymologies;⁹⁵ and translation of

⁸⁸ *DNI*, § 27, 144.

⁸⁹ See Franceschini 1933, 74-84.

⁹⁰ *Prologue*, 15-16.

⁹¹ Franceschini (1933, 45-46).

⁹² McEvoy 2000, 117.

⁹³ See Franceschini 1933, 85-88. *E.g.* *CH* IV: “*Hec enim et huic in greco non differunt nisi solo accentu, et invenitur dictio illa in diversis exemplaribus diversimode accentuata;*” *Ibid.*: “*Ubi autem nos posuimus sine copulativa coniunctione: theologie, theurgie, theophanie, aliquod exemplar habet copulativam coniunctionem interpositam.*”

⁹⁴ See Franceschini 1933, 88-98. *E.g.* *DN* IV: “*Quod autem diximus genitive: per se motorum ut per se motorum et totorum et eorum que secundum unumquodque, diximus secundum proprietatem ydiomatis greci in quo verbum providendi exigit genitivum casum, quem nos in latinum possumus transferre cum verbo providendi in dativum vel accusativum;*” *DN* I: “[...] *thearchica lumina data per ipsos, splendores videlicet, seu per ipsa, eloquia videlicet: greca enim littera utrumque potest dicere.*”

⁹⁵ See Franceschini 1933, 98-116: *E.g.* *EH* I: “*Forte autem quis redderet hic singula trium adiectivorum secundum quandam adappropriationem singulis substantivorum et diceret: scienciam in Deo manentem seu a Deo illuminatam et datam. Hec enim potest dictio greca entheos significare;*” *EH* IV: “*Ad hanc dictionem teetHn, oportet referri relativum: ipsius, secundum grecam litteram. Et considera quod hoc nomen: teleta, secundum grecam linguam significat in perfectionem et communiter significat omnem oblacionem et*

compound nouns and coining of their equivalent Latin noun.⁹⁶ As stated above, Grosseteste knows the previous Latin translations of the *Corpus* and his choices show that he read several Greek manuscripts at his disposal against those translations.

His philological work is appreciated today, but it was not during his time, when theologians were more interested in the eternal truths contained in the *Corpus* than in knowing what exactly Dionysius thought.⁹⁷ Although Grosseteste's method of translation is philologically significant and extremely modern, the figure of Grosseteste as a translator does not raise interest. In the anthology dedicated to the history of translation theories, for example, Douglas Robinson recalls several medieval authors – even those who were not translators – but no mention of Grosseteste is present.⁹⁸ Comparing Grosseteste's translation with the controversial translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* by Vladimir Nabokov, will demonstrate not only that Grosseteste deserves a place among the theorists of translating in the past, but his theory is very actual. In the introduction, Nabokov explains his method of translating as follows: "To my ideal of literalism, I sacrificed everything – elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, even grammar"⁹⁹ Nabokov and Grosseteste sacrificed the clarity and grammar to let appear the source's language and filled the gap between the two languages by a series of notes.¹⁰⁰ It has been said that "Nabokov was translating for scholarly readers who knew no Russian and would be able, with the help of his notes, to construct an accurate poetic image of Pushkin's poem; he was also attempting to efface the many fanciful and romantic images of Pushkin current at the time."¹⁰¹ This is also Grosseteste's purpose, namely, allowing Latin scholars to appreciate a Greek work, helping them with several notes. At the same time, Grosseteste wants to rediscover the true face of Dionysius clouded by – according to him – unsatisfying translation and commentaries. His polemic against those who can only guess what Dionysius thought may reveal a complaint against some misinterpretations of the *Corpus*. Nabokov, just like Grosseteste, was harshly criticized for his work, in particular for using unfamiliar words and creating new words.¹⁰² This criticism is similar to that of the

actionem Deo oblatam perfectiva."

⁹⁶ See Franceschini 1933, 116-124: E.g. *EH* III: "Sunt autem: *sacre perficiente, et a deo tradito et divine generationis et in lumen ductionum et sacram operationem, in greco singule dictiones composite;*" *EH* I: "[...] *in Deo manentia, seu, si latine diceretur unico vocabulo composito sicut est in greco, indea seu indivina.*"

⁹⁷ Dondaine 1953, 116f.

⁹⁸ Robinson 1997.

⁹⁹ See Nabokov 1964.

¹⁰⁰ Newmark (2009, 25) comments: "In return, he provided the 'pyramids of notes' for which he has become famous, which he [...] sees as a separate but integral part of the translation which uniquely establishes the translator's presence in the translation."

¹⁰¹ Newmark 2009, 25.

¹⁰² Wilson 1965: "The only characteristic Nabokov trait that one recognizes in this uneven and sometimes banal translation is the addiction to rare and unfamiliar words, which, in view of his declared intention to stick so

humanist, Leonardo Bruni, who qualified Grosseteste's translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as crude and verging upon the barbaric.¹⁰³

It is now clearer that Grosseteste could not be simply classified among the ancient translators who were loyal to literal translation. His translation is more than that. I am not trying to consider Grosseteste a forerunner of contemporary translation studies, but it is true that his theory of translation was innovative, and in a loose sense, modern. According to Grosseteste, language is not an external garment that can be exchanged for another. The translation word-for-word does not imply a one-to-one correspondence between a Greek and a Latin word, as he clearly states in his commentaries. This method of translation has profound philosophical consequences that will be discussed below.

I.4 Grosseteste as commentator

Grosseteste never meant to be only a translator. The Greek works translated were always equipped with notes and often with a thorough commentary, written by himself, or translated from an ancient source, as is the case of Aristotelian works. In fact, he never meant to separate the translations from his exposition. Only in the fifteenth century were they separated and, as we saw, harshly criticized by humanists.¹⁰⁴ In what follows, I would like to focus on two aspects that characterize Grosseteste's way of commenting that are overshadowed by scholars: first, his respect for the authority, and accordingly, his caution in proposing his interpretation of the text; and second, his ecclesiastical point of view in approaching some passages.

Grosseteste was criticized not only for the obscurity of his translation but also for the prolixity of his exposition.¹⁰⁵ Some scholars stated that Grosseteste was a commentator in the full sense of word since the text of Dionysius was, for him, an occasion not to introduce and discuss his own ideas but to clarify the thought of the author.¹⁰⁶ In fact, there are very few passages where it is possible to perceive clearly Grosseteste's voice, where he goes beyond the pure exposition of the text and makes some digressions. The passages where he “gently

close to the text that his version may be used as a trot, are entirely inappropriate here. It would be more to the point for the student to look up the Russian word than to have to have recourse to the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) for an English word he has never seen and which he will never have occasion to use. To inflict on the reader such words is not really to translate at all, for it is not to write idiomatic and recognizable English.”

¹⁰³ See Franceschini 1955.

¹⁰⁴ See Gamba 1944, 104f.

¹⁰⁵ See McEvoy 1982, 79 n.34.

¹⁰⁶ See McEvoy 1982, 79, and Gamba 1944, 105.

disagrees” with his source are particularly interesting. Grosseteste never criticizes directly Dionysius’s statement. I give two examples to show that Grosseteste is consistent with his approach to other authorities in previous works. In a passage from the *De libero arbitrio*, a statement from John Chrysostom (“the Father precedes the Son *causaliter*”) gives him the occasion to define the criterion for interpreting the writings of an authority. According to Grosseteste, although Chrysostom’s words are correct, someone can misunderstand and introduce a gradation inside the Trinity, with the Father superior to the Son. But it is not possible, Grosseteste says, that a man so religious and expert both in philosophy and theology, like John Chrysostom, can commit such a mistake. Grosseteste suggests that it is not correct to interpret the words of a man so religious against the Truth, but we must search for its original meaning.¹⁰⁷ In general, when he disagrees, first, he paraphrases the position of Dionysius, then he argues for another view. This happens in the *De coelesti hierarchia* in the chapter on beatific vision. Grosseteste realizes that, according to Dionysius, the object of heavenly vision is a created theophany emanating from God, and not God in Himself, as stated by the Latin Fathers. Grosseteste does not criticize Dionysius, neither does he try to reconcile the *Corpus* with the Latin tradition; he simply explains the divergence in the commentary discussing the doctrine of the Latin Fathers.¹⁰⁸

This respect for the authority was also the reason for his caution in proposing his interpretation of the text. In their introduction to the English translation of Grosseteste’s *Epistulae*, Mantello and Goering state that “in these letters one see Grosseteste making the transition from his earlier career as a master in the schools to his new role as supreme authority in his diocese. As a teacher and scholar he wrote with deference and curiosity. [...] In these collected letters [...] we see him finding his voice as one who speaks with authority.”¹⁰⁹ If this is true for the *Letters*, we can note that bishop Grosseteste, *qua* commentator, continued to be respectful towards his authorities and very scrupulous in

¹⁰⁷ *De libero arbitrio*, 186: “Item: in determinando assumptum fuit hoc verbum Chrysostomi super «in principio erat verbum», «praecedit Pater Verbum non natura, sed causa,» «praecedit Pater Verbum causaliter,» «praecedit Filius omnia, quae per ipsum facta sunt naturaliter.» Hoc verbum iterum videtur habere obscuritatem, quia nulla est, ut videtur, in Trinitate processio, nulla causalitas nisi ad creaturas. -- Et sine dubio vir ille sanctus catholicus, inter scriptores catholicos eminenter commendatus et approbatus, philosophia mundana et divina excellentissime imbutus, multo perspicatius et limpidius quam nos novit in Trinitate nullum esse gradum, nihil prius aut posterius, nihil maius aut minus, sed totas tres personas coaeternas sibi esse et coaequales, nihil ibi velut causalitate aliqua creatum aut factum, sed solum procedens et genitum. Quapropter si intelligimus in suis verbis aut eis imponimus aliquid falsum et veritati contrarium, haec nostra praesumptio et nostrum vitium, et non est, quod ipse in suis verbis aliquid intellexerit impium. Non igitur in verbis tam pii, tam scii, tam sanctissimi viri est a nobis perperam aliquid interpretandum, sed ut accipiamus, quod ipse intelligat devote petendum, et ut inveniamus sollicitate quaerendum, et ut aperiatur nobis instanter est pulsandum.”

¹⁰⁸ This topic was studied by McEvoy (1982, 93ff; 248ff).

¹⁰⁹ Matello – Goering 2009, 19.

approaching the texts. It is astonishing how many times the adverb ‘maybe’ (*forte*) appears in the commentaries on the *Corpus*. For example, there are three occurrences of ‘maybe’ in the first four pages of the *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia*.¹¹⁰

Grosseteste manifests the respect for the authority even if that causes him some difficulties in commenting on the *Corpus*. A feature that especially troubled Grosseteste was Dionysius’s tendency to write down long lists. The most important are the order of divine names in the *De divinis nominibus* and the negations in the *De mystica theologia*.¹¹¹ Here, I focus on another passage where Dionysius lists a series of attributes coming from God taken as principle of everything: beginning, end, life, immortality, wisdom, order, harmony and so on.¹¹² Grosseteste observes that the text is clear, but the reason of that order of words is not. According to Grosseteste, the list cannot be given at random, therefore, it is necessary to make sense of it.¹¹³ Despite his efforts, he acknowledges that it is not necessary to understand the proper meaning of each single word, but it is enough to understand the most important ones.¹¹⁴ What is important to Grosseteste is to preserve the authority from any explicit criticism that may induce in error. The authority of Dionysius (called *tantus pater*) – as well as that of John Chrysostom (called *tam sanctissimus vir*), and that of John Damascene (called *tantus auctor*) – cannot be explicitly call into question.

The second aspect on which I want to focus is Grosseteste’s ecclesiastical concerns in his commentaries. In particular, in the commentary on the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, the reader clearly realizes that a bishop is speaking for the role of the bishop (*hierarca*) is highly emphasized.¹¹⁵ The figure of bishop that emerges from these pages is not that of a mediator between God and the lower orders of the human hierarchy; but rather, that of a symbol of God Himself.¹¹⁶ In order to appreciate the relevance of the bishop in the *Commentary*, it can be

¹¹⁰ See *EH* I, 293-296. Grosseteste employs different expressions to manifest caution in proposing his interpretation of the text. Here it follows some examples: *DN* II, M 181rb “potest forte considerare;” *DN* II, M 182va “videbatur forte;” *DN* II, 183vb “sicut forte explanata equivocacione;” *DN* II, M 192va “forte hos insinuavit;” *DN* IV, M 208ra: “forte hic sumpsit auctor;” *DN* IV, M 208rb: “forte comprehendit;” *DN* V, M 234ra “forte per hoc insinuans;” *DN* V, M 234ra “forte per hoc insinuans [...] vel aliud aliquid quod nos latet;” *DN* V, M 234rb “forte intelligit hic;” *DN* VI, M 242va “ut si forte diceret.”

¹¹¹ I will analyze the first list below, § II.3.3.1; the second one is studied in Curiello 2016.

¹¹² See *Dionysiaca*, 347-350.

¹¹³ *DN* V, M 237ra: “Sermo itaque iste quo ad seriem constructionis planissimus est, sed quo ad rationem ordinis verborum in eo positorum dilucide assignandam non sic, neque enim verisimile est quod tantus pater casu et irrationabiliter verba hic posita collocaverit. Posset autem quis circa ordinis rationem studiosus forte sic vel aliter melius dicere.”

¹¹⁴ *DN* V, M 237rb: “Nec forte querenda est ratio ordinis verborum hic positorum secundum omnis sensus quos habent singula verba hic posita sed secundum sensus eorum principaliores et de quibus principaliter intendit auctor.”

¹¹⁵ The importance of the bishop in Grosseteste’s thought has been studied in Quinn 1991, 211-255.

¹¹⁶ See *EH* 414, 13-16: “Posita theoria subiungit secundum quas proprietates est huius theorie symbolum ierarcha. Est enim ierarcha huius typus et figura secundum quod ad dei imitationem expandit copiose ad omnes divine doctrine splendores [...]” Note that ‘*theoria*’ is a theoretical consideration on the reality that

useful to compare the interpretation of Grosseteste with Albert's commentary on the same Dionysian work. One example will suffice. When Dionysius discusses how Christ can be one in substance and multiplied in the Eucharistic species, Albert dwells on the ontological problem and poses a *quaestio* to demonstrate that Christ remains numerically the same in the multiplicity of hosts, while Grosseteste puts aside the discussion on the sacrament. He rather comments on that passage making a comparison between Christ, who stays in Himself and, at the same time, is participated by everyone in the host, and the bishop, who is the symbol of God spreading his goodness towards creature, while remaining steadfast in his own goodness and unity.¹¹⁷ In the case of Albert, it is absolutely clear that a master is writing, who finds in Dionysius's text an occasion to develop a topic of sacramental theology. Grosseteste, instead, as a bishop, highlights the passages that can endorse the primary role of his own ministry.¹¹⁸

This pastoral intent is not only present in the *De ecclesiastica hierachia*, as could be expected to a certain degree, but also in the *De divinis nominibus*. For example, in Book I, Grosseteste adds a note that apparently has nothing to do with the context. Dionysius says that we embrace truths about God in that Union that exceeds our reason by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁹ Grosseteste wants to preserve Dionysius from any suspicion of arrogance, saying that Dionysius's words are entirely drawn from the Scriptures, as Dionysius himself acknowledges, and that the authors of the Bible are those who are united ineffably with God.¹²⁰ Divine names, Grosseteste says, can be praised independently of the moral state of those who praise just like the priest who is in state of mortal sin can validly confer the Eucharist.¹²¹ Unfortunately, Grosseteste is not explicit, so we are left to conjecture about the reason he added this note. A plausible reason is that in the passage, Grosseteste endorses the catholic doctrine *ex opere operato*, which means that the efficacy of the action of the

lies beyond the acts of the rite. See also *EH* III, 599.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Albertus Magnus, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, 66,24 – 66,67. The text is too long to be quoted here. Grosseteste's account is in *EH* 493, 2-11: "Quamvis enim deitas ex sua bonitate se tribuat omnibus et singulis participandam secundum cuiusque susceptibilitatem et ita diversimode, in seipsa tamen est secundum sui substantia omnino permanet immota et invaria. [...] Huius itaque immutabilitatis et idenptitatis secundum substantiam deitatis et in se reflexionis typos, symbolum, ymago et agalma est ierarcha [...]"

¹¹⁸ On the differences between Albert and Grosseteste about the centrality of the bishop see also Albertus Magnus, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, 43,44 ss and the parallel text commented by Grosseteste in *EH* I, 410

¹¹⁹ *Dionysiaca*, 6-7.

¹²⁰ *DN* I, § 5, 135: "Sed ex hiis videri posset alicui quod iste beatus Pater presumptuose ascriberet sibi divini Spiritus participationem et ea participatione se unitum eo et ineffabilibus et incognitis se ineffabiliter et incognite coniunctum; cuius presumptionis suspicionem rationabiliter tollit cum adicit se nihil intellecturum aut dicturum de Deo in reseratione nominum divinatorum, nisi que ex eloquiis divinitus sunt manifestata [...]. Non igitur asserit auctor se asseveraturum veritatem dictorum de Deo in demonstratione virtutis Spiritus quam ipse participat, sed quam participaverunt theologi qui eloquia ediderunt."

¹²¹ *DN* I, § 5, 135f: "Potest enim divina verba dicere, in quibus operatur summe divine divina virtus, etiam qui divina virtute et gratia eum cum Deo uniente non participat, utpote sacerdos in mortali peccato existens verba consecrationis Eucharistie, in quibus divina virtus conficit corpus Domini divinissimum et ipsius sanguinem pretiosum."

sacraments does not depend on anything human but only by the will of God as expressed by Christ's institution and promise. This implies that the moral status of the priest does not affect the validity of the sacraments. It was an ancient doctrine that was stated by Augustine against the Donatists, and Grosseteste needed to repeat what could seem an obvious truth but it was not. Indeed, the Donatist view was relaunched by the Waldenses who reached England at the end of the twelfth century.¹²² Another element that supports my hypothesis is that the formula *ex opere operato* comes probably from Peter of Poitiers (†1205), while its counterpart *ex opere operantis* appears for the first time in William of Auxerre, and both are authors well known by Grosseteste.¹²³ These elements imply that at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Donatism is perceived as an urgent problem to be solved. Grosseteste may have heard of it during his studies in Paris; and when he becomes bishop, he is more and more involved in the struggle against it.

Grosseteste's concern is not limited to the Eucharist. In the commentaries on the *Corpus*, references to heresies are very numerous, especially in the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*. Nestorianism, Manicheism, Apollinarism, and many other heresies are mentioned in this work.¹²⁴ Grosseteste gives us detailed information about them, and it is not just because he was an "inveterate scribbler."¹²⁵ He borrows most of his knowledge of heresies from the *scholia*, and the fact that he reports them in the commentary can be just a consequence of his lack of sense of proportion when he composes a treatise, as McEvoy emphasized.¹²⁶ This explanation sounds weak considering that the struggle against heresies is a pillar of Grosseteste's thought. When he was a master of arts, he was involved in the discussion of the eternity of the world, a problem that emerges in several works, and Grosseteste strenuously defended the creation in time of the universe against Aristotle.¹²⁷ It was a doctrine diffused in the Universities; but when Grosseteste became bishop other heresies bothered him and episcopacy was a favourable moment for studying and fighting them. Another significant case is the Manichean heresy and its dualism professed by Cathars, which was probably the spur to develop the doctrine of transcendentals. The case of Catharism is another example, together with the Waldenses of an old error, fought by the Fathers, which comes back in Grosseteste's

¹²² On Waldenses doctrine of Eucharist, see Peters 1980, 159. On the diffusion of Waldenses in England, see Jones 1816, vol. II, 156f.

¹²³ On the genesis of the formulas, see Berkouwer 1969, 64.

¹²⁴ Unfortunately, there is no analytical index in the edition. Reading through the text, I have found these places devoted to heresies: *EH*, 304; 580f; 672; 686; 806; 823; 837; 894.

¹²⁵ McEvoy 1982, 27.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁷ Cf. Dales 1986.

time. Besides his theological passion for the origin of Christianity,¹²⁸ his pastoral interest for heresies could be one of the reasons that induced Grosseteste to deepen his knowledge of the beginning of the Church, to which the *Corpus* is supposed to belong.

Ian Forrest stated that before the 1380s England had seen no widespread heresy like Catharism in Languedoc or Waldensianism in the Alps, Germany, and Bohemia, but at the same time it was not completely immune from the major heretical movements of continental Europe.¹²⁹ A personality like bishop Grosseteste could not have been indifferent to those events. He understood heresy in its biblical Greek meaning, as a choice or a thing chosen. According to him, a heretic is a person who chooses to be outside the church, believing her/his choices to be truer than God's revealed word.¹³⁰ As a pastor, he tries to bring back the lost sheep into the sheepfold. Maybe he was zealous to such a point that King Henry III in 1252 prohibited him from using his inquisitorial techniques, which being something new in his reign, generated a lot of polemics.¹³¹ This aspect must not be a surprise for the readers of Grosseteste's *Epistulae*, in particular the CXXVII, where he firmly states that the bishop's duty of preaching is not enough if it is not accompanied with the ecclesiastical discipline that, like the shepherd's crook, is a spur to lift up again and go in the right direction.¹³²

Grosseteste's interest in heresy becomes more intense during his episcopacy not only because of his duty as shepherd but also because his knowledge of Greek leads him to reconsider another thorny issue of Christianity, namely, the discussion on the *Filioque* that opposes the Latin and Greek Church. In the next paragraph, we will consider how his translation theory, together with his peculiar way of commenting, influenced Grosseteste's theory of language. Even in this case, we will realize that also pastoral concerns are at play.

¹²⁸ McEvoy 2000, 120: "If we leave aside his retranslation of works by Damascene, then we can regard a group of his versions as the expression of that passionate interest he took in the origins of Christianity and in its earliest history. His translations of St. Ignatius, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, and the *Testaments* run parallel to the theological explorations that he conducted in his commentary on Galatians and in *De Cessatione Legalium*."

¹²⁹ Forrest 2005, 19; 23.

¹³⁰ Southern 1986, 292f.

¹³¹ *Close Rolls 1251–53*, 224f: "Rex episcopo Lincolniensi, salutem. Ex querela multorum accepimus, tam magnatum de dyocesi vestra quam aliorum, per quosdam clericos vestros, et decanos quosdam, citari facitis passim et indifferenter pauperes homines de diocesi vestra, et quosdam liberos homines, cujuscumque sint homines, et trahitis eos de locis varus ad loca varia, et eos artari facitis per penam excommunicacionis ad capiendum coram predictis clericis et subditis vestris ad loca varia et eis honerosa, dum vacare debeant agrorum culture et aliis temporalibus agendis suis necessariis, pro quo depauperantur indebite et enormiter vexanturet; insuper, quod inauditum est, eos jurare compellunt predicti scrutatores vestri de privatis peccatis aliorum, que non sunt, ut dicitur, publica cohercione purganda, [...] vobis prohibemus ne decetero hujusmodi convocaciones populi fieri faciatis in diocesi vestra contra regni nostri consuetudinem et usum longevum."

¹³² *Epistulae* CXXVII, 383-385.

I.5 Philosophical implications of Grosseteste's translation theory

Grosseteste's theory of translation is inspired by his reflections on language that began before the translations themselves, and conversely, the translations were the occasion for new inquiries on language. The clarification of this interaction is the topic of this paragraph. First, I will offer an overview of some of Grosseteste's works dedicated to the topic; second, I will present the three pillars of Grosseteste's theory of language; and third, after having identified the sources of these pillars, I will discuss in detail the first of them (i.e. the relationship between the internal and the external language). Finally, I will show how this theory of language was useful for Grosseteste's translation work.

The first known work about language was written when he was a master of arts, entitled *De generatione sonorum*, and dedicated to the material aspects of language (*vox*). Grosseteste dedicate also several *Dicta* to language in particular *Dictum* 9, entitled *De hoc verbo "Velociter currit sermo eius,"* and *Dictum* 54, entitled *Quomodo lingua est calamus*. When he becomes a master of theology, he is more and more interested in mental language. In the *De cessatione legalium* (ca. 1235), for example, Grosseteste manifests a certain interest in angelic language, a topic that will receive particular attention in the *Commentary*.¹³³ McEvoy, one of the first to consider the philosophical relevance of Grosseteste's thought on language, pointed out that the idea of a dialogue among intellects (angels and blessed) was an echo of the theory of thinkers like Philo, Gregory of Nyssa, and Proclus. They held that language is a sign of human weakness because its corporality prevents human beings from communicating directly through the mind.¹³⁴ According to McEvoy, Grosseteste does not draw this explicitly negative anthropological conclusion because according to the bishop of Lincoln, language results from the combination of the spiritual and the physical aspects of human nature, namely, its rationality and its power to produce sounds. Language is not classified among the faculties pertaining to the human soul nor among those possessed by human beings *qua* animals, but it has its proper place in the "incarnate rationality."¹³⁵ This reference to the animals calls for clarification since on at least two occasions Grosseteste states the superiority of human beings over animals because of language.

¹³³ *De cessatione legalium*, 121: "If our intellects were manifest to each other, then the signs we use for communication, external words (*exteriorum verborum signa*), would be quite redundant." English translation in McEvoy 1981, 586.

¹³⁴ McEvoy 1981, 586.

¹³⁵ McEvoy 1981, 586.

This multi-faceted interest of Grosseteste for language is based on three principles. First, the interaction external/internal: the external voice and the written words are conventional signs of the interior voice, or the concept.¹³⁶ The second principle is the comparison of the human word with the second person of the Trinity, or the Word: spoken words are like the flesh while the internal word is like the *Verbum*.¹³⁷ Third, as a consequence from the previous points: human beings have to guard their talk from evil.¹³⁸ I will present the sources of these principles, then I will discuss in particular the first one and its relation with the other two.

These principles are not original, historically speaking. On the authority of Aristotle and Augustine, most medieval logicians admitted that there are three kinds of terms: written, spoken, and mental (or conceptual).¹³⁹ Concepts or mental terms are the most fundamental, they signify “naturally;” spoken terms signify derivatively, by a conventional relation with the concepts; written terms are related to spoken terms in the same way.¹⁴⁰

It was Augustine, again, on the basis of the second principle, for he formulated the view of human language as an image of the Incarnation.¹⁴¹ Also the necessity to preserve the tongue from sinning was a common theme among the preachers at the end of the twelfth century.¹⁴² With respect to this point, I would like to note that Grosseteste does not develop a speculative treatise on the *peccatum oris*, which was from the *Summa Halensis* onward, an important subject of speculation for the masters.¹⁴³ Even though Grosseteste is aware of this scholastic interest for the sins that are related to language, his style is closer to the preachers of the twelfth century. Those preachers were more interested in the moral aspect of the sins, in order to awake the conscience of the listeners, than in the rational classification of sins as the University masters did.

Grosseteste devotes many passages to the first principle. There are passages where uttered or written words are considered expressions, or vehicles, of the internal ones, and this

¹³⁶ *Dictum* 48: “Manifestius quoque et cercius signant et loquuntur opera sensibilia verba interiora operancium quam voces vel nutus, que ex sola institutione sunt signa.”

¹³⁷ *Super Psalterium*, cap. 100, p. 173ra: “Et quia sermo est id quod inter omnes res precipuam gerit similitudinem verbi Dei incarnati, sicut enim eternum Dei verbum assumpsit sibi carnem sensibilem in vnitatem persone, sic verbum mentis interius intellegibile assumunt sibi vnitatem persone verbi exterioris sonans audibile vt sit vnus sermo ex intelligibili et audibili.”

¹³⁸ A passage that summarizes those three elements is *Dictum* 54 *Quomodo lingua est calamus* fol. 43va-b: “Adde ad hoc quod in interiori verbo sumus Dei similitudo; in verbo autem sonante et signante exteriori est expressiva similitudo verbi incarnati. Quid igitur tam diligenti custodia observandum ut verbum in quo nostra summa consistit dignitas, quod qui custodit, ut patet ex iam dictis, custodit animam suam.”

¹³⁹ See Aristotle, *De interpretatione* 1, 16a3-8; Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV, 10-11.

¹⁴⁰ Spade 1982, 189.

¹⁴¹ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV, 10-11.

¹⁴² See Casagrande - Vecchio 1987, 15.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, 13.

relation is never disputed by Grosseteste.¹⁴⁴ From these presuppositions, Grosseteste holds that there is an immediate correspondence between the concept and the word. In some occasions, Grosseteste specifies that there is a priority and superiority of internal language over the external, that which is uttered. In particular, the following passage is puzzling:

And this is what some say truth is, the adaequation of speech and thing and the adaequation of the thing to understanding. – But since the speech is truer which is silent within than the one which sounds without, namely, the concept of the understanding through vocal speech, truth will be rather an adaequation of interior speech and the thing, than of exterior speech; but if interior speech itself were an adaequation of itself to the thing, it would be, not only true speech, but truth itself. – Wisdom, however, and the word, or the Speech of the Father is in the highest degree adaequated by this manner of adaequation to the thing which it speaks of and states.¹⁴⁵

This passage is important for Grosseteste's conception of truth, which I analysed elsewhere.¹⁴⁶ Here we can limit ourselves to note that Grosseteste searches for a definition of truth and that he finds it in the famous 'adaequation formula,' (misattributed to Isaac Israeli) a formula much popular among the masters.¹⁴⁷ In the last part of the quotation, the Christological reference is another witness of the second principle of Grosseteste's theory of language. But the most interesting part is Grosseteste's quotation of another version of the 'adaequation formula,' namely, the adaequation of interior speech and thing, which probably comes from William of Auvergne, and Grosseteste feels the need to clarify it.¹⁴⁸ The point in discussion is that the internal word is truer than the word that is uttered. Ginther explains this passage saying that an unvocalised concept is truer than a vocalised one "presumably because there is one less layer of temporal signification."¹⁴⁹ This interpretation relates truth to the

¹⁴⁴ *Dictum 54 (Quomodo lingua est calamus)*, fol. 43vb: "Verbum autem interius, de thalamo memorie procedens, quasi vehiculum verbi sonantis ascendit, et progreditur per cavum oris quasi per ostii aperturam, cuius ostii valve sunt instrumenta vocalia." The generation of the concept from the memory is a doctrine borrowed from Augustine. See *De Trinitate*, XV, 22.

¹⁴⁵ *De veritate*, 134: "Aliqui dicunt veritatem esse «adaequationem sermonis et rei» et «adaequationem rei ad intellectum». Sed cum verior sit sermo, qui intus silet, quam qui foris sonat, intellectus videlicet conceptus per sermonem vocalem, magis erit veritas adaequatio sermonis interioris et rei, quam exterioris; quod si ipse sermo interior esset adaequatio sui ad rem, non solum esset sermo verus, sed ipsa veritas. Sapientia autem et verbum, sive «Sermo Patris» maxime adaequatur hoc modo adaequationis rei, quam dicit et loquitur." English translation in McKeon 1929, 269.

¹⁴⁶ See Curiello 2016.

¹⁴⁷ On the misattribution of the 'adaequation formula' to Isaac Israele, see Altman – Stern 1958, 58. On the diffusion of the 'adaequation formula' among the Masters of the first half of the 13th century, see Pouillon 1939, 59 f.

¹⁴⁸ William of Auvergne, *De Universo III*, I, c.26, p. 749 b A s.s.: "Intentio veri et veritas [...] et hoc, ait Avicenna, est adaequatio orationis et rerum."

¹⁴⁹ Ginther 2004, 96.

rapidity of its medium. It is plausible, but I think that a different interpretation is possible. A different answer, more based on Grosseteste's words, could be that the uttered language can be separated from the internal word, as it happens when someone lies. In one of his *Dicta*, where Grosseteste shows his ability in using images and metaphors, he compares the uttered word to a leaf. When the leaf is detached from the tree, it falls down and dies; just as the uttered word detached from the truth of the internal one is destined to fall down, namely, to not reach God.¹⁵⁰

The idea of the superiority of the internal word on the external one is constant in Grosseteste both before and after his translation work.¹⁵¹ Behind this belief there is, once again, Augustine who considered the internal word as something which comes before any linguistic articulation and that is the closest image to reality. The uttered word instead is just a sign, and its linguistic nature hides the reality because it is a limited instrument that cannot signify the reality as it is.¹⁵² The truth is in the interior of men and no language can attain it.

These principles, and in particular the first one, are determinant also for Grosseteste's theory of translation. A passage from the *Confessiones* seems to describe perfectly Grosseteste's translating work and its relation with truth. In that passage, Augustine asserts that truth speaks without voice or tongue, neither in Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Latin, nor barbarian.¹⁵³ These words resound in Grosseteste's works. Commenting on Paul's *Epistle to Galatians*, Grosseteste finds the following verse: "God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, «Abba, Father»" (*Galatians* 4,6). Grosseteste believes that Paul, employing both the Greek and Hebrew term, meant to signify that the Holy Spirit does not speak with audible voice but that He refers directly to the concept that is signified by

¹⁵⁰ *Dictum* 98 (*De Folio*), fol 75ra: "Folii autem spiritualis discontinuacio est verbi exteriorum ab interiori disunctio. Hoc autem est cum aliud dicit verbum exterius et aliud sentit mens interius. Causa autem casus foliorum est condensacio et siccacio succi glutinosi. Similiter cum siccatur humor caritatis, amor videlicet veritatis, cadit folium verbi discontinuatum a verbo interiori. Folium autem cadens in terram decidit, quia illuc cadit verbum ubi terminatur intencio dicentis. Omnis autem menciens intencio in terra terminatur, quapropter eius verbum in terram cadit. Veridicorum autem verba nusquam cadunt, sed usque ad celum intencionis directione pertingunt."

¹⁵¹ Another passage on the topic written during the years of regency of the chair of theology is *Super Psalterium*, cap. 100, p. 173ra: "Item, sermo est in quo solo preeminet homo omni animali. In sermone etiam ratio interior comprehenditur quia igitur in hoc est hominis preeminentia et decus hunc debet super omnia custodiri immaculum. Sermo autem malus pssimos parit fructus quia corrumpit bonos mores auditorum colloquia praua."

¹⁵² Koch 2009, 12-13: "En effet, si le verb intérieur peut être *simillimum rei notae*, c'est parce qu'il 'ne tient rien de lui-même', mais que tout en lui vient de la connaissance qu'il dit dans le cœur. [...] Car le propre des verba qui appartient à une langue particulier, c'est que, lorsqu'ils signifient, ils comportent quelque chose qu'ils "tiennent" d'eux-mêmes. [...] Le propre de signes, linguistique ou autres (gestuels par exemple), c'est qu'ils ne disent pas ce qu'ils signifient comme cela est, mais comme eux-mêmes sont, c'est-à-dire par traduction dans la structure qui est la leur et qui ne ressemble pas à la structure de l'objet signifié." Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV, 20 and 22; *Sermon* 288, 3.

¹⁵³ Augustine, *Confessiones*, XI, 3: "Intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis nec hebraea nec graeca nec latina nec barbara veritas sine oris et linguae organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret: verum dicit."

those words.¹⁵⁴

The passage from *De veritate* quoted above and that on *Ad Galatas* recalls how important was this Augustinian idea in Grosseteste's mind, but he can fully appreciate Augustine's analysis only after his Greek study. While reading the works of the Greek Fathers, he realizes how Augustine was right and how the historical languages may lead far from the truth. Grosseteste, as translator, becomes more and more aware of the ambiguities generated by language, and realizes that it is impossible to put a one-to-one correspondence between Greek and Latin. McEvoy lists four kinds of discrepancy among these languages according to Grosseteste: first, a single Greek word has two Latin equivalents; second, a Greek word has no direct Latin equivalent; third, two Greek words are rendered by a single Latin one; fourth, the meaning of a single Greek word is rendered by a number of Latin forms, each of which signifies (taken separately) only part of the meaning of the Greek word.¹⁵⁵ A paradigmatic example of the ambiguity to render a Greek word in Latin is the term *logos*. In Book VII of the *De divinis nominibus*, God is praised as *ratio*, or according to other translations, *sermo*. Grosseteste comments that in Greek the word *logos* means both "reason" and "word" which are not different in God.¹⁵⁶ This means that while in God there is a perfect correspondence of what He thinks and what He says, this is not the case for human beings as asserted in the quoted text from *De Veritate*.

Concerning human beings, there is, however, some proportionality between thoughts and words. In *the De mystica theologia*, Dionysius explains why the treatise that concerns divine names drawn from material things, the *De symbolica theologia*, is longer than the *De divinis nominibus* and this one is longer than the *Theologicas subfigurationes* that deals with Trinitarian names. Grosseteste, following Dionysius, asserts that superior things are more simple than inferior, sensible things "and for that reason the insights into them (*intelligentie eorum*) are less numerous, and as a consequence the words that signify the understanding of them are fewer."¹⁵⁷ This means not only that the less a reality can be grasped by the intellect, the less it can be expressed by words, but also that sensible things are more composed than the superior. On this point Grosseteste says, "they [i.e sensible things] need more words to show them forth in the wholeness of what they are (*totalitatis ostensionem*), and to clarify

¹⁵⁴ *Ad Galatas*, 105: "Postest quoque per haec diversa nomina insinuari, quod Spiritus Sanctus clamat in nobis non tam diversas voces audibiles, quae apud diversas gentes sunt diversae, quam ipsarum vocum diversarum unum significatum, quod apud omnes gentes est idem."

¹⁵⁵ McEvoy 1975, 81.

¹⁵⁶ *DN VII*: "Laudat ipsum ex nominationibus rationis seu verbi. In greco enim habetur logos quod significat rationem et verbum que de deo dicta non differunt." Other references to logos and its double meaning of ratio and sermo are at *DN II*, M186vb; *DN III*, M 195vb; *DN IX*, M 259ra; *DN IX*, M 260va; *DN IX*, M 261va.

¹⁵⁷ *MT III*, 101.

what they mean symbolically (*symbolice significatorum declarationem*).¹⁵⁸ This is an application to language of a metaphysical principle, namely, that the spiritual realities belong to the domain of unity while the material ones to that of plurality. Those expressions suggest that material realities are in some way covered by several layers. Words are needed to disclose what they really are while spiritual realities are more easily accessible by the insights of the intellect. We may infer from these assertions a moral consequence, namely, verbosity characterizes someone who deals with material things, and therefore, it can lead to sin.¹⁵⁹ While those who live in contemplation do not need to use many words, actually in the mystical union “the whole word, that is the speech power, in terms both of the word which is framed interiorly and the word that is brought forth exteriorly, will be voiceless.”¹⁶⁰

In the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Grosseteste explains that the concept is the internal word while the proper word is the uttered one and the latter is a symbol of the former.¹⁶¹ Grosseteste reaffirms that vocal words are symbols of the internal words some pages later, in a liturgical context, where Grosseteste explains that the hymn, the song of praise that is chanted during the Mass, is just a symbol of the interior thanksgiving.¹⁶² Both occurrences of ‘symbol’ are not present in the Dionysian text, but they are Grosseteste’s original developments.

At this point, we must clarify what is a symbol for Grosseteste in order to understand the relationship between internal and external word. Grosseteste calls the symbol “something sensible which takes the place of something intelligible (*pro intelligibili assumptum*).”¹⁶³ On many occasions, Grosseteste deals with symbols in the *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia*. Dionysius refers to symbol when he deals with theological knowledge. Sensible symbols are necessary to hide holy realities (God, sacraments) from the impures, but at the same time they represent the first step to know those realities, because while we are on earth, we need those symbols to climb towards God. The first who received the Revelation, the authors of the Scriptures, bequeathed their knowledge using symbols just to reach this double

¹⁵⁸ *MT III*, 99.

¹⁵⁹ See *Dictum* 54, fol. 43ra: “Multiloquii prolixitatem incurtat Salomon in Parabolis 10: [Prov. 10:19] «In multiloquio non deerit peccatum.» Et Dominus ipse in Matthei sexto: [Matt. 6:7] «Orantes nolite multum loqui.»”

¹⁶⁰ *MT III*, 101.

¹⁶¹ *EH I*, 357, 8-12: “Ubi nos ponimus ‘rationes,’ in greco habetur ‘logos’ quod significat non solum interiores rationes et racionaciones sed et exteriores sermones et verba. Unde hic diversi diversimode transtrulerunt non dissonanter veritati cum sermones simbolorum sint revelati et cogniti sacreperfectioribus.”

¹⁶² *EH III*, 540, 12 – 541,9: “Hec autem ympnizacio vocalis corporaliter audibilis symbolum est ympnizacionis interioris in mente racionabiliter et intus dispositio sermone facte. Unde vocatur ympnologia ab ympnos et logos quod est racio [...] Logos enim, id est sermo exterior, audibilis corporalis ympnizacionis symbolum est interioris sermocinacionis et iocundacionis.”

¹⁶³ *MT III*, 97.

goal: hide and reveal.¹⁶⁴ The symbol *qua* symbol is neutral, its function depends on the receiver. The more saint and pure the receiver is, the clearer will be the reality signified by the symbol; on the contrary, for the impures the symbols will obscure the reality behind it.¹⁶⁵ These considerations applied to the language imply that we have no other choice than using language, our poor historical languages. At the same time, we must remember that the language does not always reveal our thought since it can also veil it. Thus, the uttered language is, with its physical aspects (voice or handwriting), a symbol of the concept, which is the intelligible part of language. Grosseteste does not add any other detail to this picture, and a modern reader can be disappointed to not see a full-fledged theory of internal language.¹⁶⁶

Despite the lack in his account, Grosseteste's theory of translation is so decisive in his thought that it allows him to solve a thorny theological question. Destined to have great fortune in the Franciscan school, McEvoy, again, sheds light on this solution. I am referring to Grosseteste's solution of the conflict between the Greek and the Latin Church about the formula *Filioque*.¹⁶⁷ According to the Greek Church, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, while for the Latin Church He proceeds from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*). Our attention must not be fixed here on the theological aspects of the controversy. Grosseteste believes that the difference that opposes them represents only a verbal and not a real disagreement; after closer analysis of the expressions involved, it emerges that the doctrine is the same.¹⁶⁸ Even in this case the interplay between a spoken/written word (i.e. the linguistic expressions of the dogma) and an inner language (i.e. the dogma itself), as well as their discrepancy, is due to the impossibility of finding a proper translation for the expressions. If it

¹⁶⁴ *EH I*, 353, 7-17: "Dicto quod eloquia sunt nostre ierarchie substancia et que sunt illa eloquia nobis a deo per sacros viros nostros sacre perfectores in simbolis tradita et infert quod ipsi sacri viri [...] in simbolis tradiderunt, nec hunc modum tradicionis observaverunt solum causa occultandi sub velamine figurarum symbolicarum sacra execratis sed et quia nostra hierarchia indiget sensibilibus simbolis comproporcionaliter nobis ut per ea divinius sursum ducamur ad intelligibilia ex ipsis intelligenda." See also *EH I*, 349.

¹⁶⁵ *EH II*, 404, 7-10: "Hec namque teletH unicuique ordini convenientem sibi tribuit ad deum reduccionem: capaci videlicet spiritualium plus tribuens participationis eorumdem, et minus capaci minus et perfectissimo perfectissime." *TeletH* is the liturgical rite of a sacrament; it is what appears but not the divine reality signified (*theoria*).

¹⁶⁶ We may feel the same disappointment reading Augustine, cf. Koch 2009, 11: "La notion de verbe intérieur, telle quela définit Augustin, est assez peu en accord avec ce que l'on attendrai du modèle verbal appliqué à la pensée."

¹⁶⁷ McEvoy 1975, 42-53.

¹⁶⁸ *DN II*: "But let the reader beware of taking statements similarly expressed as having a single sense, such as the following, e.g.: «from someone», «through someone», «in someone», and other such expressions [...] Ignorance of this fact deceives good scholars, and the outward expression sets them at variance and leads them to contradict each other; yet if the ambiguity were once ironed out there would be no controversy between them; just as, it may be, an analysis of the ambiguous phrase, «from X» would remove all controversy between the Greeks' doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, and the Latins', that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son." English translation in McEvoy 1981, 591.

is impossible to translate exactly the expressions of a language into those of another language, one may wonder how it is possible to fill the gap between the spoken and the inner word. The answer is Grosseteste's method of translation. It is not by chance that he states his idea on the *Filioque* in two commentaries on Greek works (*De hymno trisagio* by Damascene and the Dionysian *De divinis nominibus*). His translations, furnished with the indispensable commentary and the abundance of philological, grammatical and historical notes, are his original way to solve the problem of the ambiguity of language. The *Corpus*, therefore, is not only a source of information about old heresies which permitted to detect the roots of new heretical movements, but also the place to show that what is considered a heresy (for example, the refusal of *Filioque* by the Greek Fathers), in actuality is not.

All that being said, we can return to McEvoy's evaluation of Grosseteste and his positive view of language. We realize that the Neoplatonic influence, via Dionysius, on Grosseteste is undeniable. Historical, spoken languages are, indeed, a sign of human weakness, and the superiority of human beings over animals is manifested in the internal language rather than in language in general.¹⁶⁹ It is the ability of human beings to bring to unity, in a concept formed before any linguistic expression, the richness and the plurality of material reality that puts human beings in a higher position in the hierarchy of beings.¹⁷⁰

I.6 Conclusion

In 1238, Robert Grosseteste begins to translate and comment on the *Corpus*, an authority well known among the masters of the twelfth and the thirteenth century. But Grosseteste knew very well Dionysius's works before that date. As I have demonstrated, he reads not only the *Hierarchies*, as generally believed, but he has also some knowledge of the other two treatises.

When he decided to translate the *Corpus*, he began to collect manuscripts from Greece.

¹⁶⁹ See *Super Psalterium*, cap. 100, p. 173ra: "Item, sermo est in quo solo preeminet homo omni animali. In sermone etiam ratio interior comprehenditur quia igitur in hoc est hominis preeminetia et decus hunc debet super omnia custodiri immaculum." Cf. *Dictum 98*: "Folia vero arboris sunt ornamenta; sic sermo est solus quo homo plus aliis animantibus decoratur. [Ecclus. 5:15] «Honor enim et gloria in sermone sensati,» sicut scribitur in Ecclesiastico 5°, et in eodem, capitulo 4 [x MS]: [Ecclus. 4:29] «In lingua agnoscitur sapiencia, et sensus, et sciencia, et doctrina in verbis veritatis»."

¹⁷⁰ This does not imply that also spoken language has its own positivity. In the *Dictum 136 (De orando)*, he exalted the prayer expressed vocally over the silent prayer chiefly because it hurts the devil, who does not perceive the thought, but can hear the prayers. However, if uttered words are not connected with the interior affection, they are vain.

These resources gave him the opportunity to correct the previous translations of the *Corpus*. Indeed, Grosseteste works first on the Latin versions and then compares them with the original Greek. Grosseteste translates also the *scholia* and uses them, explicitly or implicitly, in his commentary. Most of the references to Greek grammar or antiquities comes from this source.

Despite this great effort, Grosseteste's translation of the *Corpus* was not widespread. The reason of this failure is that Grosseteste's Latin is clumsy and hard to read. When translating the *Corpus*, Grosseteste's aim is to produce a version for study, not simply for reading. Grosseteste was offering to Latin scholars, in particular cultivated priests, a new kind of instrument, a text that could allow them to go beyond what they already knew on Dionysius. Grosseteste, however, never meant to be only a translator. As a commentator, his first duty was to respect the authority, and accordingly, he is cautious in proposing his interpretation of the text. His comment shows also some of his concerns such as the relevance of the bishop and the fight against heresies.

For Grosseteste, the *Corpus* is not only a source of information about old heresies, which permitted to detect the roots of new heretical movements, but also the place to show that what is considered a heresy, in actuality is not. The case of the controversy on the *Filioque* is a paradigmatic example of how Grosseteste's theory of translation, inspired by his reflections on language, has important theological and philosophical consequences. The interplay between a spoken/written word (i.e. the linguistic expressions of the dogma) and an inner language (i.e. the dogma itself), as well as their discrepancy, is due to the impossibility of finding a proper translation for the expressions. If it is impossible to translate exactly the expressions of a language into those of another language, one may wonder how it is possible to fill the gap between the spoken and the inner word. The answer is Grosseteste's method of translation. His translations, furnished with the indispensable commentary and the abundance of philological, grammatical, and historical notes, are his original way to solve the problem of the ambiguity of language.

CHAPTER II

Manentia: God's Transcendence

II.1 Introduction

According to James Ginther, Grosseteste's teaching on the doctrine of God has received little attention by scholars.¹⁷¹ This statement may seem surprising, but it is essentially valid, and it is even more unexpected when one realizes that it comes from the only monograph devoted to Grosseteste's theology. Indeed, the theme of 'God' does not feature prominently in Grosseteste's scholarship.¹⁷² However, Grosseteste himself, a theologian and bishop as he was, would be astonished to know that he is remembered for his scientific and philosophical works rather than for his work in theology. It is indisputable that his scientific works are significant, and regardless of whether he may be considered a forerunner of scientific method or not, the value of his work and method is appreciated even today by scholars belonging to scientific disciplines.¹⁷³ This does not mean that some topics of Grosseteste's theology have not received any attention. For example, his Christology and pastoral works have been well-received by commentators.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, his speculation on God *qua* God has been unduly neglected.

In this chapter, I deal with the first point of my thesis, namely, to reconstruct the doctrine of the threefold state of the First Principle in Grosseteste's works. Specifically, the present chapter focuses on the first phase of the First Principle, which we called the remaining (*moné*). Grosseteste holds as a basic tenet that while it is impossible to say or know something about God in Himself, human beings are not destined to a complete ignorance or silence about Him.

¹⁷¹ Ginther 2004, 89.

¹⁷² The most complete bibliography, as said in the Introduction, is Gieben 1962 and Gieben 1995.

¹⁷³ On Grosseteste as forerunner of modern science see Crombie 1953 and more recently Oliver 2004. For what concern the appreciation of Grosseteste as a "scientist" who is worthy of being considered today, I refer to the "Ordered Universe Project" that is presented in the web page (ordered-universe.com) as follows: "Bringing together a unique configuration of natural scientists, social scientists and arts and humanities scholars, the project integrates the conceptual tools of modern science with the textual methods of the humanities to explore the richness of Grosseteste's thought. Our translations, many for the first time, and which incorporate the groundbreaking concept of translation into mathematics, enable wider access to this wonderful mind, compelling us to make new assessments of his perceptive and inventive imagination".

¹⁷⁴ On christology, see McEvoy 1980. On Grosseteste's pastoral care see Boyle 1979.

In his pioneering work, Ginther points to three topics that characterize Grosseteste's speculation about God in the years of his regency as master of theology: God as first form of everything; what God can know and do; the traces of the Trinity in the world.¹⁷⁵ These themes also occur in the *Commentary*. In particular, Grosseteste treats God as form in Book V of the *De divinis nominibus*; there he deals with how God knows all things in Book VII of the same treatise, while Trinity is the topic of Book II. While these various themes are important for Grosseteste's work as a whole, the topic most developed in the *De divinis nominibus* and *De mystica theologia* but also in some important parts of the *Hierachiae* is the human being's capacity for knowing and naming God. The theological themes indicated by Ginther have received, separately, attention by scholars. For this reason, I shall not discuss them in detail, but I shall refer to them only when they are relevant for the present argument. Unlike the other topics just mentioned, the theme of the human being's capacity for knowing and naming God has received only sparse attention from the likes of Francis Ruello and Jean-Michel Counet.¹⁷⁶

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify Grosseteste's conception of God *qua* God. In order to accomplish this task, we begin by examining his theory of theological language. This choice may seem unusual insofar as theological language can be considered only a part of theology, and hence, secondary with respect to other topics. But it is Grosseteste himself who suggests this path. According to him, naming God properly amounts to having a proper concept of Him. By contrast, having an improper concept of God entails a kind of blasphemy that leads to heresy. This is the fundamental thesis of the second commandment in Grosseteste's *De decem mandatis*, which forbids one to believe that God is something less than He actually is. As explained above,¹⁷⁷ human language is intrinsically problematic because it has normally been introduced to express our thoughts, but on some occasions, it can hide our thoughts to a certain degree. A particular case is that of theological language that, according to Grosseteste, reaches the peak of this paradox because no thought or word can be adequate to God's infinity. While ordinary language can be corrected through correcting our understanding of reality, a correct understanding of God is impossible because His reality is simply beyond all understanding. This is why only a keen analysis of Grosseteste's theory of theological knowledge and language, considered in their mutual interplay, permits us to understand Grosseteste's idea of God *qua* God.

Who is God, according to Grosseteste? The first *distinctio* of his *Tabula* is entitled *de*

¹⁷⁵ Ginther 2004, 89-105.

¹⁷⁶ Ruello 1959; Counet 2012. Their studies consider only a little part of the *Commentary*.

¹⁷⁷ See § I.5.

Deo and numerous authorities are mentioned. The sub-distinctions reveal how Grosseteste intends to develop the subject: from the questions concerning the existence of God and his quiddity (*an Deus sit, quid sit Deus*) until the questions concerning praising God and the dictum that God created in “number, weight, and measure” (*de laudando deo; de numero, pondere et mensura*).¹⁷⁸ These questions illustrate two different ways of approaching God insofar as they consider God *qua* God and God in relation to the creatures. The two approaches of the *Tabula* recur in other works of Grosseteste, belonging to his regency as master of theology (§ II.2) as well as to his episcopacy (§ II.3). In this chapter I shall consider Grosseteste’s attempts to express God in His transcendence, while the next chapter shall examine Grosseteste’s explanation of God’s procession towards creatures. In order to approach God’s mystery as close as a man can do, Grosseteste observes that knowledge needs to be strengthened by a pure love for Him, according to the principle that intelligence goes hand-in-hand with the will (§ II.2.2). As a master of arts and then as master of theology, Grosseteste discusses theological language in order to decide upon either the equivocality or the univocity of divine names (§ II.2.3). From the *Commentary* onwards, the priorities of Grosseteste change. The first issue I will discuss is Grosseteste’s theory of the human capacity to know God. We shall see that, for Grosseteste, this knowledge can be based either on Scripture or on reason (§ II.3.1). Once realized that intellectual knowledge is not, according to Grosseteste, enough to reach God, we have to take the role of love into consideration (§ II.3.2). The limit of human knowledge is reflected in the limit of a human being’s capacity for naming God. There is no name (except, maybe, for one) that can *define* God’s transcendence; nonetheless, there is a method that guides human language to *express* (as far as possible) it, namely, the affirmative and negative theology: the first begins from the most proper names of God and descends to the less noble ones, while the second ascends from the less noble names to the silence. From the *Commentary* onwards, Dionysius becomes Grosseteste’s first source for a discourse on the divine transcendence, together with the authority of Anselm (§ II.2.3).

II.2 The doctrine of God before the *Corpus Dionysiacum*

II.2.1 Definitions of God

If we search for a definition of God, we find two very different answers in

¹⁷⁸ See *Tabula*, 265-272. The dictum refers to *Wisdom* 11:20.

Grosseteste's early writings: the first is that "God is the first form of everything" (*Deus est prima forma omnium*), the second is the Anselmian formula that "God is that than which nothing greater can be thought" (*Deus est quo nihil maius excogitari potest*). These definitions evoke two different aspects of God: the first indicates the proximity of God to creatures by virtue of His universal causality, a view that I will discuss in the next chapter; the focus of this chapter, however, concerns the second definition, which refers to His absolute transcendence.

Yet the meaning of a 'definition' itself needs clarification before we assess the content of Grosseteste's point. McEvoy points out that, for Grosseteste, the Anselmian formula *id quo maius* ... is not, strictly speaking, a definition of God. McEvoy follows a suggestion of Karl Barth – one of the few, McEvoy claims, to have understood Anselm's intention – and holds that the formula "expresses nothing about the nature of God, but rather lays down a rule of thought which enables us to endorse the statements about the Nature of God accepted in faith as our own necessary thoughts".¹⁷⁹ Even though it is true that the formula is not an essential definition, since it does not express the *quid* of God, Grosseteste, however, notes that no definition of God can be quidditative as He is in Himself ineffable. By the use of the term, 'definition, I, therefore, intend to convey a *descriptive* definition.

As McEvoy notes, Anselm's argument recurs in many works of Grosseteste: *De cessatione legalium*, *Sermo* 19, and *Deus est* (known also as *De confessione*).¹⁸⁰ The first work studies the prophecies of the Messiah, their fulfillment in Christ, and in particular, it deals with the theory of the necessity of Christ's Incarnation. According to the authorities that Grosseteste consulted, the Incarnation would not have taken place if Adam had not sinned.¹⁸¹ Grosseteste, instead, believes that there are reasons to believe the opposite, namely, that God would have become man even if Adam had not sinned. Grosseteste begins his discussion with this words: "God is the greatest power, wisdom and goodness, and is more good than can even be thought."¹⁸² The first part of the sentence has a long history reaching back to Boethius and Augustine.¹⁸³ The second part of the sentence elicits Anselm's argument. From this established truth, Grosseteste argues that God created a world that is as good as it can possibly be, and

¹⁷⁹ McEvoy 1995b, 272-3. Giulio d'Onofrio recently endorsed a similar position on Anselm's argument, see d'Onofrio 2005, 139.

¹⁸⁰ McEvoy 1995b, 261-264.

¹⁸¹ Grosseteste mentions Augustine, Gregory the Great and Anselm as authorities on this matter. Cf. Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 108 and Id., *De Trinitate*, 13-14; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, 17, 30; Anselm, *Cur Deus homo*, 2, 6-7.

¹⁸² *De cessatione legalium*, 120: "Deus est summa potentia et sapientia et bonitas et magis bonum quam etiam possit excogitari".

¹⁸³ See Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, III, pr. 10; Augustine, *Confessiones*, VII, iv, 6.

from which no good that could be granted is withheld. According to Grosseteste, God would not be extremely good (*summe bonus*) if the universe were capable of more goodness than that received from God.¹⁸⁴ It follows, in particular, that the world is capable of receiving the Son of God and this capacity does not come from Adam's sin, but from divine goodness that is greater than any idea of which it can be conceived. In this first text, we see the element that characterizes Grosseteste's reading of Anselm argument, i.e., the strict connection between thought and goodness: God is beyond every thought because His goodness is also unsurpassable by thought.

The other occurrences of Anselm's argument are in writings devoted to the sacrament of confession. The first, *Sermo* 19, is a sermon written at the request of the papal legate, cardinal Otto, to be delivered at a Council in London.¹⁸⁵ The second, *Deus est*, is Grosseteste's most popular work on the subject of which I will focus. Anselm's argument is at the incipit and epilogue of the treatise. From this definition it follows, according to Grosseteste, that God did not content Himself with staying alone in His absolute perfection; on the contrary, because of His overabundant goodness, He called things from non-being to being in order to participate in His excellence.¹⁸⁶ The preamble concludes with the work of redemption realized by Christ. Since God cannot die a second time, He established the sacraments to free those who could fall into sin again. The sacrament of confession, in particular, allows the sinner to return to God, who is qualified, again, as "*quo nihil melius excogitari potest.*"¹⁸⁷ Thus, the entire treatise is framed by the thought of God's transcendence formulated in the terms set by Anselm.

To McEvoy's list, we may add another occurrence found in the second edition of *De libero arbitrio*. In the second chapter, Grosseteste presents many arguments to prove that God knows particulars. Among the authorities quoted there is Anselm with his formula. The argument goes as follows: in every genre, it is better to know than not to know. If God would know only universals, but not particulars, He would be inferior than the one who knows both universals and particulars, but this is against Anselm who stated that God is greater than that which can be thought.¹⁸⁸ Here Grosseteste applies Anselm's argument of the existence of God

¹⁸⁴ *De cessatione legalium*, 120: "Si enim ipsa [universitatis] esset capabilis aliquante bonitatis quam ipse illi non influeret, non esset summe largus et ita nec summe bonus."

¹⁸⁵ It is an unedited sermon contained in MS. Bod. 830, fol. 184rb.

¹⁸⁶ *Deus est*, 239f: "Deus est quo nihil melius excogitari potest, cuius posse maximum, scire verissimum, et velle optimum. Est enim aeternus in essentia, simplex simpliciter, et invariabilis in manentia, alio non indigens sed sibi et aliis sufficiens in gloria. Igitur propter exuberantiam bonitatis propriae placuit ei alia a non esse in sui praesentiam vocare, ut haberent tantae excellentiae participationem."

¹⁸⁷ See *Deus est*, 293.

¹⁸⁸ *De libero arbitrio II*, II, 157: "Item dicit Anselmus: «Deus est maius, quam quod possit excogitari.» Sed in unoquoque genere melius est sciens nesciente et maius, ut dicit Augustinus in Enchiridio [*Ench.* 17, n.5].

to a specific divine attribute, i.e., His omniscience: as God cannot not exist, He cannot not know something.

But it is in the *De decem mandatis* that Anselm's argument is developed, which tells us that Grosseteste shows is one of the first theologians to have read the *Proslogion* with a careful attention to the text in the thirteenth century. In the commentary on the first commandment, Grosseteste connects the prohibition of having strange gods before the God of Israel with Anselm's formula.

Qui enim Deum super omnia diligit, illi soli ut summo bono amore inheret, eundemque solum summum bonum credit. Si enim aliquid aliud crederet esse equale bonum illi quod summe amat vel maius bonum ipso, illud summe amatum Deus non esset, cum Deus sit id quo magis excogitari non potest, immo etiam maius quam excogitari potest.¹⁸⁹

Grosseteste's argument goes as follows: he whoever loves God above all also believes that He alone is the supreme good. For if someone believed that there exists something else that is a greater good than what he supremely loves, then what he supremely loves would not be God, since God is that than which nothing greater can be thought. This passage, together with those mentioned above, reveals important tenets of Grosseteste's thought. First, Anselm's formula is strictly connected with love. The Prologue of *De decem mandatis* begins with the quotation from Saint Paul: "love is the fulfillment of the law" (*Romans* 13:10). The explanation of the first commandment begins with the quotation of Anselm with the emphasis on love. This means that, according to Grosseteste, God is not only that than which nothing greater can be thought, but, first of all, He is that than which nothing greater can be loved. Second, Anselm's formula is at the beginning of his argument. The same occurs also in the *Deus est*, and in a certain way, also in the *De cessatione legalium* where the formula opens his argument for the necessity of Incarnation. Grosseteste sets God's absolute transcendence, formulated in Anselm's terms, at the beginning of his argument because all further claims derive from this one, including the argument concerning creation and redemption.

On the second commandment, Grosseteste comments that "we should think of him as being, not this or that true being, but the true truth itself, not this or that good but the good goodness itself; we should think of Him as that than which nothing is higher, nothing better – as not merely the best which can be thought of but also better than can be thought of".¹⁹⁰

Ergo, si posuerimus quod Deus solum sciat universalialia et non singularialia et posuerimus, quod aliud sit per impossibile, quod sciat et universalialia et singularialia, maius erit, quod scit utrumque, quam alterum tantum. Ergo contingit secundum intellectum intelligere aliquid maius Deo, cuius oppositum dicit Anselmus, ut praedictum est."

¹⁸⁹ *De decem mandatis*, 6.

¹⁹⁰ *De decem mandatis*, 24: "Intelligamus eum non hoc vel illud verum, sed ipsum verum verum; non hoc vel illud bonum, sed ipsum bonum bonum. Intelligamus eum quo nichil est superius, sed et melius; non solum

These texts show Grosseteste's originality in reading not only Anselm's *Proslogion*, but also his *Monologion*, which is the source of the idea that God is not a determined good (or being) but the source of goodness, the only good to be good through itself.¹⁹¹ Grosseteste moves from the definition of God as *summum bonum* (first commandment) to the designation of Him as that which is not only the best (*optimum*), but also better (*melius*) than anything else that can be thought. It is a movement from the highest thing that exists in the created world to the highest thing that can be thought by us.¹⁹² Not every connection with His creatures is considered, for God as Creator is not in question, but God *qua* God. Only in God *qua* God is there fully identity of being, goodness, and truth: God is the supreme good, but also the true being, thus He deserves the supreme love.¹⁹³ He is being in such a true way that any other thing can be called 'not being'.¹⁹⁴ God's transcendence, therefore, is also the ground of the absolute ontological dependence of creatures upon the Creator.¹⁹⁵

The relationship of God with creatures, however, is not absent in Grosseteste's comments. A way of breaking the second commandment (not taking the name of the Lord in vain) is to think that He created something without reason, or even worse, that He created something bad such as wild and dangerous beasts. A full-fledged theodicy could explain these cases, upon which Grosseteste actually elaborates. But his first argument for rejecting the thesis that God created irrationally or that He created evil things is that every creature is greatly useful insofar as it has been created in size, species, and order, and in this triad a rational intelligence may recognize the signs of the Trinity: from the size, he may recognize the Creator's power; from the species, he may recognize the Creator's wisdom; from the order, he may recognize the Creator's goodness.¹⁹⁶ One could note a tension in Grosseteste's texts, for here the creatures are considered as a rung on the ladder to reach the most inner truth about God, i.e., His being a Triune God, while just some lines before Grosseteste stated that

optimum quod excogitari potest, sed et melius quam excogitari potest.”

¹⁹¹ Anselm, *Monologion*, I, 15: “Ergo consequitur, ut omnia alia bona sint per aliud quam quod ipsa sunt, et ipsum solum per seipsum. At nullum bonum, quod per aliud est, aequale aut maius est eo bono, quod per se est bonum. Illud itaque solum est summe bonum, quod solum est per se bonum.”

¹⁹² See McEvoy 1995b, 269.

¹⁹³ On the identity of transcendentals in God according to Grosseteste, see Curiello 2016.

¹⁹⁴ *De decem mandatis*, 17: “Preterea, hoc verbum *sum*, cum dicit *Ego sum Deus*, ponitur substancialiter et signat quod per se et substancialiter et necessario est, cuius comparacione alia non sunt.”

¹⁹⁵ See below § III.2.1.2b.

¹⁹⁶ *De decem mandatis*, 25: “Item, in vanum assumit nomen Dei qui credit Deum aliquid fecisse sine fine utili [...]. Sunt autem aliqui qui putant bestias crudeles et animalia venenosa et muscas non solum carere fine utili, sed insupr in hac universitate creature esse nociva. Et tamen, si queratur ab illis quis hec fecerit, non inveniunt horum factorem nisi Deum. [...] Sed omnia talia immensas habere utilitates manifestum est. Cum enim quodlibet talium habeat magnitudinem, speciem, et ordinem, potest mens conspicientis de facili intelligere ex magnitudine creature creantis potenciam, et ex specie creature creantis sapienciam, et ex ordine creature creantis bonitatem, et ita ex creatura qualibet potest acendere in Trinitatem creatricem.” Grosseteste presents the same argument in *Hexaëmeron* VIII, iv, 4, 222f.

the best way to think about God is to abandon any kind of comparison with the created world. This tension is only an apparent one, however, as Grosseteste's claims become clear when considered in the light of his theological method and convictions. His basic principle is that transcendence cannot be expressed adequately by words, but reached only by way of "dialectical thought," as McEvoy calls it.¹⁹⁷ This means that, for Grosseteste there is a dynamic relationship between transcendence and immanence, which is expressed by an ascending movement from the creatures to God. Assuming this perspective, the Trinity can be considered as a stage of this ascent: the Trinity can be understood by the human intellect – albeit in an imperfect way – since It has a certain relationship with creatures, revealed by the fact that they bear the signs of It. Recall that the first distinction of the *Tabula*, i.e., regarding God, ends with a sub-distinction on "number, weight and measure" (*Wisdom* 11:20), which expresses one of the imperfect analogies of the Trinity found in nature, according to Augustine.¹⁹⁸ In other words, it appears that the knowledge of the Trinity does not complete the human ascent to God, but this perspective only becomes manifest in the last Book of Grosseteste's *Commentary on the De mystica theologia*: God in Himself is neither Father, nor Son, nor Spirit.¹⁹⁹ This can be considered a consequence of Anselm's formula: if God is that than which nothing greater can be thought, the only way to know Him is, paradoxically, to be ignorant, and to recognize that even the trinitarian names are inadequate to express His transcendence.

The numerous signs of the Trinity in the created world do not compel human beings to know It. The reason why they cannot have a full comprehension of the Trinity is their insufficient love. This consideration is what makes Grosseteste's approach to Anselm's argument new and original, and which requires a further investigation of Grosseteste's theology.

II.2.2 Naming God means loving God

A distinguishing feature of Grosseteste's philosophy is the interplay of knowing and desiring, which Grosseteste renders by the coupled term, *aspectus/affectus mentis*. This is a basic tenet

¹⁹⁷ McEvoy 1995b, 267.

¹⁹⁸ *De Trinitate*, VI,10.

¹⁹⁹ See below § II.3.3.1.

of his thought that features from his first works until the mature *Commentary*.²⁰⁰ Grosseteste applies Anselm's definition of God both to intellect and will so that God works out to be not only that than which nothing greater can be thought, but also that than which nothing greater can be loved.²⁰¹ As Ginther has pointed out "there is a reflexivity between knowledge and will. The more ordered the mind's desires are to God's will, the more opportunity a person has to gain certain knowledge of God."²⁰² By this principle, i.e., the direct proportionality between knowledge and love, Grosseteste also distinguishes philosophy and theology. They are different not only for their different approaches to truth, but also for their different ethical consequences: only theology teaches human beings to live according to something superior to them, namely, God's law. Grosseteste uses a metaphor to describe this difference. He compares the secular sciences (*mundane sciencie*) to the fishnets: some fishnets leave the fish under the sea, other fishnets bring the fish to the surface of the sea. This means that some kind of philosophy (identified with Epicurus) leaves human beings to live according to their instinct, namely, to live under the human dignity. The other kind of philosophy (identified with Diogenes)²⁰³ is superior because it guides human beings to live according to their reason. But even more noble is theology because it allows men to live according to God's will.²⁰⁴

Grosseteste devotes other two of his *Dicta* to the limits of the philosophical knowledge of God. In the *Dictum* 104, entitled "On praising God," Grosseteste makes the relationship between knowledge, linguistic expression and love clear. Grosseteste presents the gradual process of acquiring knowledge of God as a reflection of the different ways of recognizing God's work and to praise Him for it; the true knowledge of God owes to ordered love and faith (accordingly a lesser degree of love causes lesser clarity in knowledge), so the true

²⁰⁰ E.g. *InPoAn*, I, 14, pp. 215f: "Causa autem quare obnubilatur visus anime per molem corporis corrupti est quod affectus et aspectus anime non sunt divisi, nec attingit aspectus eius nisi quo attingit affectus sive amor eius." *InPhy*, lib. 8, pp. 146 - 147: "[...] cum mentis aspectus, vel intelligencia, non possit superius ascendere quam ascendat eius affectus vel appetitus."

²⁰¹ *De decem mandatis*, 6: "Prohibetur itaque isto mandato primo, ne aliud a vero summo bono vel summum bonu credamus, vel ut summum bonum maxime amemus."

²⁰² Ginther 2004, 56.

²⁰³ Maybe Grosseteste refers to Diogenes of Apollonia, mentioned by Augustine in *De civitate Dei*, VIII, 2. It is implausible that Grosseteste refers to Diogenes of Sinope that is accused of lust, "worthy undeed of dogs," in *De civitate Dei*, XIV, 20.

²⁰⁴ *Dictum* 118, fol. 96va: "Mundane namque sciencie que trahunt hominem ut vivat secundum illud quod sub se est, id est secundum appetitus carnis, bestiales sunt, sicut retia deorsum mergencia. Ille vero sciencie que docent hominem vivere secundum illud quod sibi compar est, hoc est secundum hominem, id est secundum humanam racionem, sunt sicut retia equilibratim in aqua fluctantia. In priori rethe captus fuit Epicurus, in secundo Diogenes. Sola autem theologia docet hominem vivere secundum illud quod super se est, id est secundum Deum. Qui igitur vivit secundum illud quod sub se est, in aquis mutabilitatis submergitur. Qui vero vivit secundum hominem, id est secundum humanam racionem, nondum de aquis mutabilitatis emersit. Qui autem vivit secundum Deum, vivit secundum illud quod incommutabile est, et aquas mutabilitatis in tantum excessit in quantum secundum <Deum> vivit." Servus Gieben (1963) studied Grosseteste's idea of philosophy through the sources quoted in the *Tabula*, and he consider this *Dictum* a summary of Grosseteste's opinion about philosophy.

praise of God is to love Him. Grosseteste explains that praising God does not simply mean to narrate His works, and implicitly to recognize that He is the Creator, but to rejoice in them and to love Him back. The limit of philosophers, in particular, is that they did not praise Him, although they reached some knowledge of the Creator from the creatures.²⁰⁵ In this passage, there is an echo of the twelfth century monastic theology and its homological character, which prescribed that the knowledge of God proceed hand-in-hand with the admiration of God's goodness.²⁰⁶

The lack of praise entails a lack of love towards God. On the principle that, in theological knowledge, love and cognition are strictly connected, according to Grosseteste, the lack of love prevents philosophers from knowing God accurately. This idea derives, once again, from monastic theology.²⁰⁷ Following this idea, Grosseteste distinguishes different kinds of philosophers. The first kind of philosophers lack love, that entails a weakness of knowledge, for they come to claim two divine persons rather than three, namely they derived the two persons from human being's power and wisdom.²⁰⁸ The second kind of philosophers, endowed with a purer love (and knowledge), detected a trace of the Trinity, as occurs in the definition from the so-called *Book of the twenty-four philosophers*: "God is a monad begetting a monad in itself reflecting its own ardour."²⁰⁹ Other thinkers attributed power, wisdom, and goodness respectively to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but they never understood how they were related to each other.²¹⁰ Finally, there is the case involving the Jews who

²⁰⁵ *Dictum* 104, fol. 86va: "Item, qui narrat alicuius bone et recte voluntatis opera, ipsa ad eam referendo, nisi eidem voluntati congaudeat, affectumque dilectionis rependat, non dicitur vere laudare. Unde qui Dei enarrat opera, eaque ad ipsum refert ut ad auctorem, eidem tamen ob hoc non congaudet nec dilectionis affectum rependit, non laudat, sicut philosophi qui per visibilia Dei invisibilia cognoverunt, et per facta, factorem intellexerunt, non tamen sicut Deum glorificaverunt, [cf. Rom. 1:18-23] quia dilectionis affectum aut gratiarum actionem non rependerunt, ipsum nequaquam laudaverunt."

²⁰⁶ See, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, 42; Rupert of Deutz, *De operibus Spiritus Sancti*, I, iv.

²⁰⁷ Gaybba 1988, 32: "Texts abound in which understanding the things of God is directly linked to moral dispositions, all of which, of course, are expressions of love".

²⁰⁸ *Dictum* 33, fol. 24rb: "Philosophi et curiosi amatores potencie et sapiencie, et non habentes amorem ordinatum, et ideo habentes oculum cordis obscuratum, plus noverunt in se, licet impure, tum noverunt memoriam gignentem intelligenciam, et intelligenciam genitam de memoria, quam amoris ordinem, et ideo in speculo anime plus cognoverunt duas personas quam terciam. Unde quidam illorum tetigerunt de duabus, nichil dicentes de tercia; quidam obscure valde aliquid intellexerunt de tercia, magis limpide agnoscentes duas". This theory is the same mentioned by Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 32, a.1, ob. 1, who gives more information about the identity of those philosophers: "Dicitur etiam in Glossa Rom. I, et Exod. VIII, quod magi Pharaonis defecerunt in tertio signo, idest in notitia tertiae personae, scilicet spiritus sancti, et sic ad minus duas cognoverunt". From this passage we deduce that the source is the *Glossa ordinaria*: "Quia enim per ipsam corruptionem mentis inquieti fuerunt, in signo tertio defecerunt, fatentes sibi adversum esse Spiritum Sanctum qui erat in Moyse" (cf. *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria*, I, 130).

²⁰⁹ *Dictum* 33, fol. 24rb: "Quidam vero illorum qui plus accesserunt ad amorem ordinatum, et habuerunt oculum mentis puriorem, eciam trinitatem investigaverunt, sicut ille qui dixit [*Liber XXIV Philosophorum*, 1] «monas monadem genuit, et in se suum reflectit ardorem»."

²¹⁰ *Dictum* 33, fol. 24rb-va: "Preterea, licet omnes magni philosophi, vel plures, qui <de> Deo loqui sunt, noverunt [noverunt] ipsum esse potentem, sapientem, et bonum; et potencia attribuat Patri, sapiencia Filio,

worshipped God as the Father, but they did not relate Him to the Son because they took the name ‘father’ not for his essential feature (to be related to a son), but as a *proprium* (to be a person).²¹¹ This hierarchy of philosophers means that, according to Grosseteste, there are many ways of approaching, knowing, and naming God. All philosophers knew God as Creator from creation, but they did not glorify Him and did not love Him in return for His deeds. This does not imply, however, that even if a human being had the right degree of love and faith that it would be possible for him to know everything about God. Despite all the efforts one could make to investigate God, there will be always something hidden from his sight.²¹²

Not only does intellectual knowledge alone prove to be insufficient in theology, but language also shows its limits if it is not supported by faith. The case of the Hebrews shows that even the name of the ‘father’ may be conceived according to two completely different interpretations: according to one, it implies the “son,” but according to the other it does not imply the ‘son’ at all (this is the position held by Jews). This instance regarding the name of the ‘father’ shows that Grosseteste’s interest in clarifying the theological language was present already in the works before the *Commentary*, which needs further investigations.

II.2.3 Divine names

The fundamental problem of theological language is that it seeks to explain how we can speak about a transcendent, yet totally simple, spiritual being without altering the sense of the words that we use. At the same time, theology must explain how, and if, it is possible to

bonitas Spiritui Sancto. Non tamen omnes noverunt Trinitatem, quia non noverunt omnes potenciam in quantum ipsa est gignens sapienciam, nec sapienciam in quantum ipsa est genita, nec bonitatem in quantum ipsa est procedens vel spirata.” The triad power, wisdom and goodness and its attribution to the Trinitarian Persons originates from Abelard and became popular among the Victorines; see Luscombe 1969, 115-121.

²¹¹ *Dictum* 33, fol. 24va: “Item, cum dicat auctoritas quod Iudei credunt Patrem et negant Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, forte hoc est intelligendum non solum eo modo quo dicitur quod Deus est Pater omnium creaturarum, sed ideo eciam dicuntur credere Patrem quia credunt unicam personam cui convenit proprium Patris. Credunt namque Deum esse individuum essenciam racionalem, non factam, nec creatam, nec genitam, nec procedentem, et hoc soli Patri convenit. Non tamen credunt Patrem, hoc est gignentem Filium, quia tunc crederent et Filium. Credunt ergo Patrem, hoc est eam personam que est Pater. Non tamen credunt Patrem secundum racionem et diffinicionem Patris, sed credunt eum qui est Pater secundum proprium Patris, velut si quis agnosceret animal risibile, non agnoscens racionale, agnosceret hominem secundum suum proprium, et non agnosceret ipsum secundum suam diffinicionem; et diceretur agnoscere hominem quia agnoscit hominis proprium, licet non eius diffinicionem.”

²¹² *De decem mandatis*, 29: “Vietur quoque multis quod, cum non sit in hominis potestatem veritatem cognoscere, sed lateant plerumque multe veritates etiam diligentissimos investigatores suos ignoranciam vel errorem in habentibus maxime sciendi amorem, et addentibus investigandi laborem, non esse imputandos ad culpam.”

speak meaningfully of God. During Grosseteste's time, medieval thinkers set out to explain our human disposition, which, they claimed could allow us to provide a name for God. They divide words into three sorts. Some are univocal (always used with the same sense), some are purely equivocal (used with quite different senses), and some are analogical (used with related senses).²¹³ Grosseteste does not develop a full-fledged theory of divine predication, but he incidentally comes across this subject. The three following passages illustrate his approach to this issue.

The first text is in a *Dictum* about mercy. Grosseteste gives two definitions of it: the first is "the will to relieve a wretched from his wretchedness," the second is "compassion for the wretchedness."²¹⁴ He explains that the first definition applies to God and angels because there is no passion in them, while the second applies to human beings while they are on earth (*in via*). Therefore, 'mercy' is equivocally said of God/angels and human beings because there is no passion in God and the angels unless taken in a metaphorical sense.²¹⁵ Grosseteste resorts to the equivocity argument to explain how an attribute can be differently predicated of superior (God and angels) and inferior (humans) beings, but his account does not develop a detailed description of the distinction between the Creator and the creatures. This is probably due to the literary genre of the *Dicta*, namely, brief notes written down roughly, while he was in the school.

The second, and more extended, passage is from the *De libero arbitrio*. In the first part of the treatise (chapters 1–15), Grosseteste presents arguments against the existence of free choice; by contrast, the second part (chapters 16–18) concerns the arguments for the exact opposite, namely, that free choice is possible. In chapter 17, Grosseteste begins the account of the nature of free choice, but it is preceded by a discussion of whether free choice is said univocally of God, angels, and man. Against Anselm's view, Grosseteste holds that nothing can be said univocally of the Creator and the creatures.²¹⁶ More specifically, according to Anselm, the definition of free choice is the same for God, the good angels, and men, while 'animal' is said univocally of many kinds of beasts.²¹⁷ Grosseteste presents four reasons to

²¹³ Valente 2007.

²¹⁴ *Dictum* 2, fol. 1va: "Misericordia est amor sive voluntas relevandi miserum a sua miseria. [...]. Voluntatem autem talem relevandi hominem a miseria in homine viatore concomitantur dolor et compassio de miseri miseria. Unde a proprietate concomitante sic solet diffiniri: Misericordia est compassio miserie qua utique si possimus subvenire compellimur."

²¹⁵ *Dicta* 2, fol. 1va-b: "Prior ergo diffinicio misericordie magis est substancialis, et convenit Deo et celestibus spiritibus. Secunda vero diffinicio homini viatori convenit. Deo autem et supernis spiritibus non convenit dolor et compassio, quia non est in eis passio nisi metaphorice sumantur hec nomina et equivoce dicuntur de illis et de nobis."

²¹⁶ *De libero arbitrio* I, cap. 17, pp. 79f: "Univoce enim videtur dici secundum Anselmum, qui unam et communem assignat liberi arbitrii definitionem, secundum quod dicitur de Deo et de homine et angelo."

²¹⁷ Anselm, *De libertate arbitrii*, I, ed Schmitt, 208: "Quamvis differat liberum arbitrium hominum a libero

rejects univocity in theological language. First, in God a quality is identical with His substance, and therefore, ‘free will’ is the same as ‘divinity,’ while in creatures it is not the case. Second, nothing can be interchanged (*in nullo communicant*) between God and the creatures. Third, if something would be interchanged, this would mean that God is not simple, but has parts. Finally, ‘free will’ as ascribed to the creatures is in one of the ten categories, but this is impossible in the case of God.²¹⁸ In sum, Grosseteste leaves no space for univocity in theological language because of God’s transcendence; there is nothing that God and the creatures share ontologically, and thus, nothing can be said in the same sense of them. Other versions of the doctrine of univocity were circulating among the masters of theology, but Grosseteste does not discuss them before the *Commentary*.²¹⁹ We will see that in the *Commentary*, Grosseteste concedes that some names can be said univocally of God and the creatures.

Grosseteste tries to account for Anselm’s view in order to justify the univocal meaning of an attribute applied to God and the creatures:

Concedimus autem quod nihil univoce dicitur de creatura et Creatore, sed tamen creatura rationalis ita propinqua est vestigium et similitudo et imago sui Creatoris, quod in his secundum quae est ita propinquum et assimilatum vestigium, meretur etiam communicare et nomen, non quidem univoce sed propinqua, imitatoria similitudine; sic et nominis definitionem habet unam non univoce sed propinqua, imitatoria similitudine.²²⁰

Grosseteste holds that no name is said univocally of God and creatures, however, a distinction must be made between the rational and non-rational creatures because the former are closer to God and imitate Him better, thus they may share names with Him, though not univocally. Grosseteste implicitly admits that metaphysics and meaning are isomorphic: as rational creatures are images of the Creator, so the names applied to rational creatures are images of those attributed to the Creator. The imitative similitude is realized when the intellect can look at the model in the modelled, and conversely at one glance, such as the

arbitrio Dei et angelorum bonorum diffinitio tamen hujus libertatis in utriusque, secundum hoc nomen, eadem debet esse: licet enim animal differat ab animali sive substantialiter, sive accidentaliter, diffinitio tamen, secundum nomen animalis, omnibus animalibus est eadem.”

²¹⁸ *De libero arbitrio I*, cap. 17, p. 80: “Quod vero liberum arbitrium non dicatur univoce de creatura et creatore, patet sic: arbitrii libertas in creatore substantia est et divinitas est; in creatura qualitas est et divinitas non est. Ergo non univoce dicitur de his. Item: in nullo communicant creator et creatura. Univoca autem in aliquo communicant. Ergo creator et creatura in nullo univocantur. Item: si univocaretur Deus cum aliquo in aliquo dicto non secundum relativum, oporteret Deum esse compositum et non simplicem, vel ipsum esse partem substantiae alterius vel qualitatem vel quantitatem alterius. Item: liberum arbitrium dictum de creatura continetur sub genere aliquo praedicamentali; dictum vero de Deo sub nullo genere praedicamentali continetur. Ergo non univoce de illis dicitur.”

²¹⁹ Univocity in theological language was defended by Prevostin of Cremona, Stephen Langton and William of Auxerre, see Valente 2007, 234-272. The last two authors were surely known to Grosseteste.

²²⁰ *De libero arbitrio I*, cap. 17, p. 80.

image of the seal and the image impressed in the wax by the seal.²²¹ In the case of the attribute of ‘free choice,’ Grosseteste concedes that it can be shared by the Creator and the creatures because the intellect perceives the kind of similitude of the seal in the wax.²²² Grosseteste explicitly says that ‘free choice’ is not said univocally – against Anselm – of God and creatures, but it is not a completely equivocal name. Grosseteste also rejects the idea of those who attended to the essential diversity between the free will in God and in creatures and gave differing definitions of free choice in each case, or even denied the existence of free choice in God, a denial that Grosseteste rejects.²²³

The third text devoted to the theme of the equivocity/univocity of names comes from the *Commentary on the Physics*. Silvia Donati reconstructed in great detail the tradition of the Latin medieval commentaries on the *Physics*, both in Paris and Oxford.²²⁴ Unfortunately, she began her study with the commentaries of the late fifties of the thirteenth century. Donati shows that the English commentators clearly distinguished between a logical and a metaphysical level of discussion about being.²²⁵ She refers to authors like Geoffrey of Aspill whose *Commentary on the Physics* was written in the fifties. Geoffrey holds that in logic the sufficient condition for a term to be equivocal is to be predicated according to different notions; by contrast, in metaphysics and physics, the conditions to predicate being equivocally are stronger. A term is equivocal not only if it is predicated according to different notions, but also if the things of which it is predicated are not ontologically or epistemologically dependent on each other. The consequence is that ‘being’ is equivocal for the logician since it is predicated of substance and accidents according to different notions, whereas it is analogical for the metaphysician since accidents depend on substance.

Grosseteste’s position is less developed than that of Geoffrey; nonetheless there are interesting elements that are shared by the two authors. Grosseteste holds that a word is used for several things either univocally or equivocally. Although he does not define an intermediate category, he distinguishes the case of equivocal names that are said in to a prior

²²¹ *De libero arbitrio I*, cap. 17, p. 80: “Est quoque similitudo tam vicine imitatoria, quod intellectus unico aspectu contueri potest exemplar in exemplato et e contrario <sicut imaginem sigilli in cera ab illo sigillo impressa et e contrario>.”

²²² *De libero arbitrio I*, cap. 17, p. 80: “Et intellectui sic contemplanti, assignandum est unum nomen et una definitio liberi arbitrii in Creatore et creatura, quia unico et non diviso aspectu contuetur haec in creatura et Creatore propter vicinae imitationis similitudinem.”

²²³ *De libero arbitrio I*, cap. 17, p. 81: “Alii vero [...] differenter definierunt liberum arbitrium in creatura et Creatore, vel etiam liberum arbitrium abnegare videntur a Creatore.” The reference is to Peter Lombard, *Libri quatuor sententiarum*, II, 25.1-2, where he states that the definition of free choice as free ad utrumlibet cannot apply to God but only to human beings. He then adds that God and good angels are free in the sense that they can choose what has been decreed by reason without necessity.

²²⁴ Donati 2005.

²²⁵ Donati 2005, 7ff.

and a posterior sense (*per prius et posterius*). Grosseteste's thesis is that 'being' is said equivocally of the First existent, to whom existence is substantial, and of creatures, to which it is not. His arguments are based on the idea that being is said substantially of the First Being because substantial being is necessarily being in virtue of itself; but what is being in virtue of itself can absolutely be only one eternal being.²²⁶ From this premise follows the first argument: "Quod autem ens equivoce dicatur, ostendetur primo per impossibile. Si enim dicatur univoce sequitur omnia esse unum simplicissimum, sicut posuerunt quidam."²²⁷ The target of Grosseteste's criticism becomes clear some pages later where he comments on Aristotle's criticism of Eleatic monism: "Parmenides peccavit falsum dicendo et non sillogizando. Falsum enim dixit dicendo ens dici univoce cum dicatur multipliciter."²²⁸ This argument, therefore, is against monism because 'being' said univocally cannot account for the difference in reality. The principle of difference is indeed something that is "not-being," as the principle of difference of humanity is something "not-humanity," but it is impossible to derive particular beings from "not-being".²²⁹

The second argument stems from the same premise, namely, that only one eternal thing is necessary to exist substantially, and everything that begins to exist does not exist substantially. From there, Grosseteste specifies his position and affirms that for a thing that begins to exist is nothing other than to depend on eternal substantial existence, or to be upheld by its Word. Grosseteste concludes that since 'being' is said only of one thing substantially, and of other things with respect to its dependence on that one thing, in a prior and a posterior sense, it is clear that it is said equivocally.²³⁰ According to Grosseteste, God is the only being that can be called 'being' substantially, while all the other things can be called 'being' after Him and in relation (of dependence) to Him. Like Geoffrey of Aspall, Grosseteste recognizes the existence of an ontological dependence that links the things of the outer world, but unlike

²²⁶ *InPhy*, 6f: "Si ens dicatur univoce de omnibus cum substantialiter dicatur de primo ente, dicatur de omnibus substantialiter. Sed de quocumque dicitur substantialiter ens, ipsum necesse est esse per se. Necesse autem esse per se non potest nisi unum solum simpliciter eternum."

²²⁷ *InPhy*, 7.

²²⁸ *InPhy*, 12. I accept the reading 'dici' instead of 'dividi' suggested by Lewis 2009, 45, n. 24.

²²⁹ *InPhy*, 7: "Si enim univoce dicitur non distrahitur in multitudinem nisi per diversas differentias quarum nulla est ens, sicut humanitas non distrahitur in multas humanitates, nisi per multas differentias quarum nulla est humanitas; ac impossibile est ens distrahi in multitudinem per id quod non est."

²³⁰ *InPhy*, 7: "Item cum unum solum eternum necesse sit substantialiter esse, omne autem quod incipit esse non substantialiter est, quicquid incipit esse in tantum est in quantum ab eterno esse substantiali dependet, et rem que incipit esse nichil aliud est quam ab esse eterno substantiali dependere vel a Verbo ipsius portari; magisque est quod ei propinquius adheret, minusque quod minus propinque. Cum ergo esse de uno tantum dicatur substantialiter et de aliis secundum dependenciam ab illo uno secundum prius et posterius, manifestum est quod dicitur equivoce." I accept the emendation to the text suggested by Lewis (2009, 45 n. 27).

Geoffrey, Grosseteste is more interested in the dependence of creatural beings on God than the dependence of accidents on substance.

The case of the equivocity of 'being' is different from the case of 'mercy' seen previously in the first text. In *Dictum 2*, the equivocity represents the pure equivocity that is identical with the metaphor: there is no passion or pain in God, but metaphorically (or as Grosseteste says, equivocally) they can be attributed to Him. In the case of 'being,' by contrast, the equivocity that connects different things is *de facto* an analogy based on the relation of dependence, which is different from the pure equivocity.

II.2.4 Conclusion

During his years as master of theology, Grosseteste gives two answers to the question "Who is God?": the first is "God is the first form of all things," the second is "God is that than which nothing greater can be thought." Those definitions mirror two ways of considering God: the first is about thinking of God as the causal principle of everything, the second is about thinking God as He is in Himself.

Grosseteste point out that even though philosophers have reached some knowledge of God, as for instance when someone also glimpsed the mystery of Trinity, they did not actually praise God because they did not love Him. The lack of love is a lack of knowledge and vice versa, and this correlation is a consequence of the anthropological principle that will and understanding (*affectus/aspectus mentis*) are dependent on each other. Who does not love God cannot have a proper concept of God and therefore cannot attribute to Him a proper name.

Searching for a *quaestio* by Grosseteste on theological language will not yield a fruitful outcome. Ginther admits that Grosseteste's analysis of theological language may seem philosophically unsatisfactory.²³¹ I also showed that the theological debate on univocity or equivocity is rather slim in Grosseteste's works. In the remaining portion of this chapter and in the one to follow, I will show that Grosseteste indeed has his own theory of theological language, although he did not develop it in the form of a treatise or a *quaestio*. Such a theory must be derived from scattered remarks in his *Commentary*.

²³¹ Ginther (2004, 54) considers that before 1250 there were few discussions on the nature of theological language, thus Grosseteste was not an exception. Ginther's view is highly debatable. The study of Luisa Valente, in fact, has proven the presence of a rich debate over theological language in the years between 1150 and 1220. The absence of a full-fledged doctrine of theological language – along with other topics – is very likely due to the short amount of time that he dedicated to the teaching of theology.

II.3 God as *manentia* in the *Corpus Dionysiacum*

McEvoy notes that Anselm was for Grosseteste the theologian who most accurately expressed the transcendence of God.²³² Commenting on the *Corpus*, Grosseteste finds another authority and yet another way to express this concept. In the commentaries on the *De divinis nominibus* and *De mystica theologia*, there is no explicit quotation or reference to the two perspectives on God *qua* God mentioned above, but their meaning is present. The main characteristic of the *Commentary* is that Grosseteste, in the wake of Dionysius, holds a paradox: God is at the same time unknowable and knowable (*ignorantia/omne intelligibile*), ineffable and many-named (*ineffabile, multivocum*).²³³ The alternative in the paradox expresses the two perspectives indicated in the previous paragraph: the first attribute expresses God's absolute transcendence, while the second his causal proximity to creatures. The peculiarity of the *Commentary* is that those two perspectives are kept together: divine names signify at the same time the process of God towards the creatures and His super excellent divinity.²³⁴

The first two paragraphs are dedicated to theological knowledge, while the latter to theological language. The first paragraph presents three sub-paragraphs that deal with theological knowledge *per se*. The topic of human beings' possibility to know God is twofold because human beings can be considered as beings on earth (*in via*) or beings in heaven (*in patria*).²³⁵ Grosseteste's central concern is about ordinary knowledge, i.e., *in via*. This topic can be further divided to account for the knowledge of God based on the Bible, but also according to the natural knowledge of God, such as that described by the philosophers. First, we will discuss the possibility of human beings to know directly God without the help of senses and the role of God in this process (II.3.1.1). I will argue that Grosseteste contemplates that direct knowledge of God occurs in more cases than commonly believed. However, normally, human beings climb towards God starting from the knowledge of material things that are considered as symbols of God's presence in the universe (§ II.3.1.2). The last sub-paragraph is dedicated to the philosophical knowledge of God that does not clearly recognize

²³² McEvoy 1995b, 262.

²³³ *Dionysiaca*, 77.

²³⁴ *DN* V, M 232rb: "Hos itaque beneficos processus significant hec praedictae nominationes ita quod simul insinuant et significant super excellentiam divinitatis ad ea ad que se extendunt iidem processus."

²³⁵ On knowledge of God in Heaven, see below § IV.3.3.2B.

the signs of God's presence in the universe (§ II.3.1.2).

In the second paragraph (II.3.2), I will show how Grosseteste applies the anthropological principle that knowledge and love, *aspectus/affectus*, go hand-in-hand in the *Commentary*. It will be clear that the *Corpus* permits one to break the isomorphism between love and knowledge and argues for the superiority of love in theological knowledge.

The third paragraph is dedicated to theological language. Following Dionysius, Grosseteste considers the *via negativa* as the best way to speak of God (II.3.3.1). This means that the most proper name attachable to God is indeed no-name at all (II.3.3.2).

II.3.1 Knowing God

II.3.1.1 *The steps of the ascent*

Grosseteste never provides a demonstration of the existence of God, nor before the *Commentary* nor afterwards.²³⁶ When he comments on the *Corpus*, Grosseteste is no longer a teacher, so he does not dwell on natural theology but he takes for granted that his readership already presupposed the existence of God, but also believed in a Christian God with proper attributes.²³⁷ Nevertheless, the problem of how it is possible to have knowledge of an infinite being by a finite intellect calls for a solution. Grosseteste does not try to demonstrate the human knowledge of God because he takes it as a fact; rather, he aims to explain the psychological mechanism that makes this knowledge possible.²³⁸ First, we need to outline Grosseteste's philosophical psychology, then we can discuss the grades of theological knowledge.

Grosseteste illustrates his view on the faculties of the soul and their objects in two sermons: *Ecclesia sancta celebrat* and *Ex rerum initiarum*, both written in the forties, the same years of the *Commentary*. In the latter sermon, the starting-point of Grosseteste's argument is the consideration that the human being *qua* human being is a rational being. From this, Grosseteste argues that human beings have the natural power to contemplate God as He

²³⁶ McEvoy 1995b, 274.

²³⁷ It must be recalled that the principle according to which the subject of theology cannot be understood, unless it is first believed, cf. *Hexaëmeron* I, 2, i, 50: "[...] istius sapiencie [i.e. theology] subiectum neque per se notum est, neque per scienciam acceptum, sed sola fide assumptum et creditum. Nec posset esse intellectum, nisi prius esset creditum."

²³⁸ It is not a case that Grosseteste develops his anthropology only after the *Commentary* in the sermon *Ecclesia sancta celebrat*, which is deeply influenced by Dionysius's thought, see McEvoy 1980b, 141.

is, without images, and to know everything in His *rationes*, the eternal exemplars of a created thing in His mind.²³⁹ In the *Ecclesia sancta celebrat*, Grosseteste gives a more detailed account. There he argues that God is the highest object of human knowledge, and therefore, He can be known and loved by the highest faculty, wisdom (*sapientia*), which is a natural power that allows human beings to see God directly.²⁴⁰ Grosseteste insists on two points: God is not only an object of knowledge, but also the aim of the will; this tendency to know and love Him is natural and not a gift from Grace.²⁴¹ This means that everyone is potentially able to know God directly, but actually it is not the case. Why? Grosseteste posed his answer to this difficult question in a previous work, *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*, where the faculty of wisdom is called intelligence (*intelligentia*). It is a faculty that does not need any corporeal instrument because it is immaterial, and its natural way of knowing is the direct irradiation of the supreme light, God, and not by abstraction from the data of senses. This is the kind of knowledge that is normally acquired *in patria* when the soul is delivered from the body. However, *in via*, this power is normally asleep because of the weight of the body, except for someone who is already completely free from love of corporeal things and their phantasms.²⁴² Below we will try to identify who are those who can see God directly already in this life.

The second faculty of the human soul is the intellect (*intellectus*), which has two objects: the principles of knowledge that are self-evident, and the separate substances.²⁴³ The third power pertains to the demonstrative knowledge concerning the permanent aspects of the material world, while the objects of this faculty are the mutable realities.²⁴⁴ In this paragraph, I

²³⁹ *Ex rerum initiarum*, 121: “Et in quantum rationalis, habet potestatem naturalem et virtutem contemplandi Deum Unum et Trinum, veritatem nec fallibilem nec fallacem, iustitiam et bonitatem, sicuti est, absque imaginibus, et in rationibus aeternis et causalibus omnium in Ipso [...] cognoscendi omnia.”

²⁴⁰ *Ecclesia sancta celebrat*, 171: “Deus autem supremus est entium, [...]propterea potentia naturalis dei apprehensiva, appetitiva et motiva ad apprehendendum [...]suprema potentia est, et pars vitae humanae nobilissima. Licet enim deus sit incomprehensibilis, videbimus tamen eum «facie ad faciem» et «sicuti est», testante scriptura, quod non fieret nisi inesset nobis adhuc naturalis potentia.”

²⁴¹ The first point was discussed in § II.2.2 and it will be reconsidered also in § II.3.3. The second point will be discussed in § IV.3.1.3b.

²⁴² *InPoAn*, I, ch. 14, p. 213-214: “Si pars suprema anime humane, que vocatur intellectiva et que non est actus alicuius corporis neque egens in operatione sui propria instrumento corporeo, non esset mole corporis corrupti obnubilata et aggravata, ipsa per irradiationem acceptam a lumine superiori haberet completam scientiam absque sensus adminiculo, sicut habebit cum anima erit exuta a corpore et sicut forte habent aliqui penitus absoluti ab amore et phantasmatis rerum corporalium. Sed, quia puritas oculi anime per corpus corruptum obnubilata et aggravata est, omnes vires ipsius anime rationalis in homine nato occupate sunt per molem corporis, ne possint agere, et ita quodammodo sopite.”

²⁴³ *Ex rerum initiarum*, 121: “Habet etiam virtutem intellectivam ad cognoscendum, sine medio, principium scientiarum immediata, et intellectualem ad cognoscendum, sicuti sunt, sine imaginibus, substantias separatas et intelligibiles.”

²⁴⁴ *Ex rerum initiarum*, 121: “Habet quoque virtutem scitivam ad sciendum per propria media proprie dicta scibilia et uno modo semper se habet. Habet quoque et virtutem cognoscendi, per congrua media, ea que non semper necessario uno modo se habent, ut frequentius, que dicitur virtus artis.” There are slight differences in the account given in *Ecclesia sancta celebret*, which is more detailed; on this, see McEvoy 1980b, 144-158.

shall focus on the first faculty (wisdom), its object (God), and those who can achieve this kind of knowledge. Grosseteste considers this topic crucial to such a point that he treats it in every treatise of the *Corpus*, and in each one, Grosseteste introduces nuances due to the peculiarity of the treatise.

The first Book of the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus* poses the basis for the discussion. I consider a text in particular as Grosseteste's manifesto about the progress of theological knowledge. As it usually happens, Grosseteste presents his own view on the subject by paraphrasing Dionysius.

[Dionysius] insinuat ordinem progressus nostre conspectionis donec pertingimus ut fas ad supersubstantialem radium incomprehensibilem[...] ait itaque: *nunc autem*, in hac videlicet vita, *utimur; ut nobis possibile, propriis quidem* seu familiaribus, id est congruentibus *symbolis in divina*, id est in spiritalia conspicienda videlicet, *et ex hiis*, id est symbolis, *rursus extendimur analogice* nostre videlicet possibilitati *ad simplicem et unitam veritatem intelligibilem speculaminum*, id est adorationum angelicarum [...], quarum veritas absque phantasmatis et symbolis speculata simplex est et unita. [...] Unde post intelligentiam supremarum creaturarum non restat intellectui nisi in solo et summo desiderio supersubstantialis radii quiescere et quiete et inoperabilitate expectare superfusionem et contactum et infusionem supersubstantialis radii ipsum sibi coniuncturi et post se tracturi, secundum analogiam susceptibilitatis sue.²⁴⁵

In this life, the starting-point of theological knowledge is the knowledge of the symbols more familiar to us; Grosseteste is probably thinking about material things, which are closer to our knowledge as they are symbols of the spiritual realities. Indeed, we have the power of climbing from the material realm to the spiritual one. The aim of this progress is a kind of knowledge similar to that of the angels. They do not need phantasms and symbols, but can grasp directly their objects. Beyond this kind of knowledge there is not activity, but only a quiet waiting for the divine ray that enlightens the mind. Accordingly, we can identify three moments in which the human intellect climbs towards God: (1) knowledge of God through material things; (2) direct knowledge of God without phantasm; (3) ignorance of God in the mystical union. The third point is the last step for a created mind, but there is yet a further step, namely, to know the divine ray that contains the divine *rationes*, which are the efficient causes of everything and the divine science itself. But Grosseteste, following Dionysius, holds that it is impossible for a created nature to attain this kind of knowledge because it would mean to know God as God knows Himself.²⁴⁶ The fact that the blessed in Heaven can see God

²⁴⁵ *DNI*, § 57-58, 155-156.

²⁴⁶ *DNI* § 59, 156: "In mente enim divina preexisterunt ab eterno eterne rationes omnium creandorum, in quibus rationibus omnia vivunt [...]. Cum enim eternaliter sint [scil. rationes] in ipso thearchico radio non ab alio extra sint cause efficientes et conditrices omnium ex nihilo et ita in infinitum superexcedentes et finales et terminates, nullo modo potest essentia vel virtus creata ad hanc admirabilem et sic confortatam scientiam.

directly does not entail that they can know everything, as God knows everything by knowing Himself.²⁴⁷ The reason of this impossibility is due to the infinity of God: it is impossible to circumscribe God in a created mind, as it is impossible for the sight of the created to see the whole of the sky in one glance.

Those three steps are also described in another short passage from the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*. There Grosseteste explains the meaning of the Dionysian expression “illuminated by the Wisdom.” He explains:

*Illuminatus imperscutabili profunditate sapientie hoc enim est rapi in tertium et supremum celum. Et videre ibi secreta que non licet homini loqui. In primum namque caelum rapitur qui in actus virtutis artis et scientiae sustollitur incognitis per artem et scientiam speculans Deum. In secundum vero qui in actus virtutis intellectus elevatur et in intellectis limpidius Deum speculatur. Post quod caelum non est superius nisi illud quod prediximus. In hac itaque cognitione omnia a Deo auferuntur et sic quasi opposita non inconvenienter ei attribuuntur.*²⁴⁸

To be illuminated by Wisdom is what occurred to Saint Paul (see 2 *Corinthians* 12:2). It represents the highest degree of knowledge. Grosseteste also explains the other degrees. The first one (1) is that of science, or as we said, knowledge of God through material things; the second degree (2) is a more clear knowledge of God; (3) ignorance of God, in the mystical union, and at this degree it is possible to deny and affirm every attribute of God because it becomes evident that He is beyond every thing. Now we will analyze these three steps in detail.

(1) In Book VII of the *De divinis nominibus*, the discussion of the human knowledge of God retains all of Dionysius’s (and Grosseteste’s) attention. The problem is thus stated: how is it possible to know God who is beyond every cognitive faculty, both sensible and intellectual?²⁴⁹ Grosseteste initially responds that the source of our knowledge is not from God’s nature, but that the sensible and intelligible species are derived from material things. The process is bottom-up, and not vice-versa, ascending through the hierarchy of beings.²⁵⁰ At

Ipse enim rationes divina sunt scientia.”

²⁴⁷ *DN VII*, M 246va: “Divinus intellectus, qui idem est cum divina sapientia, cognoscens se, cognoscit omnia.”

²⁴⁸ *DN VII*, M 248ra.

²⁴⁹ *DN VII*, M 247ra-b: “Querit consequenter qualiter nos cognoscimus Deum, cum ipse sit superior omni virtute nostra apprehensiva et cognoscitiva et omni operatione omnis virtutis nostre apprehensive et cognoscitive, dicens: *in hiis autem*, id est consequenter predictis, *oportet quaerere qualiter nos cognoscimus Deum, neque intelligibilem*, id est inapprehensibilem, vel cognoscibilem virtute creata cognoscitiva immaterialium et spiritalium, *neque sensibilem* id est apprehensibilem virtute apprehensiva materialium et corporalium; *neque existentem universaliter quid entium*, vel secundum aliud exemplar ‘quid intelligibilium’. Nullum enim omnino ens aut intelligibile est Deus, sed super omne ens et omnem intellectum ac per hoc nullum ens aut intellectus potest ad ipsum.”

²⁵⁰ *DN VII*, M 247rb: “Posita itaque questione et motivus ad dubitandum subiungit solutionem dicens quod non cognoscimus deum ex ipsius natura. Quemadmodum cognoscimus intelligibilia et sensibilia per species horum intelligibiles et sensibiles nostris viribus apprehensivis eis apponentes, sed cognoscimus eum primo ex entium ordinatione. [...] Cum vero per ordinem creaturarum ordinatis operationibus virium apprehensivarum

this point, Grosseteste departs from the paraphrase of the Dionysian text, and adds his point-of-view: every being is a similitude of God, and reminds us not only of the unity of its cause, but also the Trinity because everything is made of three elements, *scil.* matter, form, and the composite of both.²⁵¹ The images of God present in the material things are not of the same quality; they are like a mirror, some reflect the image of God better than others.²⁵² Grosseteste, however, believes that it is possible and desirable to transcend images to reach the reality they signify. The act of transcending is not strictly speaking an operation because the intellect is, at this point, passive, its role is just to receive God's illumination without images. This passivity is clearly expressed by the fact that the intellect can receive only what God wants to reveal.²⁵³ There is a faculty appointed for this job, namely, the faculty of wisdom (*sapientia*).²⁵⁴ Sense perception is only the first step of the ladder by which human beings ascend to God; it is a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for it becomes useless when the mystical union is realized.

Indeed, the role of sense perception can be invalidated in two cases: first, it is possible, although it is rare, that someone can receive knowledge directly from God by way of illumination and without the help of the senses; second, senses configure themselves only as the occasion for the soul to operate.²⁵⁵ A proof that an a-sensorial knowledge of divine things is possible is given, according to Grosseteste, by human beings' natural desire. The premises are that nothing in nature is in vain (*natura nihil facit frustra*), and that human beings' desire to know God purely and without phantasm is natural. In conclusion, this a-sensorial knowledge cannot be frustrated, and consequently, it is possible for humans.²⁵⁶ Even if we

sic ascendimus ab imis usque ad supremas.”

²⁵¹ See below, § III.2.2.2.

²⁵² *DN VII*, M 247rb: “In cuiusque entis comprehensi a nobis, unitate quasi in vestigio et speculo comprehendentes Dei factoris unitatem in materia et forma et compositione ipsius entis potentiam factoris ex nihilo educentis et sapientiam formantis et bonitatem compositis et sic in unitatem trinitatem. Et in entibus inferioribus inferiori virtute comprehensis, cognoscitur minus limpide tanquam in vestigio minus formato et speculo minus lucido et imagine minus imitante. In entibus vero superioribus superiori virtute comprehensis, cognoscitur limpidius tanquam in predictis formationibus lucidioribus et magis imitantibus.”

²⁵³ *DN VII*, M 247rb-va: “Oportet etiam transcendere supremas creaturas et operationes omnium virium apprehensivarum et fieri in actuali omnium ignorantia et in illa supersplendentem divinum <247va> radium suscipere et ab eo illuminari et ei uniri. Et in hac unione Deum, ut possibile, sine imaginibus videre. [...] sed solum potens suscipere ab ipso quod dignatur largiri.”

²⁵⁴ *DN VII*, M 247va: “Potentiam itaque quam dicimus virtutem naturalem sapientie, id est cognitionis Dei in se, ut possibile, sine imaginibus, est potentia transcendendi operationes omnium virium apprehensivarum et fieri in supereminentia, in ignorantia omnium, secundum se impotens, superius agere et apponere in divinum radium.”

²⁵⁵ On this second point, see *DN IV*, M 210vb: “Nec intelligat aliquis ex hiis verbis auctoris vel nostris asserere vel insinuare quod virtutes et potentie naturaliter inferiores directe agant in naturaliter superiores et eas moveant sed quod occasione actionum inferiorum virtutum agant virtutes superiores.”

²⁵⁶ *DN III*, M 197va: “Quod autem possibilis sit nuda et pura cognitio divinatorum absque phantasmatis, manifestum est ex hoc quod naturaliter appetimus nudum et purum eorum intellectum et contemplationem. Non enim naturaliter appetimus impossibilia.”

accept the first premise, what makes the argument weak is the second premise. In particular, we may wonder how it is possible that pure knowledge without phantasm can be natural if this kind of knowledge, Grosseteste admits, is possible only in rare cases *in via*. In this life, indeed, the normal way of knowing is by abstraction from the sensory perception. However Grosseteste, since his early works, states that sensory perception is not the highest mean to reach the truth.²⁵⁷

(2) Some contemporary scholars wondered about the identity of those who can attain a direct knowledge of God without the help of senses. The question is not trivial because if, for Grosseteste, this were the ordinary way to acquire knowledge, then his theory would be strictly Augustinian. Aristotle's psychology would stand in stark contrast to Grosseteste's view, and hence, he would never have blended it with Augustine's psychology. Grosseteste speaks of "the pure in heart and those perfectly purified" and McEvoy identifies them with a small number of mystics who had the privilege of seeing God on earth, such as Moses, Saint Paul, the Virgin Mary, while normally this experience is accessible only to the blessed and the saints in Heaven.²⁵⁸ From this, McEvoy rightly concludes that "the opposition is not between Augustinian illumination on the one hand and Aristotelian abstraction on the other, but between human knowledge in the present limited condition and the direct vision of God."²⁵⁹

We can add another category of beings that can reach divine knowledge without the help of phantasms already during their lives on earth, which has neglected by commentators. In the *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Grosseteste distinguishes the way of knowledge of angels from that of human beings: angels comprehend God without sensible images and phantasms, while human beings can only speculate about God by starting from sense perception.²⁶⁰ The same expression that characterizes angelical knowledge, "*sine phantasma*," however, denotes another category of beings, namely, the highest members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Dionysius carefully distinguishes common people from the hierarchs: the first can understand only the appearances of the rites, while those who celebrate move from the images to the divine realities signified by the rites. The expression used by Grosseteste to qualify the

²⁵⁷ See *InPoAn*, I, 14, p. 213, ll.228ff; see note 71.

²⁵⁸ McEvoy 1982, 326. Grosseteste speaks of the pure of heart, an evangelical expressions (*Matthew 5,8*), in *De Veritate*, 138: "Mundicordes vero et perfecte purgati ipsam lucem veritatis in se conspiciunt, quod immundi facere nequeunt"

²⁵⁹ McEvoy 1982, 329. Christina Van Dyke (2009) studied the role of illumination in ordinary knowledge and spoke of "an Aristotelian theory of divine illumination."

²⁶⁰ *EH I*, 320, 12-17: "Secunda autem differentia est quod celestes ordines et substancie existentes intellectus intelligunt deum et divinam virtutem secundum ipsi fas est hoc est absque sensibilibus ymaginibus intellectu ab omni fantasmate abstracto; nos autem reducimur ad divinas speculationes sensibilibus ymaginibus quia nostre infirmitati non est aliter possibile in ipsas sersum duci." See also *EH I*, 345, 13-16.

ascensus of the hierarchs is once again “naked and without phantasms.”²⁶¹ The monks, who constitute an order inferior to that of priests and deacons can also attain, to a certain degree, this knowledge. This possibility is, however, mediated by the superior order of the priests.²⁶² Grosseteste, thus, applies the Dionysian principle of the influence of the superior order on the inferior one to the capacity of knowing God directly. For Grosseteste, to be illuminated means to receive theological knowledge directly from the source, God, but there is no evidence, in Grosseteste, that orders inferior to the monks are capable of this knowledge.

All that being said, generally speaking, Grosseteste confirms that, normally, during their life on earth, human beings cannot reach a direct and immediate vision of God, but it is necessary that something falls between the human intellect and God for the intellect’s sake, as when the eye needs something dark to look at the sun: the more sensitive the eye is, the more the *medium* has to be dark. This is Grosseteste’s way of arguing for the Aristotelian principle that reason cannot perceive the most evident realities, just like a bat’s eye cannot stare at the sun.²⁶³ The accent here is on the weakness of the eye more than on the clarity of the object.

The principle that a medium is needed in order to know God, and that this medium must veil the divine in some kind of way, plays a role in the context of the history of salvation because during the time of the Old Testament, eyes were so sensitive that they need dark images to approach to God.²⁶⁴ What the metaphor conveys is that the Revelation of God was gradual, and that it was harder for people who lived before Christ to know God because His manifestation was more unclear than for those who during Christ’s time. Grosseteste’s considerations on this issue aim to outline the passage from the ancient hierarchy of the Old Testament to the ecclesiastical hierarchy instituted in the New Testament. Here Grosseteste is developing an idea already stated in the *De cessatione legalium*, which was written before the

²⁶¹ *EH* II, 405, 3-6: “[...] *nos autem scilicet perfectores respicientes oculo mentis videlicet sacris ascensionibus a sensibilibus symbolis videlicet ascendentes gradatim per gradus virium anime usque ad vim illam que nude et sine fatasmatibus conspicit spiritalia.*” The same expression recurs to state the same truth, namely that the hierarch goes beyond the symbols of the rite to grasp the divine reality signified, in *EH* III, 491, 9-14: “*Oportet utique igitur existimo nos hoc est me et te o Timothee et alios volentes in hoc negocio nos sequi, adesse intus omnino sacrorum seu intus omnino sacra hoc est relictis exterioribus intencione et intelligencia penetrare ad omnino sacrorum interiora et sic consequenter denudantes hoc est nude et absque fantasmatis conspicientes.*” Other occurrences are in *EH* III, 496, 3-5, and *EH* IV, 630, 7-8.

²⁶² *EH* VI, 794, 3-9: “*Per illuminativam enim virtutem sacerdotalem fit hec adornacio in contemplacione que est divina operacio intellectuali absque fantasmatis videlicet materialibus qua contemplacione secundum suam possibilitatem contemplatur sacras operationes intellectuales videlicet angelicas et divinas ut ad earum exemplar quantum possibile est dirigat sacre suas operationes humanas per hoc facta in earum eciam communicacione.*”

²⁶³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, II, 993b.

²⁶⁴ *EH* IV, 700, 6-16 “*Quia igitur sicut oculus carnis infirmus non potest conspicerere solem hunc absque velamine nubis aut aliuius interpositi [...] et quanto infirmior est tanto crassioribus indiget interpositis [...]. Antiquorum autem mentales oculi erant infirmi et quidam aliis infirmiores et quidam infirmissimi necesse fuit spiritalem solem et spiritales eius fulgores visuum mentalium infirmitati comproporcionaliter velari; non solum per simbola similia sed et per dissimilia et eciam per summe dissimilia obscurissime et difficillime [...].*”

episcopacy. This treatise focuses on the history of salvation by bringing the interrelationship of the Old and New Testaments into light, and thus, demonstrating how the prophecies are fulfilled by Christ. In that treatise, Grosseteste also explains the passage from the Revelation of the Old Testament, characterized by allegories and metaphors, to the Revelation of the New Testament, which is characterized by straightforward explanations.²⁶⁵

(3) For Grosseteste, no matter how clear and direct human knowledge could become, God is still called ‘ignorance’ because He is incomprehensible to us. Ignorance of God is the topic of the *Commentary on the De mystica theologia*. In the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, however, Grosseteste follows Dionysius’s attempt to take together the ignorance of God and the fact that He is called ‘completely knowable’ because He is knowable precisely in that kind of ignorance.²⁶⁶ Grosseteste’s view emerges not in the paraphrase of the text, but in the philological comment on the meaning of ‘*omne intelligibile*.’ Rather than merely providing notes on Greek language, as he usually does, he goes further by providing three possible meanings of the expression. The phrase *omne intelligibile* could, first, mean that we can know God as the cause of everything, and that everything leads us to the knowledge of its cause. Second, it could also mean what is “totally knowable” insofar as He is in Himself light.²⁶⁷ Finally, if we maintain that God is light, it is in His light that everything becomes intelligible.²⁶⁸ Grosseteste does not opt for one of them because they complement each other. These three interpretations make, at one and the same time, God object and condition of human knowledge since He is knowable in Himself and makes every created thing knowable.

Yet what does it mean for God to be a condition of knowledge? Is it possible to know without the help of God? Those questions do not pertain only theological knowledge but every kind of knowledge. The third meaning of *omne intelligibile* clearly recalls a passage from another Grossetestian treatise, the *De veritate*, written almost twenty years earlier than

²⁶⁵ Grosseteste describes the correct method of reading the Holy Scripture, here it follows the considerations about the New Testament, cf. *DCL* I, IX.4, 49: “In tertia vero sui parte signat hec scriptura ad nostram salutem pertinencia verbis nudis, nichil habentibus allegorici enigmatis.”

²⁶⁶ *DN* II, M 186ra: “Et sic nominatur Deus *ignorantia* quia inaccessibilis et incomprehensibilis et incognoscibilis quid est in se. Quia in ea que dicta est ignorantia maxime cognitus et quia cognoscitur quod in hac ignorantia est maxime cognoscibilis *omne intelligibile* [dicitur]”. When the intellect stops its operations, then the wisdom can receive illumination from God and thus the ignorance of the intellect is a requisite for a deeper theological knowledge, cf. *DN* VII, M 248ra: “Cum enim transcenderit mens operationes intellectuales et facta in omnium ignorantia suscipiens divinum radium ei unitur. Et est hec eminentissima nobis possibilis Dei cognitio. Et potentia ascendendi in hanc ignorantiam est in nobis virtus suprema quam et supra nominavimus virtutem sapientie.”

²⁶⁷ *DN* II, M 186ra: “Grecum autem pro quo dicimus «omne intelligibile» potest esse sicut dicimus due dictiones omne et intelligibile velut una dictio composita et secundum hoc posset interpretari ab omnibus intelligibile quia ab omnibus ut causatis ab ipso sursum ducimur in eius intelligentiam vel posset interpretari «omnino intelligibile» quod contrapositive ei quod predicatur ignorantia quia deus est lux omnium manifestissima.”

²⁶⁸ *DN* II, M 186ra: “Et sic etiam potest dici ‘omne intelligibile’ quia per ipsam [*scil.* lucem divinam] et in ipsam et propter ipsam est omne intelligibile.”

the *Commentary*: “It is true, therefore, as Augustine testifies, that no truth is perceived except in the light of supreme truth.”²⁶⁹ In that treatise we find also the second meaning of *omne intelligibile*, namely, that it is possible to perceive the First Being in everything.²⁷⁰ Either consciously, as the pure in heart, or unconsciously, as the impure in heart, every human being not only needs the supreme truth for reaching any certain knowledge, but he also knows God knowing other realities.²⁷¹ Once again, we face Grosseteste’s will to mark a difference between ordinary knowledge (that of the pure of heart) and that of the rest of humankind that are impure in heart. Contemporary scholars have confined the doctrine of illumination, and accordingly the necessity of God in the process of cognition, to a problem concerning a few mystics (Moses, Mary, Saint Paul) and the blessed in Heaven.²⁷² Grosseteste’s insistence on this topic in many works, and in a different period and context of his life, suggests that his aim is wider. Moreover, as I argued, in Grosseteste’s view, the hierarchs also have this kind of knowledge. His will to preserve God’s transcendence does not entail that human beings are completely ignorant about Him. None lacks His vision and His light completely, otherwise they could not know anything to be true. We can compare the impure man (*immundus*) from Grosseteste’s *De veritate* with the fool (*insipiens*) from Anselm’s *Proslogion*. They both do not know God (or even deny His existence), but they can be guided to His knowledge by an argument (for Anselm) or directly by God’s illumination (for Grosseteste). The peculiar feature of Grosseteste is to turn the cognitive deficiency into an affective deficiency, as we saw in his the comment on the second commandment.

In conclusion, Grosseteste’s account of these three steps is problematic. He strives to maintain three levels (influenced by the Scriptures that accounts for a “third heaven”), but the second and the third levels are not clearly distinct. This difficulty lies in understanding when an author tries to explain something that is beyond common experience.

²⁶⁹ *De veritate*, 138: “Verum est igitur, sicut testatur Augustinus, quod nulla conspicitur veritas nisi in luce summae veritatis.” The reference is to Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, II, 13, 36.

²⁷⁰ *De veritate*, 141: “Nec scitur vere aliquid creatum esse, nisi in mente videatur ab aeterno Verbo supportari. Et ita in omni esse, quod est adhaerere esse primo videtur aliquo modo esse primum”. See also *DN V*, M 238rb: “Omne enim ens in intelligentia vel speculatione cuiuslibet intelligentis vel speculantis sursum ducit illam in cause ipsius entis speculationem et intelligentiam, et in ente speculato sicut in speculo vel vestigio speculatur entis causam et eam ab ipso ente nominat et preentem ipsius entis causam designat.”

²⁷¹ *De veritate*, 138: “Nemo est igitur, qui verum aliquid novit, qui non aut scienter aut ignoranter etiam ipsam summam veritatem aliquo modo novit. Iam igitur patet, quomodo soli mundicordes summam vident veritatem et quomodo nec etiam immundi penitus eius visione frustrantur.”

²⁷² See McEvoy 1982, 326. Other scholars depend on McEvoy, see Oliver 2004, 163; Lewis 2009, 41; Van Dike 2010, 157.

II.3.1.2 *Knowing God through symbols*

Previously, I demonstrated Grosseteste's view regarding the three steps towards the knowledge of God: (1) knowledge of God through material things; (2) direct knowledge of God, without phantasm; (3) ignorance of God, in the mystical union. The further step wherein we know God as He knows Himself is beyond human capacity. Only (1) is the ordinary way to know God *in via*. Grosseteste's concern is to reconcile this kind of knowledge with God's transcendence. In the next chapter, we will see that the doctrine of exemplarism allows human intelligence to find traces of God in the universe. In this section, we will see that, although created realities are meaningful manifestations of the Creator, they do not permit one to grasp the most intimate nature of God. This incapacity of creation to render a perfect idea of the Creator was clearly stated in 1215 during the IV Lateran Council.²⁷³ I will argue, against the McEvoy, that Grosseteste prefers the use of unlike-symbols (namely, images that are taken from materiality), instead of like-symbols (namely images that manifest more clearly the spirituality of the divinity) to express God because unlike-symbols more fully express divine transcendence.

While Grosseteste reflects upon symbolism before being appointed as bishop, the necessity of images receives particular attention in the *Commentary*.²⁷⁴ In Book II of the *De coelesti hierarchia*, Dionysius explains why the Scripture uses symbols, images to describe angels, who are pure spirits, and from this, he extends his discussion to the images of God. This point becomes an opportunity for Grosseteste to develop his doctrine about knowing and expressing God. Dionysius and Grosseteste acknowledge the necessity of images for two reasons: (1) to fulfil the human intellect's infirmity of raising itself from the material to the intelligible world; (2) and to hide divine things from the impures of heart.²⁷⁵ Someone may hold that the first need is satisfied by the use of like-symbols (*similia symbola*), while the second is satisfied by unlike-symbols (*dissimilia symbola*), and that, as such, cannot be attributed to God. But Grosseteste's answer is more nuanced, which shows that the two

²⁷³ See Denzinger 1995, n. 432: "we [...] believe and confess with Peter (Lombard) that there is one supreme entity, incomprehensible and ineffable, which is truly Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, together three persons and each one of them singly [...] between the Creator and the creature there cannot be a likeness so great that the unlikeness is not greater;" English translation at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/latran4.asp>.

²⁷⁴ The few passages devoted to symbolism before the *Commentary* are gathered in McEvoy 1982, 359.

²⁷⁵ *CH* II, 34: "Est enim theologia respiciens nostrum intellectum, ut agnoscat posse ipsius, et quasi medicatrix infirmitatis ipsius, ipsum visitans, intendens in ipsum, ipsum perscrutans et explorans ut, agnitis eius infirmitate et potentia, provideat ipsi familiaribus et connaturalibus symbolis, figuris et plasmationis, ipsum reducens et sursum ducens ad infigurabilia et intelligibilia". *CH* II, 49: "Et quod decet eloquia ab inmundis et execratis sacra sacris velaminibus abscondet."

reasons offered are strictly inter-related.

With respect to the first reason, Grosseteste notes that it contrasts with the Scripture, for it does not use only noble images, such as ‘substance,’ ‘reason,’ or others taken from the most spiritual things in the material world, such as ‘life’ or ‘light’ in order to express the simplicity of God, but it also employs images coming from lesser noble realities, such as ‘stone’ or ‘lion.’²⁷⁶ Dionysius and Grosseteste respond that God shows Himself according to similar or dissimilar symbols, but that none of them are perfectly suited to God. The reason is that every image represents something composed (of matter and form), while God is totally simple.²⁷⁷ This means that God is not properly a substance as He is not, for example, a lion.

In this context, Grosseteste prefers dissimilar symbols because they are less dangerous, as there is no risk for the intellect to rest on them, but they lead our intellect to something other than themselves. The image of light, for example, can deceive because someone could really think that an angel is made of light, while the image of an animal with wings shifts the attention immediately to something else, because clearly it cannot refer to an actual spiritual being.²⁷⁸

When interpreting the same passage, McEvoy draws the opposite conclusion, namely, that Grosseteste accords favour to the like-symbols rather than to the dissimilar images. According to McEvoy, Grosseteste would show pastoral concerns towards the many (*multitudo*) and willingness to defend the liceity of the material symbols used in the Bible to represent the angels. He is convinced that the presence of the word ‘*vestigium*’ in that context alerts the reader that Grosseteste moves from a Dionysian to a distinctly Augustinian atmosphere of thought.²⁷⁹ In my opinion, the text does not appear as ‘diffractive’ as McEvoy stresses, but it is perfectly coherent with Grosseteste’s loyalty to Dionysian thinking. The like-symbols are dangerous for faith, both according to Dionysius and to Grosseteste because, as said above, they attract the attention on themselves more than on the represented reality.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ CH II, 57: “Eedem etiam mystice traditiones aliquando *reformant* sive replasmant, hoc est figuraliter significant, *ipsam* scilicet thearchiam [...] per hec nomina: ratio, intellectus, substantia, lumen et vita *existentibus venerabilioribus* [...] *materialibus formationibus*, quales sunt cum ipsam thearchiam significant per leoniforme et similia.”

²⁷⁷ CH II, 41: “Huiusmodi quoque estimator, quia negare non potest, ut pretactum est, quin oporteat recipi in eloquis compositiones in designationem simplicium, propter suam simplicitatem.”

²⁷⁸ CH II, 65: “Per modum autem similis formationis non manifeste ostenditur quod divina non sunt illa que esse dicuntur, sed a multis intelliguntur esse ea et illa affirmationes proprie sumi et non symbolice tantum dici. Et est modus iste similis formationis propinquior, ut faciat multitudinem errare circa divina quam sit modus ille qui fit per formationes dissimiles, ut in proximo consequenter ostendet.”

²⁷⁹ McEvoy 1982, 96-97.

²⁸⁰ Another text that states this risk of the images is DN V, M 239rb-va: “Ambulans post exempla creata recordari debet scripture que precipit non ambulandum post exempla creata sed ab hiis sursum duci ad solius crean- <239va> -tis speculationem et adorationem.” Grosseteste, following Dionysius and the Scriptures, forbids the worship of images (*exempla*) of God. We may infer that the higher the similitude, the higher the

Moreover, the pastoral concern for the multitude of believers does not stand out here or in other texts; as a matter of fact, Grosseteste, following Dionysius, clearly highlights the difference between the members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the rest. In order to understand Grosseteste's position, we also need to take into account the other *Commentaries*.

If we consider the *De divinis nominibus*, McEvoy's hypothesis seems to find some evidence. In this treatise, indeed, Grosseteste's focus shifts from the dissimilar images to the similar ones. The intellectual power, Grosseteste says, is guided from sensible things to the intelligible realm, and in this process, it follows what can most easily manifest the spiritual nature of intelligible things.²⁸¹ Grosseteste concludes that what is known obscurely cannot be represented clearly.²⁸² However, the context makes it clear that our hypothesis is still valid. Indeed, Grosseteste's discussion concerns the sacred authors (*theologi*), i.e., those who wrote the Bible, and the vocabulary they chose to talk about God. More specifically, the problem at stake is given by the name 'love' (*eros* or *amor*), which was traditionally considered unsuitable to God, for it is intended to signify a passionate and erotic love. The Latin term that was traditionally used to express God's love was *dilectio* (or *caritas*). Here Grosseteste and Dionysius clearly mark the contrast between the hierarchs (*nos*) and the many (*multitudo*).²⁸³ The hierarchs hold that *dilectio* and *eros* are the same in God, while the multitude of believers are shocked by the name *eros*. The positivity of the use of images is limited to the early stages of the ascent to God, i.e., those that pertain mostly to laymen; the images are instruments that permit us to glimpse something, but the real 'diffractive' role – to use McEvoy expression – is that of dissimilar symbols. This datum is coherent with what we said about the hierarchs and their power to see God directly without the help of phantasm. The aim of Grosseteste to distinguish the ways to approach God could not be clearer: on the one hand, the hierarchs can see God directly, and they do not need like-symbols because they are fully aware that God is neither of His images; on the other hand, the laymen need like-symbols, and are shocked by the use of names that are drawn from material realm. Grosseteste's pastoral concern towards

risk.

²⁸¹ *DN* IV, M 210vb: "Indiget tamen nostra vis intellectiva sursum moveri et ferri per sensus sensibilium ad speculativas intelligentias intelligibilium, et cum hac indiget delatione preciosiora sunt ei que levius eam sursum movent et ferunt ut in audibilibus sermones manifestiores et invisibilibus clariora et visui perspicacius et certius apprehensibilia." See also *CH* II, 48.

²⁸² *DN* IV, M 210vb: "Quia enim obscure et immanifeste susceperunt quomodo clare et manifeste representarent?"

²⁸³ *Dionysiaca*, 211f: "Incapabile enim est multitudinem unitum dei et unius amoris. Propter quod, et ut difficilius nomen multis visum, in divina sapientia ordinatur, ad reductionem ipsorum et extensionem in eius qui vere amoris cognitionem, et ut absolvi ab ea quae in ipso difficultate. In nobis autem rursus ubi et inconveniens quid multoties intelligere terrenos, secundum visum famosius: «cecidit», quidam ait, «dilectio tua super me ut dilectio mulierum». In recte divina audientibus in eadem virtute ordinatur a sacris theologis dilectionis et amoris nomen, secundum divinas manifestationes."

the multitude of believers is a fact, but it does not entail an egalitarian view concerning theological knowledge.

The second reason mentioned above – i.e., the necessity to hide divine truths from the impures – is strictly connected with the first reason (namely, to fulfill the human intellect’s infirmity). In the attempt to explain the meaning of the word *atechnoos*, Grosseteste states that the Scripture “has used poetic sacred imageries. For it has used them not artificially, but wisely and in a way above art, nor has it used them deceitfully, but simply, not humbly, but magnificently, not obscurely, but clearly.”²⁸⁴ This claim seems to contrast with what Grosseteste has written some pages earlier about the necessity to veil the divine mysteries. The principle – mentioned above, in § I.5 – that “somehow the sacred veils to some are manifestations of the things veiled under them, but to others they are concealments” helps to unravel the knot.²⁸⁵ The examples that Grosseteste puts forward to clarify his thought are significant. Grosseteste affirms that the image of a lion is meaningless to someone who has never seen a lion; it is just a mix of colours and lines, while the image refers to a real lion only for those who are acquainted with it. Similarly, the letters written in a text appear to the illiterate as a mere bunch of strokes, while they are meaningful to the learned man.²⁸⁶ This passage gives McEvoy the opportunity to state that Grosseteste poses a difference between signs and symbols: the examples of the lion and the letters belong to the first category, while the images used in the Scriptures to the second.²⁸⁷ This distinction can be traced back to one of Grosseteste’s favourite sources, namely, Hugh of Saint Victor, but I argue that it has very little influence on Grosseteste.²⁸⁸

A more thorough analysis of the examples indeed shows that Grosseteste’s concern is

²⁸⁴ *CH* II, 34.

²⁸⁵ *CH* II, 49-50: “Quomodo sacra velamina aliis sunt velatorum sub ipsis manifestationes aliis vero absconsiones.”

²⁸⁶ *CH* II, 50: “Numquid sicut pictura leonis respicienti eam ut ymaginem et similitudinem animalis seu leonis est manifestatio et rememoratio animalis seu leonis. Respicienti vero eandem picturam solum ut linearum quandam divaricatem protractionem et nullius similitudinem aut ymaginem nullius alterius est manifestatio seu rememoratio, sed magis vis et intentione ipsius detentis et attentis in solam ipsam linearum figurationem ipsa pictura est eis ipsius rei, que depingitur, absconsio; sic sacra et symbolica velamina mundis enitentibus per ea in visionem intelligibilium sunt manifestatio eorundem, inmundis vero et in terrena demersis sunt eorundem intelligibilium absconsio. Item laicus omnino ignorans etiam quid vel qualis est littera inveniens librum et inspiciens in eo, in solas litterarum varias protractiones aliud ab ipsis protractionibus ymaginans aut intelligens. Unde nullius rei alterius sunt ipse litterarum protractiones ei manifestatio sed magis intentio in illas solas est ei rerum aliarum occultatio. Sciens autem quoniam littere sunt protractiones quas videt, scit quod aliud significant; agnoscens vero uniuscuiusque littere figuram propriam et cuius vocis simplicis signum est per figuram visibilem ymaginatur elementum audibile et est figura visibilis eidem manifestatio audibilis elementi.”

²⁸⁷ McEvoy 1982, 360f.

²⁸⁸ Hugh of Saint Victor, *In Hierarchiam*, 926: “The creator is only pointed to in the images found in natures. However, the images of grace [namely those found in the Scripture] display God as Present. The reason is that the former was made to enable us to know that God exists, whereas in the latter God is at work so that God’s presence may be perceived.” English translation in Gaybba 1988, 22.

actually otherwise than McEvoy claims. Both examples involve three elements that express three degrees of knowledge. In the first example, we have (a) colors and lines, (b) the picture, and (c) the lion as the real animal; in the second example, we have (a) the strokes, (b) the word (for example ‘house’), and (c) the sound signified by the word (for example, the sound ‘house’). Grosseteste not only affirms that someone cannot connect the word ‘house’ to its sound, or that someone who has never seen a lion cannot connect the picture to the animal, but also that there are people who do not realize that (b) is also endowed with real being (i.e., being a picture, or being a word), confining themselves to the first degree (a). Thus, when Grosseteste concludes that a sign leads the mind to the apprehension of something else only if it is perceived as a sign and not as a thing *per se*, we must assume that he does not refer only to the picture and to the word, but also to the colors and lines, and to the strokes.²⁸⁹

If my interpretation is correct, the opposition underscored by McEvoy vanishes, for the same symbol can be said to be similar and dissimilar at the same time (although with respect to different men). The degree (a) expresses a dissimilar image: a stroke as a symbol of a sound, and a color as a symbol of an animal. The degree (b) can be considered a like-symbol; indeed the picture of a lion is very close to the reality represented. However, both degrees (a) and (b) are far from the real thing they refer to, and thus, both can either reveal or conceal that thing. Grosseteste’s only concern is to state the absolute transcendence of God, which is veiled by the double element (a) and (b) and by the limits of laymen to approach Him.²⁹⁰ Thus, Grosseteste fully exemplifies what Brian Gaybba said about monastic theology: “In any system that stresses simply the transcendence, all symbols must logically be equal in their capacity to illuminate or veil the transcendent reality.”²⁹¹ In Grosseteste’s system, for example, the sentences “God is not a lion” and “God is not father” seem to be of the same value.

If we move, now, to consider the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* and Grosseteste’s analysis of the sacraments and their symbols, we can find further evidence of the necessity to hide divine truths from the impures. In this *Commentary*, Grosseteste emphasizes the central role of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. It has the duty to guide everyone to the knowledge of God,

²⁸⁹ *CH II*, 51: “Sic omne signum, consideratum in quantum signum, ducit intentionem considerantis in aliud apprehendendum; per ipsum consideratum autem, in quantum est res sola et non signum, non ducit in aliud apprehendendum considerantis intentionem sed magis sue apprehensioni alia interim occultat.”

²⁹⁰ A passage that shows that Grosseteste talks of nature and Scripture at the same time is in *CH II*, 60: “Non minus igitur sed potius forte plus laudant eloquia thearchiam ipsa abnegatione ‘rationis’ et ‘intellectus’ et ‘substantie’ et similibus ab ipsa quam cum ‘rationem’ et ‘intellectum’ et ‘substantiam’ nominant ipsam. Omnis autem creatura quantumque excellens [...] clamat et dicit: «non sum ego deus».” A passage that shows that Grosseteste uses *vestigium* to refer both to sensible signs and to intelligent natures is in *CH II*, 61: “Sed creature et nature immaterialiores [...] expressiora et formatiora sunt conditoris vestigia [...]; materiales vero et necessario corruptibiles minus expressa et informiora sunt creatoris vestigia.”

²⁹¹ Gaybba 1982, 21.

passing from the degree (a) to degree (b), while the most secret reality (c) remains a prerogative of the hierarchs. It is on the basis of Revelation that human beings know God and the different kinds of symbols used to represent Him. Such symbols become visible during the celebration of the sacraments, and it is in the *De ecclesiastica hierachia* that Grosseteste explains the real significance of the prohibition to access divine realities. For each sacrament, Dionysius clarifies and distinguishes the elements of the rite (the symbols) and the spiritual meaning of them (the *theoria*). Commenting on Dionysius's text, Grosseteste does not deny that human beings can gain access to spiritual meaning, but he establishes a hierarchy: the impures (*execratis*) do not participate in the rites at all; then, there are the catechumens, the penitents, and the possessed by an evil spirit who may attend only some parts of the rite; finally, the believers and the clergy, which in turn is divided into sub-categories.²⁹² Speaking in this way, Grosseteste reveals his pastoral role. While in Dionysius, prohibition is a matter of the preservation of a sort of esoteric knowledge of divine realities, in Grosseteste, by contrast, it signifies the attempt to preserve and gradually guide believers to God, just as he stated the necessity of images to protect weak (intellectual) eyes from the super-bright light of the sun, namely, God. As an example, Grosseteste presents a parallel between the light of the sun and the sacraments: as it is dangerous for weak eyes to stare at the sun, it is dangerous for impures to see sacred things.²⁹³

Grosseteste seems to be fascinated by the secrets and the mysteries that envelop Dionysius's doctrine. A Dionysian passage on the "hierarchical traditions" will help us bring this point to light. Dionysius uses this expression repeatedly, which was common among the Fathers of the Church, and often it is employed without further qualification.²⁹⁴ Among the possible meanings, it can refer to Jesus's teachings to some of his closest disciples that are not quoted in the Gospel.²⁹⁵ According to Grosseteste, those traditions are probably the unwritten doctrines that are handed down from the first disciples to the clergy across the centuries.²⁹⁶

It was probably this curiosity for the unwritten doctrines of the first Fathers of the

²⁹² In particular the chapter on the Eucharist outline this hierarchy, cf. *EH* III.

²⁹³ *EH* II, 371. "Periculosum namque est sic imperfectis in sacra videnda intendere sicut periculosum est infirmis oculis inspicere contra solis radios et nocivum est eis ad superiora se conari."

²⁹⁴ Another passage in these traditions is *CH* II, 56: "Dicit itaque hic eloquia manifestativa, [...], quorum traditiones sunt mystice, id est secrete vel archane."

²⁹⁵ This is the interpretation of Clemens of Alexandria and it seems the same for Grosseteste. Cf. Hägg 2006, 139 n.9. Note that Clemens also considered it necessary to hide the truth from the impures (143f).

²⁹⁶ *EH* I, 296: "Ex hierarchicis traditionibus hoc est doctrinis forte in scriptum non redactis. Agnoscunt enim viri ecclesiastici multa sancta et secreta ex misteriis per primos patres et ierarchas dispositis et eorum tradicionibus non scriptis." This exoteric interpretation of Dionysius also occurs in the mentioned passage from *DN* VII where Grosseteste considers that to be illuminated by divine wisdom is like being caught up in Heaven where it is possible to apprehend secrets that are unspeakable to other human beings; cf. n.77.

Church that led Grosseteste to translate and study the sources that he believed closer to the time of the Apostles. This is the case, for example, of the *Letters* of Saint Ignatius, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, and although wrongly attributed, the *Corpus Dionysiacum*. This is also what led Grosseteste to analyze, in the *De cessatione legalium*, the cause as to why the early Christians abandoned the law of the Old Testament. This attitude sharply distinguishes Grosseteste from other commentators. According to Albert the Great, for example, the *traditiones* are simply the doctrines transmitted by the Fathers, and no reference to secret knowledge is present.²⁹⁷ But Albert was a scholastic teacher at that time, while Grosseteste was a bishop and their different interpretations of traditions shows that one of the reasons that compelled Grosseteste to read Dionysius was to confirm the guiding role of the bishops. They alone have access to a privileged source (i.e., the secret traditions); they are not only unpuzzled by the use of unlike-symbols, they are also the only ones that can have access to a direct knowledge of God like that of the angels.

II.3.1.3 *Philosophical knowledge of God*

Having discussed Grosseteste's account of the knowledge of God based on the Bible, it is possible to turn now to his explanation of the role and limits of the other way of knowing God, namely, through philosophy. In the *Corpus*, the word *philosophia*, takes on different meanings. On the one hand, Dionysius takes philosophy to designate a rational argument. This meaning emerges, for example, in the *De divinis nominibus*, where Dionysius rejects the thought of Elymas who denied that God is omnipotent insofar as he cannot deny Himself.²⁹⁸ Dionysius's answer to this objection, Grosseteste explains, is not difficult to understand for those who are trained in philosophy. Dionysius uses an argument known to philosophers, namely, that truth and being are the same in God.²⁹⁹

In another passage, Grosseteste interprets Dionysius's conception of *philosophia* as the Scripture, although after a closer reading, Grosseteste seems to misinterpret Dionysius, for the latter understanding philosophy commonly, which refers to arguments based on reason, and

²⁹⁷ Albertus Magnus, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, p. 5, ll.5-8: "Et haec oportet ostendere his auditoribus, qui sunt perfecti ex hierarchicis sacramentis et traditionibus, idest doctrinis, ut principia et auditores proportionetur rei tradite."

²⁹⁸ Bar-Jesus, known also as Elymas, was a Jew who opposed the apostle Paul; see *Acts of the Apostles* 13.

²⁹⁹ *DN VIII*, M252va: "Eidem autem Elyme oppositio non sit ad solvendum difficile maxime exercitatis in philosophicis. Manifestat auctor brevi verbo apud philosophos noto eam solvens sic inquires sui ipsius enim negatio casus a veritate est."

not on the authority of the Bible.³⁰⁰ Generally, however, Grosseteste understands *philosophia* as referring to pagan wisdom: the philosophers endorse some unorthodox theses, such as the eternity of the world, and the *Philosophus* is, of course, Aristotle, one of the very few sources explicitly mentioned in the *De divinis nominibus*.³⁰¹

In the conclusion of the *De divinis nominibus*, Grosseteste mentions a different kind of philosopher, namely, the monk. Dionysius confesses that his attempt to praise God does not match that of angels, or that of the authors of the Bible and of their listeners and disciples.³⁰² It is worth noting that Grosseteste translates Dionysius's term 'ἀγκητων' as *monachorum*, while Eriugena and Sarrazin as translated it as *philosophantium*.³⁰³ In the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Dionysius grants monks a particular status because they abandoned a divided life in order to reach the unitive laws of God.³⁰⁴ This means, according to Grosseteste, that they show their perfect wisdom, which consists in the passage from the multiplicity of knowledge coming from the world to the unity of knowledge coming from God. Grosseteste explains that true philosophy coincides with a love for wisdom, namely, a perfect mix of knowledge and love that reaches its peak in the life of monks.³⁰⁵ Again, the couple *aspectus/affectus* is the key to define a perfect life.

This kind of wisdom can reach the divine truths, while the human intellect cannot attain them. Among these truths there is not the mystery of the Trinity, for it can be glimpsed by the intellect to a certain degree, as seen above. There are, however, other truths that Grosseteste considers knowable only by faith, such as the Incarnation and the Resurrection. Already in the *De cessatione legalium*, Grosseteste stated that nothing is as distant from

³⁰⁰ *Dionysiaca*, 68: "Si quidem enim est aliquis totaliter eloquiis resistens, longe ibi omnino erit et ab ea quae secundum nos philosophia". Grosseteste paraphrases the word 'philosophia' as "id est a philosophia sacre scripture." In *DN* III, Dionysius mentions a *divina philosophia*, but Grosseteste does not expose it and probably refers it to the Scripture. Such a phrase seems to designate the Christianity just as the phrase *vera philosophia* in Augustine. See *De ordine* 2.5; *De civitate dei* 22.22; *Contra Iulianum* 4.

³⁰¹ On the philosophers as the advocates of the theory of the eternity of the world, see *DN* IX, M 258ra: "Dicitur a philosophis non factum et multo magis per consequens super omne quod in creaturis dicitur factum et ut absolute non factum quia semper sine initio ens et non ab alia causa sed per seipsum et a seipso perfectum ens et idem non initiabile non alterabile non terminabile." Grosseteste mentions explicitly Aristotle in *DN* VIII, M 255vb: "Sicut determinat Philosophus in quarto Moralium ad Nichomatum [...]."

³⁰² *DN* XIII, M 276rb: "[...] neque quidem derelicti solum ab hymnodia resume adhuc ipsorum theologorum neque ipsorum monachorum qui videlicet vocentur ascetae vel consecutorum hoc est imitatorum dictorum monachorum."

³⁰³ *Dionysiaca*, 556.

³⁰⁴ *Dionysiaca*, 1392: "Partibilium non solum vitarum, sed quidem et phantasiarum, abrenuntiatio perfectissimam manifestat monachorum philosophiam in scientiam unificatorum mandatorum operantem."

³⁰⁵ *EH* VI, 804: "*Philosophiam* id est amorem sapientie pro viribus in actus sapienciales prorumpentem.[...] Non enim est philosophia aut que tepide amat aut que solum scit et non operatur aut que casu fortuito, aut ignoranter operatur. Et bene dico quod perfectissima est ordinis monachici philosophia." Grosseteste inherits the definition of philosophy as "love for wisdom" from Augustine, *De civitate dei* 8, 1 and *Contra Academicos* 2, 7.

human reason as God's plan to redeem the world through the passion of His incarnate Son.³⁰⁶

In the *De divinis nominibus*, the Resurrection, rather than the Redemption, is at stake.³⁰⁷ Dionysius replies to the objection of Simon Magus – i.e., the resurrection of a body contradicts reason because it is contrary to common experience – by affirming that it is insane to judge the invisible Cause by means of human sense perception.³⁰⁸ Grosseteste comments:

Si enim aliquid apparens verum ex manifestis secundum sensum contrarietur et conpugnat divine voluntati cui omnia sunt possibilis nihil preter naturam vel super nullo modo est sapientis eo uti adversus omnipotentem voluntatem vel ut quid esset ei super naturam et possibilitatem eo enim sic uti est preter naturam et contra naturam. [...] Non enim igitur preter naturam corporum resurrexio in vitam immortalem sed preter naturam est dicere eam esse preter naturam.³⁰⁹

According to Grosseteste, God's omnipotence cannot be disputed. If something apparently true to the senses contradicts God's will, this does not mean that it is against nature; on the contrary, it is the philosopher's pretension to say that God is not omnipotent to be against nature. This passage is important. Sense perception does not warrant the acquisition of truth *per se* because truth ultimately depends on God's will. Note, indeed, that Grosseteste qualifies as "apparent true" that which is manifested by the senses, but is in contradiction with the Revelation.

This is a consequence of the theory of God's necessity that Grosseteste develops in the *De libero arbitrio*, a philosophical theme that attracted the attention of many scholars.³¹⁰ Let me summarize Grosseteste's position in order to convey his point. Grosseteste distinguishes three modal strengths: the simply contingent such as «Socrates is white», which though true can be false and can be true at one time and false at another; the immutable such as «The Antichrist is going to be» which can be false, but if true at one time, is true at every time; the simply necessary such as «Two and three are five» which simply cannot be false. Grosseteste uses this apparatus to explain how God can know what he neither knows nor will know. God's knowledge is immutable, but not simply necessary.³¹¹

Now, the case of the resurrection and the "apparent truth" becomes clearer. Grosseteste's criticism against those who hold that a man cannot be resurrected means that the

³⁰⁶ *De cessatione legalium* IV, 1, 10, 159: "Nichil autem tam remotum est ab humane sapientie investigatione quam humani generis reparacio per Filium Dei, Deum et hominem, in crucem passum."

³⁰⁷ On the incapability of heretics and pagans to understand God's salvation, see *DN VII*, M 243rb: "Potest quoque dei sapientia ideo dici stultitia quia hereticis et gentilibus videtur stultitia quod non possunt sillogistice ex principiis sumptis a sensibilibus demonstrare ut est nostre redemptionis dispensatio."

³⁰⁸ *Dionysiaca*, 376. Simon, according to Acts of the Apostles 8:9-24, after becoming a Christian, offered to purchase from the Apostles Peter and John the supernatural power of transmitting the Holy Spirit.

³⁰⁹ *DN VI*, M 242ra.

³¹⁰ Knuuttila 1981, 206ff; Lewis 1996; Normore 2006.

³¹¹ A more extended study of Grosseteste's theory of necessity, see Normore 2006, 261.

purely contingent truths, like «Socrates is white», are purely contingent because both God and creatures have the power to make them change their truth-value from time to time. On this interpretation, the sentence, “A body is corruptible and it cannot live forever” is not simply necessary in the way that “Two and three are five” is, nor simply contingent as is “Socrates is white”; nonetheless, it is closer to the case of the Antichrist than that of Socrates because it is possible for a body to be risen, as actually happened to Jesus. This explains why Simon Magus was wrong. Something is possible only if there is a power that can bring it about and this power seems to be the power of God.³¹²

In conclusion, Grosseteste seems to think that the philosophers have two main limits when approaching God: the first is the ignorance of God’s omnipotence, against which logical arguments fail; the second is the lack of love for God that also curbs the philosopher’s knowledge. Because of the great importance of the latter element in the commentary on the *Corpus*, it deserves to be treated separately.

II.3.2 The relationship between love and knowledge

As said above (§ II.2.2), knowledge and love, *aspectus/affectus*, go hand-in-hand, but in the *Commentary* Grosseteste focuses on them separately depending on the context. The mystical union, the peak of knowledge (which coincides, paradoxically, with the complete ignorance) of God is the domain where love and knowledge comes to a new synthesis. More specifically, in this paragraph, I will argue that in the *Commentary* Grosseteste “breaks” the isomorphism between love and knowledge by arguing that, with respect to theological knowledge, love is a better epistemological instrument than reason.

In the *De mystica theologia*, as McEvoy points out:

Dionysius offers an ascent which is essentially one of love, rising not through the levels of knowledge and being to their source, but in independence of all that is conceptualisable; the jumble of concepts and realities which are denied of God have no coherent order. [...] Grosseteste, instead, was unshakeably convinced that the mystical union is an operation in which not only love or desire is involved, but also the highest cognitive power of mind.”³¹³

As one will recall, in the *De decem mandatis* Grosseteste extended Anselm’s definition of

³¹² See Normore 2006, 262.

³¹³ McEvoy 1980b, 150; 165.

love so that God is not only that than which nothing greater can be thought, but also that than which nothing greater can be loved. Commenting on the *De mystica theologia*, instead, Grosseteste completes the ascent to God through love by the ascent through cognition.

The relationship between love and knowledge is reconsidered in the sermon *Ecclesia sancta celebret*, which dates to the forties (the same years of the *Commentary*), where Grosseteste speaks of love as a cognitive power. In this sermon, he describes the unitive moment in the mystic's experience as follows:

Cum autem non habeat amor post hunc ascensum ubi dilectum quaerat et inveniat per vehementiam amoris, retrahit et quiescere facit omnes potentias inferiores iam dictas a suis actibus universis, et nihil apprehendens stat super omnia et supra se in caligine actualis ignorantiae et sui et omnium; quasi Moyses in vertice montis caliginoso, expectans in ea donec dilectus se manifestet ipsi per speciem. Quo facto iam plene vivit et virtus est nobilissima suprema animae potentia, et de plenitudine eius vitae suscipiunt secundum ordinem inferiores potentiae, unaquaeque sibi competentem vitae plenitudinem.³¹⁴

Grosseteste says that the ascent to God reaches a point where love has no further place than to seek and find the Beloved. Love apprehends nothing at all, but stands beyond all creatures and beyond itself in the darkness of ignorance, waiting for God to manifest Himself to it directly. Grosseteste compares the state of 'love' to Moses on the dark summit of the mountain, as accounted in *Exodus 24*. Only when God reveals Himself does the noblest power of the soul enjoy full life and become the noblest virtue. In this sermon, Grosseteste does not specify which is the noblest power that allows human being to be united with God. If we want to bring it to light, we have to turn to the *De mystica theologia*. The *affectus* and whatever concerns the volitive part of the human soul has a privileged place in Grosseteste's theology. This is evident when he paraphrases Dionysius's description of Moses's ascent to the Mount to see God face-to-face, and thus, to be united to God in his best part. Grosseteste explains the "best part" as referring to the will.³¹⁵ As McEvoy has demonstrated, in this work, Grosseteste is clearly influenced by Thomas Gallus, the abbot of Vercelli, who wrote the *Commentary on the De mystica theologia* some years before Grosseteste.³¹⁶ Grosseteste's position is what

³¹⁴ *Ecclesia sancta celebrat*, § 36, 186-187.

³¹⁵ *MTI*, 85: "[Moyses] fit, resume, nullius unitus, id est nulli creature unitus [...] perfecte autem incogniti, hoc est secundum perfecte incogniti inoperationem, id est secundum inoperationem omnis cognitionis fit unitus secundum melius, id est secundum supremum virtutis desiderative et amative." Other interpreters like Albert consider the intellect as "best part" where the mystical union is realized, see Albertus Magnus, *De mystica theologia*, 463, 53. Grosseteste identifies in the free will the power that God grants to humankind to become like Him (see § IV.3.3.2C).

³¹⁶ McEvoy 1980b, 153: "Now there is no difference that I can see between Gallus and Gosseteste on any of these points, but rather an identity of thought." It is significant that McEvoy published the Grosseteste's *Commentary on the De mystica theologia* together with the *Commentary* by Thomas Gallus (cf. McEvoy 2003).

McEvoy has called “affective Dionysianism.” By this expression, McEvoy means that “conceptual thought must be surpassed in the movement towards God, the attraction of love fills the vacuum and supplies a new ‘knowledge’, coming from direct acquaintance and being beyond thought and speech.”³¹⁷ We can add that the predominance of love over intellect is not a prerogative of the mystical theology, but it also recurs in the other commentaries on the *Corpus*.

In the *De divinis nominibus*, love is seen as the fulfilment of knowledge. All divine names signify God’s processions towards the creatures – as it will be illustrated in the next chapter – and the name ‘Good’ signifies all of them. Grosseteste explains Dionysius’s choice of putting the names ‘light’ and ‘love’ after ‘good’ as follows: “Nothing is better than intellectual knowledge of God which is filled with His pure love.”³¹⁸ The name ‘light’ concerns the intellectual life, but without divine love it becomes useless. In this text, the subject is the divine love rather than human love for God. This means that there is a parallel between light and love: as the light of the human intellect is powerless without the supreme divine light, thus human love needs to be “illuminated” by God’s love.³¹⁹ The aim of the entire treatise is to expound upon divine names. Such an exposition amounts to praising God and being enlightened upon seeing what God concedes to creatures to see.³²⁰ Since praising God means to love God, as we saw, love and vision, *aspectus* and *affectus* are combined once again.³²¹

The balance is, however, in favour of love, according to Grosseteste. Speaking about “holy minds” – probably in reference to angels – Dionysius says that they “do not seek with impotent presumption the Mystery beyond that heavenly revelation which is so granted as to fit their powers, nor yet through their lower propensity slip down the steep descent, but with unwavering constancy press onwards toward the ray that casts its light upon them and, through the love responsive (*commensurato amore*) to these gracious illuminations, speed their temperate and holy flight on the wings of a godly reverence.”³²² Commenting on this text, Grosseteste reveals some worries with equating love to the illumination received from

³¹⁷ McEvoy 2003, 126.

³¹⁸ *DN* IV, M 202vb: “Nihil est melius quam Dei intellectualis cognitio que eius amore puro necessario est repleta.”

³¹⁹ *CH* IV, 181-182: “[...] *suscipientes* a patre luminum *principales*, hoc est primas absque medio et maxime reductivas in suam originem, *illuminationes* tam intelligentie oculum illustrantes quam amoris affectu simplificantes.”

³²⁰ *DN* I, 144 § 28: “Intendit enim per hanc [*scil.* enarrationem] divinitatem laudare unam et trinam et hymnologizare et illuminari, ut fas, ad visionem provisarum ab eterno operationum divinarum ad creaturas.”

³²¹ Another text can be added to the passages mentioned in § 2.2.2, namely *Dictum* 104, fol. 86vb: “Is eciam est finis laudis, ut ipse laudans in laudati dilectione laudando amplius inflammetur, et audientes in eiusdem rapiat et inflammet dilectionem.”

³²² *Dionysiaca*, 15-16; English translation in Rolt 1920, 35.

God. We can say this because, in this case, Grosseteste does not content himself with a simple paraphrase of the text, as he usually does, but expresses his own view on the subject. First, he states that the intellect/angels desire God with all their strength, and without any measure (*sine modo et sine mensura*).³²³ He then explains that the measure is not in the desire, but in the limit of human faculties. It concerns our capacity to receive God, a capacity that is donated by God Himself to every rational being. Therefore, our capacity to love God is limited and it reveres what is beyond that capacity.³²⁴ But in the next sentence, the subject is no longer love, but the intellect: “Due ale sunt quibus mens, [...] sursum elevatur, sed non nisi commensuratum nostre virtuti de divino radio. [...] Et si quis presumeret et eniteretur totalitatem divinitatis ut est in se ipsa comprehendere, existimo quod in hoc Dei Verbo se parificaret et per hoc esset par Sathane.”³²⁵ Grosseteste repeats that it is not allowed to desire to know more than God concedes to us, otherwise our intellect would be like Satan who believed to be like God. It is significant that Grosseteste shifts from love to knowledge, but he considers it unnecessary to offer any explanation for that move. This text is further proof not only of the epistemological role of love, but also of his primacy in theological knowledge: love for God can be without measure, while the intellect is limited by God Himself, and must be content with what God concedes to reveal.

A passage from the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* may help us to make Grosseteste’s position clearer. Love is also the key concept to understand the *Hierarchies* because the aim of each hierarchy – Dionysius says – is love towards God and divine realities (*ad deum et divina*). Grosseteste explains that the object of love can be intended in two ways: (a) love for God in Himself as Unity and for the divine realities understood as the three Persons of the Trinity; (b) love for God as Unity in the Trinity and vice versa, and for the divine realities understood as divine attributes like truth and justice.³²⁶ If both interpretations are possible, the most problematic is (a), because it entails that by loving God we can reach God in Himself. Knowledge cannot drive us to Him, as demonstrated above, as it is limited to the object of

³²³ DN I, 142 § 24: “[...] tales enim intellectus extendit se per se bonum in sui contemplationem et communicationem et assimilationem eis decentissime convenientem qui totis viribus desiderant ipsum, nec modum nec mensuram apponunt huic desiderio, quia modus et mensura desiderandi et amandi Deum est ut sit sine modo et sine mensura.” This idea is stated also in the *Dictum* 91, 70vb: “Sine modo enim et sine mensura amandum est quod sine modo et mensura bonum est.”

³²⁴ DN I, 143 § 25: “[...] amor in hoc est commensuratus quod, licet sine modo et mensura desideret, commensuratum tamen proprie virtuti de divino radio desiderat et sacre reverenter quod est supra suam virtutem, amor igitur sibi convenientis de divino radio et reverentia eius quod superexcedit sue susceptibilitatis analogiam.”

³²⁵ DNI, 143 § 26.

³²⁶ EH I, 336, ll.11-15: “[...] et ad deum in seipso nude in sua substancia et unitate substanciali diligendum et divina hoc est ad deum trinitate personarum patrem scilicet et filium et spiritum sanctum diligendum; vel ad deum hoc est ad unitatem in trinitate et trinitatem in unitate et divina hoc est ea que de deo predicantur ut veritas, iusticia et similia.”

love, which is stated in (b): to know that God is one in three Persons. Incidentally this is further demonstration that the knowledge of the Trinity is a step lower than the pure knowledge of God.³²⁷ For Grosseteste, love is not only what lifts cognitive powers from the lower, material objects to the highest truths, but it alone is capable to lead us to the core of the Godhead.³²⁸ There can be a unbounded love, but not an unbounded knowledge of God.³²⁹

In concluding this section, we may add a little note that may shed a new light on a controversial episode of Grosseteste's life. Indeed, holding together the homological meaning of the verb 'to theologize',³³⁰ and the primacy of love over knowledge, is an interpretation that becomes clear in the famous letter that Grosseteste addresses to the masters of theology in Oxford around 1240.³³¹ In that letter, the bishop of Lincoln warned his former colleagues to do all the ordinary lectures in the morning hour when commenting on the Bible. The target of his remarks was probably Richard Fishacre, who commented on the *Sentences* at Oxford in those years. This letter must not be interpreted as a rejection of the new methods in theology because, as mentioned earlier, Grosseteste knew the *Sentences*, and it is very likely that some of his short treatises are a revision of a (partial) commentary on them. Rather, the letter shows that Grosseteste warned the masters in theology to devote morning lectures, in the hours reserved to ordinary or magisterial lectures, to treatments of Holy Scriptures. For Grosseteste, Fishacre's fault was not to have commented on the *Sentences*, but to have replaced the Scripture with the *Sentences*.³³² The letter reveals the conviction, typical for a twelfth century theologian, that disputing about God could make Him an object of investigation, while God is something that must be principally loved and admired.³³³

II.3.3 God has no name

In the works written before the *Commentary*, we have seen Grosseteste holding that no name is said univocally of God and creatures.³³⁴ However, a distinction must be made

³²⁷ See above § II.2.1.

³²⁸ In the sermon *Nostra conversacio in celis est* (p. 141), Grosseteste presents the angelical hierarchy and explains in the following way the closest orders: "Talis autem est ordo in scendendo de angelis ad archangelis [...]; deinde ad cherubin, id est, cognitionem divine visionis; et tandem ad seraphin, id est, ad superfervidum Dei amorem pervenire." It confirms that, in the ascent to God, knowledge is a lower degree than love.

³²⁹ Hugh of Saint Victor expressed the same idea, namely of the superiority of love over intelligence: "Si tamen hoc intelligi potest, quoniam dilectio supereminet scientiae, et major est intelligentia. Plus enim diligitur, quam intelligitur, et intrat dilectio, et appropinquat, ubi scientia foris est" *In Hierarchiam*, VI, 7, 1038D.

³³⁰ See above § II.2.2.

³³¹ See McEvoy 2000, 163-165.

³³² Ginther 2004, 27.

³³³ See Gaybba 1988, 17f.

³³⁴ See § II.2.3.

between the rational being and others because the rational creatures are closer to God and imitate Him better, so they may share names with Him, though not univocally. Although Grosseteste does not define an intermediate category, he distinguishes the case of equivocal names that refer to a relation according to prior and posterior sense (*per prius et posterius*). It is the case, for example, of ‘being’ that is said equivocally of the First existent, to whom existence is substantial, and of creatures, to which it is not.

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste seems to hold to a similar view, however, in a couple of passages, he proposes an alternative interpretation. In the *Commentary*, the focus is not so much on the couple univocity/equivocity, but rather on the affirmation and negation of divine attributes. Since this chapter is dedicated to God’s transcendence, we will focus on the method that allows human beings to express it better, i.e., the negative way (§ II.3.3.1). At the end of the paragraph, we can see that everything can be denied of God because of His transcendence, but yet Grosseteste proposes some answers to the quest for a more proper name. First, he considers some attributes that can be said univocally of God and the creatures, and then, he suggests the biblical Tetragrammaton as the most proper divine name (§ II.3.3.1).

II.3.3.1 *Negations*

The paradox concerning the knowledge of God (*ignorantia/omne intelligibile*) is reflected in the language (*ineffabile/multivocum*).³³⁵ There are no names that signify God as *moné* because causality is the only way we have to access to Him. There is a privileged method, however, in approaching His transcendence that resumes the two ways of knowing God developed by Grosseteste in Book II of the *De mystica theologia*. In the mystical union, God is praised by removing from Him all attributes, while in natural conditions, when human beings are still on earth, He is praised by means of negations and affirmations. Grosseteste seems to prefer the first way,³³⁶ i.e., removing divine names provides the best means of expressing His transcendence. In the *De mystica theologia*, Dionysius explains that such a process involves every divine attribute and starts from the less noble – those whose meaning is connected to material things – up to most noble.³³⁷

³³⁵ See *DN II*.

³³⁶ *MT II*, 90: “In dicta caligine laudatur Deus per omnium ablationem modo quo predictum est, non autem per positiones, quia tunc non esset in ea actualis omnis ignorantia. Extra caliginem vero laudatur per utrasque et principalius per ablationes, et familiarius perducit laus eius per abnegationes ad caliginem et ignorantiam que est in caligine.”

³³⁷ *MT IV*, 102: “Hic autem, querens ipsum ut intimum omnium per abnegationes omnium ab ipso, primo amovet ab ipso sensibilia tamquam ab ipso magis distantia, et deinde intelligibilia tamquam ipsi proximiora.”

While the claim in the *De mystica theologia* is reserved to negations, the *De divinis nominibus*, by contrast, points out the affirmations. We will see that Grosseteste tries to balance affirmations and negations in these treatises of the *Corpus*. It is necessary to make it clear, says Grosseteste in *De mystica theologia*, that every denial is not intended to mean that God lacks something, for He possesses everything in a supersubstantial way: the ascension to God through negations needs to be understood in the light of the principle that every negation presupposes a super-affirmation in God.³³⁸ In the same way, in the *De divinis nominibus*, Dionysius's accent was put on the affirmation, while Grosseteste notes that every attribute affirmed of God must be denied.³³⁹ In other words, the *De divinis nominibus* is a treatise devoted to the affirmative theology, while Grosseteste, in the commentary, emphasizes the role of negation in the process of naming God. The *De mystica theologia* is a treatise on the negative theology, although there Grosseteste holds that every negation is based upon an affirmation.

In Book I, Grosseteste underscores the limits of every attempt at naming God: God as *moné* is knowable to Himself but unknowable to us.³⁴⁰ Human beings' ignorance about what God is in Himself is reflected in the theological language, i.e., through silence.³⁴¹ There is an important biblical text concerning the human capacity of naming God, which is recalled by Dionysius and commented on by Grosseteste. It is the dialogue between the father of Samson and the angel of God that traditionally was interpreted as a figure of God Himself. At the request of the man to know the name of his guest (he does not know indeed that he is the angel of God), the angel answers that his name was admirable (*admirabile*).³⁴² Grosseteste raises a question about the meaning of that name '*admirabile*'. It is one of the rare digressions of the *Commentary*, and even rarer is the fact that Grosseteste quotes the interpretations advanced by other commentators.³⁴³ A first interpretation comes from those who propose understanding the name '*admirabile*' as the tetragrammaton (YHWH), the unpronounceable

³³⁸ *MT* V, 106: "Sed ne ex abnegatione omnium a Deo posset quis opinari auctorem intendere dicere Deum omnino non esse, premissi eum esse supersubstantialiter substantiam, vitam rationem et intellectum, qui tamen simpliciter et essentialiter nihil est entium vel non entium."

³³⁹ *DN* I, § 68, 159: "Modus autem comprehensionis ipsis et laudis per divina nomina est per ablationem et remotionem omnium entium ab ipsa [...] nec est nomen, vel privativum vel positivum de Deo dictum quod non insinuet et laudet ipsum per ablationem."

³⁴⁰ *DN* I, § 12, 137: "Itaque nostre susceptibilitatis divinarum illuminationum modificata est nostra de divinis cognitio ipsa deitate in sua immensurabilitate manente incognoscibili, a se ipsa sola superessentialiter cognita."

³⁴¹ *DN* II, M 189ra: "Et ut in hac quiete et ignorantia et in hoc silentio comprehensa ineffabilis est innominabilis et nominatione nulla manifestabilis vel cognoscibilis". See also *DNI*, § 30, 144.

³⁴² *Judges* 13:8.

³⁴³ The only extant complete *Commentary* on the *De divinis nominibus* written before that of Grosseteste is that of Thomas Gallus, but we do not find those comments. Just as Grosseteste knew more translations than the ones extant, it is very likely that he knew more *Commentaries* than the ones extant as well.

name of God. Other interpreters consider ‘*admirabile*’ itself as the name of God, and refer to *Isaiah* 9:5 as the biblical basis of this conviction. Finally, there are interpreters who hold that the expression *nomen admirabile* means that God is above every name, and therefore, has no name. Grosseteste thinks that the third option is probably the best interpretation of Dionysius’s text.³⁴⁴ He then concludes that naming God admirably means to name the nobleness of Him by removing all nobleness from Him (*per privationem*).³⁴⁵ In this case ‘*admirabile*’ plays the same role as the Anselmian formula *id quo maius ...*: properly speaking, it is not a name of God, nor does it express something of Him, but it is a rule of thought that prevents us from attributing names to Him because He is above and beyond all names. This means, for example, that if we were to think of God as life, the adverb *admirabile* reminds us that God is not life, properly speaking, because He is beyond life, and therefore, He is not life. Specifically, the name ‘*admirabile*’ indicates the fact that God is not the first of a series, but He is beyond the series, for He is that than which nothing greater can be thought, and thus, a single name to summarize Anselm’s circumlocution is precisely ‘*admirabile*’. What Grosseteste probably means is that Dionysius’s negative theology fits Anselm’s definition: its purpose is to preserve God’s transcendence.

In this context we have to see Grosseteste’s clarifications about Dionysius’s use of the prefix ‘hyper,’ which he renders as ‘super.’ Divine names such as *superbonus*, *superdeus*, *supervivus* and so on do not state anything of God. The prefix ‘super’ declares, at the same time, God’s supereminence and the negation of every attribute from Him.³⁴⁶ In light of this principle, we can explain the attitude of the authors of the Bible to name God with antonyms. For example, when they call Him ‘foolishness,’ they do not mean that God lacks wisdom, but that He is beyond any kind of wisdom that can be found in the created world.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ *DN* I, § 74, 162: “[Admirabile] quod potest tripliciter intelligi. Intelligunt enim quidam quod nomen in quo nominatur divina essentia in se ipsa est illud quod dicunt tetragrammaton, quod nomen est ineffabile a creatura, sicut ipsa divina essentia est incomprehensibilis, et ideo est hoc nomen admirabile, immo super omnem admirationem. Alii dicunt quod hoc ipsum admirabile est nomen Dei, sicut dicitur in Isaia; et vocabitur admirabilis. Alii autem intelligunt hanc dictionem admirabile positum adiective ad hanc dictionem nomen et intelligunt quod per hanc dictionem nomen cui addicitur admirabile superponuntur talia divina nomina: super omne nomen, innominatum, supercollocatum omni nominationi et similia, et sic videtur intellexisse auctor iste.”

³⁴⁵ *DN* I, § 74, 162: “[...] vere est admirabilis nominatio que nominat nobilitatem per nobilitatis privationem.”

³⁴⁶ *DN* II, M 184vb: “Huiusmodi videlicet nomina sunt *superexcellētis ablationis* id est significant superexcellētiam deitatis super omnia que nominari per nomina quibus compositive praeponitur hoc particula «super» et que significant ablationem deitatis ab omnibus ut predicta et ut privative de ea dicta velut immortalis, interminabilis, infinitus, et huiusmodi” Such a claim, which can also be found in similar texts, explains why modern readers of Dionysius rightly prefer to translate ‘hyper’ as ‘beyond’ instead of ‘super.’ See e.g. Jones 2008, 669.

³⁴⁷ *DN* VII, M 243ra: “*Theologis est consuetum abnegare*, id est privato sermone dicere, *in Deo*, seu de Deo, *contraria passione ea que privationis*, hoc est attribuere Deo significantia privationes. Cuiusmodi attributio videtur esse oppositi habitus abnegatio in designationem quod ei conveniunt superexcellēter habitus oppositi privationis utpote cum ei attribuitur stultitia que est privatio sapientie.”

This principle guides Grosseteste in his effort to give an order to the long, fuzzy list of attributes denied of God, which were introduced by Dionysius in Book IV and V of the *De mystica theologia*. The list starts, according to Grosseteste, when Dionysius states that God “is not a body”; he continues that God is not constituted by shape, nor form, nor quality, nor quantity and so on.³⁴⁸ Grosseteste believes that it is possible to find a hierarchical order in this list, from the body as such to the body endowed with sensible powers. When Grosseteste realizes that no reference to a vegetative nature is present, he justifies this omission by recalling the philosophical principle that the mention of the extremes of a series implies the intermediate.³⁴⁹ Two points of the argument are worth noting. First, according to Grosseteste, it is impossible that Dionysius wrote something without an exact meaning or order, but his interpretative efforts sometimes reveals the weakness of this assumption.³⁵⁰ Grosseteste’s attempts to systematize the confused mix of negations presented in those Books are not always successful, which confirms that those negations have no coherent order as many contemporary interpreters of Dionysius hold.³⁵¹ Second, on another occasion (besides those discussed in § II.3.1) Grosseteste recognizes that Dionysius uses a philosophical argument to explain the truth of God.

Passing through the hierarchy of beings, Grosseteste reaches the peak of this ascensional path where no name is attributed, even the Trinitarian names.³⁵² The *De mystica theologia* takes an even further step with respect to the *Theologicæ subfigurationes* (the Dionysian treatise on the Trinitarian names), and it reaches the highest degree of theological knowledge that is possible to be attained by a created mind. This confirms what I said above about the Trinity and its knowability for the philosophers: although this mystery cannot be grasped without faith and love, it is in a certain way related to the creation and for this reason, the non-believers can glimpse it. In the mystical union, by contrast, there is no room for this

³⁴⁸ See *MT IV*, 106-109.

³⁴⁹ *MT IV* 106.108: “Videtur autem quod auctor hic omiserit naturam vegetativam, que media est inter corpora penitus carentia vita et corpora sensitiva. Sed potest dici quod per extrema dedit intelligi medium, sicut pluries faciunt philosophice tractantes.”

³⁵⁰ I developed the assumption at § I.4. Another passage where Grosseteste has difficulties to make sense of the text is *MT V*. According to Grosseteste, a substantial step towards the mystical union is to deny what belongs to sensible and intelligible realities taken in common. Among those things there is “the love of good”. In the explanation of this name, however, Grosseteste discusses names that pertain to the intellectual sphere (‘understanding,’ ‘knowledge,’ ‘truth’ and so on). A further step is to deny what pertains only to the intelligible nature. It is at this point that Grosseteste finally comes to the attribute good. Grosseteste has some difficulties in justifying the double occurrence of the name ‘truth’ in the same Book (cf. *MT V*, 117.119).

³⁵¹ For a bibliography on this point, cf. McEvoy 1980b, 150.

³⁵² *MT V*, 118: “*Neque deitas est, videlicet omnium causa, vel bonitas, et similiter intellige de ceteris nominibus de tota Trinitate dictis, et similiter discretive dictis de personis, unde sequitur: neque spiritus est, ut nos scire, id est ut contigit nos scire et intelligere spiritum, neque filiatio neque paternitas. Ultra hec non restat abdicabile ab omnium causa specialiter.*”

kind of connection, and therefore, the Trinitarian names are removed from God.

In the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia*, Grosseteste reaffirms the primacy of negations, even of the most spiritual attributes of God, i.e., reason, intellect and substance. He claims that:

Non minus igitur sed potius forte plus laudant eloquia therchiam ipsa abnegatione rationis et intellectus et substantie at similius ab ipsa quam cum rationem et intellectum et substantiam nominant ipsam [...] negationes itaque, ut pretactum est, proprie et vere possunt de deo dici, affirmatio autem nulla secundum propriam predicati significationem, cum proprie aliquod entium citra ipsum significet, de eo vera est.³⁵³

Grosseteste's point is that every name would signify something less than Him. Grosseteste holds that negations can be properly and truly spoken of God, while no affirmation is true in the same way concerning Him, in the proper meaning of the predicate. This passage mirrors the second commandment of the *De decem mandatis*: there, it was prohibited to think that God is something less than what He is; here the same doctrine is applied to language, namely, that it is prohibited to attribute to God a name that signifies something less than He is in Himself. But the question is: according to Grosseteste, does such a name exist?

II.3.3.2 *God's proper name*

In the *Commentary*, there are passages where Grosseteste restates the idea held in his previous works, namely, that no name is said univocally of God and the creatures.³⁵⁴ However, in the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia*, Grosseteste affirms that there is a category of names that is particularly suitable to God, i.e., the privative names such as the 'invisible,' 'infinite' and 'incomprehensible.' Insofar as they simply deny something, they are said univocally of God and the creatures. For example, the name 'invisible' means "something not visible," and it can be attributed both to God and to the creatures.³⁵⁵ Unlike Dionysius,

³⁵³ CH II, 60.63.

³⁵⁴ E.g., DN V, M 240rb: "*Et stans per immutabilitatem, et motus per rerum productionem et gubernationem in esse seculari vel temporali, et neque stans neque motus quia nihil dictum de creatura univoce dicitur de ipso sed super substantialiter et super omnem intelligentiam.*"

³⁵⁵ CH II, 59-60: "[...] tria autem nomina quibus exemplificat manifestationes dissimile, invisibilis scilicet, infinitus et incomprehensibile, secundum suam significationem primam et propriam dicunt de deo non quid est sed quid non est. Et est vera hec predicatio privativa de Deo; et forte huiusmodi nomina privativa aliqua univoce dicuntur de ipso et de aliquibus creaturis, ut 'invisible' de ipso et omnibus creaturis que non possunt visu sentiri." McQuade commits a mistake when translates 'univoce' as 'equivocally', but it is excusable

Grosseteste holds that these names do not manifest anything of God, and this explains why they are particularly appropriate for God.³⁵⁶ Finally, these names not only remove God from what He is not, but also suggest that God is beyond all things. The more noble and superior the potency or essence that is denied of Him, the more clearly the super-eminence of his potency and essence is manifested by that denial.³⁵⁷ However, the discovery of such names does not stop our search for a proper, “real” name of God.

Now, Grosseteste seems to think that there is a name that could play this role. In the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, Grosseteste refers to some commentators who took the name ‘*admirabile*’ to refer to the tetragrammaton (YHWH), the unpronounceable name of God. Grosseteste, however, does not believe that they pick up on Dionysius’s view. In the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia*, Grosseteste expresses his own idea about the Tetragrammaton and seems to attach to it only the privilege of signifying God’s essence:

Quapropter omne nomen, dictum de aliquo alio essentialiter in eadem significatione de ipsa thearchia, non dicitur nec est nomen aliquod quod ipsam divinitatis essentiam primo et proximo, pure et precise significet ut aiunt quidam, qui de divinis nominibus tractant, nisi nomen quod dicitur tetragrammaton.³⁵⁸

Grosseteste explains that, because God has nothing essentially in common with anything else, every name spoken of some other being is not used in the same signification of God Himself, nor is there any name which primarily and proximately, purely and precisely signifies the essence of divinity, as certain people say who write about the divine names, except the name which is called the Tetragrammaton. Despite the importance of the idea stated above, the passage is dense, which also illustrates the limits of Grosseteste’s theological method, as criticized by Ginther.³⁵⁹ From this passage, it is not clear if Grosseteste accepts the exception of the Tetragrammaton, as a name that signifies God *pure et precise*. But if we

because it is an *unicum* in the whole chapter (and, very likely, in the whole *Commentary*). An analysis of the divine attribute ‘infinite’ is in Ginther 2004, 106f. William of Auxerre also stated that a negation of a property can be said univocally of everything that does not participate in that property, as ‘not-white’ is said univocally of everything that does not participate in the whiteness; see *Summa aurea*, I, vi, 2, p.83, l.58: “Quinta univocatio est per convenientiam in privatione vel etiam negatione, sicut non album est univocum ad omne quod non participat albedinem.”

³⁵⁶ CH II, 60: “Non sunt symbolice dicta neque manifestationes que grece dicuntur ekfantorie, cum tamen secundum auctoris exemplificationem oportet ea esse symbolice et ekfantorie dicta.”

³⁵⁷ CH II, 60: “Nomina igitur huiusmodi in eloquis sacris dicta de deo non solum abnegant ab ipso hoc quod ipse non est sed et ipsa remotione cuiusque ab ipso quod ipse non est, innuunt de deo quod ipse est super omnem potentiam essendi illud quod ab ipso removetur et quod sua potentia incomparabiliter excedit potentiam essendi id quod ab ipso abnegatur et quod sua essentia similiter excedit incomparabiliter omnem essentiam ab ipso abdicatam.”

³⁵⁸ CH II, 59.

³⁵⁹ Ginther 2004, 109: “Grosseteste’s brevity and sometimes cursory analysis of significant theological concepts is disappointing.”

combine this passage with the text about the name ‘*admirabile*’ we can assume that, for Grosseteste, the Tetragrammaton is a particular name because it is the only name by which God names Himself, but it cannot be uttered (and hence understood) by men, and therefore, it is a proper name of God precisely because it is a no-name for men.³⁶⁰

II.3.4 Conclusion

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste accepts a paradox: God is at the same time unknowable and knowable, ineffable and many-named. These coupled terms represent two ways of defining God, as Grosseteste also points out in the early works: the first attribute expresses God’s absolute transcendence, while the second his causal proximity to creatures. With respect to God’s transcendence, the main problem to solve, for Grosseteste, is how knowledge of an infinite Being by a finite intellect is possible. The problem of knowledge concerns two cases: the knowledge of man on the earth and that of blessed in Heaven. The first one receives particular attention by Grosseteste and it has been developed in this chapter. I suggested dividing this topic in two: the knowledge of God based on the Bible and the natural knowledge of God like that of the philosophers. The first kind of knowledge implies that every being is a similitude of God, but those created images of God are not of the same quality; they are like mirrors, some reflect better the image of God and others worst. Commenting on the *De coelesti hierarchia*, Grosseteste discusses Dionysius’s theory that God shows Himself according to similar or dissimilar symbols and concludes that none of them are appropriate to God: He is not properly substance or intelligence, nor is He a rock. In this work, Grosseteste gives two reasons for the utility of the dissimilar symbols: they prevent the impures from approaching God and the believers from confining their hearts to what is only a symbol.

But the level of mere images can be transcended to reach a higher degree of knowledge. The act of transcending is not properly an operation because the intellect at this point is only passive, its role only consists in receiving God’s illumination without any image. This passivity is marked by the fact that the intellect can receive only what God wants to reveal. The faculty that Grosseteste designates for this task is wisdom (*sapientia*). We argued that the possibility of being illuminated is not only a privilege of some mystics and the

³⁶⁰ Remember that in Grosseteste’s time, people did not know that Tetragrammaton came from the biblical expression “I am who I am” (*Exodus* 3:14). Indeed Robert Wilkinson calls the Middle-Ages “the times of ignorance about the tetragrammaton.” See Wilkinson 2015, 215.

blessed, but it can also be experienced by the ecclesiastical hierarchs.

The philosophical knowledge of God has little room in the *Commentary*. Grosseteste believes that the process of approaching God in a purely rational way has two limits: the first is the ignorance of God's omnipotence against which logical arguments fail; the second is the lack of love for God that also curbs the philosopher's knowledge. It is this second point that Grosseteste develops more in detail. Love is more important than conceptual thought in the ascent towards God; love is oriented to God in Himself, while intellectual knowledge is limited to the creatural images of God.

Indeed, there are not names that signify God's transcendence because the only way to access Him is causality. There is a method, however, that is more suitable, namely, to praise Him by removing all names from Him. This is why privative names like 'invisible,' 'infinite,' and 'incomprehensible' are particularly appropriate to God because they simply deny something. There is however a name that is supposed to signify God's essence, the Tetragrammaton, but after closer analysis we can conclude that it is not a name since it cannot be uttered and understood.

CHAPTER III

Processio: A Theology of Creation

III.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have presented two definitions of God given by Grosseteste: the first is that “God is the first form of everything” (*Deus est prima forma omnium*), the second is the Anselmian formula. The latter definition expresses God’s transcendence. In this chapter, we will analyze the first definition that indicates the proximity of God to creatures by virtue of His universal causality. As Richard Southern has stated, this aspect is rather important for Grosseteste to the point that we can consider him a theologian of creation.³⁶¹ While one can certainly agree with this judgment, Southern himself does not advance any argument to prove it. Perhaps he was induced to make such a claim because in the catalogue of works attributed to Grosseteste the works on creation are much more numerous than the works on redemption. Or, perhaps Southern considered Grosseteste’s theological masterpiece, the *Hexaëmeron* (a commentary on the first chapters of *Genesis*), as an attempt to introduce his doctrine of creation. After all, commentators general refer to this book of the Bible normally as the occasion to say something about creation. If, however, these are the reasons that led Southern to that claim, they may be perceived as too superficial. If we search for a more solid ground, we can find it in Grosseteste’s conception of Sacred Scripture. Every text of the Scripture has, according to Grosseteste, the same authority as God’s Word. But there are some parts that are easier to be understood than others.³⁶² Grosseteste seems to refer to those parts that deal with the sensible world, such as earth, creatures, and the sea. The sensible world is the starting-point of any kind of investigation, not only in theology. This explains why the Bible begins with the creation and why Grosseteste meditated on it for long time. The topic of creation was perfectly suited to his previous studies of liberal arts, thus the book of *Genesis* could have given him the occasion to apply his interest in natural phenomena to a theological matter. He

³⁶¹ Southern 1986, 219: “If we may make a broad distinction between two types of theology – a theology in which Redemption is the central theme, and a theology centred on Creation – Grosseteste is essentially a theologian of Creation.”

³⁶² See *Hexaëmeron* I, i, 2, 51: “Quapropter hec scriptura que proponitur simpliciter toti humano generi, a sensibilibus huius mundi secundum quod sub fidem veniunt debet inchoari. Omnis namque doctrine primordia hiis quibus proponitur eadem doctrina, debet esse magis capabilia.”

preferred to develop the topic of creation rather than redemption, a topic that Grosseteste considered very distant from any human reasoning, as has been seen previously.³⁶³ Indeed, his treatise on redemption is dated around the forties when he became a bishop and commented on Dionysius.³⁶⁴

Grosseteste's theology of creation would be incomprehensible without an analysis of the philosophical doctrines of participation and exemplarism. The definition of God as the form of everything is based on the metaphysical principle that every thing participates in God; from this it follows that every thing is an image of God and likewise modeled after Him. Before the *Commentary*, Grosseteste uses the word 'procession' to signify the Trinitarian relationships or the religious procession. This does not mean, however, that the idea of procession as something that flows from God downwards cannot be found in the works written during his years as master of theology.

This chapter is divided in two main parts: the first is devoted to Grosseteste's theology of creation in the works written before the *Commentary* (§ III.2.1-3). The second part will deal with the idea of procession in the *Commentary* (§ III.3.1) and its consequences for religious language (§ III.3.2).

III.2 Procession in the works before the *Commentary*

It could be objected that the definition of God as first form of everything is merely a marginal issue in Grosseteste's thought because he only explicitly mentions it in a single letter. It will become clear in this chapter, however, that many works of this period deal with this topic. Taking into account all the writings that concern this topic, firstly, we discuss the meaning of form (*forma*); secondly, that God is the first (*prima*) form; and finally, that He is form of everything (*omnium*).

III.2.1 God is form (*forma*)

The first term of the definition that we discuss is form. Grosseteste does not provide a definition, but he illustrates three examples to describe this term (§ III.2.1.1), and develops

³⁶³ See § II.3.1.3.

³⁶⁴ See *Ex rerum initiarum*, 114.

two of them. The first example presents the form as a container that shapes a liquid. This example implies that creatures do not exist through themselves, but they completely rely upon God for their existence (§ III.2.1.2). The second example presents the form as a silver seal that impresses the wax. This example entails many degrees of similitude between the Creator and the creatures (§ III.2.1.3).

III.2.1.1 *Three meanings of 'form'*

The study of the etymology of the Greek word for participation (μέθεξις) reveals that “to speak of metaphysical participation is to say that one thing has what it is *with* and indeed *after* and *in pursuit of*, another: it has its reality, in other words, by virtue of something other than itself.”³⁶⁵ The idea of a dependence of every thing on the eternal exemplar in God’s mind is present in particular in Grosseteste’s *De prima forma omnium*, known also as *De unica forma omnium*, written at the beginning of his theological career. This brief essay, is the first part of the first of Grosseteste’s *Letters*, while the second part is devoted to angels, which is known as *De intelligentiis*. Between 1226 and 1231, Grosseteste’s pupil Adam Rufus asked his master if God can be said to be the form of everything.³⁶⁶ The background of this question is probably owed to the recent condemnation of Eriugena; the definition of God as the first form of everything is formulated by Eriugena in the *Periphyseon*, and condemned in 1225 by pope Honourius III for alleged pantheism. The name of Eriugena, though, does not appear in the answer likely because of the aforementioned condemnation. However, Grosseteste approves of Eriugena’s thesis that God is form, but qualifies it according to the authority of Augustine.³⁶⁷

Grosseteste analyzes Eriugena’s thesis as a combination of two claims: (1) God is Form; (2) God is the form of everything. At first glance, claim (1) seems unproblematic to Grosseteste. He quotes three texts from Augustine’s works that state (1).³⁶⁸ Those texts affirm, in a nutshell, the existence of an eternal and immutable form thanks to which contingent things subsist; without this form, everything would collapse into nothing.³⁶⁹ After the long

³⁶⁵ Schindler 2005, 1.

³⁶⁶ For the date of this letter see McEvoy 1981b.

³⁶⁷ For a general discussion on the influence of Eriugena on Grosseteste, see McEvoy 1987. McEvoy pointed out that it is almost impossible to ascertain if Eriugena exerted some influence on Grosseteste, since both rely on the same sources, Augustine first, but also the Greek Fathers. See McEvoy 1987, 193-195.

³⁶⁸ The Augustinian texts are *De libero arbitrio*, II, 16-17; *Confessiones* XIII, 2; *Ibid.* XI, 30.

³⁶⁹ Here a relevant passage from the first text: “Si quicquid mutabile aspexeris, vel sensu corporis vel animi consideratione capere non poteris, nisi aliqua numerorum forma teneatur, qua detracta in nihilum recidat. [...]”

quotations from Augustine, Grosseteste confirms the authority with an argument from the nature of the form (*ratione formae*). A form, Grosseteste says, is that by which a thing is what it is (*id quod est*); for example, humanity is a human being's form for it is that by which one is a human being; similarly, God's divinity can be thought as that by which something is God, but God's divinity is not different from God Himself, so God is what it is in virtue of Himself; as a result, God can be said to be form in virtue of Himself.³⁷⁰ Moreover, form is the perfection of a thing and God is the most perfect being that does not need anything else to be perfect.³⁷¹

Claim (2), by contrast, raises problems because it seems to jeopardize God's transcendence. Grosseteste aims to give an interpretation that avoids any risk of pantheism, as he states that God is the form of everything not as a substantial part of creatures or as a complement of matter. This difficulty spurs Grosseteste to clarify, again, claim (1) and he does not find anything better than to explain his view by means of examples. He advances three descriptions of form. Firstly, the form can be described as an exemplar distinct from the copies that depend on it: for example, form is the idea to which the craftsman looks at when he shapes his product. Secondly, form can be intended as a model of life, such as the life of a righteous man that is the form of life that everyone should imitate. Third, the form can be described as what is impressed on a malleable matter, as the silver seal is impressed on wax.³⁷² The second example presents a kind of form that has only moral relevance, and without ontological content; accordingly, Grosseteste does not develop it. He dwells instead on the first and the third example that present two perspectives on form: the first focuses on the ontological reality of form; the third concerns the relationship between the form and the matter.

Before analyzing these two examples, we must consider a philosophical work where Grosseteste attempts to define 'form', but he admits the limits of this endeavour. In the *De statu causarum*, Grosseteste deals with the four kinds of causes introduced by Aristotle in

Si enim omnia, quae sunt, forma penitus subtracta nulla erunt," (*De forma prima omnium*, 107).

³⁷⁰ *De forma prima omnium*, 108: "Ex ratione quoque formae argui potest, Deum formam esse, quia forma est, qua res est id quod est, velut humanitas, qua homo est homo, forma hominis est. Deus autem a seipso est id quod est. Seipso enim Deus est, quia deitate deus est et deitas deus est. Quapropter cum id, quo res est id quod est, forma sit, Deus forma est."

³⁷¹ *De forma prima omnium*, 108: "Item: quid est forma, nisi completio rei sive perfectio? Deus autem est completio incompletibilis, perfectio imperfectibilis, et ideo forma non formabilis, quia penitus sine defectu et incommutabilis."

³⁷² *De forma prima omnium*, 109: "Dicitur itaque forma exemplar, ad quod respicit artifex, ut ad eius imitationem et similitudinem formet suum artificium; sic pes ligneus, ad quem respicit sutor, ut secundum ipsum formet soleam, dicitur forma soleae. Sic etiam vita bonorum, ad quam respicimus, ut ad eius similitudinem mores vitae nostrae formemus, dicitur nobis forma vivendi. Dicitur quoque forma, cui materia formanda applicatur, et per applicationem ad illud recipit formam ipsius, cui applicatur, imitatoriam."

Metaphysics Book II. At the end of the treatise, Grosseteste develops his idea of form a bit further. The text commented on is Aristotle's, but the answer comes from Plato. In particular, when Grosseteste comes to comment on the formal cause, he explains that form can be said in many ways. He first distinguishes the accidental form from the substantial form, and holds that only the latter can be called a formal cause. Grosseteste distinguishes three meanings of substantial form. First (a), a substantial form can be an exemplar that, being separated from everything, is not that through which something exists (*quo est*). Second (b), it can be that through which something exists and is immanent to the thing. Third (c), it can be an exemplar that is also that through which something exists.³⁷³ The exemplar in the craftsman's mind is the substantial form of the kind (a). There are several substantial forms of the kind (b), like the soul, the material cause, and the mover of celestial bodies. There is instead only one substantial form of the kind (c), that is God, the First Form, who is at the same time a separated exemplar and that through which everything exists. Grosseteste acknowledges that it is difficult to explain how the existence of an exemplar such as (c) is possible, thus in *De statu causarum* he does not propose any solution.³⁷⁴

For this reason, we turn back to the *De prima forma omnium*, and in the next two paragraphs I will discuss the two examples illustrated in more detail. Moreover we must keep in mind the warning that opens and concludes this treatise: human beings are limited in dealing with such matters because human knowledge and language are not sufficient to represent God because of His excellence and transcendence.³⁷⁵

III.2.1.2 *The form as a conservative principle*

Grosseteste illustrates the first example about the form by means of a thought experiment:

Imaginare itaque in mente artificis artificii fiendi formam, utpote in mente architectoris

³⁷³ *De statu causarum*, 124: "Forma vero substantialis absolute dicta adhuc dicitur multipliciter. Dicitur enim uno modo exemplar separatum a re et non quo res est; et alio modo quo res est, ita quod sit coniunctum rei et non exemplar; tertio modo dicitur simul exemplar et quo res est. Exemplar dicitur solum forma illa, quae est in mente artificis, non forma illa, quae est illud, quo res est et non exemplar."

³⁷⁴ *De statu causarum*, 125: "Forma vero, quae simul est exemplar et quo res est, non est coniuncta rei, sed abstracta, simplex et separata. Haec est forma prima, quae qualiter sit forma prima, difficile est explanare."

³⁷⁵ *De forma prima omnium*, 111: "Non tamen hanc similitudinem de modo, quo Deus est forma omnium, sicut nec supradicta attuli sicut usquequaque congruam divinae excellentiae quia sicut creatura eius similitudinem etiam non potest perfecte exprimere, sic nec mens creata potest aliquid perfecte et ei ex omni parte simile fingere." See also *Ibid.*, 109: "De re enim tanta nihil verum potest esse parvum, licet pro parvitate dicentis possit esse non granditer dictum et pro parvitate nostri dicentis non possit esse granditer elocutum." The source of this conviction is Augustine, according to whom "even when our thought about God corrects our speech about God, our thought about God remains unequal to the being that God is": cf. Teske 2008, 96.

formam et similitudinem domus fabricandae, ad quam formam et exemplar solummodo respicit, ut ad eius imitationem domum faciat; et imaginare cum hoc per impossibile ipsius architectoris volentis domum fabricare voluntatem ita potentem, quod se sola applicet materiam formandam in domum formae in mente architectoris, qua applicatione figuraretur in domum; et imaginare cum his, quod materia domus esset fluida, nec posset permanere in forma recepta in se, si separaretur a forma in mente architectoris.³⁷⁶

We should imagine God as an unusual craftsman, says Grosseteste. God applies the form of house – viz., the idea of house that is present in His mind – to the matter of the house by means of the power of His will, hence bringing it into existence. Moreover, the matter of the house is fluid, without this form it will lose consistency, so that the house would actually disappear. This entails that if the craftsman ceases to think of the house that it would fall into nothing. Grosseteste explains the meaning of this example: the idea in the craftsman’s mind is the Word of God, which is not only the exemplar, but also the efficient and formal cause and conservative principle. This explanation raises more questions than it pretends to solve; it does not explain the relationship between the form in God’s mind and the form of the thing; second, the matter that is formed seems to be pre-existent to the form, or it is the first created thing; third the distinction (if any) among the roles of the cause is not clear, namely, the efficient, formal, and conservative principles.

As has been said, Grosseteste refers to Augustine as an authority about the issue of God as form. One of the texts of Augustine quoted by Grosseteste affirms that God is form because He is the truth, thus the form of a thing is God’s truth.³⁷⁷ Grosseteste actually considers the problem concerning the comprehension of the meaning of form equivalent to the problem facing the notion of truth. He realizes that this kind of comprehension is possible only by means of illumination because our reasoning is tied to bodily objects. Knowing what form is (or what truth is) does not mean to know this particular form (or truth), but knowing the First Form, that does not need any form, that gives form to everything.³⁷⁸

In the *De veritate*, indeed, Grosseteste presents an example similar to that shown in the *De unica forma omnium*. Grosseteste connects the characterization of God as form with the idea that God is also the truth of everything. In the same way the supreme Truth is the

³⁷⁶ *De forma prima omnium*, 109.

³⁷⁷ *De forma prima omnium*, 108: “Item idem in undecimo de Confessione ad Patrem loquens ait: «Stabo atque solidabor in te, in forma mea, veritate tua».”

³⁷⁸ *De forma prima omnium*, 108-109: “Dicitur homo formosus et anima formosa et domus formosa et mundus formosus: formosum hoc, formosum illud. Tolle hoc et illud, et vide ipsum formosum, si potes. Ita Deum videbis non alia forma formosum, sed ipsam formositatem omnis formosi. Cum audis "Deus est forma vel formositas, sicut et veritas," noli quaerere, quid sit formositas, sicut nec quid sit veritas. Statim enim se opponent caligines imaginumcorporalium, ut ait Augustinus in libro octavo de Trinitate (VIII, 2, n.3), et nubila phantasmatum et perturbabunt serenitatem, quae primo ictu illuxit tibi, cum diceretur veritas vel formositas. Ecce in ipso primo ictu, quo velut coruscatione perstringeris, cum dicitur veritas vel formositas, mane, si potes; si non potes, relaberis in ista solita atque terrena.”

condition for knowing every other truth, the divine Being is the condition for the existence of every other being, which, consequently, depends on It. Grosseteste illustrates this point with an example:

Potest autem quaeri, cum idem sit ueritas et esse, quid ueritas est ut dicit Augustinus «id quod est», an sicut non uidetur aliqua ueritas, nisi in luce supremae ueritatis, sic non uideatur aliquid esse, nisi in ente supremo? Quod uidetur exemplo tali: aqua fluida in se ex se nullam habet determinatam figuram, sed figuratur semper figura continentis. [...] Similiter omnis creatura ex se, si sibi relinqueretur, sicut est ex nihilo, sic relaberetur in nihilum.³⁷⁹

Like the water that needs a container to have shape, otherwise it flows away, so too would the creatures without God slip into nothing. The context of the example is epistemological: Grosseteste aims to demonstrate that it is impossible to know anything without some kind of knowledge of the Word of God that supports every thing. The ontological consequence is that the Word of God is a support without which any creature that exists from nothing (*ex nihilo*) would go back to nothing. Grosseteste adds that since every creature does not exist from itself, but considered in itself is liable to cease to exist, and therefore, it can be seen to be existing in connection with that which sustains it such that it does not collapse into nothing. For that reason, it seems that for a creature to exist is nothing else than being supported by the eternal Word.³⁸⁰ I considered the epistemological side of the problem in the previous chapter.³⁸¹ Here I would like to make some remarks on the ontological aspect of Grosseteste's texts.

His remarks in these texts raise a certain problem, namely, that the notion of God as form (and accordingly the doctrine of participation) seems to deprive the finite, temporal, and physical world of any reality of its own. However, Grosseteste does not seem to consider this a problem at all: the dependence of the creature's being on the Creator's being is a necessary condition that implies the inconsistency of their existence. Neil Lewis has investigated this issue and presented many texts that demonstrate that, according to Grosseteste, in the wake of Augustine, the only true being is the First Being.³⁸² In the *De decem mandatis*, for instance, Grosseteste writes that “when he says «I am God», the verb ‘am’ is used substantially and signifies that which through itself and substantially and necessarily exists and in comparison

³⁷⁹ *De ueritate*, 141.

³⁸⁰ *De ueritate*, 141: “Cum igitur non ex se sit, sed in se solum consideratum, invenitur labile in non-esse: ubi vel quomodo videbitur, quod sit, nisi in coaptatione ad illud, quod supportat ipsam ne fluat in non-esse et in conspectione, quod hoc supportatur ab illo? Hoc est igitur, ut videtur, alicui creaturae esse, quod ab aeterno Verbo supportari.”

³⁸¹ See § II.3.1.1.

³⁸² Lewis 2009, 26-27.

with which other things do not exist.”³⁸³ ‘To be,’ in the fullest sense of the expression, means to be eternally, immutable substantially, necessarily, and per-se; all these features belong to one and only being, namely, God. Lewis also quotes from the *De veritate* text, which I discussed previously. With regard to the water and the container example, he observes that a creature’s existence is a purely relational feature of the creature: if we take a creature and consider it in itself, as unrelated to any other thing, we will not be able to attribute existence to it since its existence is nothing more than its being dependent on what exists in itself, i.e., God.³⁸⁴ Grosseteste does not mean that creatures depend on God for their existence in the sense that existence is something they receive from God. If it were the case, existence would be a property they possess, and so they would have existence in themselves, although God would still be their efficient cause. Lewis, instead, rightly points out that, for Grosseteste, in the case of creatures existence is a relation, and thus, to have existence means to depend on God.³⁸⁵ On this interpretation, it is possible to understand why the example of the water and the container does not render completely the sense of Grosseteste’s thought. When the container ceases to exist, the water loses its shape, but it would still be water and not “nothing.” In the case of God and the creatures, however, if God were not the form of the creature, the creature would result to nothing. On Grosseteste’s account, for example, a human being, without the support of God, would not become a corpse, but it would lose matter and form and become nothing.

The doctrine of the absolute dependence of the creatures on the First Being is also a consequence of Grosseteste’s view of spirituality. Servus Gieben has noted this aspect, observing that “the profound awareness of being in God’s hand did not so much originate from the precarious circumstances of medieval living as from his strong philosophical conviction that God is form and the form of everything.”³⁸⁶ Both cases are probably true: Grosseteste’s metaphysics is at the same time the basis and the consequence of his way of perceiving the weakness of the human condition. This means that, on the one hand, the fact that God is considered the form of everything reflects in the spiritual life the awareness that

³⁸³ *De decem mandatis* I.21, p. 17: “Preterea, hoc verbum sum, cum dicit Ego sum Deus, ponitur substancialiter et signat quod per se et substancialiter et necessario est, cuius comparacione alia non sunt.” English translation in Lewis 2009, 26.

³⁸⁴ Lewis 2009, 27. Lewis also points out that “Grosseteste repeats the claim that of themselves creatures do not exist in *In Phys* (I, p. 8 ed. Dales), where he writes of what truly exists as ‘standing’. Considering the Parmenidean doctrine that all things are one, he says that one *correct* interpretation of this doctrine is «that only one thing is truly and substantially an existent; the rest, as they are of themselves, flow rather than exist, and stand only by participating in the existence of what stands, and of themselves they would flow, even into nothingness».”

³⁸⁵ Lewis 2009, 28.

³⁸⁶ Gieben 2003, 222.

the existence of human beings depends completely on God's will; on the other hand, Grosseteste realizes that creatures cannot stand on their own because of the fragility of their condition, and for that reason, they need God on which they can rely.³⁸⁷

III.2.1.3 *The form and matter*

Grosseteste also considers the third example of form through an example of a silver seal. The image of the silver seal occurs in three passages. In the first passage, Grosseteste says that the silver seal is the form of the wax seal, and that the clay, in which the statue is melted, is the form of the statue.³⁸⁸ This first text concerns the relationship with the matter that is formed, and it will be analyzed together the third occurrence. The second text, by contrast, comes from the thought experiment described in the previous paragraph; as the idea in the craftsman's mind is necessary to preserve the house made of liquid matter, so the silver seal is necessary to preserve the form of the water.³⁸⁹ The example is unusual because one would expect that a silver seal were impressed on the wax and not on the water. But here Grosseteste uses the image of the silver seal to repeat that the form is the conservative principle of being. The third text presents another thought experiment:

[...] scio prudentiam tuam facile percepturam, aeternam Dei sapientiam sic esse formam omnium, velut si imaginareris figuram sigilli argentei esse vitam et intelligentiam intelligentem se volentemque figurare ad sui imitationem et similitudinem magis minusve expressam ceram fluidam non potentem per se manere in aliqua figuracione recepta, ipsaque hac sola voluntate informem et fluidam ceram ad se revocaret sibique applicaret et ad se revocando sibique applicando sua similitudine aliquanta imprimeret et in impressa similitudine servaret.³⁹⁰

God is the form of everything as the form of a special silver seal, provided with life, intelligence and will, and shapes the wax according to a greater or lesser degree of similitude. This text states again that God is the conservative cause of everything without which every

³⁸⁷ It is interesting that one of the first information about Grosseteste's activity in the diocese of Lincoln dates between 1186-1189, when the bishop was the Chartusian Hugh of Avalon, who was canonized in 1220. The motto of the Chartusian order is "The Cross is steady while the world is turning" (*Stat crux dum volvitur orbis*). It is suggestive that this motto sums up Grosseteste's belief that the created universe is unstable and it can be said to flow more than exist, while God is the only true being, unchangeable and stable in His form.

³⁸⁸ *De forma prima omnium*, 109: "Dicitur quoque forma, cui materia formanda applicatur, et per applicationem ad illud recipit formam ipsius, cui applicatur, imitatoriam. Sic dicimus de sigillo argenteo, quod ipsum est forma sigilli cerei; et de argilla, in qua funditur statua, quod ipsa est forma statuae."

³⁸⁹ *De forma prima omnium*, 109: "[...] et imaginare [...] quod materia domus esset fluida, nec posset permanere in forma recepta in se, si separaretur a forma in mente architectoris, sicut aqua figurata sigillo argenteo separato sigillo statim amitteret figuram receptam."

³⁹⁰ *De forma prima omnium*, 111.

created being would lose their form. The focus of this passage, however, is on another aspect, which will return in the *Commentary* that must be highlighted here. According to Grosseteste, the dependence of the creatures on the First Being involves an ordering, and thus, the creatures exist to a greater or lesser degree. We must specify that, for Grosseteste, there are two different kinds of being (*esse*). Firstly, to be means to exist and this belongs to every real being; thus, for example, every plant “is” in the very same way. Secondly, for something to be means that it fully realizes its own form; thus, for example, an object could be more or less plant-like depending on its conformity to the idea of plant in the divine mind.³⁹¹ Only the second kind of being is subject to degrees.

Among the others, there are three texts of Grosseteste that directly concern the degrees of existence of the creatures.³⁹² In the first text, from the *Commentary* on the *Physics*, after stating the creatures’ ontological dependence on the First Being, Grosseteste concludes “that which adheres more closely to it (the Word) exists more and that which <adheres> less closely exists less.”³⁹³ In the second text, from the *De libero arbitrio*, recalling Aristotle’s doctrine of the many ways in which ‘being’ can be said, Grosseteste holds that accidents exist less than substances.³⁹⁴ Finally, in the last text, from the *Commentary* on the *Posterior Analytics*, Grosseteste asserts that a universal “will be more an existent <than a particular is> because it is more incorruptible than a particular, as it is farther away from the accidents of variable matter and nearer to the first existent (*enti primo*). But not any universal is more an existent than any particular, since the universals of natural things are existent less than each of the intelligences is.”³⁹⁵ From those passages we may infer that, according to Grosseteste, while the creatures are in themselves liable to flow into non-existence, some approach nearer to God in the sense that their existence is more stable and so it is less liable to come back into nothing. For this reason, they can be said to exist more.

The doctrine of the existence of a “more and less” (*maius et minus*) degree of existence was probably inherited by the medieval authors from the *Categories* of Aristotle, via Boethius, as Jean-Luc Solère has pointed out.³⁹⁶ Such a doctrine is not unproblematic. While it

³⁹¹ *De veritate*, 135: “Quapropter veritas est defectus privatio, sive essendi plenitudo; tunc enim est vera arbor, cum habet plenitudinem esse arboris caretque defectione esse arboris, et haec plenitudo essendi quid est nisi conformitas rationi arboris in Verbo aeterno? Rerum autem duplex est esse: primum et secundum; potestque res habere plenum esse primum et carere plenitudine esse secundi.” Grosseteste inherits this distinction from Augustine, who is quoted some lines before. Grosseteste refers to Augustine, *Soliloquia*, II, 15, n. 29.

³⁹² These texts are illustrated in Lewis 2009, 31-32

³⁹³ *InPhy* I, 7. English translation in Lewis 2009, 31.

³⁹⁴ *De libero arbitrio* 16, 218: “Sed non oportet, ut sint univoca, quae comparari possunt in aliquo signato per consequens sive secundum prius et posterius, ut comparantur decem praedicamenta respectu eius, quod est ens, quia substantia magis est ens, quam quantitas.”

³⁹⁵ *InPoAn* I, 17, 245. English translation in Lewis 2009, 31.

³⁹⁶ See Solère 2000, 438. Solère (pp. 462-464) lists three positions about the increment or decrement of a

is easy to understand that a quantitative form can increase or decrease, since the quantity is divisible, and hence some parts of it can be added or subtracted, it is much more difficult to understand that a quality or a substantial form can increase or decrease. Grosseteste does not merely say that there are several degrees of goodness among the creatures, as stated in Anselm's *Monologion*, for example, but he radically applies the gradation to being itself. An important application of this theory is Grosseteste's cosmology. Both in the *De luce* and *De operationibus solis* he abolishes the difference between a higher part of the universe made of ether and the sublunary world made of the four elements.³⁹⁷ He replaces the difference between two types of matter with the distinction in degree of density and perfection of one and the same matter, i.e., light. The whole universe is made of light, the first corporeal form; the difference among the spheres is due only to the higher density of light in the lower part. This doctrine might have been influenced by Dionysius. Grosseteste, indeed, seems to subscribe to Dionysius's doctrine that the proximity of a being to the First Cause makes it not only more good, but also more existent.³⁹⁸ The *Commentary* will give Grosseteste the occasion to develop this issue.³⁹⁹

III.2.2 God is first (*prima*) form

In the *De prima forma omnium*, Grosseteste devotes a few words to explain that God's form is the "first." According to Grosseteste, if God is form, it is necessarily the first form because nothing is prior to God.⁴⁰⁰ God cannot receive a form because nothing precedes God. This concise account explains that being "first" form entails the presence of other forms. In other words, God is the only principle of creation, but are there other principles? This question arises from a tension between the account given in the *Commentary* on the *Posterior Analytics* and one given in the *Hexaëmeron*. In the first work, Grosseteste claims that there

substantial form during the Middle Ages, but Grosseteste does not develop explicitly any of these three positions.

³⁹⁷ See *De luce*, 80-81.

³⁹⁸ Solère (2000, 444 n. 29) refers to following passage from the *De divinis nominibus* IV: "Et non est universaliter malum neque bonum neque faciens bonum, sed quod magis aut minus bonum appropinquat, proportionaliter erit bonum. [...] Et haec quidem omnino bono participant, illa autem magis et minus privantur, alia autem obscuriorem habent boni participationem, et aliis secundum ultimam resonantiam adest bonum" (Dionysiaca, 246f; 248).

³⁹⁹ See below § III.3.1.4.

⁴⁰⁰ *De forma prima omnium*, 107: "Et cum sit forma, necessario est forma prima, quia ante ipsum nihil. Ipse enim est primus et novissimus".

are mediators in the work of creation (the Platonic Ideas), while in the second one he denies this possibility. Scholars have proposed different solutions to this ambiguity. I think that their attempts do not do justice to Grosseteste's position, mostly because they limit themselves to these two works, which does not consider the other writings composed in the same years between ca. 1225 and 1235 (from the Commentaries on Aristotle until the *Hexaëmeron*). If we only take into account all the writings that concern the status of the ideas in God's mind we may realize that there was an evolution in Grosseteste's thought. Indeed the theme of the existence of an archetypal world in God's mind recurs in many works of Grosseteste.

Grosseteste probably inherits doubts and positions about the nature of the archetypal world from the twelfth century position. They are clearly expressed, among others, by William of Auxerre who states:

There are some who say that the archetypal world is identical with God; others say that the archetypal world and the sensible world are the same essentially, but differ by reason [...]; others say the the archetypal world is neither God nor the sensible world, but those ideas were eternally in the divine mind, which are neither God nor the sensible world, and this was the opinion of Plato. Hence, they say that the collection of those ideas is the archetypal world.⁴⁰¹

My interpretation is that Grosseteste passes from a "Platonic" explanation of the Ideas to the view according to which the archetypal world is identical with God because of some insurmountable difficulties: the Ideas jeopardize God's simplicity (because they place a multiplicity in Himself), and also God's omnipotence (because they imply that God is not might enough to create alone).

III.2.2.1 *A Platonic View*

A text particularly referred to by commentators is in Grosseteste's Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*. As it is well-known, Aristotle holds that universals do not exist separately from the individuals that instantiate them. Grosseteste does not follow Aristotle on this point. He is puzzled by Aristotle's claim that every demonstration is based on what is incorruptible and wonders how universals are incorruptible when the individuals that instantiate them are corruptible. Grosseteste begins his detailed discussion of the different kinds of universals with

⁴⁰¹ *Summa Aurea* II, 1.2 (p.14, 9f). English translation in Coolman 2004, 93, n.10.

the claim that universals are principles of cognizing (*principia cognoscendi*) non-created reasons that are eternally in the First Cause.⁴⁰² Commentators have linked this aspect of Grosseteste's thought to his theory of divine illumination.⁴⁰³ Grosseteste also claims that some of these universals are also principles of being (*principia essendi*), but this aspect has been neglected almost entirely in the literature.

In detail, Grosseteste describes the first kind of universals as follows:

Et he sunt quas vocavit Plato ydeas et mundum archetypum, et he sunt secundum ipsum genera et species et principia tam essendi quam cognoscendi, quia, cum intellectus purus potest in his defigere intuitum, in istis verissime et manifestissime cognoscit res creatas, et non solum res creatas, sed ipsam lucem primam in qua cognoscit cetera. Et planum est quod ista universalia omnino sunt incorruptibilia.⁴⁰⁴

For Grosseteste, universals are the Platonic Ideas that form the archetypal world, and they are principle of cognizing since when the pure intellect is able to fix its sight on them, it knows created things and the first light itself in which it cognizes other things. Moreover these universals are principles of being and are completely incorruptible. This passage, and the whole treatise, focuses on the cognitive role played by the universals, but it is important to note that, according to Grosseteste, some of the incorruptible principles are also principles of being and these that are identified with the Platonic Ideas. Grosseteste clarified the expression *principia essendi* some lines before when he stated the divine ideas to be the formal causes and the principles of creation (*creatrices*).

The second kinds of universals are the Intelligences that reflect the true light of God. As Christina Van Dike has noted, Grosseteste's description of the nature of this irradiating intelligence is frustratingly vague, however, for he may refer both to the Neoplatonic description of the angels as intelligences and to Avicenna's view of the agent intellect as a separate intelligence responsible for human knowledge.⁴⁰⁵ Whatever the case may be, we may leave aside here the cognitive implications of Grosseteste's theory of universals. For our argument, it suffices to note that the cognitions in the mind of the intelligences are paradigmatic forms and causal reasons of created things; indeed, corporeal species are brought into being by the power of the first cause, i.e., through the mediating role (*ministerio*)

⁴⁰² *InPoAn*, I, cap. 7, 139: "Hic autem oritur questio quomodo universalia sunt incorruptibilia, cum singularia sint corruptibilia, et non existentibus primis impossibile est aliquid aliorum remanere [...]. Ad hoc dicendum quod universalia [...] sunt principia cognoscendi rationes rerum increate ab eterno existentes in causa prima."

⁴⁰³ For the argument of this chapter (how God proceeds towards the creatures) we have not considered the exemplars as principles of knowledge but only as principles of being.

⁴⁰⁴ *InPoAn*, I, cap. 7, 139f.

⁴⁰⁵ Van Dike 2010, 158.

of the intelligences.⁴⁰⁶ It is worth noting that Grosseteste explicitly says that the first two kinds of principles have a creative power, which are considered the helper of the First Cause in the act of creation. It will be this position – likely influenced by the Platonic text, *Timaeus*, and Eriugena – that Grosseteste revises and then rejects some years later.

There are three other kinds of principles of cognition, but they are not called universals. The third principles are as incorruptible as the first two, which are those contained in the celestial spheres. The fourth types of principles are the formal causes of the composite substances (such as “humanity”), while the last kind of principles are only principles of cognizing that are identified with the accidents, but not principles of being. Grosseteste concludes that the last two kinds of principles cannot be considered incorruptible.⁴⁰⁷ This conception of universals is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of the degrees of existence illustrated above: universals have different degrees of existence, some of them exist more than others insofar as they are closer to the First Being. This makes every universal more than a mere fiction (*figmentum*), but rather something that is one in many (*aliquid unum in multis*).⁴⁰⁸ This text quoted previously, as well as the other passages referred in this paragraph, allows Grosseteste to speak as a realist in the medieval debate on universals.⁴⁰⁹

III.2.2.2 *The crisis*

In the *De libero arbitrio*, there are two points that call into question the account given in the Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*. The first point (1) is that Grosseteste marks a difficulty with the Platonic view, namely, the plurality of ideas in God’s mind. The second point (2) is that God is defined as the only creator and any kind of help in creation is explicitly denied.

(1) The first problem arises because it is hard to maintain the realism of the ideas in

⁴⁰⁶ *InPoAn*, I, cap. 7, 139: “Item in luce creata, que est intelligentia, est cognitio et descriptio rerum creatarum sequentium ipsam; et intellectus humanus, qui non est ad purum defecatus ita ut possit lucem primam immediate intueri, multotiens recipit irradiationem a luce creata, que est intelligentia, et in ipsis descriptionibus que sunt <in> intelligentia cognoscit res posteriores, quarum forme exemplares sunt ille descriptiones. Cognitiones enim rerum subsequentium, que cognitiones sunt in ipsa mente intelligentie, sunt forme exemplares et etiam rationes causales create rerum posterius fiendarum. Mediante enim ministerio intelligentiarum virtute cause prime processerunt in esse species corporales. He igitur ydee create sunt principia cognoscendi apud intellectum ab eis irradiatum et apud talem intellectum sunt genera et species; et manifestum est quod hec universalia sunt iterum incorruptibilia.”

⁴⁰⁷ *InPoAn*, I, cap. 7, 140-141.

⁴⁰⁸ See above § III.2.1.3, n.35. *InPoAn*, I, cap. 17, 245.

⁴⁰⁹ See de Libera 1996, 241-244. Unfortunately de Libera dwells on the fourth kind of principles and gives little considerations to the first three kinds.

God's mind – as Grosseteste holds also in this treatise – and the simplicity of God. The fact that the ideas – like that of man, fish, plant – are eternally in God's mind implies that they are immutable, immortal, stable, and incorruptible, just like the Ideas of Plato. Grosseteste traces this idea back to Augustine and Boethius, and remotely to Plato. He resorts to the example of the idea of humanity to express the thought that the idea of man is truer than the man we can experience on earth.⁴¹⁰ Since truth and being are convertible, the exemplars are also more existent than the particulars, as has been shown.⁴¹¹

At this point, Grosseteste faces the problem of reconciling the plurality of ideas in God's mind with the God's simplicity. This problem is a version of what Neil Lewis has called "Christian dualism," namely, "the idea that God the Creator and creatures comprise an exhaustive and mutually exclusive classification of the contents of reality."⁴¹² In other words, whatever exists may be God or a creature, but this does not leave any room for a third realm of beings. As Lewis points out, Christian dualism could be rejected only proving that something besides God exists without beginning. The question is if the ideas in the divine mind represent this third realm since they are eternal beings that are themselves not creatures, but rather creative.

Grosseteste holds that two problems seem to challenge the Christian dualist position: the kinds of propositions and relations that are eternal and without beginning, but that are not identical with God. Grosseteste illustrates many examples including the following:

Quod verum est, veritate verum est, et veritate quae est et quae aliquid est. Sed quod pure nihil est, veritate quae est non potest informari. Ergo si informatur veritate, non pure nihil est. Sed ante creaturam omnem verum fuit *nullam creaturam esse*. Ergo *nullam creaturam esse*, cum informabatur veritate, non fuit pure nihil; nec fuit creatura, quia nondum fuit creatura; nec fuit Deus, non enim fuit haec vera: 'Deus est *nullam creaturam esse*.' Fuit igitur, ut videtur, quod nec fuit Creator nec creatura.⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ *De Libero Arbitrio II*, cap. 5, 167 – 168: "Item dicit Boetius [...] Item Seneca: «Plato ideas vocat, ex quibus omnia, quaecumque videmus, fiunt et ad quas cuncta formantur. Hae immortales, immutabiles, invariabiles sunt. Quid sit idea audi! Idea eorum, quae natura fiunt, est exemplar aeternum. Talia exemplaria infinita habet rerum natura, hominum, piscium, arborum, ad quae, quodcumque fieri ab illa debet, exprimitur.» Haec exemplaria rerum omnium Deus intra se habet numerosque universorum, quae agenda sunt et modos mente complexus est. Plenius his figuris est, quas Plato ideas vocat immortales, immutabiles, infatigabiles. Itaque homines quidem pereunt, ipsa autem humanitas, ad quam homo effingitur, permanet et hominibus laborantibus et intereuntibus illa nihil patitur."

⁴¹¹ See above § III.2.1.3.

⁴¹² Lewis 1998, 17.

⁴¹³ *De libero arbitrio II*, cap. 8, 191.18–25. Lewis (1998, 18-19) noted that this argument is also present in William of Auvergne's *De universo* 1.3.25.

The premise is that what is true also exists because being and truth are convertible. The proposition “that no creature exists” was true before the existence of any creature, thus it is informed by truth, which means that it is not purely nothing. It cannot be identified with a creature because it was true before all creatures existed, but it likewise cannot correspond to God because the proposition “God is *that not creature exists*” is false. In conclusion, there is something that exists that is neither God nor a creature. Grosseteste illustrates other examples of propositions that are eternally true (and thus eternally existent, according to the premise), such as “Peter is going to exist,” or “seven and three are ten.”⁴¹⁴ Grosseteste’s solution is to hold that in such statements as “this truth or *enuntiabile* is eternal,” the expression “this truth” or “this *enuntiabile*” is a designation of some non-eternal item taken under an eternal relation.⁴¹⁵

One may wonder what such an item is, a question which Grosseteste does not address. Lewis considers that the proposition as such is not eternal, but the state of affairs that it implies could be. In this case, Lewis notes that “this *enuntiabile* is eternal” may be expanded to “this state of affairs *as stated by the eternal Word* is eternal.”⁴¹⁶ On Lewis’s interpretation, the example stated above must be understood as follows: the expression “this truth” refers to a state of affairs adequate to the eternal Word. This interpretation, however, does not explain Grosseteste’s solution, but just pushes the question further. One could ask, indeed, what is this “state of affairs” or what does it imply that a thing is “stated by the eternal Word”? A possible explanation is that those expressions refer to reasons in God’s mind. But Grosseteste clearly wishes to avoid a conception of such *enuntiabilia* according to which they are the eternal reasons of things in the divine mind – as Lewis himself admits.⁴¹⁷ Grosseteste probably denies this interpretation – the identification of such statements with the reasons (*rationes*) – because it is impossible to think a reason of something not real such as “that not creature exists.” It would imply that privations do exist in God, such as blindness or evil, but this compromises the theodicy.

Another possible interpretation of Grosseteste’s solution – “this truth” is a designation of some non-eternal item taken under an eternal relation – is to consider that he reduces the case of propositions to that of relation. Therefore, the question is what makes something non-

⁴¹⁴ See *De libero arbitrio II*, cap. 8, 189.20–25 and *De veritate*, 140.

⁴¹⁵ *De libero arbitrio II*, cap. 8, 191.24–28: “Similiter igitur, cum dicitur ‘Hoc verum aeternum aut enuntiabile aeternum est,’ suscipitur praedicatio haec propter formam correlativam dictioni in Verbo aeterno, propter quam tamen correlationem nihil exigitur extra Deum esse.”

⁴¹⁶ Lewis 1998, 32.

⁴¹⁷ Lewis 1998, 31 n. 33. See *De libero arbitrio II*, cap. 8, 191.29–31: “Hoc itaque modo respondebitur ad supradictas oppositiones, aut cogemur fateri enuntiabilia nihil aliud esse quam rationes aeternas rerum in mente divina.”

eternal, such as the truths stated in the Word eternal (for example, “seven and three are ten”). Grosseteste explains the case of the relation of “knowing.” For example, if we define the term “A” to mean “Socrates known by God,” we may truly say “A is eternal”; and if we define the term “B” to mean “Plato known by God,” we may truly say “B is eternal,” and that A and B are not the same. Grosseteste concludes that God knows Socrates (or Plato) from eternity, and that Socrates (or Plato) is known by God from eternity does not multiply the essences because it is necessary only to hold that God exists eternally but not Socrates (or Plato).⁴¹⁸ According to Lewis, it is Socrates *as known by God* that is eternal, not Socrates as such.⁴¹⁹ This explanation, however, falls into the same problem concerning the statements: what is Socrates as known by God? If it is not a reason, what is it? Grosseteste’s solution makes sense if one considers that only the divine act of knowing is eternal and not the objects of God’s knowledge. This act supports the existence of Socrates eternally, even though Socrates is not eternal. This solution allows us to solve two problems: first, that there are not eternal beings other than God, and second, that there is not a plurality of beings in God.

Grosseteste concludes that the plurality of relations or true propositions does not imply any plurality of eternal beings. He endorses his conclusion with an example: the following three sentences “three persons are eternal,” “notions are eternal,” and the “reasons (*rationes*) of things in God’s mind are innumerable and eternal” do not imply any plurality in God’s essence.⁴²⁰ This means that no divine Person or notion is something different (*alia*) from the divine essence. The case of reasons appears more complicated to Grosseteste since he says that “accordingly, perhaps (*forte*), no reason is different (*alia*).”⁴²¹ The case of the reasons, in fact, is different because, unlike the Trinitarian relations or notions, reasons cannot be reduced to relations since they are exemplars and are provided with existence. As we have seen, they are actually more existent than the created things. Thus, the analogy between the plurality of

⁴¹⁸ See *De libero arbitrio II*, cap. 8, 191.12–24: “Praeter positionem ante factam, exemplum bonum est ad hoc, scilicet quod Deus scit omnia ab aeterno. Quapropter, si scit A, cuius definitio sit ‘Socrates scitus a Deo,’ et B, cuius definitio sit ‘Plato scitus a Deo,’ per se loquendo verum erit quod A aeternaliter est et B aeternaliter est, et A non est B nec e contrario, et neutrum horum est Deus. Et tamen solus Deus aeternaliter est, quia cum dicitur ‘A non est B et B non est A et neutrum horum est Deus,’ redditur praedicatio pro subiectis corruptibilibus. Cum vero dicitur ‘A vel B aeternaliter sunt,’ redditur praedicatio per se gratia formae a qua haec nomina imponuntur, quae scilicet aeterna dicitur propter scientiam Dei aeternam. Nec exigit veritas talis sermonis alicuius extra Deum existentiam aut coaeternitatem.” Lewis 1998, 33-37.

⁴¹⁹ Lewis 1998, 29.

⁴²⁰ The divine notions, *notiones*, are those features by which the Persons are described and discriminated, like paternity attributed to the Father, filiation to Son, and spiration to the Spirit.

⁴²¹ *De libero arbitrio II*, cap. 8, 195-196: “Et ideo haec pluralitas nullo modo infert essentialiter existentium pluralitatem, ut cum dicitur: «tres personae aeternae sunt», vel «notiones aeternae sunt», «rationes rerum in mente divina innumerabiles et aeternae sunt.» In qua tamen pluralitate non ponitur nisi simplex et indivisa essentia, et tamen nulla persona est alia, nulla notio est alia, nulla forte similiter ratio est alia, et tamen haec omnia non sunt nisi una essentia.”

the divine Persons and notions and that of reasons is inappropriate. If the reasons in God's mind can be equated to Plato's Ideas – and in *De libero arbitrio* and the Commentary on *the Posterior Analytics* this seems to be the case – then we may say that they jeopardize Christian dualism more than *enuntiabilia* and relations do. If the Ideas are thought simply as relations, as happens, for example, when the idea of “humanity” is described as “humanity as known in the Wisdom,” then they are not essences at all. But this is not possible, for, as has been seen above, they are more existent than the created beings. The only way to solve the paradox is to deny that there exists a world of ideas in the Platonic sense, which is the position that Grosseteste adopts in his later works.

(2) The second point that represents a change in the *De libero arbitrio* is that the first principle is unique. In this work, the concept of immediate cause helps Grosseteste to state that God did not need any help in His work of creation. Grosseteste does not provide a proof, but he simply states that nothing is closer to beings than the immediate cause of their essence. This cause is the divine Wisdom, for in it the act of creating and the act of knowing are one and the same.⁴²² This reasoning implies that beings pre-exist (as exemplars) in the Word of God, where they are known and created from eternity, as will become clear in the following section.

III.2.2.3 *The absence of Plato*

In the *De prima forma omnium*, Grosseteste reconsiders the problem of the reasons in the divine mind, but there is no reference to Plato when Grosseteste discusses the divine models of the created reality. The only authority quoted is Augustine. In this short letter, Grosseteste presents a new account of the nature of exemplars. The novelty consists in the identification of the exemplars with God, and more precisely with the second Person of the Trinity, the Word, which is at the same time the exemplar, efficient, formal, and conservative cause.⁴²³ Grosseteste provides a theological example taken from Augustine to justify that the exemplars are more true, good, and existent than the created beings. Augustine says that “because the Wisdom of God, by way of which all things have been made, contains everything according

⁴²² *De libero arbitrio* II, 201: “Item: ut dictum est, immediatissima causa omnis conditae essentiae est Verbum Dei aeternum. Nihil enim potest esse tam proximum alicui essentiae conditae secundum aliquam actionem, nec tam propinque et intime illud attingere secundum suam actionem, quam propinque et intime aeterna sapientia secundum suum scire attingit omnem essentiam, quod idem ipsum scire est eiusdem essentiae efficere immediatius. Ergo cum aliquo agente et efficiente efficit aeterna sapientia omnem conditam essentiam. Sed agens immediatissimum sibi omnino sufficiens nulloque penitus egens quomodo habebit coadiutorem?”

⁴²³ *De unica forma omnium*, 110.

to a design before it is made, therefore those things which are made through this design are not immediately life, but whatever has been made is life in Him.”⁴²⁴ This means that the exemplars have a superior degree of existence due to the Wisdom of God who is the only true being, and not because they subsist by themselves as the Platonic Ideas.

III.2.2.4 *Against Plato*

Grosseteste proposes an answer to the doubt concerning the plurality of reasons as essences – expressed by the adverb “*forte*” in *De libero arbitrio* – in the question *Tribus modis res subsistere habent* and, then, in his theological masterpiece, the *Hexaëmeron*. The first work probably belongs to his early scholastic activity at Oxford and could be a part of the greater project of a *Summa theologiae*.⁴²⁵ In that work, Grosseteste illustrates three modes in which a thing can subsist: (i) actually and in itself; (ii) in an intellect; (iii) in the divine mind. Created things do not subsist in themselves because they are transitory; they can subsist in the human intellect, but they are mutable, while in the angelic intellect they subsist in a sempiternal way; in the divine mind, by contrast, they subsist without any mutability.⁴²⁶ After a brief discussion, Grosseteste concludes that things exist in God as universals.⁴²⁷ At the same time, Grosseteste warns that since things subsist in so many ways, and that different properties can be attributed to them according to their different subsistence, a certain confusion could arise. One must examine the issue closely, with lynx eyes, to see that we do not inadvertently confuse this different being with its properties. Less than careful distinction of these has been the root of manifold errors, such as that of the Platonic ideas, since people attribute to things in themselves what they should attribute to things as they exist in the divine mind.⁴²⁸ This short question shows that, for Grosseteste, every created thing, if not supported by the divine Word,

⁴²⁴ Augustine, *Tractatus in Johannem* I, 17: “Sic ergo, fratres carissimi, quia Sapientia Dei, per quam facta sunt omnia, secundum artem continet omnia, antequam fabricet omnia; hinc quae fiunt per ipsam artem, non continuo vita sunt, sed quicquid factum est, vita in illo est.” English translation available at: <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701001.htm>>.

⁴²⁵ Lewry 1983, 2; 13.

⁴²⁶ *Tribus modis res subsistere habent*, 19, 3-9: “Tribus modis res subsistere habent: in actu sive in se ipsis, in intellectu, in mente divina. In se ipsis sine subsistentia transeunt; in intellectu hominis subsistunt quidem, set tamen inmutabiles non sunt; in intellectu angelico et si subsistere ceperint, in eo tamen subsistunt sine termini prefinicione; in mente vero divina subsistunt sine omni mutabilitate incepcionis aut desicionis, cum divina saapientia terminum utrumque sit certissimum religari.”

⁴²⁷ *Tribus modis res subsistere habent*, 20, 38.

⁴²⁸ *Tribus modis res subsistere habent*, 20, 56 – 21, 62: “Cum ergo res totis modis habeant subsistere, et secundum esse diversum diversa conveniat rebus assignari, lineis oculis contemplandum est reor ne ista esse diversa cum suis proprietatibus inperspecte confundamus. Horum enim minus diligenter perspecta distinctio multiplicis erroris apud veteres radix existit et origo. Hinc enim ille platonice ydee sumpserunt exordium: rebus enim secundum quod in se ipsis sunt tribuebat quod eis convenit secundum quod sunt in mente divina.”

has an ontological weakness. This work may also be considered the first explicit rejection of Plato's doctrine of Ideas. Grosseteste's conclusion closes the door to the realism of ideas: a reason such as "humanity" cannot be a principle of being in itself.

In the *Hexaëmeron*, Grosseteste's theological thought reaches its maturity. There he once again returns to the Platonic view on the exemplars. Commenting on the first words of Genesis, "*In principium*," Grosseteste stresses two features of the process of creation: (1) first, God is the only Creator, and accordingly, He does not need any help; (2) second, the world was made at the beginning of time, which goes against the theory of the eternity of the world. With regard to the first issue, he targets two specific groups in his criticism, namely, the pagan philosophers (1.a) and the heretics (1.b).

(1.a) Grosseteste recalls the history of the philosophical error that consists in posing more than one principle (*principia*), which runs up against the Bible that states that there is only one beginning (*principium*). On the authority of Ambrose and Augustine, Grosseteste describes and condemns the theories of Plato and Aristotle, Thales of Miletus, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, and Archelaus.⁴²⁹

The specific object of Grosseteste's criticism is the position of Plato. Grosseteste reaffirms the idea that the archetypal world is the begotten Wisdom of the Father.⁴³⁰ Grosseteste explicitly rejects the conception of Ideas as exemplars distinct from God, as that to which God looks when He creates the world. He quotes Ambrose, who criticized Plato for having supposed three origins of things, namely, God, the exemplar, and matter. Grosseteste recognizes that some texts of Plato could induce one to think that the Ideas are only the concepts of things in the divine mind, but at the end he confesses that Plato has been inconsistent on this matter.⁴³¹ After a brief illustration of the position of the other philosophers, Grosseteste concludes that "all of these, then, claimed that there was some origin, other than God, which had no beginning. And since God is an origin of this kind, they claimed, by consequence, that there are many origins – even those who apparently claim that there is only one."⁴³² The position of the philosophers is highly problematic for Grosseteste

⁴²⁹ See *Hexaëmeron* I, ix, 1-3, 62-64. Grosseteste's sources are Ambrose, *Hexaëmeron* I, 1,1 (CSEL, XXXII.1,3) and Augustine, *De civitate dei*, VII.2.

⁴³⁰ *Hexaëmeron* I, iii, 3, 52: "Mundus namque archetipus, id est sapiencia Patris genita."

⁴³¹ See *Hexaëmeron* I, ix, 2, 63: "Plato quoque erravit in idee positione ex ea parte qua asseruit ydeam exemplar extra Deum, ad quod intendens Deus fecit mundum. [...] Aliqui hominum presumptorum tria principia constituerunt omnium, deum et exemplar et materia, sicut Plato discipulique eius. [...] Plato alicubi videatur sensisse non aliud esse ideam quam rationes rerum in mente divina. Puto autem quod Plato in hac positione videatur sibi ipsi sensisse contraria." Grosseteste quotes Ambrose, *Hexaëmeron*, I, 1,1 (CSEL, XXXII.1,3).

⁴³² *Hexaëmeron*, I, ix,3, 62: "Hii igitur omnes aliquid aliud quam Deum posuerunt principium non iniciatum, et ita, cum Deus sit tale principium, posuerunt per consequens principia plura, eciam illi qui non videntur ponere nisi principium unum."

because it regards God as one principle among others, and not the unique principle of reality, which undermines one's faith in the omnipotence of God. Grosseteste instead holds that no other principle than God can be given because He is the first mover and the efficient cause of every thing, and thus, all meanings of the word '*principium*' (beginning in time, in the order of numbers, in mass and size, in change, and so on) are gathered together in the first sentence of the Bible "in the '*principium*' God made heaven and earth."⁴³³

Grosseteste again tackles the topic of the archetypal world when he investigates the biblical words, "heaven and earth" (*Genesis* 1:1). After the explanation of the literal and allegorical meaning, Grosseteste notes that the anagogical sense of this expression could consist in a reference to the archetypal world as Basil does in the first homily on the *Hexaëmeron*.⁴³⁴ In that homily, Basil expresses the belief in the existence of a world before this world, a world that our intellect can contemplate.⁴³⁵ At the end of the quotation, Grosseteste confesses that he has no idea how he is to interpret this exegesis of Basil, an exegesis that moves from created things to the uncreated ideas in the mind of God.⁴³⁶ The silence of Grosseteste facing Basil's belief in the archetypal world, associated with explicit criticism of Plato's doctrine of Ideas, considered as something different from the Creator, and together with the previous affirmation that the world of Ideas is reduced to the Wisdom, shows that Grosseteste has realized that it is impossible to endorse the Platonic doctrine and state, at the same time, the identity of the Ideas with the second Person of the Trinity. In the *Hexaëmeron*, Grosseteste does not hold that the Ideas exist through themselves, but they are concepts of things in the divine mind, which do not exist apart from God's existence.

(1.b) There is another doctrine that poses more than one principle of creation, namely, the Manichean heresy, a doctrine that originated, according to Basil, from a misunderstanding of the biblical verse, "darkness was upon the face of the deep" (*Genesis* 1:2). According to Manicheans, the "darkness" mentioned in the Bible is not shadowy air, but an evil power, rather evil itself, which has its own origin and is opposed to the goodness of God. The Manicheans say that darkness is coeternal with God, and not created, since there is no mention of its creation in the Bible. Since darkness does not come from God, it exists of its

⁴³³ *Hexaëmeron* I, x,1, 64-65: "Nomen autem principii multiplicem habet intellectum. Dicitur enim principium in successione temporis et principium in ordine nemerali, et principium in mole et magnitudine, principium quoque in mocione. [...] Simpliciter autem principium omnium dicitur divina virtus ut primum movens et efficiens omnia. Omnes autem hii dicti intellectus principii coacervantur in hoc nomine '*principium*', cum dicitur: *In principio fecit Deus celum et terram.*"

⁴³⁴ See *Hexaëmeron* I, xii,4, 64-65.

⁴³⁵ Grosseteste refers to Basil, *Hexaëmeron*, I, 5, 1-3.

⁴³⁶ *Hexaëmeron* I, xii,4, 65: "Huius igitur anagogiam, que ex rebus creatis sursum ducit in rationes earum increatas eternas in mente divina, interpretari omitto quia interpretari nescio. Circa alias namque interpretaciones puer sum et non nisi balbuciendo loqui scio; quanto magis circa istam omnino loqui nescio."

own, it has no beginning, and thus, it is a *principium*. Insofar as it is a principle, it must be coeternal with God. As a consequence, the Manicheans hold that there is a kind of darkness to which bodies and souls belong. Grosseteste objects that their arguments would follow only if darkness were something real, but since darkness is merely the privation of light, and not a positive essence, their position must be rejected.⁴³⁷ Specifically, Grosseteste dismisses their arguments by resorting to Augustine's authority.⁴³⁸

The condemnation of the heresy ends the first part of the *Hexaëmeron*. In the second part, Grosseteste continues the investigation on the uniqueness of the creative principle. Grosseteste proposes to prove that God's perfection would be diminished not only if a material principle, or even an evil principle, was posed alongside Him (as the philosophers and the Manicheans respectively held), but also if any other kinds of helper were supposed. The further position that Grosseteste discusses is that of the philosophers who believe that God first created the angel, and then the created angel formed the bodies through the intellectual word that was in it. These philosophers think that God is the ultimate creator of the world, but they admit that God created through the angel.⁴³⁹ The editor does not identify the reference of this criticism, but one may suppose that Grosseteste was thinking of Avicenna who considered the tenth Intelligence, identified with the place of intelligible forms, and the Quranic angel Gabriel, responsible of the emanation of the sublunary world.⁴⁴⁰ Grosseteste rejects this position because "God, solely by the Word which is co-eternal with Him, and without the service of any creature, made the works of the six days at the beginning of the world."⁴⁴¹ According to Grosseteste, the role of the angels is to serve in the government and propagation of the created world, a service that manifests the greatness of God's power and the generosity of His goodness.

(2) The second point that needs to be discussed is a consequence of the doctrine of participation and is a tricky matter for Grosseteste: it is the creation in time. Grosseteste writes extensively on this topic, which has led several commentators to pay particular attention to it.⁴⁴² For our purposes in this chapter, only one problem is important and may be stated in Grosseteste's own words: "Since, then, this Word is eternal, why is that which is

⁴³⁷ *Hexaëmeron* I, xxiii, 1-2, 82-83.

⁴³⁸ *Hexaëmeron* I, xxiv, 1-2 83-84.

⁴³⁹ *Hexaëmeron* II, i,1, 85.

⁴⁴⁰ See Corbin 1993, 172. See Avicenna, *Book of Healing*, IX, 3, 3-4; IX 4, 4; IX, 5,1.

⁴⁴¹ *Hexaëmeron* II, i,1, 84.

⁴⁴² See Dales1986, 547: "[...] within a few years after 1230 he composed two separate though similar treatises warning against the errors of Aristotle and his followers and asserting the finitude of time and the world. One of these was incorporated into his *Hexaëmeron*, and the other, *Definitate motus et temporis*, which circulated separately in two redactions, was also incorporated into his commentary on the *Physics*."

made by this Word not co-eternal with him?”⁴⁴³ In the Word, the second Person of the Trinity, the forms of all the things are contained, and therefore, the creation should be eternal with the Word in which it is formally contained. Grosseteste’s efforts are directed to demonstrate that the world is not co-eternal with God. He never answers, however, this question in an explicit way, so it remains undecided why the creation happened in a particular time. But if we consider Grosseteste’s argument closer, it appears clear that our doubt can be allayed. His argument is indeed common in the Patristic tradition and be summarized as follows: “the pagans, whose gaze was bound up in transitory things, could only think of eternity by an analogy with temporal things – that is, one space after another or one time before another to infinity – whereas the true situation is that the eternal is simple, enjoying the full and complete possession of limitless life all at once.”⁴⁴⁴ Grosseteste acknowledges the limit of human reason, which cannot transcend the data of the senses, and thus, cannot imagine eternity.

This argument, combined with the existence of exemplars in the Word, serves to solve some problems generated by the doctrine of the creation in time, in particular the “why not sooner” and the “idleness” arguments.⁴⁴⁵ The first argument states that if the world were created in time, we could not explain why it was created exactly in that time and not sooner. Here Grosseteste echoes Augustine: the argument makes no sense, because time was “created” together with creation, there was not a “before” prior to the actual creation.⁴⁴⁶ The “idleness” argument asserts that God before creation was idle. Against this argument, which was very popular among the philosophers from Plato to Averroes, Grosseteste follows a long tradition that culminates with Augustine and affirms that out of time, *aeternaliter*, God begot the World of Ideas, the intelligible world.

In conclusion, we can reconsider the secondary literature on the topic of the ideas in Grosseteste. McEvoy and other interpreters noted the tension between the account given in the Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* and the one given in the *Hexaëmeron*.⁴⁴⁷ In the former work, Grosseteste accepts the existence of Platonic ideas that have a creative power; while in the latter, he explicitly denies this possibility. Scholars have taken interest in

⁴⁴³ *Hexaëmeron* II, iii, 2, 86.

⁴⁴⁴ Dales 1986, 554.

⁴⁴⁵ The terminology and the argument themselves are drawn from Sorabji 1983, 232-252.

⁴⁴⁶ *Hexaëmeron* I, viii, 6, 62: “Deus autem eternus causa est mundi temporalis et temporis, nec preceedit ista tempore sed simplici eternitate.” For Augustine as Grosseteste’s source, see Augustine, *Confessiones*, XI, 13; *De genesi contra Manicheos* I,2,3; *De civitate Dei* XI, 5-6.

⁴⁴⁷ Cf. McEvoy 1982, 64-65.

understanding Grosseteste's position regarding the possible pantheistic implication of emanation. McEvoy, for example, denies that Grosseteste ever admitted co-operators in God's act of creation of the world, and assumes that the two accounts can be reconciled if we consider their context. According to McEvoy, Grosseteste was not interested in the creation in itself in the Aristotelian *Commentary*, but in the process of illumination of the created minds, and for this reason, he privileged the consideration of ideas as principles of knowledge. In the divine mind, the ideas are also principles of being, but this identification does not hold in the case of angels. McEvoy suggests interpreting the passage on the Platonic Ideas contained in the *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* in light of Augustine's doctrine of illumination.⁴⁴⁸ This interpretation shows that McEvoy focuses on illumination, but does not consider its metaphysical presupposition. Although McEvoy's interpretation is correct as to what concerns the angelic mediation in the doctrine of the illumination, it does not solve the role of the Platonic Ideas in Grosseteste's account for two reasons. First, McEvoy suggests that Augustine is not mentioned in the *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* because it is a philosophical. McEvoy's hypothesis does not stand because Grosseteste quotes Augustine, together with Plato, in a passage on the Ideas in his *Commentary on the Physics*.⁴⁴⁹ Second, Grosseteste explicitly holds that the Ideas, not the intelligences, are creative and mediating between God and the world. The only way to make sense of the tensions and contradictions among Grosseteste's works is to acknowledge an evolution in his thought, even if it occurred in a short span of time. The act of creation is not a spontaneous overflowing from an indeterminate source, it is not a sort of emanation, but it is a *creatio ex nihilo* whereby only one absolute principle – God by His Word – could have accomplished this task. Any other hypothesis, for Grosseteste, undermines this first and fundamental Christian truth.

III.2.3 Form of everything (*omnium*)

Grosseteste perceives clearly that the definition of God as form of everything can be interpreted as a form of pantheism. His answer is clear: God is not the sort of form that completes matter and transforms it into a composed thing; He is not part of a thing, but He is its support.⁴⁵⁰ As we have seen, Grosseteste explains the relationship between God (the form)

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. McEvoy 1982, 67.

⁴⁴⁹ *In Libros Physicorum*, III, 54, 61.

⁴⁵⁰ *De unica forma omnium*, 109: "Ut autem aliquo modo clarescat, quomodo ipse sit forma creaturarum non

and the creatures (the formed) by means of examples. Grosseteste does not usually discuss the relationship between the reason in God's mind and the form imprinted in the matter in detail. He rather prefers to tackle another consequence of the definition of God as the first form of everything, namely, that God is present in every thing. Grosseteste's concern, therefore, is to explain the ubiquity of the First Principle in everything, a topic that indeed arises in the Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, but is more fully developed in his theological works (§ III.2.3.1). The ubiquity of God entails that He present – essentially, presentially, and potentially – in everything, but also that He imprinted His form in everything. More specifically, it means that there is a trace of the Trinity in every single being, even in a fleck of dust (§ III.2.3.2).

III.2.3.1 Ubiquity of the first form

In the Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, Grosseteste presents four kinds of universals, as we have seen previously. The first three kinds of universals have some common features: they are incorruptible, eternal, and are also present everywhere (*ubique*). In this part of the Commentary, Grosseteste is fully aware of the opposition between Aristotle and Plato. He nevertheless proves that both recognize the ubiquity of universals. If universals are considered in the way Aristotle understands them, namely, as forms abstracted from the extramental particulars, then universals can be said to be everywhere in the sense that they are where the particulars are or in the sense that they are in the intellects that cognize them.⁴⁵¹ Even if universals are considered in the Platonic way, namely, as ideas in God's mind, the characteristic of ubiquity can be preserved. In this case, universals can be said to be everywhere in the sense that God, as the first cause of everything, is everywhere. Finally, universals can be considered as the powers (*virtutes*) of the celestial bodies and even in this case they are everywhere since the powers are everywhere.⁴⁵²

enim sic est earum forma velut pars earum substantialis completiva, ex qua et materia fit aliquid unum significationes huius nominis 'forma' aliquatenus sunt explicandae."

⁴⁵¹ *InPoAn*, I, cap. 18, 266-267: "Quomodo universale semper sit satis expositum est supra, ubi fiebat sermo de perpetuitate universalium. Si autem intelligimus universalialia per modum Aristotelis formas repertas in quidditate particularium, a quibus sunt res particulares id quod sunt, tunc universale esse ubique nichil aliud est quam universale esse in quolibet suorum singularium. Ubique enim esse est esse in quolibet suorum locorum, loca autem universalium sunt ipsa singularia in quibus sunt universalialia, nisi forte dicamus quod universale ubique est quia intellectus est locus universalium, et universale ubique esse est ipsum in intellectu esse, qui intellectus quodammodo ubique est, quia intellectus per modum spiritualem ibi est ubi est illud quod intelligitur, sicut amans ibi est ubi est illud quod amatur."

⁴⁵² *Ibidem*: "Si autem universalialia sunt ydee in mente divina, tunc universalialia ubique sunt per modum quo causa prima ubique est. Si vero universalialia sunt rationes rerum causales create, que sunt virtutes site in corporibus

Grosseteste, however, acknowledges that he cannot explain how the First Cause or the celestial powers are everywhere or how what is intellected is where the intellect is.⁴⁵³ To find this claim in a philosophical work is a bit unexpected, but, as mentioned above, Grosseteste proposes to explain the ubiquitous presence of the First Cause in the later theological works. Such a claim means that, for Grosseteste, human reason is not sufficient to understand and explain a reality that is acquired through faith, as Grosseteste maintains that two domains are separated.

At the beginning of his theological career, Grosseteste writes a long letter to his disciple, Adam of Marsh. The first part of this letter is also known as *De prima forma omnium*. The second part is dedicated to the place of the angels. Those two writings circulated separately, but their themes are more connected than previously thought. The examples from the *De prima forma omnium* (and the *De veritate*) that we discussed above emphasize that God is not of the same genre of all the other beings; He is portrayed as the container rather than as the contained water.⁴⁵⁴ In the second part of the letter, this topic is further developed. The question that Adam raised is about the place of the angels, but Grosseteste places the question within the broader issue of the place of spiritual substances. The scheme of Grosseteste's answer to this question is similar to the previous one: first, he states his doctrine; second, he endorses his statement with the authority of Augustine; third, he recognizes that what he says is far from the truth, because God exceeds every representation of Him. Grosseteste notes that only God is entirely in every place at the same time.⁴⁵⁵ He then quotes Augustine's *De Trinitate* where the bishop of Hippo affirms that God, in His wholeness, is everywhere yet without place;⁴⁵⁶ finally, he concludes that Augustine's words only help us to understand how God is everywhere up to a certain point, but this truth is actually beyond human reason.⁴⁵⁷ Grosseteste dwells in particular on a comparison between

celestibus, tunc etiam ipse ubique sunt, quia virtutes corporum celestium ubique reperiuntur.”

⁴⁵³ *Ibidem*: “Quomodo autem causa prima ubique sit et quomodo virtutes corporum celestium ubique sint et quomodo intellectus sit ibi ubi est illud quod intelligitur et amans ubi est illud quod amatur, altioris est negotii et non est nostre possibilitatis explanare. Verumtamen quod ita sit scimus, modum autem comprehendere non sufficimus.”

⁴⁵⁴ The image of the container also plays a central role in his biblical commentaries. In the Commentary on the *Psalm*, for example, Grosseteste explains that being the essential cause of a thing does not imply being an essential part of it; God “gives form to his creature by recalling and adhering it to Himself, as a vessel shapes the water that, without the vessel's support would not maintain its proper figure and form.” *Commentarius in Psalmos*, in Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, MS A.983, fol 43ra. English translation is in Gieben 2003, 223.

⁴⁵⁵ *De intelligentiis*, 112: “In primis respondeo, quod solus Deus totus ubique simul est.”

⁴⁵⁶ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, V, 1, n.2. He quotes also *Epistle* 187.

⁴⁵⁷ *De intelligentiis*, 114: “Ex his verbis Augustini, ut supra dixi, aliquatenus iuvatur noster intellectus ad comprehendendum, licet velut de longe in nubilo, quomodo Deus ubique est, quia plene comprehendere, quomodo ipse ubique est, supra viventis hominis capacitatem est.”

God's presence in the universe and the soul's presence in the body, a comparison set forth by Ambrose and Augustine. This comparison is very tricky and the risk of a pantheistic interpretation is high. A reader of Grosseteste's time could be induced to think that God is the soul of the world (*anima mundi*), as William of Conches affirmed in his first writings.⁴⁵⁸ Grosseteste does not share this interpretation because he clearly argues for God's absolute transcendence, as we saw in the previous chapter. Grosseteste does not feel the need to specify his authorities, but after quoting from their texts he concludes that as the soul is essentially in every part of the body, God is essentially (*essentialiter*) in every part of the universe that He rules.⁴⁵⁹ Those words do not fully clarify the implication of the comparison. However, Grosseteste's conclusion – in particular, the reference to the essential presence of God and His rule – will be developed in another work, the *Summa theologiae*.

In the fourth question of the *Summa theologiae*, Grosseteste aims to demonstrate that the Creator is present everywhere (*ubique*).⁴⁶⁰ Grosseteste provides an original interpretation of Peter Lombard's answer that God is everywhere with His power, presence and essence (*potentialiter, presentialiter, essentialiter*). First, Grosseteste focuses on the adverb "essentially," which he explains by way of the following syllogism: "Nothing can lack its essential cause; but God is the essential cause of every thing; then God is everywhere."⁴⁶¹ The hidden premise of this argument is that every second cause participates in the first cause, which is, accordingly, implied and present in every caused. Grosseteste illustrates this point with an example: when the light of the sun passes through a colored window and shines on the opposite wall, both the first cause (i.e., the light of the sun) and the second cause (i.e., the colored window) are present in the colored wall.⁴⁶² Second, Grosseteste explains the adverb "potentially." God is potentially present everywhere because His power is exercised on every thing, but not as a human king, Grosseteste observes, who, despite his power reaches every corner of the reign, he is not actually present everywhere. In virtue of this way of being present, Grosseteste employs the third adverb to argue that God is said to be "presentially"

⁴⁵⁸ Gregory 1955, 125.

⁴⁵⁹ *De intelligentiis*, 114: "Ecce ex his verbis aperte habes, quod anima tota essentialiter ubique est in corpore, quod vivificat, sicut Deus ubique totus essentialiter est in universo, quod regit."

⁴⁶⁰ As mentioned above (§ I Introduction), the authenticity of the *Summa* is disputed. Daniel Callus, the editor of the *Summa*, gives many arguments in favour of the authenticity. McEvoy (2000, 111) and Southern (1986, 29-31), for example, consider them unconvincing, while Goering (1995, 25 n.26) defends the authorship of Grosseteste. There is not room here to take a stance in this debate. For my argument it suffices to note that the content of the *Summa* is very close to that of other works of Grosseteste, so that there is no evidence that the author of the *Summa* would depart from Grosseteste's doctrines.

⁴⁶¹ *Summa* IV 205, ll. 3-5: "Nulli rei dum est potest deesse sua causa essentialis; sed essentialissima causa uniuscuiusque Deus; ergo Deus est ubique."

⁴⁶² *Summa* IV, 205, ll. 5-10: "Assumptum patet, quia nulla est rei causa nisi participatione cause prime; unde et ipsa causa prima immediatissima est omnium causarum ad unumquodque causatum, sicut lux pertransiens vitrum coloratum colorat parietem obiectum, et immediatus splendet in pariete quam color vitri."

everywhere.⁴⁶³ Grosseteste had implicitly clarified this adverb some lines before when he quoted a sentence attributed to Augustine: “God is not enclosed in the world, nor excluded from the world, nor elevated over the world, nor weighed down in the world.”⁴⁶⁴ Grosseteste quotes this text to support the idea that the presence of God must not be intended as the relation between a place and the object in that place because He is not an object among the others, but is a sort of “container” of the objects. To be outside the world, for God, does not mean that He is in a real place, but simply that He infinitely exceeds every creature.⁴⁶⁵ Grosseteste concludes that if God were said to be only “potentially” and “presentially” near to the creatures, this could induce one to think that He is only the efficient cause of reality; but since He is also their formal cause, the adverb “essentially” is needed.⁴⁶⁶ For Grosseteste, it is not enough to say that God is present everywhere, but he also affirms that He forms everything because where God is, He acts.

III.2.3.2 *Trinitarian exemplarism*

The doctrine of God as form of everything does not only imply that He is essentially, presentially, and potentially present in everything, but also that He imprinted the forms contained in His ideas in everything, and therefore, “every kind of creature is an example [...] of something true in the divine ideas.”⁴⁶⁷ The metaphysical dependence on the first Being, or, better yet, on God’s ideas, gives the basis for the doctrine of exemplarism.⁴⁶⁸ This idea was

⁴⁶³ *Summa* IV 206, ll. 26-31: “Potentialiter, quia illa virtus, ut dictum est, ad omnia se extendit; sed quia posset de eo credi, sicut de rege mortali, licet eius virtus sit in regno toto, non tamen ipse in propria presentia ubique est, quia non est ipse idem quod sua virtus, ideo additur quod non solum potentialiter sed etiam presentialiter est Deus ubique.” The editor notes that the source of this example is William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea* I, 16.

⁴⁶⁴ *Summa* IV, 206, ll. 15-16: “Deus est in mundo non inclusus, extra mundum nec exclusus, supra mundum non elevatus, infra mundum non depressus.” As the editor points out, this statement is a conflation of many authorities and sometimes was attributed to Gregory the Great. The statement, as quoted by Grosseteste, occurs in the *Summa aurea* by William of Auxerre, who is also the source of the just mentioned example of the king’s power (cf. Callus 1958, 194).

⁴⁶⁵ *Summa* IV 206 ll. 13-14; 17-22: “Sed notandum quod cum comparatur Deus ad hoc nullo modo comparatur locatum ad locum [...]. Si est ibi aliqua proprietas et comparatio loci ad locatum, eo enim indigent omnia sicut proprio locante, ipse autem nullo indiget. Unde cum dicitur esse ‘extra mundum’, non dicitur hoc quia ibi sit creatura vel locus qui ibi divine presentie subsistat, sed quia in se est qui in infinitum omnem creaturam excedit.”

⁴⁶⁶ This doctrine also recurs in another treatise, the *De statu causarum*. There Grosseteste proves that in God the efficient and the formal causes must be substantially one and the same. See *De statu causarum*, 122.

⁴⁶⁷ *Sermo* 19, in Gieben 1964, 144. In Grosseteste, the relationship about the exemplar and the example generates a lot of metaphors and most of them present the creatures as words or letters that announce the mystery (or ideas) of God. See e.g. *De operationibus solis*; *Dictum* 19. For texts and translations, see Gieben 1964, 145.

⁴⁶⁸ This was a very common doctrine among medieval thinkers, inherited from Plato via Augustine, as Grosseteste himself acknowledges: “Plato vero et Augustinus, qui consideraverunt quod in mente divina est sapientia infinita et rationes rerum eterne infinite, posuerunt numerum infinitum abstractum a sensibilibus et

developed in particular by the Franciscans, and Grosseteste, the first theology master of the Franciscan School in Oxford, was strongly influenced by it.⁴⁶⁹

The doctrine of exemplarism is not a novel argument for a Christian thinker. The world of Ideas is the Platonic legacy to medieval thought via Augustine in particular. What makes the exemplarism a Christian doctrine is its Trinitarian application. The created world is not simply the image of an abstract First Principle, but it has the imprints of the Trinity. In the wake of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, Grosseteste recognizes that the creatures must reveal the Trinitarian nature of their Creator in some way. Grosseteste develops this topic in the *Hexaëmeron* and in the *Dictum 60*.

In the *Hexaëmeron*, Grosseteste mentions many classical examples of the imprints of Trinity in the created world. The first illustration is the triad "matter, form and the composite of them;" the second is "size, shape and order;" the third is "number, weight and measure," but the closest illustration of the Trinity is the Augustinian triad "memory, understanding and love." Among bodily things, the clearest illustration of the Trinity is fire or light because it begets its splendour from itself and fire and splendour reflect mutual warmth on each other.⁴⁷⁰ Although Grosseteste calls these "examples" images of the Trinity in the world, he actually considers them real arguments to demonstrate the Trinity. However, in the *Hexaëmeron*, he does not develop this argument any further.⁴⁷¹

Servus Gieben has shown that in the *Dictum 60*, Grosseteste elaborates one of the proofs that Grosseteste was thinking about in the *Hexaëmeron*.⁴⁷² The argument is a thought experiment. Let us suppose, Grosseteste says, that there are only two creatures: a rational one and a corporeal one. As an example of the latter, let us choose one as insignificant as possible: a particle of dust (*atomus*). However minimal the particle of dust's being is, its existence presupposes a creator of infinite power since the act of passing from nothing to being is infinite, and consequently, requires an infinite efficient power. Now, since the particle of dust is a body, it must be three-dimensional. But in every three-dimensional body it is possible to describe a sphere, and in that sphere, infinite circles, and in every circle, infinite figures. And since a demonstrative science of each one of these infinite figures can be given, an infinite science concerns that particle of dust. Yet, this science would remain possible only if there

ipsam esse principium omnium et exemplar" (*In Libros Physicorum*, III, 0, 61).

⁴⁶⁹ For the history of this doctrine and its influence on Grosseteste, the study of Gieben (1964) is fundamental.

⁴⁷⁰ See *Hexaëmeron* VIII, iv, 3-12, 222-224.

⁴⁷¹ See *Hexaëmeron* VIII, iv, 2, 222: "Exempla igitur summe Trinitatis que solent afferri sunt talia; et non solum sunt exempla, sed evidenter summe Trinitati collata sunt argumenta ipsam Trinitatem efficaciter probancia. Non tamen propter vitandam prolixitatem afferimus illa nunc sicut argumenta sed sicut exempla imaginacionem iuvantia."

⁴⁷² Gieben 1964, 149.

were not an infinite wisdom. Thus, we come to the conclusion that the particle of dust has been created by an infinite power through an infinite wisdom. This conclusion is certainly a great acquisition of the rational being considered in this example. Thus, by creating the dust, the Creator made a very useful thing for that mind. Furthermore, since the mind itself is not responsible for this good, the creator must be a good Creator. In this way, starting from a particle of dust, Grosseteste argued for the infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness of the Creator.⁴⁷³ This argument proves that even the tiniest creature shows the imprints of the Trinity.

What we said in this part allows us to specify McEvoy's claim that Grosseteste is not interested in the demonstration of the existence of God.⁴⁷⁴ This claim is essentially true because Grosseteste's problem is not *An Deus sit*, but *An Trinitas sit*. The above argument, and the other examples, do not say anything about the nature of the Trinity, and Grosseteste never thinks to reach such an understanding because all the possible analogies, he knows, have some point of dissimilarity.⁴⁷⁵ The aim of his arguments become clear in the *Corpus* where he concludes that, thanks to those examples, it is possible to comprehend the Trinity, not however as It is in Itself, but as cause and principle of all the triads in the created world.⁴⁷⁶ Because God is not only the efficient cause of the world, but also its final cause, the triadic "footprints" in the creatures will become more evident in the process of deification, which describes the process of the assimilation of creation to the "form" of the Creator.

III.2.4 Conclusion

The definition of God as first form of everything is not marginal in Grosseteste's thought, despite the fact that it appears to be an hapax in his writings. If we consider the writings of the first period of Grosseteste's life, before the episcopacy, we realize that many of them concern this topic. We have analyzed each element of the definition of God: "form," "first," and "of everything."

According to Grosseteste, God is "form" in the sense that He is the eternal and immutable support thanks to which contingent things subsist; without this "container," everything would collapse into nothing. The consequence is the complete dependence of the

⁴⁷³ For a more detailed discussion of the example, see Gieben 1964, 149-150.

⁴⁷⁴ See § II.3.1.1.

⁴⁷⁵ See *Hexaëmeron* VIII, iv, 12, 224.

⁴⁷⁶ See *DNI*, § 45, 151.

creature's being on the Creator's being as a necessary condition that implies the inconsistency of their existence. To be a "form," for God, means also to leave His imprint on creation, as the silver seal shapes the wax. However there is an order among the creatures due to their degree of receptivity. While all the creatures are in themselves liable to flow into non-existence, some approach nearer to God in the sense that their existence is more stable, and thus, they are less liable to come back into nothing.

That God is "first" form means essentially that He cannot receive a form because nothing precedes God, that He is the only principle of creation, and He does not need any help in this work. This is against what Grosseteste held in a previous work, the *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*. In this *Commentary*, he holds the existence of the Platonic Ideas considered not only as the principle of cognizing, but also as principles of being, namely, that they are the formal causes and principles of creation. My interpretation is that Grosseteste passes from a "Platonic" explanation of the Ideas to the view according to which the archetypal world is identical with God because of some insurmountable difficulties associated with the former: the Ideas jeopardize God's simplicity and God's omnipotence.

Finally we see that Grosseteste perceives clearly that the definition of God as form of "everything" can be interpreted as a form of pantheism. His answer is that God is not the sort of form that completes matter and transforms it into a composed thing, but He is its support. The ubiquity of God entails that He is essentially, presentially, and potentially in everything, but also that He imprinted His form in everything. More specifically, it means that there is a trace of the Trinity in every single being.

Grosseteste will reconsider three of his topics in the second period of his life, which takes place during his episcopacy: the uniqueness of God as creator, the function of the divine reasons, and the many degrees of a creature's receptivity of the divine form.

III.3 Procession in the *Corpus*

God as form of everything is the second perspective of Grosseteste's doctrine of God after the consideration of His transcendence. Grosseteste revises the results of the early works during his years as bishop when the influence of the *Corpus* becomes more important. We could use the image of God as a vessel to connect the two phases of Grosseteste's production.⁴⁷⁷ In the first part of this dissertation, I often said that without the vessel's support, water would not

⁴⁷⁷ Servus Gieben found that Grosseteste used the image of vessel in the *Commentary on the Psalms* (see n. 94), and again in the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*; see Gieben 2003, 223-224.

maintain its shape (cf. § III.2.1.2A). This metaphor shows that without the support of their First Cause the creatures flow into nothing. Grosseteste uses this image in the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus* where the accent is put on the participation of all existent things to the Being and Good in themselves.

The themes of the first section of this chapter again recur in Grosseteste's *Commentary*. Many aspects will be reaffirmed, while some other, in particular the doctrine of eternal reasons, will display a further evolution. The focus of the second section of this chapter is Grosseteste's account of God's universal causality and the possibility that human beings have to name Him in force of this causality. Grosseteste's concern is to prove that creation is not the result of an evil Maker, but that God created with purpose and in time (III.3.1.1). In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste again speculates as to whether God is the only creator, or if the eternal reasons have a creative role (III.3.1.2). Grosseteste identifies the reasons with the Word, but he does not deny the existence of exemplars that have their own consistency, and this permits him to explain the difference among the creatures, although God is simple (III.3.1.3). Since God is the cause of every creature, He has many names. Grosseteste gives a causal explanation of divine names, namely, they signify that God is the cause of that attribute in the created universe (III.3.2.1). This explanation, however does not exclude the fact that some names can be substantially attributed to God. In particular, I will argue that Grosseteste considers the name "Good" as the most appropriate divine name, and this choice places other names such as "Being" and "Light" at a second level (III.3.2.2). Finally, I will show that the Trinitarian names are also considered inappropriate for naming God (III.3.2.3).

III.3.1 Everything proceeds from God

III.3.1.1 *Why did God Create?*

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste's answer to this question is a common Christian doctrine: God created because He is good. The answer is quite expected, but Grosseteste does not always put the accent on God's goodness. In the *Hexaëmeron*, for instance, he stresses that God was the only Creator and that He did not need any helper. The words, *bonitas* and *bonum*, appear only five times, and they are not employed to designate the reason for creation.

In the *Commentary*, by contrast, he places the emphasis on goodness, which coincides with the overabundant occurrences of it in Dionysius's text.

Grosseteste reaffirms this common Christian doctrine on many occasions in order to corroborate other less evident Christian truths, in particular **(A)** that creation is not the result of an evil Maker (against the Manicheans), or **(B)** that God created on purpose and in time (against the Aristotelian theory of the eternity of the world). Grosseteste does not attack his opponents directly, but his insistence on some issues serves this critical function.

(A) Divine Goodness is the only reason to create, as Grosseteste affirms in the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*:

Non enim propter aliud a non esse in esse ducit et in esse conservat et existenti bene esse tribuit nisi propter propriam bonitatem. Posset eciam intelligi per hunc sermonem quod omnium causa trinitatis tribuit esse et bene esse existentibus propter bonitatem ipsorum videlicet hoc est ut ipsa sint bona.⁴⁷⁸

God, *qua* Goodness, is the cause of everything. There is no reason to create, preserve the cosmos, and attribute goodness to beings other than His own goodness. Grosseteste also mentions a different interpretation of the doctrine of creation through God's goodness: God created in order to make good things, both in their singularity and in their genera. It is evident that these interpretations are not in opposition, but that the second is a consequence of the first: God created because of His goodness, and therefore, He created good things.

Grosseteste's insistence on the uniqueness of God as the Creator of the world becomes clearer in the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*. In this commentary, Grosseteste's concern is to reaffirm that there is no cause other than God in the process of creation. When Dionysius writes that God, *qua* the Good and the Beautiful, is the cause of all goodness and beauty, Grosseteste explains that what Dionysius means is that God does not need any con-cause in the act of creating.⁴⁷⁹ A few pages later, the reason for this insistence becomes manifest, as Grosseteste explicitly charges pagans and heretics with having posed a plurality of first causes of creation.⁴⁸⁰ He probably has Plato and Aristotle, Thales of Miletus, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, and Archelaus in mind when he refers to the pagans, as it their errors that were confuted in the *Hexaëmeron*.⁴⁸¹ His mention of the

⁴⁷⁸ *EHI*, 333, 15 – 334, 1.

⁴⁷⁹ See *Dionysiaca*, 186. *DN IV*, M 205rb: "Non enim indiget alia concausa vel alio in producendo omnia pulcra a non esse in esse." See also *DN IV*, M 202ra: "Per se bonum enim est causa omnium non indigens adiutorio vel adiunculo extrinseco."

⁴⁸⁰ *DN V*, M 232 vb: "[...] neque aiunt eloquia resume multas causas primas videlicet et alias deitates ita videlicet quod has superexcellentes et has subiectas adductivas in esse videlicet aliorum causatorum scilicet ut aiunt multi gentiles et heretici."

⁴⁸¹ See above § III.2.2.4.

heretics very likely refers to the Cathars who believed that an evil principle was the first cause of the matter. Accordingly, the reaffirmation of the doctrine of creation through God's goodness is significant, which allows us to see it as further evidence for the thesis that the *Commentary* was written for pastoral purposes, such as refuting the arguments raised by the heretics. In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste does not limit himself to reaffirm that God is the only principle of creation, but he also emphasizes the goodness of this principle.

(B) The goodness of the First Principle is often connected with another feature, i.e., His freedom:

Quia omne genus principii rerum est per se bonum et pulcrum non ex factorum meritis sed sui *ipsius gratia* et libera voluntate nec propter aliquid extra se sed *propter ipsum*, quoniam bonum et pulcrum, nec in alio ut coadiutore quo indigeat est aliquid huius principiationis sed solum *in ipso*.⁴⁸²

God, who is good and beautiful *per se*, creates because of His Grace, which can be paraphrased as free will; i.e., creation is an act of God's freedom. This point is not obvious in Dionysius's text. Dionysius's description of God as productive Love has raised the question as to whether, for Dionysius, God creates all things freely or by necessity. Eric Perl has recently reconsidered this issue, which has often been misunderstood. Interpreters normally assume that to say that God creates freely means that He chooses between creating and not creating, while to say that God "cannot" not create means that He is subject to some necessity.⁴⁸³ Actually, Perl maintains that the fact that God "cannot not create" is not a limitation of God, but a consequence of His transcendence. Given that God is the Good, he cannot not create; however, the "cannot" does not refer to an impossibility for God, but designates a constriction that lies purely in Himself: insofar as God is Love, He is compelled to create the world, but such a constriction is not imposed on Him from the outside.⁴⁸⁴ In other words, as Philip Sherrard noted, "God *qua* God is Creator and Creator *qua* Creator is God."⁴⁸⁵

Grosseteste proposes an accurate reading of Dionysius's text. In Book IV of the *De divinis nominibus*, which is devoted to "Goodness," Dionysius writes that the authors of the Bible preferred to name God "Good" because it manifests God's spontaneous expansion towards the created world.⁴⁸⁶ The Areopagite illustrates this doctrine through an example. He

⁴⁸² *DN IV*, M 204va.

⁴⁸³ Perl 2007, 49.

⁴⁸⁴ Perl 2007, 52.

⁴⁸⁵ Sherrard 1992, 157.

⁴⁸⁶ See *Dionysiaca* 145. *DN IV*, M 198ra: "In hoc [*i.e.* boni nominatione] enim manifestatur spontanea ipsius expansio in omnium utilitates que vere bonitas est."

wrote that as the sun gives light to all things not through an act of choice or deliberation, but by the very fact that it exists, similarly, the Good effuses on all things, according to their receptive powers, the rays of its undivided Goodness.⁴⁸⁷ Grosseteste hastens to avoid any interpretation of the example that can raise the doubt of heresy. The similarity between the sun and God, Grosseteste glosses, is not introduced to underscore a lack of reason and freedom in God, but the fact that both God and the sun act according to their own substance.⁴⁸⁸ On Grosseteste's interpretation, Dionysius illustrates this example simply to state that God bestows His gifts because He is substantially good just like the sun enlightens because it is substantially luminous. Grosseteste notes that the expansion of God towards the creatures is voluntary (*spontanea*), an adjective that neutralizes the problematic example given by Dionysius.

Grosseteste returns to this topic some pages later where Dionysius writes that Love does not allow God to stay unproductive, but it compels Him to create.⁴⁸⁹ This text may cause us to think that God is not free, but is necessitated to create. Grosseteste comments that love prevents God from being idle, so God overflows in a good act towards His beloved creatures on purpose (*ex intentione*), namely, love compels God to create from nothing.⁴⁹⁰ Grosseteste perceives the ambiguity of Dionysius's texts, and by combining the expressions *libera voluntate*, *spontanea*, and *ex intentione* he establishes an interpretation of Dionysius's texts that avoids attaching necessity to God's act of creation.

III.3.1.2 Rationes

Divine Goodness explains the reason for creation and that God's act was free. As it occurred in the works written before the episcopacy, Grosseteste also asks whether God is solely responsible for creation or if there are other principles at work, such as the Platonic Ideas. The *Corpus* is one of the major sources of the medieval doctrine of divine ideas, and therefore, in the *Commentary* Grosseteste reconsiders this topic. In this paragraph, I will explain what a reason is, while in the next paragraph I will consider the relationship between the reasons and

⁴⁸⁷ See *Dionysiaca*, 146.

⁴⁸⁸ *DN IV*, M 198rb: "Nec intelligat quis per hic dictum sic plenam ut pretactum est similitudinem ut videlicet Deus sit sicut est sol sine ratione et non agens arbitri libertate sed in tantum extendat similitudinem quod sicut sol substantiale lumen ipso esse lumen illuminat hec mundana, sic Deus substantiale bonum influit de sue bonitatis plenitudine in omnia."

⁴⁸⁹ See *Dionysiaca*, 201-202.

⁴⁹⁰ *DN IV*, M 209va: "Amor enim est benevolentia non remissa nec otiosa sed ex intentione prorumpens in actum beneficium amati propter amati boni qui super excellenter preexistens in Deo movit ipsum ex nihilo creationem et generationem et sic fecundavit in omnem parvitatem."

the creation.

Generally, Grosseteste accounts for the exemplars as “principles of cognition” rather than as “principles of beings,” i.e., he focuses on their role in theological knowledge. He does not develop any distinction or digression on the matter, but limits himself to endorse the common doctrine that everything is an image and similitude of God’s reasons (*rationes*). For example, in Book VII of the *De divinis nominibus*, Dionysius affirms that it is possible to know God from the created beings that manifest a certain similarity with the exemplars.⁴⁹¹ Grosseteste explains that those exemplars are the divine reasons in God’s mind, and thanks to the similitude between the creatures and those reasons, it is possible to ascend from the creatures to reasons.⁴⁹² This is the doctrine stated many times in his previous works, *De prima forma omnium* and *De veritate*, namely, that the imprint that God leaves in creation through His form is what allows us to have theological knowledge.

There are, however, texts where Grosseteste considers the nature of the divine reasons. According to Grosseteste, the exemplars must be identified with the Word, the second person of the Trinity, and not as creative principles of the universe. This doctrine allows Grosseteste to maintain the simplicity of God and the multiplicity of reasons in His mind. Now I will analyze some texts that account for this interpretation.

The first text concerning the reasons is in Book II of the *De divinis nominibus* where Dionysius reports what his master Hierotheus wrote about Jesus in his *The Elements of Theology*. In this Christological hymn, Jesus is said to be “whole and part” of the universe because he contains in his all-embracing unity both the parts and the whole. He is the cause of the harmony among the parts in the whole, but is also transcendent and antecedent to both parts and the whole.⁴⁹³ Grosseteste comments as follows:

Ipsa est et totum et pars utpote suscipiens in seipsa id est eternaliter in se ipsa habens in eternis videlicet rationibus creaturis et partem omnem et totum omne et non solum habens sed et superexcellenter habens quia omnia in hiis suis eternis rationibus excellentius sunt et verius quam in seipsis quia et non viventia in ipsis sunt vita et corruptibilia in ipsis sunt incorrupta et temporalia in ipsis sunt eterna. Et sic ipsa est *prehabens* omnia antequam sunt in seipsis.

Grosseteste explains that not only are the created things contained in the Word as eternal

⁴⁹¹ See *Dionysiaca* 403.

⁴⁹² DN VII, M 247v: “*Sed ex omnium entium ordinatione, ut proposita, hoc est ut in esse posita, ex ipso et nobis ostensa et habente imagines quasdam et similitudines divinatorum exemplorum, id est idearum et rationum eternarum, ipsius, Dei videlicet. Omnis enim natura imago est et similitudo eterne rationis in mente divina ad cuius exemplum est formata et ex ipsa tamquam ex imagine et similitudine ascendi potest in divinam rationem que ipsius est exemplum prout possibile speculandum.*”

⁴⁹³ See *Dionysiaca*, 106.

reasons, but they also exist in It in a more excellent way: what is non-living, temporal, and corruptible is in the reasons, living, eternal, and incorruptible. Accordingly, everything exists, first as a *ratio*, and second as a creature.⁴⁹⁴ This doctrine echoes that of Augustine, quoted by Grosseteste in the *De prima forma omnium*: what exists in God is the living exemplar that is immutable and eternal, while the thing that exists on earth is corruptible.⁴⁹⁵ It is worth noting that Grosseteste introduces his thought on exemplars in a passage about Christ, which confirms that Grosseteste understands the second Person of the Trinity as the “place” of the reasons, but in this passage he does not yet consider them identical. The fact that the ideas are eternal, living, and incorruptible does not necessarily imply a Platonic view, nor does it argue the subsistence of the reasons in themselves. Grosseteste’s position can be understood in an Augustinian way: for Grosseteste, the reasons belong to the Son in the sense that the Son is the “bearer” of them. As it will become clear below, Grosseteste finally proves that the reasons are really identical with the Son. Before coming to this conclusion, Grosseteste considers also the possibility to identify the reasons in God’s mind with the Platonic Ideas.

There is only one text where Grosseteste seems to identify the *rationes* in God’s mind with the Ideas of the philosophers. It occurs in Book IV of the *De divinis nominibus*. Dionysius states that everything is contained in God, and Grosseteste paraphrases that God possesses the *rationes* of everything eternally, and these reasons are what the philosophers call Ideas.⁴⁹⁶ Plato is not explicitly mentioned, but if the reasons are to be understood as Platonic Ideas, the problems discussed in the previous paragraph reappear. This brief passage can simply mean that what he calls “reasons” correspond to what philosophers call “ideas.” In order to clarify Grosseteste’s thought, we need to consider Book V of the *De divinis nominibus*, which is devoted to “Being” and the paradigms (another term used by Dionysius to signify the eternal reasons).

According to Dionysius, the eternal reasons are identical with the super-simple and super-one Intelligence of God. However, due to the multiplicity of beings known in this Intelligence, reasons are also multiple.⁴⁹⁷ Dionysius also presents a second view on the topic,

⁴⁹⁴ *DN* II, M 191ra.

⁴⁹⁵ *De prima forma omnium*, 110: “Item Augustinus super Joh. homil. prima: “Faber cum facit arcam, primo habet in arte arcam.[...] Nam potest illa arca putrescere et iterum ex illa, quae in arte est, alia fabricari. Attendite ergo arcam in arte et arcam in opere! Arca in opere non est vita; arca in arte vita est, quia vivit anima artificis, ubi sunt ista omnia antequam proferantur.”

⁴⁹⁶ See *Dionysiaca* 197. *DN* IV, M 208va: “Per se bonum quoque et pulcrum ut sepe dictum est eternaliter habet rationes omnium exemplares et causales quas philosophi vocant ydeas et eterna exemplaria omnium in mente divina.”

⁴⁹⁷ *DN* V, M 239 ra: “Quia autem mentionem fecit de exemplis presubsistentibus in causa omnium, de quibus diversi diversimode senserunt, explanat hic suum intellectum de illis exemplis dicens ea esse eternaliter preexistentes rationes et bonas voluntates divinas, id est intelligentias Dei benivolas omnium predeterminativas et secundum predeterminationem in esse adductivas et ad se et in se unitivas. Que rationes

namely, that of Clemens the philosopher, identified by the *scholia* with Clemens bishop of Rome. According to Clemens, the exemplars are the first creatures in every category of being, or, in Grosseteste's own words, they are created causes that pre-contain what is caused.⁴⁹⁸ This alternative perspective on the reasons gives Grosseteste the occasion to explain the different meanings of the word 'example' (*exemplum*), and also to abandon, for a moment, the paraphrase of the *littera*.

Primo enim et principaliter et propriissime dicuntur exempla, ut predictum est, idee et rationes eterne rerum omnium ad earum imitationes fiendarum. Secundo autem et minus proprie possunt dici exempla causae create rerum ab ipsis causatarum imitationem quandam causas habentium. Tertio autem dicitur exemplum res causata in quantum est vestigium et imago causantis reducens cognitionem in speculationem causantis. Dicitur etiam exemplum quodlibet inductum ad manifestandum aliud per aliquam sui similitudinem ad illud.⁴⁹⁹

The first (1) and most proper sense of the word *exemplum* is the idea in God's mind, the model of a created thing; in a loose sense (2), the *exemplum* is the created cause of those things that have a certain resemblance with it. The third meaning (3) is that of "caused thing," as it is an image and similitude of the cause that leads one to know the cause. Finally (4), *exemplum* is whatever manifests something else in virtue of a similarity. Thus, Grosseteste uses the word 'exemplum' to designate the exemplar (meanings 1 and 2), as well as the exemplified (meanings 3 and 4). Grosseteste is interested in clarifying the relationship between the first and the second sense of *exemplum*. He adopts Dionysius's view by considering the reasons in God's mind as the exemplars (1), but by contrast, he places Clemens's view (2) in the background. However, he does not deny that the created causes of things exist, which can be called *exempla*, as Clemens asserted. The distinction between the first and the second kind of exemplars is that the first (1) may be worshiped because it is nothing other than God Himself, while the second kind (2), that of the "first in their own genre," is made up only of creatures, and thus, it does not deserve to be worshiped; their only purpose is to lift the mind to speculate and worship the Creator, as the Scripture advises.⁵⁰⁰

benivole cum non sint nisi supersimplex et superuna sui bonivola intelligentia, propter multitudinem tamen entium in illa sui intelligentia intellectuum dicuntur plures rationes et voluntates."

⁴⁹⁸ *DN V*, M 239 ra: "Determinato qualiter intelligenda sunt exempla ad que fiunt entia – quia beatus Clemens, Rome episcopus, usus est nomine exempli non secundum eundem intellectum, sed dicens exempla similitudines sumptas ex rebus creatis vel causas creatas in se causaliter prehabentes ea que efficiunt in causatis [...]."

⁴⁹⁹ *DN V*, M 239 rb.

⁵⁰⁰ *DN V*, M 239rb-va: "Si itaque quis dicat recte, dici exemplum secundum quod eo nomine usus est beatus Clemens, et post exempla propriissime dicta sit omnino ambulandum, et cum non sint aliud ab ipso Deo ipsa sint adoranda. Post exempla autem, alia et aliter dicta, non sit ambulandum nec sint adoranda ne per nominis identitatem decipiatur. Ambulans post exempla creata recordari debet scripture que precipit non

Accordingly, for Grosseteste, the reasons, taken in the most proper sense, are not something separated or different from God. For Grosseteste, indeed, God does not participate in His own attributes, but He simply possesses them, or to put it plainly, He is His attributes. Attributes such as truth, justice, and goodness are something in which the creatures participate, but they are not something prior to God since they are identical with God.⁵⁰¹ Some pages later, Grosseteste reaffirms this truth, but his vocabulary becomes more accurate. His intention is to refute the opinion that the First Good bestows the gifts He possesses to the creatures univocally, although He participates in such gifts more intensively than the created beings, as the fire participates in the heat more intensively than the heated things.⁵⁰² Grosseteste replies to this false opinion that the First Good does not correspond to the gifts he bestows, which is why all the divine names must be negated from it. Grosseteste agrees that God possesses everything in Himself, but He does it in an excellent way, for He contains all the things in the eternal *rationes*, which are not univocal with the created beings. From there, Grosseteste concludes that the First Good is not a form, properly speaking, because He is above every form; however, He forms everything through His eternal *rationes*, but not through something other than Himself.⁵⁰³ Identifying the reasons with God, Grosseteste preserves the uniqueness of God as creator of the universe.

In order to clarify the metaphysical status of exemplars, the discussion of the second meaning of ‘example’ becomes significant. In particular, it is worth noting what Grosseteste says in Book XI of his Commentary on *De divinis nominibus*, which is devoted to the theonym ‘Peace’ and to the meaning of expressions such as “being in itself,” “life in itself,” and so on. The explanation of these kinds of expressions allows Grosseteste to further specify his position on the status of the exemplars (2). As Jean-Michel Counet has pointed out, the exemplars can subsist only in God’s essence: “nevertheless, as they are processional gifts issuing from God towards creatures, they may be considered apart from their ontological

ambulandum post exempla creata sed ab hiis sursum duci ad solius creantis speculationem et adorationem.”

⁵⁰¹ *DN* II, M 191va: “Quod enim de deitate dicitur ut veritas, iustitia, bonitas et huiusmodi, supernaturale et supersubstantiale est omne naturale et substantiale in infinitum excedens et non participat hiis ita quod diversum sit participans a participato sicut est in naturalibus et substantiabile sed sicut indifferens et penitus idem quod est supernaturaliter et supersubstantialiter participare et habere.”

⁵⁰² *DN* IV, M 199va: “Cum itaque donans et influens non videatur dare vel influere nisi quod habet, posset ex hoc videri ea que primum bonum largitur creatis univoce licet forte excellentius et intensius participare cum ipsis sicut ignis calefaciens sibi in approximantia univoce cum illis licet intensius participat calore.”

⁵⁰³ *DN* IV, M 199va-b: “Hanc autem fantasticam opinionem volens auctor intervenire astruit ipsum primum bonum nullum eorum esse que tribuit sed ab omnium eorum ablatione nominari et per hoc insinuari ipsum incomparabiliter excellere omnia quorum ablatione nominatur et habere ea in se superexcellenter eternaliter et cautive in eternis rationibus nullo modo univocatis cum hiis quorum sunt eterne rationes. Primum bonum neque formas sed super forma neque formatum existens format omne formatum et unicuique propriam formam largitur. Non aliunde eam accipiens et imprimens formato sed in eterna sua ratione eam eternaliter prehabens.”

subject and therefore as intelligible forms *in se*, offered for participation to manifold participating creatures, but logically prior to these creatures themselves.”⁵⁰⁴ Grosseteste speaks explicitly of “life *in se*” in terms of vivification, or of “deity *in se*” in terms of deification and so on, which suggests that exemplars are creative.⁵⁰⁵ Grosseteste follows Dionysius by attacking those (i.e., the Platonists) who thought that the forms are independent principles that can be assimilated to gods or angels. Grosseteste replies that the expression, *per se*, when referred to the creatures, does not mean that they do not originate from a principle (*ab alio*), but only that they do not subsist in something else (*in altero*) like the accidents in the subject.⁵⁰⁶ Once again, Grosseteste does not reject the idea of a creative cause of reality; what he instead emphasizes is the created nature of those principles.

As a conclusion, we can evaluate Grosseteste’s evolution regarding the doctrine of eternal reasons by taking his sources into account. In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste mentions no authority but the Bible as his only source. Despite the lack of explicit references, we realize that Grosseteste’s background is still Augustinian, although revised under the influence of the Greek masters. D’Onofrio has observed that, unlike the Augustinian view, according to which the eternal reasons (*rationes aeterne*) are only the models of reality, Eriugena inherited from Maximus the Confessor the idea that the primordial causes perform a creative and mediating role insofar as they are consubstantial with the divine Intellect.⁵⁰⁷ Grosseteste appears to adopt this view, which is not a surprise considering that he translated Maximus’s *scholia* on the *Corpus*. One may be tempted to read behind the two kinds of exemplars (1 and 2) the first two divisions of nature according to Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*. The first kind of exemplar is God considered with respect to His universal causality, as the nature that creates and is not created; the second kind of exemplars are instead the primordial causes of the

⁵⁰⁴ Counet 2012, 76.

⁵⁰⁵ Counet refers to the following passage, which I have slightly emended against the other manuscripts *DN IV*, M 270rb: “Et quod <‘quidem’ Counet> ipse (*i.e.* Deus) est illa (*i.e.* esse per se, vita per se, etc.) non sicut predicatur de creaturis sed superessentialiter et super principaliter. Et quod ipse est illae <non sicut...illae om. Counet> causative quia causa horum secundum quod dicuntur <‘deum’ Counet> de creatis, sic inquam dicimus ‘per se’ principaliter divinae et causative; *participative autem* dicimus per se suple *virtutes provisivas editas ex deo imparticipabili, per se substantationem, per se vivificationem, per se deificationem, quibus entia participantia proprie sibi ipsis*, id est secundum analogiam suarum dignitatum et susceptibilitatum, *et sunt et dicuntur* <‘deum’ Counet> *et entia et viventia et divina et alia similiter* [...]. Virtutes editae a dei providentia suscipiunt adiectionem huius particule ‘per se’ et sicut participantia illis virtutibus nude in se consideratis denominantur ab illis nude utpote a vivificatione viventia et similiter de aliis. Sic participantia eisdem virtutibus consideratis secundum quod participant primo et per se, et ex hac participatione dictis per se talibus denominantur per se talia.”

⁵⁰⁶ *DN XI*, M 269va: “Haec enim particula ‘per se’ cum addicitur creatis non privat esse ab alio sicut cum attribuitur in creato. Sed quandoque privat esse in altero ut accidens in subiecto.”

⁵⁰⁷ See D’Onofrio 1996, 253-254.

singulars, as the nature that is created and creates.⁵⁰⁸ Grosseteste's texts, however, do not permit us to further examine this analogy. The admonition of McEvoy on this point is always there: the similarity between Grosseteste and Eriugena – without the support of textual evidence – may be due to the use of the same sources.⁵⁰⁹

III.3.1.3 *The Many Degrees of Creatures' Receptivity*

Grosseteste doctrine of exemplars has consequences for the relationship between the eternal reasons and the created world: (1) the plurality of the reasons does not entail a plurality in God, but rather, it is the cause of the plurality in reality; (2) the plurality of reasons explains the difference among the creatures; (3) created beings depend completely on the exemplars because, in itself, the created world has not subsistence.

(1) Grosseteste knows that the plurality of reasons in God's mind could compromise God's simplicity, and therefore, every time Dionysius's text provides him the occasion, he reaffirms that every thing that is good and beautiful is eternally present in the causal *rationes* that derive from the simple divine nature.⁵¹⁰ This argument is especially present in Book V of the *De divinis nominibus* where Dionysius treats the issue of the plurality of the reasons. Dionysius affirms that the first participation that proceeds from God is "being," and that all the beings and principles of the world derive from God and are in God.⁵¹¹ Grosseteste comments as follows:

Ipsa enim per se superbonitas, continens in se eternaliter omnia in eorum rationibus exemplaribus, sic continet ea in se quod etiam ea producit in esse seculare vel temporale in se ipsis ab esse quod eternaliter habent in ipsa. Et sic continet ea irretentive quia provise in eorum proprium esse in ipsa quorum per se superbonitate sunt omnia simul et sic convolute et ex ipsa et in ipsa sunt omnia unitive, quia ex parte ipsius causantis et continentis nulla est multitudo vel diversitas essentialis. Intelligens enim se, in essentia simplicissimam et superunitam, intelligit omnia et sic diligens se diligit omnia. Et intellectus diligens, seu dilectio intelligens, in sui simplicitate omnia est rationes exemplares et causales omnium, licet in se diversorum, unitorum tamen in superbonitatis simplicitate.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ See *Periphyseon* I, 441B.

⁵⁰⁹ McEvoy 1987, 223.

⁵¹⁰ See *Dionysiaca*, 183. *DN* IV, M 204va: "*Simplici enim et supernaturali natura tototrum pulcrorum , preexistit secundum causam uniformiter omnis pulcritudo et omne pulcrum. Per se bonum enim et supesubstantiale pulcrum preexistit eternaliter uniformiter et invariabiliter secundum rationes causales eternas. Omnis pulcritudo et omne pulcrum et universa pulcra in ipsis eorum eternis rationibus exstiterunt simplici et supernaturali natura.*"

⁵¹¹ *Dionysiaca*, 342-343.

⁵¹² *DN* V, M 235vb-236ra.

Grosseteste observes that a created thing can exist in God in the form of an eternal exemplar, and by means of this exemplar, God creates everything either according to the time of the Intelligences (*seculare*), or according to the other beings (*temporale*). Grosseteste explains that if we consider the process of creation from the perspective of the First Cause, no multiplicity must be posited; it depends on the creatures, not on God. In God, a thing exists as though it is one with God (*unitive*), but also in a convoluted way (*convolute*). What is confusedly present in God becomes actually multiple when God creates the world. It is the act of creation that generates multiplicity, the unfolding and beginning of time. Since every creature pre-exists in God's mind, when God knows Himself, He at the same time knows every creature; likewise, when God loves Himself, He at the same time loves every creature. God's loving Intellect, or intellectual Love, is the eternal *rationes*, while their multiplicity and diversity is reduced to the simplicity of God's Goodness. This text is important, for many reasons. First, Grosseteste distinguishes three kinds of time, which shows that only in God is there eternity, and that the reasons belong to His realm and not to that of the creatures. Second, Grosseteste makes it clear that the plurality of exemplars does not argue for any plurality in God. Multiplicity is a consequence of the act of creation that depends on the creatures, and not on the First Cause. Third, Grosseteste holds that God knows everything by means of the reasons, and since the reasons are nothing other than God's thoughts, God's act of knowledge is immanent.⁵¹³ Grosseteste's conclusion is that the archetypal world must be identified with God's Intellect, that is, the Son, as Grosseteste stated in the theological works preceding the *Commentary*.

In the same Book, Dionysius gives three examples to illustrate how the multiplicity of the reasons can be harmonized with God's simplicity. First, Dionysius refers to the image of the number one. Every number pre-exists indivisibly in the number one such that this number contains in itself all the numbers under the form of unity. Only when a number goes forth from the one does it become differentiated and multiplied. Second, Dionysius resorts to the image of the centre of a circle. All the rays of a circle are concentrated in a single point, in the centre, and this point contains all the straight lines that depart from it. Finally, Dionysius mentions the soul in which the different faculties are united as one.⁵¹⁴ Grosseteste does not discuss these examples, but limits himself to report on Dionysius's words without any significant addition. At this stage, Grosseteste probably does not see a problem concerning the multiplicity of reasons because they are identified with the Word.

⁵¹³ This kind of solution will be adopted also by Aquinas, *De divinis nominibus*, ed. Mondin, n. 665, p. 65.

⁵¹⁴ See *Dionysiaca* 343-346.

(2) For Grosseteste, God is not diminished, nor changed when the creatures participate in His existence.⁵¹⁵ The differences among the creatures depend on the creatures themselves, and particularly on their capacity to receive the processions of God.⁵¹⁶ Grosseteste tackles the issue of the dissimilarity present in the created world in two places, namely, in Book II and IV of the *Commentary on De divinis nominibus*. In Book II, Dionysius describes, by means of two examples – i.e., the center of a circle and the seal and its imprints – how God is participated in by the creatures without being divided, and without entering into composition with anything. Grosseteste has a different priority, which is to explain how to hold the absolute unity of God together with the multiplicity of His effects. He first turns to an example that was not taken from Dionysius. The example is that of the sunbeam. A ray of sunshine is one, he says, but has two opposite effects: on the one hand, it hardens the mud, but on the other hand, it melts the wax. These different consequences are due to the different receivers.⁵¹⁷

Book II presents yet another point that has to be highlighted. In a few lines of Dionysius's text, there are two occurrences of 'archetype.' Grosseteste paraphrases it as "principally shaped."⁵¹⁸ It may be inferred that the image of the seal refers not to the exemplar of the first kind seen above (i.e., the one identified with the Word). It refers, instead, to the second kind (proposed by Clemens) of the exemplar because it gives form, but it is also the first being formed by God in His mind. Its creative role does not compromise its creatural being. It gives Grosseteste's answer to the idleness problem: before creation, God generated the exemplars.

Grosseteste's explanation of the divine processions shows that there are differences among creatures, despite the fact that God's overflowing is uniform, but it does not account for the hierarchical order among them. The example of the sunbeam, for instance, does not say if the most proper effect of a ray of sunshine is to harden or to melt. The example of the seal, however, is closer to what Dionysius and Grosseteste actually assert, namely, that the most immaterial and incorruptible creatures are clearer signs of the Creator than the material

⁵¹⁵ *DN II*, M 187ra: "Pater autem dicitur fons supersubstantialis deitatis quia impartibiliter et indimute manens in propria totalitate eternaliter."

⁵¹⁶ *EH I*, 320, 10-11: "Participatio ex parte participati uniformis est, ex parte autem participantium est secundum uniuscuiusque participationis mensuram."

⁵¹⁷ *DN II*, M 187va: "Radius in se unus et superunitus in effectibus plurificatur et multiplicatur quemadmodum a Deum radiis solis huius visibilis in se unus et idem lutum indurat et ceram emollit non secundum varietatem sui in se sed secundum differentias suscipientium eius actionem."

⁵¹⁸ *DN II*, M 187vb: "*et quemadmodum multe expressiones [...] sigilli participant principali seu archetypo id est principaliter figurato sigillo [...]*"; *DN II*, M 188 ra: "*diversa autem participantium facit efformata ab una et tota et eadem archetypia id est principali figurazione.*"

and corruptible ones.⁵¹⁹ This consideration must be related to the metaphysical doctrine of the degrees of existence discussed above. Grosseteste interprets the examples of the seal and the sunbeam as follows:

Ut enim patet in suprapositis exemplis ex parte donantis est unitas et singularitas et nulla ab unitate egressio, ex parte autem participantium discretio pluralitas et multiplicatio; quedam enim participantia participant donis diversorum generum; quedam autem donis unius generis; sed hoc quidem illorum participant eis secundum prius hoc vero secundum posterius et hoc quidem magis hoc vero minus. Et forte hos tres modos varietatis participationum insinuavit per tria verba: *discernitur*, *plurificatur*, *multiplicatur*.⁵²⁰

Grosseteste reiterates that the multiplicity of reality depends on the creatures, while God remains one and simple, never expanding or exiting apart from Himself. Grosseteste also adds that there are things that participate in many kinds of gifts, while some other things participate in only one kind. Among them, some things participate before, some others later; some things participate more, some others less. Grosseteste appears uncertain about the exact meaning of Dionysius's text. He says that maybe (*forte*) Dionysius meant to refer to such different kinds of participations with the words "discernitur, plurificatur multiplicatur." This text is not so easy to understand. The sense was not even clear to Grosseteste, as the adverb '*forte*' seems to suggest. Grosseteste does not give any example that may help us to single out the creatures that participate in many gifts or in only one kind of gift. We can suppose that, for example, Grosseteste thought that some beings participate in "humanity," while some other beings in "horseness." This is the meaning that Grosseteste attaches to the verb, *discernitur*. Moreover, humanity can be participated in by many individuals. We might suppose that Grosseteste thinks that Dionysius expressed this kind of participation by the verb, *plurificatur*. Finally, an individual thing can participate in this form according to different degrees. For example, a human being can be said to be more or less human. Grosseteste might suppose that this kind of participation is expressed by the verb, *multiplicatur*.

This interpretation is consistent with Grosseteste's comments in Book IV of the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*. Grosseteste notes that, for Dionysius, God is the cause of the similarities and dissimilarities existing among things.⁵²¹ By "similarity" Grosseteste intends to describe participation in the same form according to the same intensity,

⁵¹⁹ CH II, 61: "Sed creature et naturae immaterialiores, vel simpliciter immateriales et bonitate creatoris incorruptibiles, expressiora et formiora sunt conditoris vestigia et intelligentibus ea ipsum expressius et manifestius ostendentia; materiales vero et necessario corruptibiles minus expressa et informiora sunt creatoris vestigia, minus expresse et inmanifestius ipsum demonstrantia."

⁵²⁰ DN II, M 192va.

⁵²¹ See *Dionysiaca* 186-187.

while by “dissimilarity,” he means participation in different kinds of form or in the same form, but with different degrees.⁵²² Grosseteste explains this with an example. According to the participation in the form of light, celestial bodies are similar, but since their participation can be more or less intense, they are dissimilar.⁵²³ Grosseteste concludes that it is possible to participate in many ways: immediately or mediately, before or after, more or less.⁵²⁴ It is undisputed that, for Grosseteste, a form may be more or less intense, but he does not specify whether it also involves the substantial forms, as I suggested with the example of “humanity.” From the texts alone, we can only speculate as to his original intention.⁵²⁵

(3) In the *De coelesti hierarchia*, Grosseteste underscores a final aspect of his theory of exemplars, namely, the total dependence of creatures on the exemplars. Grosseteste’s comments on this subject are explicit:

Omnis autem creatura quantumque excellens in auribus habentium aures audiendi evidētia possibilitatis sue quantum est de se redeundi in nichilum, sicut ex nichilo facta est, fortiter clamat et dicit: non sum ego deus, non sum ego id quod per se est et per se necesse esse, a quo omne esse, non sum ‘ego qui sum’ sed qui ab alio sum.⁵²⁶

The image used by Grosseteste is vivid: every creature by evidence of its own possibility, insofar as it is in itself, of returning to nothing, just as it was made from nothing, cries out strongly and says «I am not God, I am not that which exists *per se*». Only true being is what exists *per se*, which is consequently a necessary being that does not rely on anything else to exist. This being is the same who speaks in *Exodus* 3:14, the great “I am.” Creatures, by contrast, receive their being, but in themselves they are liable to collapse into nothing. As seen above, this doctrine plays an important role in Grosseteste’s thought during his teaching of theology at Oxford. In the *Commentary*, he stresses the dependence of the created beings. No matter how close a creature could be to the Creator, or how clearly it could manifest the Creator’s imprints, the doctrine of participation implies, according to Grosseteste, that

⁵²² *DN* IV, M 205rb: “[*ex eodem*] *similitudines* et per participationes formarum earumdem secundum speciem et equaliter intensarum, et *dissimilitudines* per participationes formarum secundum speciem diversarum aut earumdem secundum speciem inequaliter intensarum.”

⁵²³ *DN* IV, M 205rb: “Sunt insuper alia similia et dissimilia unita incommixte utpote lumina celestium corporum inquantum lumina similia sunt et inquantum quedam aliis intensiora et quedam remissiora ab aliis et aliis celestibus corporibus diffusa sunt dissimilia.”

⁵²⁴ *DN* IV, M 205 va: “Quedam enim participant predictis immediate et quedam per medium et que secundum prius et quedam secundum posterius et quedam secundum magis et quedam secundum minus.”

⁵²⁵ Almost a century later, an author deeply influenced by Grosseteste and his *Commentary* on the *De divinis nominibus*, John of Ripa, has drawn a theory of *latitudo formarum* whose complexity is far from the original, simple Grossetestian idea, but nonetheless is in debt with it; see Nannini 2014.

⁵²⁶ *CH* II, 60-61.

everything has a complete dependence on the First Cause. This lack of a proper foundation, i.e., the fact that beings actually are “beings from another” provides Grosseteste with the metaphysical basis for to make the epistemological claim that “every creature brings to mind his eternal reason in the divine mind, according to which it was made.”⁵²⁷ The reasons sustain, form, and conserve the created particulars, and are thus the signs of God’s ubiquitous presence in the world.

III.3.2 *God has many names*

In the second chapter, we introduced the paradox in Grosseteste’s theology concerning the knowledge of God (*ignorantia/omne intelligibile*) and its reflection on language (*ineffabile/multivocum*). I limited the examination to first members of the dichotomy, namely, God’s unknowability and ineffability. It has been shown that, for Grosseteste, there is no name that expresses God’s transcendence because God’s causality is the only way that we have to access to Him. In this part, I will discuss the semantic implications of the paradox when God is considered under the aspect of procession. In this case, God has many names since He is the cause of every creature. Such a multiplicity of names does not mean that all the divine names have the same significance and importance in theology. There are some names that express God in a better way just like, at the ontological level, there are some beings that participate more intensively in God’s eternal reasons. No matter how suitable a divine name may be, Grosseteste reiterates that they signify only that God is the cause of that attribute in the created universe, and not God in Himself (§ III.3.2.1). Among the divine names, I will argue that Grosseteste considers the name “Good” the most appropriate, which places other names such as “Being” and “Light” at a second level (§ III.3.2.2). Finally, I will show that the Trinitarian names are also considered inappropriate to God (§ III.3.2.3).

III.3.2.1 *A causal explanation of divine names*

Grosseteste is clear that the divine names manifest God’s beneficent gifts towards beings.

⁵²⁷ CH II, 61: “Omnis creatura rationem suam eternam in mente divina, ad cuius exemplar facta est, aut operationem aliquam divinitatis insinuat.”

Grosseteste provides a causal explanation of the divine names:

Deus enim trinitas nunc dictus substantia propter substantificationem, nunc vita propter vivificationem, nunc sapientia propter sapientificationem et sic dictus quevis alia propter alias sui donationes imparticipabiliter.⁵²⁸

For example, the name ‘substance’ is attributed to God because He is considered the cause of the “substantification” of beings; similarly, the name ‘life’ is attributed to Him because He is considered the cause of vivification, and so on.⁵²⁹ Even the names that are commonly considered more appropriate to God, such as ‘being’ and ‘goodness,’ manifest only the fact that God is the giver of those gifts.⁵³⁰ As noted in the previous chapter, Grosseteste also gives the Biblical name *Ego sum qui sum*, a causal explanation. This name actually accomplishes a dual purpose for Grosseteste: on the one hand, it is the name that God attributed to Himself; on the other hand, it expresses only what human beings can understand of God’s nature. Grosseteste affirms that Dionysius’s intent was only to praise God as ‘being’ to the extent to which we can understand Him and not to explain how God understands Himself.⁵³¹

A causal explanation of theological language does, however, encounter a problem: since God is the cause of every thing, He can, therefore, be named by every name – even those names that refer to material and imperfect beings.⁵³² Grosseteste does not seem to take issue with this problem, as in Book V of the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus* he refers to divine names such as ‘fire’ and ‘stone’ along with ‘being.’

Ab ente igitur laudamus Deum cum nomine entis, eum nominamus designantes eius substantificum processum in entia sive secularia sive temporalia. Et iterum cum nominamus eum a necessario convenientibus ad esse sive superseculare sive seculare sive temporale. Et iterum cum nominamus ipsum nominibus creaturarum ut cum dicimus ipsum esse ignem vel lapidem vel huiusmodi. Non enim intendimus dicere ipsum esse hec, sed ipsum eternaliter prehabere hec in se in eternis eorum rationibus et ipsa in illis eternis rationibus eternaliter preextitisse et ab illis processisse in esse in se ipsis.⁵³³

Grosseteste, however, gives us a false impression, as he puts some constraints on the names

⁵²⁸ *DN* II, M 187va.

⁵²⁹ See also text at § III.2.1.2 n. 145.

⁵³⁰ *DN* V, M 232ra: “Nomen enim entis dictum de Deo, prout intellegi potest a nobis, significat processum id est operationem divinam qua adducit in esse omnia entia. Quod autem et nomen boni de quo predictum est et nomen entis de quo nunc dicitur et nomen vite et nomen sapientie de quibus sapienter dicit, dicta de Deo significant nobis divinos processus.”

⁵³¹ See § II.3.3.1.

⁵³² This problem has been clearly expressed by Thomas Aquinas, see *Summa Theologiae* I, q.13, a.2.

⁵³³ *DN* V, M 234rb.

that can be attributed to God. In fact, the sense of the passage is that the theonym ‘Being’ refers to God’s activity of bringing every kind of essence into existence, i.e., both those that pertain to the *seculum*, like the angels, and those that live in time. The second category contains all the material creatures like fire and stone, from which we can move to name God. Grosseteste makes it clear that when such names are applied to God, they do not signify the nature of God, but they refer to the fact that God possesses in Himself the eternal reasons of such things. According to Grosseteste, the names taken from the creatures – i.e., from ‘angel’ until ‘worm’ – must be intended in a spiritual way. So, when the name ‘stone’ is attributed to God, it does not signify something corporeal, but only spiritual (*intelligibilis*). The spiritual use of the name refers to the causal reason of the stone that exists in God’s mind, and thus, it allows us to elevate our minds by disregarding the mere materiality of the stone.⁵³⁴

The causal explanation of theological language, however paradoxical it may be, does not prevent Dionysius and Grosseteste from claiming that one can name God substantially. As it will be shown below, God is good (and being, life and wisdom) by virtue of His own substance, but not via participation. Grosseteste’s conviction that we can name God substantially seems to contain a complication. Grosseteste frequently affirms the impossibility for human beings to name God as He is in Himself, but he also holds that some of the names that we derive from the creatures can be attributed to God substantially and not metaphorically. This presupposes that there is a strict relationship between what is God in Himself and what He causes, between God’s ineffability and the possibility to attach a name to God. In order to better understand this relationship, it is necessary to explain that, according to Dionysius, the moments of remaining (*moné*) and procession (*próodos*) of the First Principle are strictly related. This point has been clearly illustrated by Eric Perl:

The production of the effect is not an activity on the part of the cause, distinct from the cause itself. The cause does not first exist as itself and then also appear or unfold itself and in that sense produce its effects. Rather, the cause is nothing but that which is appearing, nothing but the unity, the enfolding, of the effects.⁵³⁵

Dionysius describes the process of creation from the point of view of creatures. From this perspective, procession turns out to be the manifestation of the cause itself, that is, the Unity

⁵³⁴ *DN* II, M 186ra: “[Deus dicitur] *omne intelligibile* quia ipse ut pretactum est omnibus nomnibus nominatur et dicitur omne ut angelus, celum, sol, leo, vermis et similia non tamen dicitur aliquid omnium hoc quod illud est in se sed dicitur illud intelligibile utpote dicitur lapis non quod sit corporeus sed intelligibilis quia eterna vita et vivens et causalis ratio lapidis ad quam sursum ducimur ex natura corporei lapidis ut invisibile dei per id quod factum est intelligibiliter conspiciatur.”

⁵³⁵ See Perl 2007, 26.

itself unfolded. This is why some scholars speak of a paradoxical “dynamic steadying.”⁵³⁶ For Dionysius, God’s remaining in itself is twofold: in one respect, God never modifies His unchangeable unity, thus from eternity God remains exactly as He is. Yet in another respect, there is a dynamic remaining that coincides with the creational, *ad extra*, process of God. In the following paragraphs, I will argue that the name ‘good’ especially can be substantially attributed to God because it manifests God’s procession towards the creatures and His nature that is to be Creator.

III.3.2.2 *The primacy of Goodness*

In the *Commentary*, the theonym ‘Good’ replaces the primacy of ‘Being’ that was featured in the *Hexaëmeron*. In many passages from Book IV of *De divinis nominibus* dedicated to the name ‘good,’ Grosseteste states that ‘good’ is the first divine name because it not only designates a procession, namely, something that proceeds from God to the creatures, but also it comprehends any other procession.⁵³⁷ Goodness precedes being because goodness also extends itself to non-beings by bringing them into existence.⁵³⁸ Grosseteste recalls this point in the *Commentary on the De mystica theologia* where he states that whatever can be said of God can be comprehended in one single, positive word, which is to say the name ‘good.’ If we compare this text with a passage from the *Hexaëmeron* that argues for the primacy of being, we may suppose that Grosseteste revised his position:

<p>Quicquid enim alio nomine significatum de Deo dixeris, in hoc nomine quod est essentia instauratur (<i>Hexaëmeron</i>, VIII, vii, 2, 229).⁵³⁹</p>	<p>[...] unico verbo positivo, utpote nomine bonitatis, potest comprehendi quicquid de eo positive dicitur (<i>De mystica theologia</i> I, 76).</p>
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⁵³⁶ See Schäfer 2006, 90.

⁵³⁷ See *DN* IV, M 198ra: “Accedens ad specialiter tractandum de illis et primo de bono quia, ut supra tactum est, ipsa boninominatio comprehendit in se omnes alias nominationes beneficis divine providentie processus ad creaturas significantes.”

⁵³⁸ See *DN* V, M 232rb: “Boni enim nominatio comprehendit et manifestat generaliter omnes et totos processus id est operationes deitatis omnia causantis in omnia et tota causata et etiam in non entia, ea in entia vocando et producendo et in sui designationem ea ordinando et omnia mala que in quantum mala non entia sunt.”

⁵³⁹ Another passage from the same work is quite similar as it shows that, in this context, essence and being are synonyms, according to Grosseteste: “[...] quicquid enim nominando de Dio dixeris in hoc verbo quod est esse instauratur” (*IV*, i, 1, 121).

Another argument that proves that Grosseteste changed his mind about ‘being’ as the first divine name is that he acknowledges some difficulty in interpreting Dionysius, who, quite clearly, endorses the primacy of Goodness over Being. This emerges from the way in which Grosseteste attempts to explain the order of the divine names in Book I of the Commentary on *De divinis nominibus*. I say, “attempts,” because Grosseteste proposes more than one explanation for the order, but in the end he considers all of them unsatisfactory. First, he deduces the order of the divine names as follows: ‘being’ is the most fundamental name because it contains every other name, although, for some special reason, in *De divinis nominibus*, God is praised as goodness prior to being.⁵⁴⁰ Grosseteste does not say what this “special reason” amounts to, but we may argue that it concerns the fact that, as noted above, Goodness also extends itself to non-beings in order to bring them into existence. From there, Grosseteste divides being into “being in virtue of itself” and “being in virtue of something else.” Being in virtue of something else does not, of course, pertain to God. God is thus being in virtue of Himself. Being in virtue of itself is further divided into body and non-body. Since God is not a body, He has the property of being non-body. But only life is the only being that is being in virtue of itself and does not have a body. Thus, according to Grosseteste, God is necessarily life. Life can be rational or non-rational. Rational life is characterized by light. The life illuminated by the light of knowledge is called *theos*, and if *theos* is the everlasting intellectual vision, then God is Truth as well.⁵⁴¹

A few lines later, Grosseteste provides an alternative explanation. It is not based on the properties that God has in Himself, but rather on his beneficial processions towards the creatures. If we consider the gifts that God bestows on creatures, we realize that the first is being. Once put into being, the creatures can be ordered according to their ends, by specific acts and operations, and thus they can be called good. God also takes care that they do not hinder each other, but act in accordance with themselves. When they act in this way, they can be called beautiful. A beautiful universe implies the wisdom of its creator, thus God must be

⁵⁴⁰ *DN I*, § 80, 165f: “[...] primo dicitur ens, quia ante hanc nominationem generaliter omnia continentem non potest esse altera prior, licet ob specialem rationem prius laudet deitatem inferius per nominationem boni quam per nominationem entis.”

⁵⁴¹ See *DN I*, § 80, 166: “Posset quoque forte quis assignare rationem ordinis nominum hic positorum de Deo dictorum, utpote quod primo dicitur ens, qui ante hanc nominationem generaliter omnia continentem non potest esse altera prior, licet ob specialem rationem prius laudet deitatem inferius per nominationem boni quam per nominationem entis. Huius prima divisio: ens in altero et ens non in altero. Ens autem in altero nullo modo convenit Deo. Unde ens dictum de Deo necessario suscipit hanc differentiam: non in altero. Ens non in altero autem prima divisione dividitur in corpus et non corpus. Corpus autem non convenit Deo; ens autem non in altero, non corpus necessario est vita. Unde post ens dictum de Deo immediate sequitur vita. Vita autem omnis aut cognoscitiva aut non cognoscitiva; cognoscitiva autem lux spiritualis est. Vitae igitur de Deo dictae necessario adiungitur lux, seu lumen.” For more on this argument, see Counet 2012, 68.

considered wise, and so on.⁵⁴² Jean-Michel Counet has rightly observed that “ultimately these attempts are not terribly convincing: Dionysius’s order is not delineated with precision, and only the first names are explicitly considered.”⁵⁴³ Grosseteste is well aware of this fact. He therefore adds that as far as he is concerned, the task is beyond his human weakness.⁵⁴⁴

After this admission, Grosseteste presents a third explanation of the order of divine names, which seems to represent his position on the subject. Grosseteste observes that God is admirably named. On Grosseteste’s interpretation, Dionysius means that God cannot be named for He is beyond every name. After stating this principle, Grosseteste begins to remove names from God: first, the common abstract names, then the names taken from the beneficial processions, and both those that directly refer to God and those that refer to Him only indirectly. Jean-Michel Counet convincingly identifies the abstract names with the names discussed in Book IV (‘good,’ ‘beauty,’ ‘light’), the names taken from the beneficial processions, and that directly refer to God with ‘being,’ ‘life,’ and ‘wisdom’ discussed respectively in Books V, VI, and VII.⁵⁴⁵ The names that only indirectly refer to God are instead treated from Book VIII onwards, which are ‘justice,’ ‘great and small,’ and so forth. There is, finally, a last category of names. They are the metaphoric names such as ‘stone’ and ‘fire,’ but, according to Dionysius and Grosseteste, they pertain to symbolic theology rather than to the theology of divine names.⁵⁴⁶

The primacy of ‘good’ also places the name ‘light’ at a second level. The metaphysics of light is a central theme in Grosseteste’s works. This is a well-known feature of Grosseteste’s philosophy on which it is not necessary to dwell here. What is less known, however, is that his metaphysics of light implies a “theology of light.” Since the early part of his career, when he was an Arts master, Grosseteste held that every thing comes from God’s light, and hence, that everything is light. This thesis will receive a theological foundation in his later works.⁵⁴⁷ In the *De dotibus*, for example, which dates to the last period of his

⁵⁴² See *DN I*, § 81, 166: Posset quoque forte aliquo consimili modo assignari ordo nominum ex beneficis processibus ad creaturas Deum laudantium, utpote quod eius primus benefices processus est a non esse in esse adductio, et haec est causatio et creatio. Secundus est quod omnia ordinat ad actus naturales unicuique directissime convenientes. Unde et bona sunt. [...] Tertius processus est quod omnia in suis naturalibus actibus non errantia fecit ad invicem concordia, et ita ad bonum immediate sequitur pulchrum. Ex bono autem et pulchro universi necessario sequitur infinita sapientia artificis.” See Counet 2012, 69.

⁵⁴³ Counet 2012, 69-70.

⁵⁴⁴ *DN I*, § 82, 166-167: “Si quis autem hoc modo vel meliori, subtiliori et sapientiori nominum hic positorum hic assignaverit ordinis rationem, ei in Domino congaudemus et ducentem libenter sequimur. Labor enim iste excedit nostre mbecillitatis.”

⁵⁴⁵ Counet 2012, 70; cf. *DN I*, § 82, 167.

⁵⁴⁶ See *Dionisyaca*, 162 and *DN IV*, M 202vb.

⁵⁴⁷ See *De luce*, 76; *Commentarius in libros Physicorum I*, p. 12 n. 41. Cecilia Panti (2011, 27-34) has justly pointed out that the ontology and the cosmology of the *De luce* are abandoned in Grosseteste’s theological works like the *De unica forma omnium* and the *Hexaëmeron*. Despite those fundamental differences a

theological teaching, Grosseteste endorses Augustine's doctrine that Christ is said to be 'light' in a proper way, while He is said to be 'stone' only metaphorically.⁵⁴⁸ In the same period, in the *Hexaëmeron*, he establishes "that the fact that God is existing in three persons follows from the fact that God is light, not corporeal light but incorporeal, or better superior to both."⁵⁴⁹ In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste relegates the name 'light' to a secondary role. This is probably because Dionysius treats the name 'light' as the most appropriate name of God only after the name 'Good.' Grosseteste explains that the name 'light' is derived from the created world and is attributed to God in an absolute way; since in the *Commentary* Grosseteste's focus is on goodness, Grosseteste also explains that light is only the manifestation of this Goodness. If in the early writing Grosseteste identifies God with light, in the *Commentary*, under the influence of Dionysius, he identifies God with goodness and considers light only an image of goodness. Accordingly, he uses the example of the sunlight as a pale and corporeal image of divine Goodness.⁵⁵⁰ We can conclude that the primacy of 'goodness' in theological language is a consequence of Grosseteste's fundamental idea of God as Creator. Grosseteste follows Dionysius rather closely by assuming that God *qua* God is Creator and to be a Creator means to be good, as Grosseteste argues consistently going back the *Hexaëmeron*. The other names manifest only a particular aspect of this truth, as they specifically refer to a single procession. 'good,' by contrast, expresses not simply that created things are good, but it unifies all the gifts that proceeds from God, which also reveals the reason for creation.

III.3.2.3 Trinitarian names

The last category of names that deserves attention belongs to the Trinitarian names. The peculiarity of those names, such as the 'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit,' is that they are derived from the Scripture and not from the creatures. Dionysius clearly opposes the divine names, which are the topic of the *De divinis nominibus*, to the Trinitarian names, which are

common feature still remains, namely the universality of light.

⁵⁴⁸ See *De Dotibus*, 105. The reference is to Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 4.28 (CSEL 28/3.2) 126-127.

⁵⁴⁹ *Hexaëmeron*, VII, xiv, 9, 220. For the explanation of Grosseteste's argument, see Gieben 2003, 231.

⁵⁵⁰ E.g. *DN* IV, M 201rb: "Ipse solaris radius in se ipso consideratus primo hoc quod inter ceteras creaturas lumen est evidentissima ymago per se bonitatis"; *DN* IV, M 202rb: "[Lumen solaris] quod est manifesta ymago per se bonitatis habens non equaliter sed a multum longe imitativas proprietates per se boni." Throughout the *Commentary*, Grosseteste associates the expression *per se* with light only one time, while there are many occurrences of "*per se bonum*" or "*per se pulchrum*" to indicate the fact that we can name God substantially; cf. *DN* IV, M 209rb: "[Auctor] adicit de amore divino quem vocat hoc nomine eroos et convenienter quia enim per se bonum et lumen et pulchrum."

instead taken up in the *Theologicis subfigurationibus*.⁵⁵¹ Divine names come from the gifts that God bestows to the creatures, such as ‘substance,’ ‘life,’ ‘wisdom,’ and so on. Grosseteste acknowledges this difference and states that from the divine Father comes any other kind of fatherhood, just as from the Son comes sonship, and finally, from the Spirit comes the union with God and deification.⁵⁵² This explanation inverts the causal explanation given for the other divine names. The name ‘life,’ for example, is attributed to God after the human intellect realizes that God is cause of life, and infers that there is life in God. The trinitarian name ‘Father,’ by contrast, derives from the authority of the Bible and the Tradition, but only then is it attached to human fatherhood.

On the one hand, the different origin of the Trinitarian names places them on a higher level, on the other hand, they belong to the realm of the symbolic language to a greater degree than the other divine names. The Trinitarian relations are beyond the human beings’ possibility of understanding, Dionysius says, and thus, all the examples we can propose to describe them appear inadequate. Consequently, Dionysius speaks of the Father as a source, while Jesus and the Spirit are like blossoms.⁵⁵³ According to Grosseteste, Dionysius’s use of images implies that we can express the Trinitarian relations only through a figurative language. From this, he concludes:

Qualiter autem hec fontana fusio et divina generatio et germinatio et florum parturitio et luminum de lumine egressio sunt in se nec omnia potest dici nude absque figurativo sermone et symbolico nec intelligi nude absque imaginibus; sed ad hoc attingit noster intellectus quod omnis paternitas et filiatio ex principali paternitate et ex principali filiatione donatur et est et nominatur et omnis unio cum deo a spiritu sancto.⁵⁵⁴

In this regard, Grosseteste says that the human mind and human language cannot extend beyond the biblical datum that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Any comparison of the Trinity with other realities, such as light, plant, or even the act of generating, does not lead us to a real comprehension of the divine nature. What is interesting here is that Grosseteste uses the word, *generatio*, on the same level of Dionysius’s examples. The word, *generatio*, is technical to the point that it requires a dogmatic explanation in order to describe the relation between the Father and the Son, but here it is intermingled with other expressions that are no

⁵⁵¹ Although this treatise is not extant, we are able to glean its content from Dionysius’s descriptions of it in his other works. He seems to have devoted himself to names for the Trinity.

⁵⁵² *DN* II, M 189va: “[Auctor adicit] quod sicut a patre secundum apostolum omnis paternitas in celo et in terra est et nominatur sic et a filio omnis filiatio et spiritu sancto omnis unio cum deo et deificatio.”

⁵⁵³ See *Dionysiaca*, 96.

⁵⁵⁴ *DN* II, M 189va.

more than symbolic images. The context may shed some light on the meaning of this choice. Some lines before, Grosseteste discussed the disagreement among Greeks and Latins on the notion of *Filioque* (§ I.5). Grosseteste tried to resolve the issue by considering that the difference that opposes them represents only a verbal, and not a real, disagreement. After closer analysis of the expressions involved, it appears that the two seemingly disparate doctrines are the same. It is very likely that the idea in the background is that even the dogmatic formulas (*generatio, Filioque*) are just attempts to approach God, but they follow the limits of our understanding and language. This entails that they do not express the nature of God, and like all the other divine names, say more of the creatures than of the Creator.

III.3.3 Conclusion

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste states that God's procession towards creature is connected with a specific divine attribute, i.e., goodness. This datum is not trivial, especially if we compare the overabundant occurrences of the words *bonitas* and *bonum* in the *Commentary* with the fact that they are almost entirely absent in the *Hexaëmeron*. Grosseteste reaffirms this common Christian doctrine that God creates because of his goodness in order to corroborate the thesis that creation is not the result of an evil Maker and that God created according to a purpose and in time.

I have shown that the critical point of Grosseteste's theory of divine procession concerns the status of the eternal reasons in God's mind. The themes exposed by Grosseteste in his previous works also return in the *Commentary*. I have underscored the evolution of his concept of "reason." In the first period of his production, before the episcopacy, Grosseteste passes from a Platonic view of the exemplars (universals are independent and creative principles of being) to the identification of the exemplar with the second Person of the Trinity. In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste's thought evolves further. The discussion of the Platonic concept of Ideas, the digression on Clemens's discussion of the notion of *exemplum* and the analysis of the expression *per se* when it is referred to divine names show that, for Grosseteste, there is room for a loose conception of the exemplars. Grosseteste thinks that they cannot be considered subsistent in themselves, but that they depend on God's Wisdom, although they maintain a creative and active power that is proportional to their proximity to

the First Cause.

In the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, Grosseteste abstains from saying what God is in Himself, and prefers instead to focus on the gifts that God gives to creatures. However, Grosseteste reserves some space to discuss the existence of substantial names. God has many names because He is the cause of everything, namely, He possesses the causal exemplars of everything eternally. In this sense, every name, even the Trinitarian names, expresses only the beneficent processions. Among those names, however, the name, “good,” can be considered a substantial name because it gathers all the other names and manifests the inner reality of God: God *qua* God is Creator.

CHAPTER IV

Reversio: Through human nature towards God

IV.1 Introduction

After considering God as He is in Himself and as the cause of the created world, in this chapter we shall reconstruct Grosseteste's position on God considered as the ultimate goal of creation. This is the third part of theology as described in the *Hexaëmeron* and *Deus est*, but it is developed particularly in the *Commentary*. This is a crucial theme in Grosseteste which, however, has only been partially explored in the literature. McEvoy, for example, focused especially on Grosseteste's doctrine of beatific vision, since Grosseteste elaborated a position opposite to that of Dionysius.⁵⁵⁵ Beatific vision, though, is only a part of the general topic of the return of creation to the Creator. James Ginther entitles a chapter of his monograph "The Church, Pastoral Care and the Deification of Humanity", but only a short paragraph is devoted to deification. In part, this is due to the fact that Ginther considers only the works belonging to the period before the *Commentary*, in which the theme of deification is not yet developed. Grosseteste begins to study deification in more depth only when he deals with beatific vision, but this issue, as Ginther opportunely points out, is fully considered only from the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia* onwards.⁵⁵⁶

Grosseteste presents theology as the study of creation as flowing from God, the One, and as returning to Him. The moment of "return" is necessary to have a comprehensive view of his theology. Grosseteste's conception of *epistrophé* is strictly connected with the place in the cosmos that he attributes to man. It is through humanity that the created world can return to God, for the human being is the summary of creation. Grosseteste, however, enriches this conception with an element that he receives from Dionysius and the Greek Fathers, namely the doctrine of deification. The doctrine of the deification of man has influenced many Eastern Fathers, but it does not have many followers in the Latin Church. Grosseteste is an exception and his interest in deification – as Southern has noted – may explain an important lack in Grosseteste's theology, namely reference to Christ's human life and his sufferings.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ McEvoy 1982, 93-95 and 248-256 and its bibliography.

⁵⁵⁶ Ginther 2004, 108. Ginther was interested in the ecclesiastical aspect of deification but, due to its strict theological relevance, I leave it aside.

⁵⁵⁷ Southern 1986, 217. However, Southern's statement has to be mitigated, because Grosseteste deals with

The present chapter is divided into two parts. For Grosseteste, the return of the creation to God is possible if two assumptions are admitted: the first is that everything is comprehended, in some way, in human nature, since the human soul partakes in the spiritual nature, as the angels do, while the human body partakes in matter, such as the other bodily creatures (§ IV.2.1); the second is that the Incarnation of the Son completed the universe and united the nature of the Creator with that of the creatures, for He is God and man at the same time (§ IV.2.2). We shall see that Grosseteste shows a special interest in the return of human beings to God. This return begins in this life, by living a virtuous life, but the complete return will occur at the resurrection. Grosseteste's doctrine of resurrection, however, leaves open a problem. It is not always clear in his texts if the resurrection means a return to the blessed state of the prelapsarian Adam or to a better condition (§ IV.3.1). Only when Grosseteste absorbs the doctrine of deification, in particular through the *Corpus*, will it be clear that human beings are called to be in a more blessed condition than was Adam in Eden, namely to be deified (§ IV.3.2).

IV. 2 The conditions for the return of the Universe

Christian eschatology admits of two events at the end of time, namely the resurrection of the dead along with their bodies, and the consummation of this world.⁵⁵⁸ I argue that, according to Grosseteste, these events are strictly connected as a result of the doctrine of microcosmism. This states that the return of human beings to God (at the resurrection) reflects the return of all creation (consummation of the world) in a smaller scale. Human nature is a sort of summary of all creation, and for this reason the redemption of human beings comprehends the redemption of all the creatures. For the same reason, the Son assumed the human, and not the angelical, nature. Microcosmism, McEvoy says, was very common in the twelfth century, and has so many nuances that it is hard to define. The core, however, is clear: "the same order can be affirmed of two terms, a great and a small, where the small is human nature or one of its aspects."⁵⁵⁹ In other words, the human beings contain on a smaller scale, as a *minor mundus*, the totality of creation. In Grosseteste's words, the human being is *quodammodo omnia*. In the following paragraphs I will analyze each aspect of the following conditions for the return: the position of human beings in the middle of the hierarchy of beings (§ IV.2.1), and the Incarnation of the Word in human nature (IV.2.2).

Jesus' sufferings in the sermons, such as *Ex rerum initiarum* (pp. 132-133), and in the poem *Le Château d'Amour* (p. 172-173).

⁵⁵⁸ The Nicene Creed states: "We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

⁵⁵⁹ On Grosseteste's doctrine of microcosmism see McEvoy 1982, 369-401 and its bibliography.

IV.2.1 *Homo in medio collocatus*

Grosseteste thinks that human beings are in a middle position between God and the rest of creation. We, therefore, have to consider humans' relationships with both, for a human being is, at the same time, *imago dei et imago mundi*. This position allows man to be the joining link of creation: he participates both in the attributes of God, and in those of creatures. Grosseteste discusses extensively these relationships – so that one between God and human beings on one side, and that one between human beings and the rest of the creation on the other in *Hexaëmeron*, Part VIII, commenting on the verse “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (*Genesis* 1:26).

(A) With respect to the Creator, a human being is an image (*imago*) and a likeness (*similitudo*):

Imago autem [...] est summa similitudo. Similitudo autem dupliciter est: aut equalitatis et paritatis, aut imparitatis et imitationis. Quapropter imago dupliciter est, aut summa videlicet similitudo secundum paritatem, aut summa similitudo secundum imitationem. Secundum priam acceptionem ymaginis, solus Filius est imago Dei Patris. [...] Homo vero similitudo est Dei Trinitatis per imitationem.⁵⁶⁰

An image is the highest of likenesses, for there are two kinds of likeness as there are two kinds of image. Grosseteste focuses on the meaning of image. Only the Son is a perfect image of the Father, for they are equal in substance. The author of the Bible, indeed, writes that a human being is made “to the image” and not that he is “the image” of God, because the only true image is the Son.⁵⁶¹ A creature, however, cannot be equal to God, but can only resemble Him. Because God has put His likeness in the creation, all the creatures can be called *similitudines* of God, but only human beings can be called image, namely the closest similitude possible.⁵⁶² This text raises a question about the difference between an image and a likeness. After the presentation of the examples that illustrates a trace of the Trinity in every thing, Grosseteste explains the difference between human beings and the rest of creation.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶⁰ *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, I, 1, 217.

⁵⁶¹ *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, ix, 1, 231: “Et considerandum quod Scriptura dicit hominem factum ad imaginem, ut per preposicionem insinuet subiectam imitationem, et distinctionem modi quo Filius est imago ad modum quo homo est imago.”

⁵⁶² On the meaning of image see also § II.3.1.2.

⁵⁶³ On the examples see § III.2.3.2.

According to Grosseteste, only human beings resemble God in all things that belong to Him. This means that what is said of God can also be said of human beings, although not univocally.⁵⁶⁴ According to Grosseteste, the objection that some attributes pertain only to God does not stand, because even “being a creator,” or “being eternal” can be said, in a broader sense, of human beings. Indeed, by Grace, they participate in eternity and in the act of creation more than do the other beings lacking of reason, and can be considered co-workers of God.⁵⁶⁵

One could ask if Grosseteste considers only the human soul as the image of God. For this matter, the account of Creation given by Grosseteste in the vernacular poem, *Le Château d’Amour*, is significant. In that work, Grosseteste affirms that when God created the world, “right at last he created Adam, making him from earth in his own likeness (*semblance*) [...] Afterwards, the Holy Trinity created his soul.”⁵⁶⁶ This means that God’s likeness was present in Adam’s body, before the creation of his soul. The connection of this text with the *Dictum* 60 is evident: if even a piece of dust has a certain imprint of the Trinity – as stated in the *Dictum* – how far greater could be the likeness between the Trinity and the human body.⁵⁶⁷ In the *Hexaëmeron* Grosseteste is more specific. He believes not only that the body is a likeness (*similitudo*) of God, but also that it is an image (*imago*) in virtue of its unity with the soul. Aligning with his authorities,⁵⁶⁸ Grosseteste believes that the image of God is impressed upon and sealed in the supreme aspect of human mind, i.e., reason, without any medium coming between them. Through the mediation of reason, the sealing of likeness is passed on to the whole of the human being, and the whole human being becomes the image of the supreme Trinity.⁵⁶⁹ This means that the highest part of the soul – reason – is properly speaking the image of God, while in a broader sense, the complete human nature – body and soul – is an

⁵⁶⁴ On the lack of univocity between God’s attributes and human beings’ attributes, see § II.2.3.

⁵⁶⁵ *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, xvii, 4, 242: “Omnis namque creatura habet in se aliquam imitatoriam Dei similitudinem, sed non in omnibus que Dei sunt, neque secundum propinquissimum vestigium imitatur irrationalis aliqua creatura Deum. Licet enim multa predicentur de Deo que non predicantur de homine, utpote quod creator est, quod eternus est et huiusmodi, tamen homo participat eternitate et creandi quadam imitatione vicinius et similis omni creatura carenti ratione. Cum enim gratie Dei inspiratione efficitur nova creatura, cum simus in hoc Dei coadiutores et cooperatores, sumus quoddam huius creacionis inicium, et operacionis que creacio est gerimus manifestissimum imitatorium vestigium. Similiter et ceterorum omnium que de Deo predicantur gerit homo manifestissimum et propinquissimum imitatorium vestigium, licet quedam predicentur de Deo, que non possunt predicari de homine sub eadem nominacione.”

⁵⁶⁶ *Le château d’amour*, 161.

⁵⁶⁷ *Dictum* 60 has been discussed above, see § III.2.2.2.

⁵⁶⁸ Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram*, III, 20 (CSEL 28 3/2, p. 86) and Basil, *Hexaëmeron*, X, 6-7 (eds. Smet and van Estbroeck, 178-182). Grosseteste refers to those texts in his *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, v, 5-6, 226.

⁵⁶⁹ See *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, v, 4, 226: “Isto quoque modo est in suprema facie rationis humane mentis expressa et signata, nullo interposito medio, Dei Trinitatis summa imitatoria similitudo, id est imago. Et per huius partis mediacionem transfunditur hec similitudinis signacio in totum hominem, et fit totus integer homo summe Trinitatis imago.”

image of the Trinity.⁵⁷⁰

(B) If, with respect to the Creator, the human being is His image, then with respect to creation, the human being is in some way all things (*quodammodo omnia*); he is also the last (*ultimus*) created creature. In the *Hexaëmeron* Grosseteste explains that human beings resemble God more accurately than do the other creatures because human beings unfold everything that the Trinity has in Itself. As God is all things in all things, so human beings, in so far as they are the image of God, are also, in some way, all things.⁵⁷¹ In *Deus est*, Grosseteste illustrates a similar analogy between God and a human being, considered as His image. Speaking of the latter, Grosseteste illustrates why he can be called *minor mundus*:

Secundum corpus ergo vilissimo simile est sicut imperfectissimum, secundum animam aequale optimae creaturae et ita nobilissimum, secundum vero se totum omnium creaturarum dignissimum. Haec inquam creatura inter caeteras creaturas creatori est simillima, quia sicut in Deo omnia stant per causam, sic in homine relucent universa per effectum.⁵⁷²

A human being is the exemplar of everything because his body is equal to the lowest things, and his soul to the most noble. Human beings, considered in their integrity, are therefore the most worthy of creatures, because they are most similar to the Creator. In other words, as in God all things stand as in their cause, so the whole universe of creatures is mirrored in the human beings, like their effect. According to Grosseteste, then, everything can be found – as an exemplar – both in God, and in the human being.

The presence of everything in human nature is explained by another human characteristic, namely, being the last (*ultimus*) creature. A human being is the last being

⁵⁷⁰ McEvoy (1982, 400) believes that Grosseteste goes beyond his authorities because he considers the totality of man, and not only reason, as an image of God. Although the text quoted in the previous footnote may lead to this conclusion, the following sentence confirms that Grosseteste does not distance himself from Augustine: “Circumscripta tamen suprema facie rationis, non posset in residuo hominis remanere ratio ymaginis; hac tamen parte sola posita, posset in ea ratio imaginis esse perfecta.” Augustine, indeed, in *De Trinitate* XII, 4,4 writes: “Sed in tota natura mentis ita trinitatem reperiri opus est, ut si desit actio temporalium, cui operi necessarium sit adiutorium propter quod ad haec inferiora administranda derivetur aliquid mentis, in una nusquam dispersa mente trinitas inveniatur; et facta iam ista distributione, in eo solo quod ad contemplationem pertinet aeternorum, non solum trinitas, sed etiam *imago Dei*; in hoc autem quod derivatum est in actione temporalium, etiamsi trinitas possit, non tamen *imago Dei* possit inveniri.” This means that only the upper part of the soul, the one that contemplates God, is the true image. The lower faculties instead receive the imprint of God through the mediation of reason. We can justify McEvoy’s statement if we consider that Grosseteste is an author who strongly emphasized the souls’ natural desire to be united with the body (see Dales 1995, 42-45).

⁵⁷¹ *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, I, 2, 217f: “[...] explicacio huius verbi [i.e. “homo est imago Dei] exigeret ut evolverentur omnia que habet in se Trinitas Deus, et singulis que sunt in Deo invenierentur singula imitatorie aptata in homine. Deus autem est omnia in omnibus, viventium vita, formosorum forma, speciosorum species [...]. Quapropter et homo, in hoc quod ipse est imago Dei, est quodammodo omnia.”

⁵⁷² *Deus est*, 241.

created because God's work during the first five days was targeted at constituting the human nature, in which all other things are found to a certain degree. Grosseteste introduces this view in a short essay, entitled *Quod homo sit minor mundus*. In this text Grosseteste holds that the human body is composed of the four elements, because it contains a portion of fire, air, water and earth. The nature of earth is in its flesh, that of water in its blood, that of air in its breath, and that of fire in its vital heat. Grosseteste holds the parallelism between human being and the elements of the universe until he reduces the physical aspects of human nature to an allegorical symbolism, in alignment with other authors of the twelfth century.⁵⁷³ From this first rough account, Grosseteste moves to a more elaborate explanation of human nature. Grosseteste considers not only the body, but also the soul, as a summary of the universe: the human soul shares functions with the animal and vegetable realms; but, considered with respect to his spiritual part, a human being shares the nature of the angels, the only difference being that the human soul desires union with the body.⁵⁷⁴

As McEvoy has opportunely pointed out, if a human being is the last of the creatures, it is so because he was the first in the order of divine intention; he is therefore the goal (*finalis causa*) of God's act of creation.⁵⁷⁵ In this anthropocentric system, the other creatures have an instrumental value: they are means of which the human being can freely make use, and this is possible because the other creatures are not created by God immediately for Himself, as are human beings, but only to give to human beings the occasion and the means to return to Him.⁵⁷⁶ McEvoy concludes that "man, the end and unity of creation in the order of *exitus*, is in the *reditus* the means of return of all things to the one source".⁵⁷⁷ This centrality of man also had, according to Grosseteste, a negative consequence: Adam's fall affected the whole creation. This is why God chose to assume the human nature in order to restore the universe.

IV.2.2 Incarnation

Man occupies an intermediate position in the created order, for he is a link between God and the rest of the creatures. In order to be connected with all of the universe, the Creator

⁵⁷³ *Quod homo sit minor mundus*, 59. McEvoy (1982, 372) shows, in particular, the proximity between Grosseteste and Honorius of Autun.

⁵⁷⁴ *CH V*, 241: "Ad hec rationalis anima non videtur differre ab aliqua celesti sibstantia alia specifica differentia, quam potentia et appetitu naturali unionis cum corpore organico in personalem unitatem." Cf. *De cessatione legalium*, I,2, 15, 14.

⁵⁷⁵ McEvoy 1982, 393. He refers to *Deus est*, 241.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. *De cessatione legalium I*, 9,1, 47: "Christ autem incarnationem a rerum natura testificatam esse, inde patere postest quod omnis creatura huius mundi sensibilis propter hominem facta est. Quapropter maximo ministerio et utilissimo quo potest homini ministrare, congruit ut homini serviat." See also III, 2,2.133.

⁵⁷⁷ McEvoy 1982, 397.

has rightly chosen to assume the human nature. Grosseteste extensively deals with the Incarnation in *De cessatione legalium*, but he returns to this topic also on some other occasions. Some studies have demonstrated the originality of Grosseteste's Christology. In this paragraph we dwell on a specific aspect of this, namely that microcosmism explains why the Son took the human nature. Indeed, the Word assumed the human, and not the angelic, nature because only the first has something in common with all the other creatures.⁵⁷⁸ Grosseteste maintains the necessity of God's Incarnation in his thesis that the Son of God would have become incarnate even if Adam had not sinned.⁵⁷⁹ This means that the Incarnation happened not to redeem humanity, but to perfect creation:

Et ita in Christo, Deo et homine, sunt omnia recollecta et commodata ad unitatem; nec esset ista consummatio in rerum naturis, nisi Deus esset homo.⁵⁸⁰

In Christ, who is both God and man, all things are gathered together and brought into unity. This completion in nature would not have happened if God had not become a human being. What about the unity of creation in the human nature? As we have seen, Grosseteste admits that, even before the Incarnation, all the creatures had a certain unity in human nature, and the reason is that human nature keeps together, in the union of body and soul, both the physical and spiritual natures. With the Incarnation, however, the creatures are brought into full communication and personal union with the Creator. Grosseteste resorts to the image of a circle to express the recapitulation of all the creatures in the human nature of Christ. In the Christmas homily, *Exiit edictum a Cesare Augusto*, Grosseteste states that "the circle of creatures is most strongly bound to the Creator, when the Creator himself [...] has been inserted in the same circle."⁵⁸¹ Grosseteste is even more explicit in the *quaestio* called *De universi complecione*, which belongs to the episcopal period. He imagines the temporal order of creation as constituting a straight line, from God to man. When the Creator became man in the Incarnation, the line of creation was bent back to form a circle that completed creation.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁸ *De cessatione legalium* III, 1, 25, 129: "Hoc igitur principales unienes non potest esse nisi homo-Deus. Non angelus-Deus, quia omnes alie nature habent aliquid in commune cum homine et non cum angelo. Propter hoc magis possunt uniri in homine quam in angelo."

⁵⁷⁹ This thesis had great fortune. For an extensive bibliography, see Goering – Mantello 1991, 95, n. 26 and 99, n. 44.

⁵⁸⁰ *Hexaëmeron* IX, viii, 3,276. See also *De cessatione legalium* III, 1, 25-29, 129-132.

⁵⁸¹ The last part of this homily has been printed by Unger 1956, 18-23: "Nondum <Creator et creaturae> sic uniuntur sed cum assumit humanam naturam in unitatem personae, tunc est circulus creaturarum firmissime Creatori coniunctus, cum ipse Creator per unitatem personalem assumpto homine in unitatem personae, sit eidem circulo insertus, factusque décor et honor huius circuli tamquam gemma aurei annuli." The English translation is taken from Goering Mantello 1991, 98.

⁵⁸² *De universi complecione*, 122: "Nam intellige in capite linee recte creatorem, deinde creaturas ordine suo –

Grosseteste also uses the image of the circle in commenting on the first words of the *De coelesti hierarchia*. Dionysius says: “For from Him all things come and to Him they go” and Grosseteste comments that in “this circular arrangement whereby we come from the same to the same, he [i.e. Dionysius] proves from the words of the Apostle and say «for from Him etc.»”⁵⁸³ The image of the circle recalls that Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, and implies not only that God assumed human nature, but also that man assumed the divine nature, as will be clear in the next part of this chapter.

Grosseteste’s soteriology – expressed by the image of the circle – seems to entail that the Incarnation completely erases the consequences of original sin because it allows the union of human beings with God. But in some other passages Grosseteste attributes more importance to the passion than to the incarnation in order to re-form God’s image in human nature.⁵⁸⁴ Finally, there are texts where Grosseteste considers the entire life of Christ as salvific.⁵⁸⁵ Emphasizing the centrality of the Incarnation or of the passion in the economy of human beings’ salvation has different theological consequences that cannot be tackled here. We can note that this difference of opinion reflects the interplay between Greek and Latin authorities in Grosseteste’s work. It is common knowledge that the Greek Fathers underscored the role of Incarnation in the economy of salvation, while the soteriology of the Western Church privileged the moment of the passion.⁵⁸⁶ As the following paragraph on the resurrection will show, Grosseteste does not want to merge his sources into a new comprehensive doctrine, but maintains both of them in his writings.

The incarnation and the privileged position of human beings in the cosmos are strictly related since the creation. The return of human beings to God, through the mediation of the Incarnate Word, was established at the beginning of the world, according to Grosseteste. In the *Hexaëmeron*, in commenting on the biblical verse “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (*Genesis* 1:26), Grosseteste considers the consultative manner of speaking. For all

angelum, celum, [...], et hominem, qui ultimo creatus est. Ideo cum principium huius lineae sit creator et finis homo, coniunge hec extrema et rectam flecte lineam in circulum, quod factum est cum verbum caro factum est; [...] et sic in ista unione Dei et hominis in una persona universum completum est.”

⁵⁸³ *CH* I, 5: “Hanc autem recirculationem ab eodem in idem probat ex verbis apostoli subiungens: «Etenim ex ipso et cetera.»”

⁵⁸⁴ *Sermo* 41, 272: “Ymago licet in primo patre nostro per peccatum fuit deformata, per passionem filii Dei fuit reformata.”

⁵⁸⁵ *Deus est*, 287-8: “Reformatione, quia per peccatum primi parentis deformatum fuit genus humanum, quod ipse sua mirabili incarnatione, passione, resurrectione ad formam reduxit.” See also *De cessatione legalium* I, 3, 3, 16.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. Jossua 1968, 38. As in the case of every common opinion, even this interpretation has been challenged by many theologians. See e.g. Balthasar 2000. The *Corpus Dionysiacum* is the peak of Greek theology: almost no space is reserved for the passion, while all concerns are about the theological problem of the unity of the divine and human natures in the incarnate Word. Regarding Dionysius’s Christology, the most recent contribution is Perczel 2004; but see also Curiello 2013, 112-114.

created things it is written that God spoke, and that they were then made; in the case of the human being, however, the expression “let us make” seems to suggest the presence of more than one person discussing the creation. Grosseteste explains that it is not a consultation in the strict sense of the word, because consultation implies ignorance. This consultation can be interpreted in several ways: as Grosseteste notes, it suggests the privilege of dignity of the creation of human beings; it also suggests the special care that God has for human beings with respect to the other creatures; finally, it suggests the incomprehensible secret of God’s providence, with regards to the manner of reparation of the human race by the Incarnation, and the renewal of the human mind in the image of the Creator.⁵⁸⁷ This means that when God created a human being He already envisaged the Incarnation as the final goal: everything was made for the sake of human beings in view of the assumption of human nature by Christ.

In conclusion, we may discuss how James McEvoy summarizes the principal points of Grosseteste’s Christology. There are four: (i) the elaboration of a cosmic, rather than of a primarily soteriological, Christology; (ii) the absorption of Greek theology; (iii) the exaltation of human nature as *dignissima creaturarum*; and (iv) the unity of all things: they stand together in the Word before the creation, and the unity of their origin is also the unity of their return, as mediated by the Word incarnate. This returns, in a circular manner, all the creatures back to their primal origin, and makes human nature one with the divine (*deificatio*).⁵⁸⁸ The texts discussed in these paragraphs confirm the centrality of these four points. Grosseteste considers the event of the incarnation as determinant for the return of created world to the Creator, and dedicates less space to the Passion as a salvific moment (i). The predominance of the Incarnation over the Passion is a sign, one among many, that Grosseteste was deeply influenced by the Greek Fathers (ii). The Word assumed the human nature because it is the summary, the exemplar of everything, and thus in the unity of body and soul, the human being is the most worthy of creatures (iii). Thanks to the Incarnation and through the mediation of human nature, the whole universe is called to be united with God. In the following paragraphs we will discuss that this return, in the case of human beings, is called ‘deification’ (iv). What McEvoy and other scholars omit to note is that the return of humanity to God, expressed by the concept of deification, recurs in Grosseteste’s works only after the *Commentary*, and this confirms that Grosseteste takes this idea from Dionysius.⁵⁸⁹ Another point of McEvoy’s list

⁵⁸⁷ *Hexaëmeron* VIII, xi, 4-6, 238f.

⁵⁸⁸ McEvoy 1987, 220-221. McEvoy shows that these principles trace back to Eriugena.

⁵⁸⁹ The website www.grosseteste.com, which contains fifty authentic texts of Robert Grosseteste, records twenty-five occurrences of “deif*”. If we leave aside the *Letters* and the *Dicta* (eleven occurrences), which are not easy to be dated, the other works belong to the episcopal period. The website does not include one of the longest works of Grosseteste, that is, the *Hexaëmeron*, but the analytical index of this treatise shows that

that calls for clarification concerns God considered as the primal origin and ultimate end of creation. Grosseteste is uncertain about the state of creation at the end of time: it is not clear if the return of creation to the Creator will be a simple restoration of the harmony lost by Adam, or if the universe will live in a better condition than that experienced in the Eden. The image of the circle seems to lead us to the first interpretation, but there are other texts that clearly support the second interpretation. We therefore need to investigate Grosseteste's account of resurrection to understand the return of human beings.

IV.3 The return of human beings

For Grosseteste, the centrality of the human being in the created order is beyond dispute, and the amount of texts he devoted to the matter is greater than that concerning the restoration of the universe in general. This topic is of such important for Grosseteste that he writes a poem in the vernacular about the loss and restoration of man, known as *Le château d'amour*, which was widely and rapidly disseminated.⁵⁹⁰ However, it is a text whose literal value is of more importance than its theological or philosophical one, thus we need to consider it with caution by referring to other treatises. The return of human beings to God begins in this life, or what Grosseteste calls the "first life" or "life of grace," which consists in the practice of virtues. The "second life" is that of glory, the blessed experience after the resurrection (§ IV.3.1). The return of humanity means that the union between the Creator and the creature will be fully realized, and thus, the human being will participate, as much as he can, in divinity (§ IV.3.2).

IV.3.1 The resurrection

In the writings that predate his episcopal period, the topic of resurrection is not among Grosseteste's first interests. He had the occasion to tackle this theme in several sermons and treatises, but he preferred to focus on the sacrament of confession, considered as the way to

Grosseteste prefers the word '*deiformitas*' to '*deification*'. To confirm this datum, we can also observe that the word '*participatio*' more frequently occurs in works belonging to the episcopal period. The doctrine of participation, as we shall see, is crucial for explaining deification.

⁵⁹⁰ On the great fortune of this poem, see Taylor 2003.

return to God in this life (§ IV.3.1.1).⁵⁹¹ This means that in this period Grosseteste was more interested in the “first life” and in the “first death” (that caused by sin) than in the afterlife and the second death (the eternal damnation). In the *Commentary*, by contrast, Grosseteste devotes more attention to the discussion of resurrection, and he shows that he is aware of the debate surrounding the unorthodox doctrine of it. Grosseteste, in particular, focuses on the resurrection of the body. He suggests an original way of distinguishing between the resurrection of rational and irrational animals: human beings will rise with their own body, while the beasts will rise by species and not by number (§ IV.3.1.2). Grosseteste is uncertain, however, if the return of the human being to the Creator will be a return to Eden, or if he will live in a better condition; this problem implies yet another one, namely, whether human nature was perfect in Adam, or whether it is perfected by the redemption. In Grosseteste’s writings, those two ideas remain in tension (§ IV.3.1.3).

IV.3.1.1 Before the *Commentary*: a theme in the background

In the texts belonging to the pre-episcopacy period Grosseteste does not show great interest in the topic of resurrection. There are sermons that could have given him the occasion to deepen the topic, but he did not take the opportunity. In *Sermo 75*, for example, preached on All Saints’ Day, Grosseteste mentions the prize that saints will receive in Heaven, but the account is very concise. He limits himself to quoting two biblical texts that state that the prize consists in sitting beside God, but he does not add anything else, because it is impossible to specify in what this prize consists.⁵⁹² The impossibility of describing the future glory reflects the real incapacity of our mind to describe something that goes beyond it, such as the union of God with human beings; however, it is possible to discuss what the Bible says on this matter. In the poem, *Le château d’amour*, written in the same years as *Sermo 75*, Grosseteste collects biblical passages about the return of Christ in the glory and final judgement.⁵⁹³ It is significant that the righteous men are said to be “glorified in body, and in soul. They will be as bright as the sun.”⁵⁹⁴ These two elements – the accent on the glorification of the body and the image of

⁵⁹¹ He may have developed his doctrine on the resurrection in a treatise called *De resurrectione*, whose subject may be connected to Book IV of Lombard’s *Sentences*. This treatise, however, did not survive; on this, see Callus 1958, 192.

⁵⁹² *Sermo 75*, 392: “Premium autem uictorie ostendit Dominus in Apocalipsi dicens: *Qui uicerit faciam eum sedere mecum in trono meo sicut et ego uici et sedi cum patre meo in trono eius* (Apoc. 3,21). De isto premio dicit apostolus ad Chorinthios: *Oculus non uidit nec auris audiuit nec in cor hominis ascendit que preparauit Deus diligentibus se* (I Cor 2:9).”

⁵⁹³ Both *Sermons* (those contained in the manuscript *Durham Dean and Chapter Library MS A.III.12*) and *Le Château d’Amour*, were written between 1230-1232; cf. Paul 2002, 140 and Murray 1918, 64.

⁵⁹⁴ *Le château d’amour*, 177.

light used to describe the glory – are typical of Grosseteste’s account of resurrection, and will be regularly affirmed across his career.⁵⁹⁵ No original perspective is present even in the *Hexaëmeron*, where Grosseteste contents himself with quoting Augustine without further discussion.⁵⁹⁶ The same happens in the *De decem mandatis*. The occasion for discussing the theme is given by the third commandment, which orders the sanctification of the Lord’s Day, i.e., the day of Jesus’ resurrection. Grosseteste limits himself to quoting a long text from Augustine about the relationship between the resurrection of Jesus and that of human beings without any further explanation.⁵⁹⁷

Why are these accounts so concise? An answer can be found in the *Sermo* 41.⁵⁹⁸ This sermon should be about the Biblical verse, “The victor shall not be harmed by the second death” (*Revelation* 2:11), but actually the second death is a pretext to discussing a related topic. Grosseteste dedicates the first part of this sermon to the theme of the first and second death, and of the first and second life. In the wake of Augustine, Grosseteste distinguishes between the “first death” of human beings, which happens in this life and which consists in their separation from God because of sin, and the “second death,” namely, eternal damnation.⁵⁹⁹ In the sermon, Grosseteste focuses only on the first death that is caused by mortal sin, and on its remedy, i.e., the sacrament of Confession, a privileged theme in Grosseteste’s writings.⁶⁰⁰ Grosseteste, therefore, considers preaching on penance a priority in his pastoral work, while other topics appear only in the background: his main concern is to preserve his flock from sin. He devotes a few words to describing the second life: in that life, both the body and soul, like a bride, will receive a dower (*dos*) from Christ, who is the groom; the soul’s gifts are knowledge, fruition and charity; the body’s gifts are agility, subtlety, clarity, and impassibility. Around 1230, Grosseteste develops this theme in *De dotibus*, a treatise that belongs to a literary genre very popular in the twelfth century.⁶⁰¹ This work, however, does not help us to reconstruct Grosseteste’s position because it is incomplete, since it deals only with the glorified body and not in any specific detail.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁵ E.g. *De Dotibus*, 104: “*Seminatur in ignobilitatem, scilicet deiformitatis et humanitatis, surget in gloria, id est claritate: ad Phi 3°, Qui reformabit corpus humilitatis nostre configuratum corpori claritatis sue, et ab hac dote dicuntur corpora glorificata;*” *Dictum* 2, 3ra : “Ipse te vestiet in anima claritate vultus sui et in corpore resurrectione lumine sicut solari.” See also *Dictum* 137, 112va; *DN IX*, M 259ra.

⁵⁹⁶ In this work, the accent is on the parallel between the general resurrection (when the souls will receive the glorified bodies) and the renewal of the universe expressed by the biblical expression, “new heaven and new earth” (*Revelation* 21,1). See *Hexaëmeron* I, xiii,1, 68 and IV, xii,3 138.

⁵⁹⁷ *De decem mandatis*, 37-38, cf. Augustine, *Epistulae*, 55, 9-13.

⁵⁹⁸ *Sermo* 41, 271-278.

⁵⁹⁹ E.g. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 13,1-3. The theme of a first and second death is in *Revelation* 20, 5ff.

⁶⁰⁰ As stated above (§ 0.1.2) Grosseteste wrote many essays on Confession both before and after his appointment as a bishop.

⁶⁰¹ For this genre and further bibliographical references, see Goering 1982.

⁶⁰² See Goering 1982. 94-95 and 101.

This period of Grosseteste's reflection on resurrection is characterized by a strict fidelity to Augustine, and by a lack of any personal analysis. Another aspect to be noted is the lack in the early works of any reference to the deification of human beings. Grosseteste will become sensitive to these doctrines only after the encounter with the *Corpus*.

IV.3.1.2 *The resurrection of the body*

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste shows a renewed interest in the topic of resurrection. It will be in the commentary on Book VI of the *De divinis nominibus*, devoted to the theonym "Life," that Grosseteste will present his own view. But throughout the *Commentary*, Grosseteste takes the occasion to gloss and integrate the concise Dionysian text. Grosseteste's peculiar interest is in the emphasis on the place of the body in resurrection. As it appears from the first pages of his *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*:

Ita, inquam, edocti sumus nunc deifica lumina, tunc autem quando incorruptibiles et immortales efficiemur, in gloria videlicet resurrectionis et consequemur christiformem et beatissimam quietem, fulgentes videlicet sicut ipse sol, et pacificato et obediente corpore omni motui voluntatis, semper cum domino, Iesu videlicet, secundum eloquium, erimus etiam per corporalem presentiam, nos dico repleti quidem visibili ipsius theophania in omnino castis speculationibus, quia visu corporeo omnino ordinato et perfecto contuebimur ipsum hominem glorificatum.⁶⁰³

Dionysius states that the writers of the Bible used symbols to describe what cannot be described, but on the day when we will be united to God, that is, when we will reach a blessed peace (*quietem*) like that of Christ, we will see His manifestation (*theophania*) clearly as it happened to the Apostles during the episode of Christ's Transfiguration. In the glory of the resurrection, Grosseteste explains, the human body will be in peace and obedient to every motion of the will. The "quiet" is also the *quiescere* of the human mind in God, the quiet reached once the human intellect has climbed the epistemological steps toward God.⁶⁰⁴ Grosseteste also adds that "being always with the Lord" implies being bodily present.⁶⁰⁵ It is clear that Grosseteste's accent is on the corporeal aspect of resurrected life, so he offers an interpretation that goes beyond the literal meaning of Dionysius's text, who does not mention the body. The impression is that in this place, once again, it is the bishop Grosseteste who speaks for reaffirming the truth established in the fourth Lateran Council. Grosseteste's

⁶⁰³ *DNI*, § 54, 154.

⁶⁰⁴ For a discussion on the steps towards God, see above § II.3.1.1.

⁶⁰⁵ In the *Hexaëmeron*, Grosseteste also relates "being with the Lord" to the body, because the body will occur in the general resurrection, when saints and blessed will "wear" new and glorified bodies. See *Hexaëmeron* VI, xii, 8, 195.

emphasis on resurrection and on the continuity between this life and the next one – which Grosseteste expresses by repeating many times phrases such as *hac vita, hic participavit, and hic existit* – depends, very likely, on the canon of the Lateran Council that required that the Cathars and other heretics assent to the proposition “all rise with their own individual bodies, that is, the bodies which they now wear.”⁶⁰⁶

A proof that heresy could be the background of Grosseteste’s insistence on the resurrection of the body may come from the *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia*. In the last Book of this treatise, Dionysius hints at some unorthodox positions about the resurrection of the soul and the body.⁶⁰⁷ Grosseteste develops some comments on Dionysius’s text, but a closer look shows that Grosseteste is merely reporting a marginal *scholium*. Grosseteste exposes four opinions. The most irrational is to consider the soul mortal; a more rational opinion is to consider the soul immortal, but the body as not rising from death; someone else holds that in resurrection the soul will be united to an ethereal body; finally, someone who holds that both body and soul are immortal, but the life to come will be comparable to this life, with food and other goods.⁶⁰⁸ No argument is proposed to confute those positions except the authority of Dionysius. Grosseteste’s choice to insert this *scholium* in the main text of the *Commentary*, which can be read as his acknowledgement of heresies that concern the resurrection of the body and his will to reaffirm the orthodox doctrine.

The role of body in the resurrection allows Grosseteste to distinguish between the rational and irrational animals in the return to God. Commenting on Book VI of the *De divinis nominibus*, Grosseteste holds that God is the true life, and is the cause of every kind of life, from the highest rung of imperishable angels and human souls to the perishable ones belonging to animals and plants, which are the beings furthest from God.⁶⁰⁹ In a short digression on Dionysius’s text, Grosseteste clarifies the difference between these two kinds of life in what concerns death and resurrection. The occasion for the digression is given by an allusion of Dionysius to the biblical verse: “take back their breath and they die and return to

⁶⁰⁶ Denzinger 1957, 200, n.216.

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. *Dionysiaca*, 1413-1416.

⁶⁰⁸ *EH VII*, 837, ll. 1-16: “Dicto in quibus est sanctorum virorum dormicio subiungit execratorum id est infidelium diversas de mortuis opiniones quorum quidam ceteris irrationabiliores dicunt animam esse mortalem et dissolvi quemadmodum et corpus et post mortem non amplius existere. Alii autem velut rationabiliores dicunt animam esse immortalem sed corpus post mortem non amplius fore humanum corpus nec resurrecturum nec uniendum iterum anime cui in hac vita erat unitum quia indignum esse dicunt quod materiale sit coeternum anime immateriali [...]. Alii vero dicentes animas esse immortales attribuunt illis post mortem corpora etherea vel aerea [...]. Alii autem dicentes animas esse immortales corporum resurrectionem futuram confitentur sed vitam illam post resurrectionem futuram dicunt fore huic nostre vite similem.”

⁶⁰⁹ *DN VI*, M 240vb-241ra: “Unde sequitur *ex supra divina videlicet vita et anime habent indestructibile* hoc est vitam immortalem *et animalia omnia et plante secundum extremam resonationem vite* vel secundum aliud exemplar secundum extremam resonationem anime id est secundum obscuriorem participationem vite vel anime *habent vivere*.”

dust. Send out your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground” (*Psalms* 103:29f). Grosseteste notes that Dionysius connects the psalm to animals and plants, but following the interpretation of the *scholium*, Grosseteste suggests that it is better to connect the psalm to all the bodily creatures, human beings included. According to Grosseteste, the meaning of the text is that every kind of life, from angels to plants, comes from God and without Him there is no life at all.⁶¹⁰ Clearly, differences are present. Life can be interrupted either because the soul departs from the body while continuing to exist in separation from it, as occurs in the case of human beings, or because life abandons the body, as occurs in the case of animals and plants.⁶¹¹

Animals and plants, therefore, die because of the loss of bodily equilibrium (*defectio complexionis et armonie apte ad vite participationem*), but when the harmony of the body is re-established by God at the resurrection, they will come back to life.⁶¹² After the paraphrase, Grosseteste departs from the text to explain in what consists the “return to life” of animals, and thus develops his position concerning resurrection. He states:

Est autem quod hic dicitur “rursus conversa rursus animalia fiunt” commune ad non eadem numero sed eadem specie ut accidet in generali resurrectione, quod eadem materia corporalis numero que fuit cuiusdam hominis in hac vita, et que deficit a participatione vite per infirmitatem vite ad participandum ipsa tunc convertetur in armoniam aptam ad susceptionem in unitatem personalem eiusdem anime qua hic sic participavit et fiet idem homo numero qui hic extitit.⁶¹³

According to Grosseteste, animals will be resurrected in species, while human beings will be so in their own number, and with their own flesh, in order to form a personal unity. The human soul in resurrection will receive the same body according to the number, and then the unity of human nature will be re-established. We have already seen what happens to human beings at resurrection; what is new in this text, however, is Grosseteste’s remark on the resurrection of animals. It is an important remark of Grosseteste’s to note because, in commenting on the verse of the psalm mentioned above, he repeats four times that animals

⁶¹⁰ *DN VI, M 241ra*: “Et quod illud intelligit Dionysius in animalibus irrationalibus et plantis solum manifeste dicit scolium maxime generale ex greco sumptum potest tamen quod hic dici et predictum psalmicum generaliter comprehendere omnia corporalia viventia inter que comprehenditur et homo. Et potest esse auctoris intentio manifestare quod omne vivere creatum seu primum seu renovatum seu incorporatum ut angelorum et animarum seu corporatum ut hominum et irrationalium sensibillum et plantarum est a divina vita.”

⁶¹¹ *DN VI, M 241ra*: “*Qua* vita videlicet animalium et plantarum *interempta* vel per separationem anime a corpore ut in hominibus, superstita anima et vivente post separationem; vel *interempta* per vite vivificantis corpus defictionem ut in irrationalibus et plantis.”

⁶¹² *DN VI, M 241rb*: “Illa inquam sic deficientia rursus conversa in complexionem videlicet et harmoniam aptam participationem vite *rursus sunt animalia* et similiter subintellige de plantis.”

⁶¹³ *DN VI, M 241rb*.

will be resurrected in species, while human beings will be resurrected in number. Grosseteste's view appears original and stimulating, but as often happens, it is not supported by any actual argument. Admitting resurrection for animals is probably a consequence of their privileged origin. In the *Hexaëmeron*, Grosseteste discusses the creation of animals in the *Particula VII* where he comments on the verse, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures" (*Genesis* 1:24). He writes:

Deus enim, sicut nos credimus, animas eciam brutorum creat ex nichilo et infundit eas corporibus organicis aptatis earum recepioni.⁶¹⁴

Grosseteste holds that animal souls are created by God from nothing and infused into organic bodies that are adapted to receive them. Adopting this view, Grosseteste rejects other theories about the origin of non-human souls: they are not the realization of some bodily matter, which passes from potency to act, because from matter comes only matter; nor do they come from a non-bodily spiritual matter.⁶¹⁵ This implies that the souls of animals have a spiritual being, which is beyond matter.⁶¹⁶ Given this premise, Grosseteste is inconsistent when he concludes that the souls of irrational animals do not remain after the dissolution of the body, an argument that follows the authority of Basil.⁶¹⁷ This means that a spiritual being created by God is annihilated, but I do not think that Grosseteste would hold to this doctrine. Perhaps the *Commentary* displays a progression in his thought, namely, his realization that the correct conclusion of his reasoning is that an incorporeal form, like the soul of animals, cannot be corrupted when the body is corrupted. However, it remains difficult to explain the resurrection of animals as a resurrection *secundum speciem*. It could be a way of saying that the species of an animal will be last despite the death of the individual animals, as the species is a divine *ratio*. But the spare remarks of Grosseteste allow us only to make conjectures, but not with any definitive stance concerning his doctrine.

Grosseteste does not draw any philosophical consequence from his view. For example, he does not raise questions about the principle of individuation of animals or human beings. Nor does he discuss the problem of the continuity between the body *in via* and *in patria*. The

⁶¹⁴ *Hexaëmeron VII*, i, 2, 200.

⁶¹⁵ *Hexaëmeron VII*, i, 2, 200: "Neque enim ex traduce credimus esa esse, neque eductas de potencia in actum ex aliqua materia corporali. De corporali enim materia non fit nisi corporeu [...]. nec eciam de matria incorporea spiritali credimus as fieri."

⁶¹⁶ *Hexaëmeron VII*, xiii, 1, 207-208: "Omne namque animans animam habet viventem, hoc est, substanciam incorpoream vegetativam et sentientem."

⁶¹⁷ *Hexaëmeron VII*, xiv, 2, 211: "Habent eciam omnia irracionalia hoc commune, quod vita eorum non precedit corpus eorum, nec mane dissoluta a corpore. Unde Basilius ait: «Non opineris pecorum animam antiquiorem esse substancia corporali illorum, neque permanentem post carnis dissolutionem»." Grosseteste refers to Basil, *Hexaëmeron*, VIII, 2,3.

editors of both the Latin and English editions have not found a specific source for his doctrine of the resurrection of animals. Even referring to Augustine in this case does not help. Augustine in fact never considers animals in themselves, but he refers to them only to establish the dominion of human beings over them.⁶¹⁸ We must acknowledge that the topic of the resurrection of animals has been neglected by the scholarship.⁶¹⁹ The authors that are usually considered are the aforementioned Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, according to whom there is no resurrection for animals and plants, neither in number, nor in species.⁶²⁰ A remote source of Grosseteste could be Plato's *Timaeus*, but the translation of the Platonic idea of the origin of animal souls into Grosseteste's position requires a detailed inspection of the different mediations that goes beyond the scope of the present work.⁶²¹

IV.3.1.3 *Back to Adam and beyond*

The resurrection of the soul and the body is the human way to return to God. Speaking of “return” entails a discussion about the destination, namely, to what exactly human beings return. The first answer, the one given up until this point, is that it is a return to God, who is also the source of everything.⁶²² Everything comes back to God with the difference, stated above, that only human beings return with their bodies. The case of human beings is particular because the first parents, Adam and Eve, were already with God in Eden. Does the “return” mean to come back to the conditions of the first parents? This question implies a discussion about the state of Adam in Eden, and its relationship with the Redemption. In other words, the problem is whether or not Adam's union with God was perfect: in the first case, “return”

⁶¹⁸ Cf. Howell 2006, 950.

⁶¹⁹ Even Caroline Walker Bynum (1995), in her important monograph on the resurrection of the body, does not develop this issue. Despite the abundant bibliography on Heaven and animals, no study seems to consider our topic. Non-scientific bibliography on the destiny of animals is available, but it does not touch the Middle Ages. Scientific monographs on Heaven in general, or especially in the Middle Ages, do not take in consideration animals. See e.g. Wright 2000; Emerson – Feiss 2000, McDannell – Lang 2001; Muessing – Putter 2007. A philosophical analysis of animals is given in Steel – Guldentops – Beuellens 1999. Another philosophical inquiry on animals with some historical digressions is expected in the forthcoming volume Adamson – Edwards 2016. A short reflection on this issue from the perspective of the intellectual history is in Salisbury 2014. Unfortunately, the title of Salisbury's article – “Do Animal Go to Heaven? Medieval Philosophers Contemplate Heavenly Human Exceptionalism” – is quite misleading since the article examines only a couple of quotations from Augustine and Aquinas.

⁶²⁰ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 5, a. 9.

⁶²¹ It is interesting to note that, also according to Lorenzo Valla, the animal soul is created by God. Lodi Nauta (2008, 378 n.35) writes that, for Valla, the soul is “a substance, which implies that it is «created out of nothing, with divine aid», rather than from «the potency of matter» (65:3-16, a section added only in the third version of the *Repastinatio*). The idea that a soul (of whatever type) would depend on or arise out of material body was an anathema for Valla.”

⁶²² *CH* III, 113: “Opinamur quod [...] sacrum significat directionem in deum tanquam in finem ultimum et optimum qui sicut est omnium principium ea inesse producendo sic est omnium consummatio et perfectio cum ad ipsum pro suo possibilitate reducuntur et revertuntur.”

means to come back to Adam's condition; in the second case, it means that only after the Redemption is it possible to have a perfect union with God, and consequently, "return" means to reach a better condition than even Adam experienced. I will analyze some texts that advocate one view or the other. My interpretation is that Grosseteste's hesitation to stand for one position is due to his doctrine of human nature. In Adam, human nature had the potentiality to become perfect, but sin interrupted its progress. When Grosseteste speaks of "return" to Adam means a return to what Adam was destined to become, namely to be deified. Thus the return implies to overcome what Adam was in order to reach what Adam was called to be.

The return of human beings to God has received two interpretations across the history of Christianity. The first interpretation, held by the first Greek Fathers, holds that the purpose of the Christian life was the recovery of the immortality lost by Adam after sin.⁶²³ From the time of Irenaeus, a second interpretation became predominant, namely, the Fathers considered the promise to become like God (*Psalms* 82) had not been realized in the first parents because God wanted immortality and non-corruption for Adam, but he failed to attain them. Incarnation, therefore, took place in order not only to recover what Adam had lost, but also to complete humanity's growth to full maturity.⁶²⁴ The Cappadocian Fathers, who were well-known by Grosseteste as he read some of their works in the original Greek, explicitly held that human destiny is not simply a return to the original beatitude, but something greater: the human being, as image of God, is not only restored, but in attaining the goal for which Adam has been created, he becomes deified.⁶²⁵

Grosseteste also finds these two interpretations in the Scripture. If one looks at Grosseteste's *Tabula* we find a sub-distinction entitled, *quod homo resurgit a peccato in eodem vel meliori statu quam fuit ante lapsum*.⁶²⁶ Grosseteste cites two biblical passages to introduce those points of views: the first is *Haggai* 2:9 ("The glory of this new Temple will surpass that of the old, says Yahweh"); the second is *Zechariah* 10:6 ("I shall restore them, because I have take pity on them, and they shall be as though I had not cast them off"). The former presents the return as a move to a better condition than that of Adam, while the latter describes it as a coming back to the previous state.

In the *Commentary* these two views persist. Commenting on Book II of the *De divinis nominibus*, in a section about Christology, Grosseteste asserts that the incarnate Word repairs

⁶²³ This position was expressly held by Justin and Tatian. See Russell 2004, 98-108.

⁶²⁴ Russell 2004, 108-110.

⁶²⁵ Russell 2004, 221.

⁶²⁶ *Tabula*, 282.

fallen humankind and all the universe and restores it to its original state.⁶²⁷ The original state is, very likely, that in which Adam was before committing sin. This interpretation is confirmed by another passage, from the *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia*:

Ympnizacionis enim in divinis teletis negocium considerans nostram a divinis donis desolacionem intendit revocare nos per divinorum bonorum perfectam participationem ad antiquum statum a quo in primo parente decidimus; et ideo assumit que nostra hoc est sensibilia utpote audibilem modulacionem ut per hanc comunicacionem tradat nobis que sua id est divina et faciat nos dei et divinorum pro nostra susceptibilitate communicatores.⁶²⁸

Grosseteste repeats Dionysius when he claims that the participation in the sacraments (especially in the Eucharist) allows participation in the state of our first parents. Through the sacraments, which are a prolongation of God's salvific action realized by the incarnate Word, God bends Himself towards human misery and recalls every man to the dignity lost after Adam's fall.⁶²⁹ But there is also the promise to receive something more than that, namely, to become like God, which is possible thanks to the Incarnation.

To resolve this issue and decide whether or not human beings can return to the condition of Adam, it is necessary to understand what the state of Adam was in Eden. Grosseteste does not say much, but from his scattered remarks we may argue that in Adam there was the full potentiality of human nature, but it was not actualized because of sin. Two elements in particular reveal Adam's condition: the necessity to eat food (i), and being an image of God (ii). According to Grosseteste, (i) the resurrected body will be different from the mortal one, given that it will not need food, but this does not mean that this state is beyond nature, for it is not beyond divine nature.⁶³⁰ Grosseteste's point is that resurrection and other miraculous events must be considered not from the human point of view, but from God's, and that an immortal body that does not need food is not against God's omnipotence. The reference to food is not casual. It recalls Augustine's position, according to which the need to eat is the proof of our destructive mutability, while in Heaven, the redeemed will not need to eat. In his writings, Augustine repeatedly equates living with eating; yet he sees redemption as the triumph over digestion and nutrition. Eating is a sign of weakness, an act of a limited

⁶²⁷ DN II, M 191va: "Dominus Iesus itaque [...] quoque deus et homo secundum theandricas operationes reparans genus humanum lapsum et rerum universitatem in hominis lapsu deterioratam ad antiquam dignitatem in hac et ex hac omnium reparatione et reductione in suum bene esse non immerito dici potest omnium causa."

⁶²⁸ EH III, 542, 2-8.

⁶²⁹ Cf. *Ex rerum initiarum*, 134 and *Deus est*, 244.

⁶³⁰ DN VI, M 241vb: "*Mihi autem et tibi o thimothee veritati rem visam resume et divinam et super naturam. Excedit enim hec res nunc consuetum nature cursum, continuantis vitam per nutrimentum perpetuare autem non potentis, sed non excedit divinam naturam et potentiam.*"

nature that does not possess in itself the source of life.⁶³¹ Food is present at the beginning of creation (*Genesis* 2:9.16), and it will be at the end of time (*Revelation* 2:7). The need to eat is a sign, Grosseteste says, that Adam was not immortal, but that he was not even mortal, otherwise God would not have threatened him with becoming mortal (e.g., *Genesis* 2:17 states: “in the day that you eat from it you will surely die”).⁶³² It is not clear in what consists Adam’s condition of being in the middle between mortality and immortality. Very likely, this idea comes from Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor who held that if Adam and Eve had remained obedient in Eden, they would have come to immortality through eating from the Tree of Life.⁶³³ This idea implies a progression of Adam’s condition, and that Adam’s body had the potential to become incorruptible, but that it did not attain incorruptibility because of sin.⁶³⁴

If the first point, namely, the necessity to eat in Eden, clearly presents the resurrected body in a better condition than that of Adam, then second point presents the contrary. The second point (ii) again shows Grosseteste’s hesitation about Adam’s condition, namely, whether or not he was perfect in Eden. The second element that characterizes Adam before sin is to be an image of God. In *Sermon* 41, Grosseteste affirms that the second life, that of glory, is infinitely more precious than the life *in via*. Someone could ask as to what this superiority consists given that already in this life, on earth, human beings are the image of their Creator. Grosseteste’s answer is that in the second life human beings will receive the seven *dotēs* so that our body and soul will be glorified.⁶³⁵ To prove that this improvement obtains in the afterlife, Grosseteste quotes the Pseudo-Augustine’s *De spiritu et anima* where it is said that what was created in Adam has been reformed in a more admirable way in Christ.⁶³⁶ In the *Hexaëmeron*, however, Grosseteste proposes another interpretation. Grosseteste explains that a man’s being image of God can be understood in three ways:

Potest enim considerari in substantia boni naturalis quod recepit a naturali condicione; et potest considerari secundum quod elevatur supra bonum condicionis sue in deiformitatem per conversionem ad Creatoris fruicionem, qua conversione spiritu mentis innovatur et decoratur;

⁶³¹ Walker Bynum 1995, 102.

⁶³² *Deus est*, 243.

⁶³³ Walker Bynum 1995, 96-125.

⁶³⁴ In the poem on the restoration of creation, Grosseteste explains that thanks to the Incarnation, not only human nature, but all the universe was perfected and reached a better condition than that lived before the Fall: “Nature was greatly enhanced when God joined with nature so that Nature was perfected. Then was Nature made a hundred times more pure than ever it had been before Adam erred” (*Le Château d’Amour*, 169).

⁶³⁵ *Sermo* 42, 273.

⁶³⁶ Pseudo-Augustine (Alcherus Clarauallensis), *De spiritu et anima*, 35 (PL 40,806): “Vt quando apparuerit qualis sit, tunc ei similis appareat, qui se mirabiliter ad similitudinem suam in primo Adam condidit, mirabilisque in secundo Adam reformauit.”

potest quoque considerari a summo bono aversa et ad inferiora conversa, et si deformata.⁶³⁷

(a) The image of God in human beings can be considered in the substance of the natural good, which human beings receive from their natural condition at the moment of creation. (b) It can be considered according to the way human beings are raised above the good of their creation and are turned back to the enjoyment of their Creator, and are thus deified. (c) Finally it can be considered as being turned away from the highest good and turned to lower things, and are thus deformed. Grosseteste stresses that, despite original sin, human beings do not lose their natural image of God, (a) but only the renewed one (b), and that the deformed image (c) can be restored by the grace of the Spirit.⁶³⁸ Therefore, Adam, and humankind after him, conserves the essential feature of being the image of God, as Grosseteste affirms on the authority of Jerome.⁶³⁹ *Sermon* 41 and *Hexaëmeron* reveal that there is something that is beyond and higher than the natural state that Adam lived in Eden or the life of grace we live here on earth. Both texts state that the human being is destined to be renewed, but while the first text clearly attributes the renewed image to Christ and to the resurrected bodies, and not to Adam, the second text extends the renewed image also to Adam, who is said to have lost the renewed image but not the natural one; it thus implies that Adam was perfect before sin.

Besides the hesitation between the hypothesis that God impressed His image in human beings already at the creation of Adam, or if he was called to reach this image, but he failed, the central point is that this image needs to be restored. The process of restoration is what Grosseteste, in the wake of Dionysus, calls deification.

IV.3.2 Deification and Hierarchy

According to Grosseteste, the second life, the life of glory begins already while the human being is on earth and it will be fully realized at the resurrection. This second life is the recovery of the image of God that human nature lost because of original sin. This process of

⁶³⁷ *Hexaëmeron* VIII, vi, 1, 227.

⁶³⁸ Cf. *Hexaëmeron* VIII, vi, 1, 227: “Naturalis itaque imago numquam amittitur; renovata vero imago amittitur per peccatum; deformata vero tollitur per Spiritus Sancti gratiam.”

⁶³⁹ *Hexaëmeron* VIII, vi, 2, 228: “Quod enim naturalis imago semper maneat, docet Ieronimus sic dicens contra Origenem: «Inter multa mala etiam illud ausus est dicere perdidisse ymaginem Dei Adam, cum hoc in nullo penitus loco Scriptura significet. Si enim ita esset, numquam omnia que in mundo sunt servirent semini Adam [...]»” Grosseteste refers to Jerome, *Letters*, LI, 6.

recovery means to participate in divinity and thus become deified. First, I will present Grosseteste's definition of deification and how he connects it with the aim of the hierarchy (IV.3.2.1); second, I will explain the formal definition of hierarchy that concerns its scope (IV.3.2.2); finally, I will argue that deification implies an improvement of human nature, knowledge, and will (IV.3.2.3).

IV.3.2.1 *Grosseteste's definition of hierarchia*

Dionysius defines deification as follows: "theosis is the attaining of likeness to God and union with him so far as possible."⁶⁴⁰ When he discusses the definition he equates deification with imitating God, of participating in Him, and of becoming good.⁶⁴¹ Norman Russell explains that deification means participation in the divine attribute of deity. Russell also underlines the idea that the concept of deification is not restricted to a Platonic attainment of a likeness to God, but in fact it is used most frequently in relation to the sacraments.⁶⁴² In Dionysius, Russell concludes, the two meanings of deification – to imitate God and to participate in God – reach a synthesis.⁶⁴³ Grosseteste connects Dionysius's definition of deification given in the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* with the definition of hierarchy given in the *De coelesti hierarchia*. The reason for this connection is that deification is the goal of hierarchy.

Dionysius defines hierarchy as follows:

Est quidem hierarchia, secundum me, ordinatio sacra et scientia et operatio, ad Deiforme, ut possibile, assimilata et ad inditas ipsi divinitus illuminationes analogice ad dei imitativum reducta.⁶⁴⁴

According to Grosseteste, Dionysius presents both a material and a formal definition of hierarchy.⁶⁴⁵ The material definition of a thing specifies how it must be constructed so as to perform that function, that is, to be an efficient cause of certain effects, while the formal

⁶⁴⁰ *Dionysiaca*, 1090; English translation in Russell 2004, 248. For an extensive study of Dionysius's doctrine of deification, see De Andia 1996.

⁶⁴¹ See in particular *Dionysiaca*, 608-610; for more details see Russell 2004, 249.

⁶⁴² Russell 2004, 249-50.

⁶⁴³ The first texts of Christianity, such as the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, that were translated by Grosseteste, underscores the necessity to become like God by imitating Him. Ignatius attaches to imitation a moral value, namely, imitating God mean a true *sequela Christi* in all the aspects of Christ's life including the martyrdom; see Russell 2004, 91. Towards the end of the second century deification assumes a more philosophical nuance and begins to be connected with the Platonic goal of attaining likeness to God; see Russell 2004, 85.

⁶⁴⁴ *Dionysiaca*, 785f.

⁶⁴⁵ *CH* III, 113: "Determinat itaque in primis ierarchiam enumerans partes ierarchiam constituens adiciens et formalem ipsius rationem et est hec prima quam ponit ierarchie diffinitio velut ex materiali et formali compacta".

definition specifies its function, which involves a final cause. Three elements compose the material definition of hierarchy, namely, order, knowledge, and love.⁶⁴⁶ The formal definition of hierarchy coincides with the definition of deification, i.e., assimilation and union with God.⁶⁴⁷ First, I will discuss the formal definition before describing the material one because the goal of a hierarchy, i.e., deification, enlightens the three elements that compound the hierarchy.

IV.3.2.2 *Deification and vision: the goals of the hierarchy*

In the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia*, Grosseteste explains that assimilation means to resemble God, but he specifies that it is an imitative likeness and not a likeness of equality.⁶⁴⁸ Indeed, as he said in the *Hexaëmeron*, only the Son is a perfect image of the Father, while human beings can only imitate God. Grosseteste is also cautious about the term “union.” It is love that permits human beings to be united with God, but he immediately specifies that to be one with God does not mean to have the same substance of God; the biblical verse, “whoever joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him” (1 *Corinthians* 6:17), means that there is a sort of uniformity with God.⁶⁴⁹ He does not explain what he means by “uniformity” with any precision; it is a way to express the ontological difference between God and the creatures.

In the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Dionysius proposes another goal for the hierarchy, which develops the one given in the *De coelesti hierarchia*. The purpose of a hierarchy, Grosseteste states following Dionysius, is to enable human beings to reach five goals that can be considered as one: the love (*dilectio*) of God; the cognition of God derived from the knowledge of the creatures; the speculation of divine truth in things; the participation in His perfections; and the pure and direct vision (*visio*) of Him.⁶⁵⁰ This is the order of the five goals

⁶⁴⁶ *EH* I, 293, 2-5: “Descripsit autem in precedenti libro [i.e. *De coelesti hierarchia*] simpliciter hierarchiam primo descriptione coniuncta ex materiali et formali, ex parte materialitatis ponens tria scilicet ordinem et scienciam et operationem.”

⁶⁴⁷ *CH* III, 121: “Infert itaque nunc ipsam diffinitionem formalem simpliciter formaliter propositam dicens quod *intentio ierarchie* est hec videlicet *assimulatio ad deum ut possibile*. [...] sequitur quod *ierarchie intentio* sit etiam ad deum ut possibile *unio*.” *EH* I, 293, 2-5: “[...] ex parte formalitatis posuit *assimulacionem* prout possibile ad deum et eius *imitacionem*.”

⁶⁴⁸ *CH* III, 121: “Non enim ut in superioribus diximus est aliquid simile deo similitudine equiparantie sed similitudine solum *imitativa*.” On the difference between these two kinds of similitude see § IV.2.1.

⁶⁴⁹ *CH* III, 121-122: “Cum autem hec *assimulatio* sit in amore potestativo, scientia et operatione, amore autem unificet amantem cum amato, sequitur quod *ierarchie intentio* sit etiam ad deum ut possibile *unio*. Amore namque puro sic adheret spiritus rationalis deo, quod testante domino «unus spiritus est» non per unitatem substantie, sed per uniformitatem, ut possibile est, ad ipsum.”

⁶⁵⁰ *EH* I, 339, 2-6: “Finis itaque *ierarchie* est hec quinque simul aggregate videlicet: dei et divinorum summa dileccio; incorruptibiliter ei sacrificia encium cognicio, summe veritatis in entibus speculacio, ex hiis

given by Grosseteste. But if we look at Dionysius's text, we find a different order. Immediately after love, Dionysius places the "receding from the opposites" (*recessio a contrariis*), and then, he lists cognition, vision, and participation.⁶⁵¹ Yet Grosseteste holds that the "receding from the opposites" aspect, which he interprets as a receding from what is opposed to God, only as a preliminary step, and not as an essential aspect of the hierarchy.⁶⁵² My interpretation is that Grosseteste changes the order of the goals in order to show more clearly that it mirrors the elements of the material definition of hierarchy. Indeed, we can divide these five goals into three categories: love pertains to human will; participation to being; cognition and speculation to knowledge. Vision recapitulates and perfects all the other goals. The two orders have in common the idea that love is the first goal of the hierarchy.

To make sense of the order proposed by Grosseteste, I argue that it is given according to the cognitive aspect of the process of deification: after love, it is what moves a human being towards God, the first goal is the general cognition of beings; the second goal is speculation, understood as the human ability to ascend from the material beings to the highest truths; finally, the last goal is vision, the pure and direct cognition of God. Vision is the highest level of knowledge in Grosseteste's order. It is last on the list, thus it encapsulates even the participation in God's perfections and connects the cognitive side to the appetitive one: the vision of God fulfils not only human knowledge, but also his will.

The cognitive aspect of deification prevails in another text. When Grosseteste must explain the meaning of the expression, "assimilation to the deiform as far as possible," he considers the idea that *deiforme* can signify two things: God Himself, who is in Himself, the divine form (but this aspect is not developed); or, it refers to a renewal of the rational spirit.⁶⁵³ This conception of deification, as the enlightenment of the intelligence, is a legacy of Augustine.⁶⁵⁴ My interpretation of the order of the goals of deification clarifies the fact that Grosseteste wants to keep two purposes of deification together, namely, participation in divinity, and the direct knowledge of God (beatific vision). These two goals are both considered by Dionysius and Augustine, but the former emphasizes the aspect of

perfectionis participacio, dei in se nuda et pura visio, que est superperfectio summum sacians appetitum et appetentem sustentans et deificans."

⁶⁵¹ *Dionysiaca*, 1091-1092.

⁶⁵² *EH* I, 339, 6-9: "Recessio namque contrariis connumeratur cum predictis ut pars termini hierarchie eo quod ipsa est necessaria preparacio ad predicta que vere et esencialiter sunt terminus hierarchie."

⁶⁵³ *CH* III, 116: "Potest autem deiforme dici ipse Deus qui est in se decor, pulcritudo, form, [...]. Dicitur etiam deiforme, renovatio spiritus rationalis."

⁶⁵⁴ According to Augustine indeed, says Russell (2004, 330), "imitation and deification are two aspects of the same process. The reward for those who imitate God is that like the spirits they come to be penetrated by intelligible light and enjoy perfect happiness in the participation of God." See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 19. 23. 4.

participation, the latter that of knowledge. These aspects need further analysis.

IV.3.2.3 *Deification as human goal and perfection*

At the beginning of the *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, Grossetete affirms that deification is the perfection of rational creatures.⁶⁵⁵ As noted above, the five goals of the hierarchy can be related to the three elements of the material definition of hierarchy, namely, order, knowledge, and love. Now that we have explained what deification amounts to for Grosseteste, we can now consider the consequences of deification in each aspect of human life: being, knowledge, and will.

A) **Deification and Being**

The first element of the definition of hierarchy is order: “order is the disposing of equal and unequal things, allotting to each its place [...] and this disposing becomes sacred then when it is directed and directs to understanding and enjoying God.”⁶⁵⁶ Deification refers to the process of a human being’s becoming like God. The Bible also refers to human beings as gods (*Psalms* 82:6). To avoid any form of pantheism, Grosseteste explains deification through the notion of participation. This notion allows him to maintain that human beings take part in the divine nature, while preserving God’s transcendence. At the same time, the notion of participation allows him to establish a difference and gradation amongst human beings who become deified. In the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus*, Grosseteste discusses the question of the relationship between God and human beings considered as gods. Grosseteste makes it clear that human beings can receive God’s being, and therefore, they can be called “gods.” But with respect to them, God must be called *archideus*, namely, the source of divinity, and *superdeus*, as exceeding any other god. The difference is that God has the power to create *ex nihilo*, while the supposed “gods” cannot.⁶⁵⁷ As every kind of participation,

⁶⁵⁵ *EHI*, 294, 14.

⁶⁵⁶ *CH* III, 113-114: “Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique tribuens loca dispositio [...] dispositio tunc sacra est cum dirigitur et dirigit in deum comprehendendum, et eo fruendum.” I leave aside the other meaning of order, namely “a power given by God with a view to the sacred government of all who are subject to the power”, because it is more related with the ecclesiastical order which is not taken in consideration in this chapter because of the strictly theological dimension of this idea.

⁶⁵⁷ *DN* II, M 191ra: “*Iesu ut astruit est omnium causa omnia ex nihilo in esse adducens quod facere non potest deitas a deiformitate dicta sicut dicuntur dii multi sed solummodo deitas eterna eadem patris et filii et spiritus*

deification does not imply that everyone participates in divinity to the same degree. God is uniform in giving, but each being can receive God's form in different ways and in different degrees.⁶⁵⁸ Significantly, Grosseteste uses the plural "deifications," to mark this difference. He makes reference to a verse from St. Paul (1 *Corinthians* 15:41) to corroborate his view.⁶⁵⁹

According to Grosseteste, deification means to take part in the entire Trinity, but it means especially to participate in the Holy Spirit. In emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit, Grosseteste goes beyond the text of Dionysius, and directly connects it with the Cappadocian Fathers.⁶⁶⁰ Dionysius limits himself to underscoring the role of God the Father who recalls everything to Him, and that of Jesus Christ through whom the return is possible. Grosseteste follows Dionysius, but observes that the role of the Holy Spirit, which is that of reducing the multiplicity to unity, must be added.⁶⁶¹ In another text Grosseteste is more explicit: the Father is the source of all fatherhood, the Son of all sonship, while the Holy Spirit is the source of all unity with God and deification.⁶⁶² If the Son was the source of procession towards the creatures, for in the Word there are the exemplars of the created world, the Holy Spirit is the first responsible for the process of the return.

B) Deification and knowledge

The second element of the definition of hierarchy is knowledge, "namely the understanding of truth, which is sacred when in things which have been truly understood, such as the vestiges and mirrors of the creator, it sees the Threefold and One itself, and the invisible things of the Divinity [...] or understands the incarnate Word, through which alone there is reraising (*reductio*) and recall (*revocatio*) to the Father."⁶⁶³ If participation is a feature

sancti indivisa trinitatis operatione et eadem dominum Iesu deitas est *repletiva* omnium omnia videlicet inesse adducta promovens consummans et conservans [...] Est autem nihilominus archideus id est in se ipso verus deus id est principium omnium et princeps factorum dictorum *et superdeos* id est omnes deos excedens."

⁶⁵⁸ *EH* I, 322, 1-3: "*Reducimur ad deificationem* hoc est dei per gratiam participationem, *uniformem* ex parte participati ex parte autem nostra existentem *in commensurationem que secundum nos*".

⁶⁵⁹ *DN* IX, M 258vb: "Deificationes enim conversorum diversorum alterae sunt et diverse ab in vicem sicut «altera est claritas solis et altera lunae et altera stellarum»".

⁶⁶⁰ Among the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil employs the language of participation to state that we are sanctified by participation in the holiness of the Spirit, but the emphasis is on imitation, which is fulfilled through the practice of virtue. However, Basil holds that deification cannot be reached only through human efforts, but that the role of the Holy Spirit is needed; see Russell 2004, 211.

⁶⁶¹ *DN* II, M 193ra: "*Deus* qui supersubstantialiter est deus, *pater* videlicet *ex quo omnia et nos in ipsum* ut in finem videlicet supremum *reducimur et unus dominus Iesus Christus ipse per quem omnia et nos per ipsum* et subintellige et spiritus sanctus in quo omnia unus."

⁶⁶² *DN* II, M 189va: "Sicut a patre secundum apostolum omnis paternitas in celo et in terra est et nominatur sic et a filio omnis filiatio et spiritu sancto omnis unio cum deo et deificatio."

⁶⁶³ *CH* III, 114: "Alter pars est scientia, comprehensio videlicet veritatis que tunc sacra est cum in rebus vere comprehensio sicut in creatoris vestigiis et speculis, ipsum trinum et unum et invisibilia divinitatis [...] aut verbum incarnatum per quod solum est *reductio* et *revocatio* ad patrem."

that concerns every being, knowledge concerns only the rational souls. Saints and the blessed are destined to see God. The content and the modalities of this knowledge are known as the topic of “beatific vision.” Grosseteste takes this topic seriously to the point that he dedicates one of the rare excursus in the *Commentary* to discussing beatific vision.⁶⁶⁴ Grosseteste correctly interprets Dionysius as identifying the object of the heavenly vision with a created theophany emanating from the divine essence. Grosseteste does not attack Dionysius directly, nor does he try to reconcile Dionysius’s doctrine with the Latin doctrine, according to which the blessed will see God as He is, without any *medium*.⁶⁶⁵ Grosseteste takes the side of the Latin view because in the paraphrase he does not mention the theophany, but he identifies the Dionysian theophany with the glorified humanity of Christ.⁶⁶⁶ That human beings will see God face-to-face is an inheritance from Augustine, which is a pillar doctrine that Grosseteste knew and endorsed long before the *Commentary*.⁶⁶⁷ The authority of Dionysius simply does not influence Grosseteste on this point.

C) Deification and will

Finally Grosseteste explains the third element of hierarchy and says that it “is sacred operation, directed to God or directing other things to Him. And because love is a gravitation and placing of rational essence, not only placing the one who loves, but also the things loved by him [...] we think in the term ‘order’ the author wished love to be included. [...] But there is nothing else but love, and especially love which is endued with power, knowing and working.”⁶⁶⁸ Grosseteste identifies operation with love, but love is not only the third element that compounds the material definition of hierarchy, but it is also what gathers the other two elements, order and knowledge, and perfects them.

We already underscored the pivotal role of love in Grosseteste’s theology, but in this context I want to underline a new aspect, namely, the place of love in the process of deification.⁶⁶⁹ Grosseteste describes love as “the form which perfects hierarchy, namely assimilation *to the deiform as far as possible*, which form is reraising or upraising to the

⁶⁶⁴ The detachment of Grosseteste from Dionysius is noted by McEvoy (1982, 93-95; 248-256).

⁶⁶⁵ See *DN* I, §51, 153: “*sine velaminibus omnia nude conspiciemus*.” Grosseteste uses also the expressions “*sine fantasmatis*” (*EH* II, 405, 6) and “*sine imaginibus*” (*DN* VII, M 247, va).

⁶⁶⁶ Ruello 1959, appendix 2, 171.

⁶⁶⁷ *Le Château d’amour*, 179: “When we are glorified, we will plainly see how he is three in trinity, one God alone in unity, of whom, by whom, at in whom are all things that are found in heaven.”

⁶⁶⁸ *CH* III, 115: “Tertio vero pars est operatio sacra in deum videlicet directa seu dirigens in ipsum et alia. Et quia amor est pondus et collocatio rationalis essentie non solum ipsum amantem, sed et amata ab ipso [...] existimamus quod in nomine ordinis voluit auctor amorem comprehendere [...]. Non est autem aliud quam amor ex maxime potestativus sciens et operans.”

⁶⁶⁹ See § II.3.2.

imitation of God, imitating Him in proportion to the divine enlightenments given to it.”⁶⁷⁰ According to the Greek and the Latin Fathers, the imitation of God and the participation in His divinity are equally important, but they stressed either one or the other aspect.⁶⁷¹ Grosseteste tries to hold the two aspects together, and thus resorts to the concept of imitation in order to counter-balance Dionysius’s preference for participation. This is a case that clearly illustrates Grosseteste’s technique of commenting on texts: Grosseteste paraphrases the text of Dionysius, but also adds elements that are derived from other sources with no effort to make a synthesis. Let us consider more closely the text quoted from Grosseteste’s *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia*.

The word “union,” which appears in Dionysius’s definition of deification, does not recur in Grosseteste’s paraphrase, and is substituted by the word “imitation.” The same happens in a passage from the *Commentary on the De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, and in the same context, namely, that of the definition of hierarchy. There Grosseteste explains assimilation in terms of imitation, but no mention of union is given.⁶⁷² The fact that Grosseteste uses the word “imitation” instead of “union” can be the result of a problem of translation. In a passage from his *Commentary on the De mystica theologia*, Albert the Great, for example, observes that Dionysius invites his friend Timothy to strive upwards towards imitation of God, but he points out that there is another translation that substitutes “union” in place of “imitation.”⁶⁷³ It is very likely that the word, “union,” comes from another version of Sarrazin’s translation of the *Corpus* since it is not present in the common version.⁶⁷⁴ Grosseteste reads correctly “union” in that instance, but Albert’s remark may suggest that there was a manuscript tradition where the word “union” was replaced with the word “imitation,” perhaps to neutralize Eriugena’s translation that used “unity” (*unitas*) to translate *henosis*, which would provide a “dangerous” description of the relation between the deified man and God.

It is, however, probable that Grosseteste’s use of imitation in the paraphrase is a deliberate choice. In the quoted text from the *Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia* about

⁶⁷⁰ CH III, 115: “[...] forma que perficit ierarchiam scilicet assimilatio ad deiforme prout possibile que forma est reductio seu sursum ductio ad dei imitationem imitantem eum proportionaliter ad inditas ipsi divinitus illuminationes.”

⁶⁷¹ See Russell 2004, 83-85.

⁶⁷² EH I, 294, 16 – 295, 4: “Auctor [...] ex parte formalitatis posuit assimilacionem prout possibile ad deum et eius imitationem [...] Dei enim pro possibilitate [in operibus imitacio, imitante deificat in qualitibus], pro possibilitate assimilatio divinum constituit et direccio et intencio in deum que est sacracitas in deo maentem facit”. The sentence between brackets is not in Hogan edition, but is in *Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat.* 1620, 116a, l.28. This case of homeoteleuton, along with some other errors, shows how a critical edition of all Grosseteste’s commentaries on the *Corpus* is needed.

⁶⁷³ Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysii De mystica theologia et epistulas*, I, 456, 52.

⁶⁷⁴ See *Dionysiaca*, 568.

love and imitation, an element worth noting, is that Grosseteste endows imitation with cognitive value such that there is no room in him for devotional implications. To imitate God exclusively means to receive His light. Grosseteste does not mention imitating Jesus' life, deeds, or words. This kind of texts may confirm Southern's interpretation that Jesus' life and sufferings are absent in Grosseteste's theology.⁶⁷⁵ However, Grosseteste is aware that imitation also has a volitional aspect because every human being must conform his own life to that of Jesus. The topic of free will, which was central in the first phase of Grosseteste's production, also left a mark on Grosseteste's interpretation of Dionysius. Grosseteste conceives of free will as the power that God confers to humankind to become like Him.⁶⁷⁶ The return to God is not possible without a free decision, and this is why even the detachment from God is due to a voluntary action and not only because of the weak human condition.⁶⁷⁷

Grosseteste's emphasis on imitation and free will prevents him from reducing the process of deification to the metaphysical (partaking in divine nature) or cognitive (enlightening) aspects that are nevertheless predominant. To become like God requires the exercise of the virtues noted by Basil.⁶⁷⁸ This leads us to another point: virtue is a characteristic of the life of grace lived *in via*. Deification is a process that begins in this life and culminates in the afterlife. The practice of virtues and the exercise of love, therefore, is the line that connects the two kinds of life, *in via* and *in patria*, and this explains why the soul and body will be completely transformed in the glorious life together with the other theological virtues (faith and hope). Love, by contrast, will not be transformed, but merely perfected.⁶⁷⁹

IV.4 Conclusion

This chapter shows that the unity between the Creator and the creatures is a theme that is central in Grosseteste, but he develops it more thoroughly during his episcopacy. In human beings, the creation is unified, according to the doctrine of microcosmism, but only when the

⁶⁷⁵ See Southern 1986, 217.

⁶⁷⁶ *DN VIII, M 252ra*: “*Et dat ipsam deificationem rationales videlicet creaturas ad sui conformitatem reducendo. Ipsa dico divina virtus tribuens deificatis virtutem seu potentiam in hoc seu ad hoc ut videlicet deificentia. Tribuit enim divina virtus rationalibus arbitri libertatem quae potentes sunt in praesente ens divino lumine in dei conformitatem confingere.*”

⁶⁷⁷ *EH II, 419, 11-17*: “*Deus qui omnia bene ordinat facit angelos primo sui cognitores [...]; sic et in hominibus facit eos naturali appetitu reverti supra seipsos ut propria agnoscant naturam in quo et frequenter occurrit eis quam infirmi sunt non solum ex condicione nature sed ex propria accione et defectu et a vero bono elongacione.*”

⁶⁷⁸ On Basil's doctrine of deification, see Russell 2004, 208-213.

⁶⁷⁹ *Sermo 42, 272*. It becomes more comprehensible that a few years after the *Commentary*, Grosseteste was more interested in ethics and devoted his efforts to the translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Creator and the creatures are united in incarnation, an event which, for Grosseteste, assumes a cosmic significance: the unity of the universe becomes complete. If Jesus died for human salvation, He assumed flesh to restore the whole universe. Human beings' return to God begins in this life by living a virtuous life and participating in sacraments, and culminates at the time of resurrection. Grosseteste is not always consistent about the conditions of human beings in the afterlife: he is uncertain if the return of the human being to the Creator will be a return to Eden, or if he will live in a better condition. The first Latin Fathers believed that the life of the resurrected is strictly connected with the present life. Grosseteste shares their optimism by adopting their views about the goodness of creation: in Adam, human nature had the potential to become perfect, but sin interrupted the progress, thus returning to Adam means to return to what Adam was destined to become, namely, to be deified. The *Commentary* inaugurates a new period of Grosseteste's reflection on this topic with the introduction the doctrine of deification derived from Dionysius and other Greek sources along with Augustine. Deification implies that every aspect of the human being is modeled according to the image of God: being (partaking of divinity, through the Holy Spirit), knowledge (seeing God directly, without any *medium*, against Dionysius's doctrine of *theophania*), and will (perfecting love). Deification is the goal of hierarchy, and this also leads Grosseteste to attack the ecclesiastical corruption: the lives of the hierarchs must witness the assimilation and union with God, as their sin is not only a simple moral defection, but also undermines the very foundation of the Church.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁸⁰ Robert Grosseteste at the Papal Curia, 382-385.

CONCLUSION

In 1235, Robert Grosseteste, a teacher of theology at the Franciscan school of Oxford, was elected bishop of Lincoln, the largest diocese of England at that time. His pastoral duty required that he quit the teaching that he began only few years before (1229/30). During his regency as master of theology, Grosseteste wrote theological essays and biblical commentaries, but not a comprehensive work, a *summa*. It is likely that he was preparing a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which testifies to Grosseteste's will to organize his theological teaching in a systematic form.

Even after his appointment as bishop, Grosseteste did not abandon the idea of a creating a systematic work in theology. Yet as he was no longer a teacher, but a pastor, the project of writing a *summa* for his students was abandoned. In the short years following his election as bishop, Grosseteste bought Greek manuscripts of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, a work that he had know for some time, as I have demonstrated. I have shown that Grosseteste's work as translator and commentator of the *Corpus* is immense: his knowledge of the previous Latin versions of the *Corpus* is evident, and even more so when he confronts those texts with the original Greek writings. His method of translating allows the Greek to shine through his use of Latin, but he does not bewilder the reader with abstruse Latin, but he labors to convey the original meaning of the text through commentaries of his translations. Moreover Grosseteste translates the *scholia*, attributed to Maximus the Confessor, which contain not only linguistic, but also historical notes that may help the reader approach the text with a Greek mind.

The question that spurred my research on has been: what was it that moved Grosseteste to so great an undertaking at a time when his life was already filled with every kind of vexation and administrative drudgery? There are many possible answers. In the present dissertation I have demonstrated that Grosseteste used the *Commentary* to elaborate a sort of summary of theology. This summary is based on the three moments of the First Cause indicated in the prologue of the *Hexaëmeron* and the *Deus est*. It refers to the triadic movement of the First Principle (remaining-procession-return). In Grosseteste's eyes, the *Corpus* develops this triad that was central to his theology, but that he was not able to deepen during his teaching. According to this triad, God can be considered as He is in Himself, in his absolute transcendence (in particular in *De mystica theologia* and *De divinis nominibus*), as the principle of the creation from which everything flows, and that leaves His similitude and

image on it (in particular in *De divinis nominibus* and *De coelesti hierarchia*); as the ultimate goal of creation to whom everything tends and desires to return. In this scheme is possible to inscribe the whole theological production of Grosseteste (in particular in *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* and in *De coelesti hierarchia*). At the end of my analysis, it is possible to retain the following points as determinant for Grosseteste's theological evolution from the teaching period to the episcopacy years.

(1) The first moment of the triad is that of remaining (*manentia*), namely, to consider God *qua* God in His absolute transcendence. I argued that, during his years as master of theology, Grosseteste refers to God's transcendence by the Anselmian formula *id quo maius...*. Grosseteste applies Anselm's definition of God both to intellect and will such that God works out to be not only that than which nothing greater can be thought, but also that than which nothing greater can be loved. There is a direct proportionality between knowledge and love: the more ordered the mind's desires are to God's will, the more opportunity a person has to gain certain knowledge of God. This does not imply, however, that even if a human being had the right degree of love and faith that it would be possible for him to know everything about God. Despite all the efforts that one could make in investigating God, there will be always something hidden from his sight. Not only does intellectual knowledge alone prove to be insufficient in theology, but language also shows its limits if it is not supported by faith. The fundamental problem of theological language is how we can speak about God that is totally transcendent, and at the same time, to describe how, and if, it is possible to speak meaningfully of Him. Before the *Commentary*, Grosseteste incidentally encounters this issue. Grosseteste explicitly denies that attributes such as "free" or "being" are said univocally of God and creatures, but they are not completely equivocal names. More specifically, those attributes are said in a prior and a posterior sense.

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste reflects more extensively on God's absolute transcendence. His way of expressing God's remaining in Himself is to define Him as unknowable and ineffable. As it happened in the previous writings, both the side of cognition and that of language are involved in the task of approaching the One. Grosseteste presents many steps to ascend to God: knowledge of God through material things; direct knowledge of God without phantasm; and ignorance of God in the mystical union. I argued that the possibility of being illuminated is not only a privilege of some mystics and the blessed, as is commonly held, but it can also be experienced by the ecclesiastical hierarchs. For Grosseteste, God is called "ignorance" no matter how clear and direct human knowledge could become because He is incomprehensible to us. If our theological knowledge is limited, however, love

alone is capable to lead us to the core of the Godhead; there can be an unbounded love, but not an unbounded knowledge of God.

Grosseteste develops his doctrine of theological predication in the *Commentary* more than in any other work. He affirms that there are not names that signify God's transcendence because the only way to access Him is causality. There is a method, however, that is more suitable, namely, to praise Him by removing all names from Him. Passing through the hierarchy of beings, Grosseteste reaches the peak of this ascensional path where no name is attributed, even the Trinitarian names. This is why privative names like "invisible," "infinite," and "incomprehensible" are particularly appropriate to God because they simply deny something. There is, however, a name that is supposed to signify God's essence, the Tetragrammaton, but after closer analysis I can conclude that it is not a name since it cannot be uttered and understood.

(2) God as cause, or as Creator, was certainly the main topic of Grosseteste's early writings. I discussed the moment of procession (*processio*) by analyzing Grosseteste's definition, "God is the first form of everything." This definition, used in the works written before the *Commentary*, indicates the proximity of God to creatures by virtue of His universal causality. Grosseteste aims to give an interpretation of this definition that avoids any risk of pantheism, thus he states that God is the form of everything, but not as a substantial part of creatures or as a complement of matter. Grosseteste intends to use the term form as the condition for the existence of every other being, which, consequently, depends on It. According to Grosseteste, if God is form, it is necessarily the first form because nothing is prior to God. I noticed a tension between the account given in the *Commentary* on the *Posterior Analytics* and that given in the *Hexaëmeron*: in the first work, Grosseteste claims that there are mediators in the work of creation (the Platonic Ideas), while in the latter, he denies this possibility. My interpretation is that Grosseteste passes from a "Platonic" explanation of the Ideas to the view according to which the archetypal world is identical with the *Verbum* because of some insurmountable difficulties the Ideas jeopardize God's simplicity (because they put a multiplicity in Himself) and God's omnipotence (because they imply that God is not mighty enough to create alone). The doctrine of God as form of everything does not only imply that He is present – essentially, presentially, and potentially – in everything, but also that He imprinted the forms contained in His ideas in everything.

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste again tackles the issue of divine ideas and tries to affirm the view that he held in his previous writings. Grosseteste adopts the view of Dionysius, according to whom the ideas in God's mind are the model of a created thing, and

they are worthy to be worshiped because they are nothing other than God Himself. However, Grosseteste, unlike Dionysius, does not reject the idea of some created and creative cause of reality that can be called exemplar; what he instead emphasizes is the created nature of those principles. Grosseteste's doctrine of exemplars has consequences for the relationship between the eternal reasons and the created world. The first is that the plurality of the reasons does not entail a plurality in God, but that it is the cause of the plurality in the reality; the second is that the plurality of reasons explains the difference among the creatures; the third is that created beings depend completely on the exemplars because, in itself, the created world does not have subsistence.

Grosseteste's consideration of God proceeding towards the creatures has a deep impact on his doctrine of theological language. God has many names since He is the cause of every creature. Such a multiplicity of names does not mean that all the divine names have the same significance and importance in theology. There are some names that express God in a better way just like, at the ontological level, there are some beings that participate more intensively in God's eternal reasons. In the *Commentary*, the theonym "Good" replaces the primacy of "Being" stated in the *Hexaëmeron*: "Good" is the first divine name because not only does it designate a procession, namely, something that proceeds from God to the creatures (such as being, life, wisdom and so on), but it also comprehends any other procession.

(3) After considering God as He is in Himself, and as the cause of the created world, in the last chapter I examined Grosseteste's position on God considered as the ultimate goal of creation (*reversio*). For Grosseteste, the return of the creation to God is possible if two assumptions are admitted: the first is that everything is comprehended in some way in human nature since the human soul partakes in the spiritual nature, as the angels do, while the human body partakes in matter, such as the other bodily creatures. With respect to the Creator, a human being is an image and a likeness; with respect to creation, the human being is in some way all things. The second assumption is that the Incarnation of the Son completed the universe and united the nature of Creator with that of the creatures, for He is God and man at the same time. The return of human beings to God begins in this life, or what Grosseteste calls the "life of grace," which consists in the practice of virtues. Grosseteste develops this aspect in connection with the sacrament of confession. The "second life" is that of glory, the blessed experience after the resurrection, and this has been the focus of my research. In the writings that date before his episcopal period, the topic of resurrection is not among Grosseteste's first interests.

In the *Commentary*, Grosseteste's emphasizes the presence of the body in the

resurrection, which allows him to distinguish between the rational and irrational animals in the return to God. Speaking of “return” entails a discussion about the destination, namely, to what exactly human beings are said to return. In some texts, Grosseteste interprets “return” as coming back to Adam’s condition; in other texts, it means that only after the redemption is possible can a perfect union with God be possible, and consequently, “return” means to reach a better condition than Adam experienced. This tension can be resolved if we consider that, according to Grosseteste, human nature had the potential to become perfect, but Adam interrupted the progress. When Grosseteste speaks of the “return” to Adam, he means a return to what Adam was destined to become, namely, to be deified. The concept of deification is strictly connected with that of hierarchy. According to Grosseteste, Dionysius presents a material and a formal definition of hierarchy. Three elements compose the material definition of hierarchy, namely, order, knowledge, and love. The formal definition of hierarchy coincides with the definition of deification, i.e., assimilation and union with God. In his account, Grosseteste holds to two aspects of deification at the same time, namely, participation in divinity (derived from Dionysius), and the direct knowledge of God (derived from Augustine). Deification has consequences in each aspect of human life: being, knowledge, and will. More specifically, deification means to take part, according to different degrees, in the divine nature; it means also to see God as He is without any *medium*; finally, it means that love, which is the line that connects the life *in via* and *in patria*, will be perfected.

As I announced in the Introduction, my dissertation is only a first step in filling the blank sector in Grosseteste’s scholarship because further investigation is needed to provide a comprehensive account. To be more specific, two issues need to be analysed. The first is the problem of evil. From the Christian perspective, the Fall of the first parents is placed between Creation and Redemption. The relevance of this problem in the medieval debate is undisputed, and Dionysius, together with Augustine, is one of the authorities on that matter. Grosseteste’s scholars have not paid attention to that issue because it is treated quickly in other works. The Preamble of *Deus est* shows that it is a central topic of his theology, but as it happened for other issues, he had no time to develop it during his teaching of theology. The edition and the study of the *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus* will show that it was not secondary at all in Grosseteste’s mind, but that he developed his theodicy in the second part of Book IV. The second point that needs further investigation is Grosseteste’s relationship with other Dionysian commentators. This point can be divided in two. First, it is important to confront Grosseteste with possible sources such as Eriugena and Hugh of St. Victor for the

Commentary on the De coelesti hierarchia, and Thomas Gallus for the entire *Corpus*. James McEvoy has written about Grosseteste and Thomas Gallus and their Commentaries on the *De mystica theologia*, but more analyses are necessary to have a complete view of the relationship between these authors. Second, the influence of Grosseteste's *Commentary* upon succeeding Dionysian commentators should also be taken into account.

The purpose of my dissertation has been to create an unedited understanding of the influence of the *Corpus* on Grosseteste's theology. At the end of this work, I realize that my scope in the background was more ambitious, namely, to present the essential structure of Grosseteste's theology as such by taking his entire oeuvre into account. I conclude my analysis with the same caution that characterized Grosseteste in interpreting Dionysius because I am aware that this work goes beyond my weakness: *Labor enim iste vires excedit nostre imbecillitatis*⁶⁸¹

⁶⁸¹ *DNI*, § 82, 167.

APPENDIX

Roberti Grosseteste Commentarium super De divinis nominibus

The following text is a provisional edition of Grosseteste's *Commentary on the De divinis nominibus* Book V and Book VII. This edition is based on the transcription of ms. Oxford, Merton College 86 (M), one of the oldest and more reliable manuscripts: Book V is at fols. 231vb – 240rb, Book VII at fols. 242vb – 249va. The transcription has been checked against the mss. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1620 (L), and Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, A v. 129 (Mz), only in the cases of ms. M does not make sense of Grosseteste's text or it contains an omission.⁶⁸²

Dionysius's text has been italicized to distinguish it from Grosseteste's commentary. Grosseteste's translation of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, based on L, has been edited by Philippe Chevallier in *Dionysiaca*. Where necessary, I also checked the transcription of *Dionysiaca* and corrected against M. The ms. Mz, instead, contains only the commentary. I have not transcribed the numerous *scholia* that appear in mss. M and L.

Regarding the sources, in the notes, I only identified explicit sources, biblical references and the other extant Latin translations (Hilduin, Eriugena, Sarrazin), referred to by Grosseteste as '*alia lectura*' or '*aliud exemplar*'. I also note the occurrences of the other translations that are not present in *Dionysiaca*.

I employed the system of modern punctuation. Grosseteste's style is characterized by long, involved periods of a page or more, interrupted by a complex parenthetical expression. I used upper-case letters at the beginning of a sentence, and for the first letter of a title, a proper name, and the divine names *Deus*, *Pater*, *Filius* and *Spiritus Sanctus*. I followed the orthography of M.

⁶⁸² For a description of these mss. see Thomson 1940, 57.

Capitulum Quintum: De ente, in quo et de exemplis

(Dionysiaca 321-327) <231vb> *Transeundum autem nunc ad vere existentem ad vere entis theologicam substantiae nominationem. Tantum autem subrememorabimus quam*⁶⁸³ *sermoni intentio non super substantialem substantiam, secundum quod supersubstantialis, manifestare ineffabile enim hoc et incognitum est et omnino immanifestabile et ipsam superexcellens unionem, sed substantificum in entia omnia thearchice usiarchie processum laudare. Etenim per-se-boni divina nominatio totos omnium causae processus manifestans, et in entia et in non entia extenditur et super entia et super non entia est.*

*Quae autem entis in omnia entia extenditur et super omnia entia est. Quae autem vite in omnia viventia extenditur et super viventia est. Quae autem sapientiae in omnia intellectualia et rationalia*⁶⁸⁴ *et sensitiva extenditur et super omnia haec est. Has igitur sermo laudare desiderat providentiae manifestativas divinas nominationes; non enim enarrare ipsius supersubstantialem bonitatem et substantiam et vitam et sapientiam ipsius supersubstantialis deitatis repromittit, super omnem bonitatem et deitatem et substantiam et vitam in absconditis, ut eloquia aiunt, supercollocatam, sed expressam bonificam providentiam superexcellenter bonitatem, et omnium bonorum causam laudat et ens et vitam et sapientiam, substantificam et vivificam et sapientiae datricem*⁶⁸⁵ *causam substantia et vita et intellectu et ratione et sensu participantium.*

Non aliud autem esse per se bonum aiunt, et aliud ens et aliud vitam aut sapientiam, neque multas causas et aliorum alias adductivas deitates, superexcellentes et subiectas, sed unius Dei totos bonos processus, et a nobis laudatas divinas nominationes; et hanc quidem esse omnino perfecte unius dei providentiae manifestativam, has autem universaliorum eiusdem et particulariorum.

Licet videri posset quod Deus esset primo laudandus per nominationem⁶⁸⁶ entis quia ens est primum et generalissimum nominum tamen, propter superius <232ra> tactas et inferius tangendas rationes, preposuit auctor dicere laudem deitatis ex nomine bonitatis. Laudato itaque primo Deo ut per se bono et deinceps ut lumine, pulcro et ut aliis per se bono, consequenter necessario ad iungendis transit ad laudem ipsius ex nominatione entis dicens *transeundum autem nunc ad vere existentem seu vere entem theologicam substantie seu*

⁶⁸³ quam] quia *Dyonysiaca*

⁶⁸⁴ rationalia] rationabilia *Dionysiaca*

⁶⁸⁵ datricem] datione *Dionysiaca*

⁶⁸⁶ nominationem] ordinationem M

essentie *nominationem vere entis* id est Dei qui solus vere et per se est nullo modo ab alio ens. Theologia enim nominat Deum nomine entis cum introducit ipsum dicentem ad Moysen: “Ego sum ens”,⁶⁸⁷ pro quo latini interpretes dicunt: “Ego sum qui sum”. Et est hec nominatio theologica vere existens substantie nominatio vere entis cum hanc nominationem sibi attribuit qui vere est, qui solus sui substantiam et essentiam que et quid et ut est in seipsa vere et perfecte intelligit. In sermone autem humano non manifestat ipsam substantiam divinam que et quid et ut est in se, sed manifestat eius bonificum processum ad entia ab ipso supersubstantialiter ente. Volens igitur auctor laudare Deum per nomen entis, secundum quod illud intelligit dictum de Deo humanus intellectus et non secundum quod illud intelligit ipse Deus hoc nomine se nominans, (quia sic est ineffabile et incomprehensibile), commonefacit in primis super hac intentione sua auditorem dicens: *Tantum autem subrememorabimus* id est in memoriam auditorum constituemus *quam sermoni* nostro videlicet presenti *intentio* est videlicet *non manifestare* per nomen entis videlicet *substantiam supersubstantialem secundum quod supersubstantialis* id est substantiam divinam *secundum quod* in seipsa incomparabiliter excedit omnem substantiam. *Hoc enim* id est quid est supersubstantialis substantia secundum quod talis est *ineffabile et incognitum et omnimode inmanifestabile et superexcellens ipsam unionem* id est ipsam mentis et intelligentiae revocationem et abstractionem ab omni eo quod est et recollectionem sui in se et unitam intentionem in ipsum qui est super omnem unitatem. Ita inquam non est nostro sermoni intentio manifestare divinam substantiam in se, quia hoc est super sermonem et cognitionem et intelligentiam quantumcumque⁶⁸⁸ unitam, sed intentio est, resume, *laudare* per entis videlicet nominationem *substantificum* id est substantie factivum *processum thearchice usiarchie* id est divine principalis causae omnis substantie in *omnia entia*.

Nomen enim entis dictum de Deo, prout intelligi potest a nobis, significat processum id est operationem divinam qua adducit in esse omnia entia. Quod autem et nomen boni de quo predictum est, et nomen entis de quo nunc dicit, et nomen vite, et nomen sapientie de quibus subsequenter⁶⁸⁹ dicit, dicta de Deo significant nobis divinos processus et quos divinos processus <232rb> manifestat consequenter. Boni enim nominatio comprehendit et manifestat generaliter omnes et totos processus id est operationes deitatis omnia causantis in omnia et tota causata, et etiam in non entia, ea in entia vocando et producendo et in sui designationem ea ordinando, et omnia mala, que in quantum mala non entia sunt, intuitu suo dissipando. Et

⁶⁸⁷ *Exodus* 3:14.

⁶⁸⁸ quantumcumque] quamcumque M

⁶⁸⁹ subsequenter] sapienter M

propter hanc generalem manifestationem merito preponitur⁶⁹⁰ laus divina per nominationem bonitatis ei que fit per nominationem entis⁶⁹¹ vel alias nominationes; ea enim que entis nominatio extendit se in omnia entia secundum quod entia sunt, et ea que vite in omnia viventia in quantum talia, et ea que sapientie in omnia apprehensiva. Et si enim omnia in sapientia fecerit Deus in apprehensivis tamen potentiis plus refulget divina sapientia et ei vicinius appropinquant. Quasi igitur diceret bene intendit sermo laudare processus deitatis in quantum causantis substantias et essentias per nomen entis et non divinam substantiam secundum quod est in se. Subiungit: *Etenim divina nominatio per se boni manifestans totos processus cause omnium extenditur per significationem videlicet totorum processuum et in entia et in non entia et est in se videlicet super entia et super non entia*. Sive enim intelligantur per⁶⁹² ‘non entia’ ea que pure sunt non entia, sive materialia, in quantum materialia et quodammodo entia et quodammodo vero non entia, sive corporalia, que respectu incorporalium quasi non sunt⁶⁹³, sive mala que in quantum talia non⁶⁹⁴ sunt, et per entia intelligantur⁶⁹⁵ hiis opposita, bonitatis processus se extendunt ad utraque omnia et super utraque est in seipsa bonitas divina. *Que autem entis*, nominatio⁶⁹⁶ videlicet, *extenditur in omnia entia*, in quantum videlicet entia sunt, *et est super omnia entia*. *Que autem vite*, nominatio videlicet extenditur *in omnia viventia et est super viventia*. *Que autem sapientie* nominatio scilicet *extenditur in omnia intellectualia* id est in omnes angelos qui licet respectu nostri sint intelligibiles, respectu tamen Dei sunt intellectuales, *et rationalia*, id est humanas animas, *et sensitiva*, id est irrationalia sensibus utentia, *et est super omnia hec* id est intellectualia, rationalia et sensitiva.

Hos itaque beneficos processus significant hec prae-dictae nominationes ita quod simul insinuant et significant super excellentiam divinitatis ad ea ad que se extendunt iidem processus. Intentio igitur sui sermonis est laudare divinas nominationes in quantum sunt manifestative ipsius providentie extendentis se ad creaturas et non in quantum manifestative ipsius supersubstantialis essentie ut est in se. Quod planius recolligit dicens *has igitur divinas nominationes manifestativas providentie desiderat sermo laudare; non enim repromittit sermo videlicet noster enarrare ipsius supersubstantialem <232va> bonitatem* seu secundum aliam lecturam “per se supersubstantialem bonitatem”⁶⁹⁷, *et substantiam* seu

⁶⁹⁰ preponitur] proponitur M, Mz

⁶⁹¹ entis om. M, Mz

⁶⁹² per] quod M

⁶⁹³ incorporalium ... sunt om. M

⁶⁹⁴ non om. M

⁶⁹⁵ intelligantur om. M

⁶⁹⁶ nominatio] nomina M

⁶⁹⁷ seu ... bonitatem om. M, non legitur in *Dionysiaca* (p. 324).

essentiam, *et vitam et sapientiam* supersubstantiales videlicet *ipsius supersubstantialis deitatis*, seu secundum aliam lecturam⁶⁹⁸ “per se supersubstantialis deitatis”. Bonitatem inquam et substantiam et vitam et sapientiam supersubstantialem *supercollocatam* seu superfirmatam *in absconditis ut eloquia aiunt* id est in luce inaccessibili que propter inaccessibilitatem etiam quandoque tenebra dicitur, *super omnem bonitatem et deitatem* angelorum videlicet et hominum iustorum, *et substantiam et vitam*. Sed laudat sermo videlicet noster per nominationem boni *providentiam expressam bonificam* id est inquantum expressa est et manifestata per bonificentias in creaturas. *Providentiam* dico *bonitatem superexcellenter et omnium bonorum causam* hoc est inquantum ipsa providentia⁶⁹⁹ est bonitas superexcellenter et omnium bonorum causa. Nomine enim boni laudatur divina providentia, ut in se superexcellens omnem bonitatem, bonitas et omnium bonorum causa. Laudat eam, resume, *entem*⁷⁰⁰ *et vitam et sapientiam* id est laudat eam per has tres nominationes: *substantificam causam* per nomen entis videlicet, *et vivificam* per nomen vite, et *sapientie datricem* per nomen videlicet sapientie. Causam inquam substantificam participantium *substantia* et vivificam participantium *vita* et causam sapientie datricem *participantium intellectu et ratione et sensu*. Habent enim etiam sensitiva naturalem providentiam⁷⁰¹ que nomine sapientie non incongrue potest comprehendi.

Aliqua autem translatio adiungit adiectivum ‘supercollocationis’⁷⁰² ad hoc substantivum ‘deitas’ propter articulum subiunctivum in greco genitive positum relatum ad hoc nomen ‘deitatis’ qui articulus⁷⁰³ si transferatur in latinum et dictum adiectivum ponatur⁷⁰⁴ accusative sicut est in greco non videbatur sermo servare congruitatem latinam. Erit enim sermo talis “non enim enarrare per se supersubstantialem bonitatem et substantiam et vitam et sapientiam per se supersubstantialis deitatis repromittit eius que super omnem bonitatem et deitatem et substantiam et vitam in absconditis, ut eloquia aiunt, *supercollocatam*”. Sed si pro ‘supercollocatam’ ponatur nominative ‘supercollocata’ vel verbaliter ‘supercollocatur’ erit et sensus verus et sermo latinus congruus. Sed quia dictum adiectivum in greco adicitur sicut nos illud superius adiectivus ut latine loqueremur dimisimus translationem articuli subiunctivi, que dimissio nihil impedit sensum nec ordinationem ut sunt in greco. In greco autem satis congrue diceretur “sermo non enarrat bonitatem deitatis eius que habet ipsam

⁶⁹⁸ Eriugena, Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 324).

⁶⁹⁹ providentiam] prudentia M, Mz

⁷⁰⁰ entem] ens *codd.*

⁷⁰¹ providentiam] prudentiam M, Mz

⁷⁰² aliqua ... translatio: *non legitur in Dionysiaca* (p. 324).

⁷⁰³ articulus] articulis M, L

⁷⁰⁴ ponatur] ponitur M

supercollocatam”.

Quia autem dixit secundum eloquia divinas nominationes predictas significare varios et diversos processus in creaturas et posset <232vb> aliquis minus sapiens ex hoc conicere diversitatem substantialem ex parte processivi, removet hoc auctor dicens *non autem aiunt* eloquia videlicet *esse aliud per se bonum et aliud ens et aliud vitam vel sapientiam* seu quam sapientiam. Omnino enim sunt hec idem ex parte nominati, *neque aiunt* eloquia resume *multas causas* primas videlicet *et alias deitates* ita videlicet quod has *superexcellentes* et has *subiectas adductivas* in esse videlicet aliorum causatorum scilicet ut aiunt multi gentiles et heretici. *Sed aiunt, repete, totos bonos processus et divinas nominationes laudatas a nobis unius Dei, et hanc quidem* nominationem videlicet *esse manifestativam omnino perfecte providentiae unius dei, has autem* nominationes videlicet divinas esse supple manifestativas *universaliorum eiusdem* unius videlicet Dei *et particulariorum* providentiarum videlicet. Boni enim nominatio, ut supra tactum est, comprehendit totaliter et manifestat omnis divine providentie processus ad omnes creaturas que et simul et divisim bone sunt et propter Dei bonitatem adducte in esse. Alie autem nominationes significant divinos processus non ita generaliter sed particularius, inter quas tamen quedam significant universaliores et quedam particulariores. Nominatio enim vite significat divinum processum in omnia viventia secundum quod viventia, et est nominatio universalior quia comprehendit et plantas; nominatio vero sapientie non attingit ad illas et ideo est nominatio particularior; et providentie particularioris. Sunt autem substantie nominationem, divina nominatio, per se supersubstantialem, sapientie datricem, singule dictiones in greco composite.

(Dionysiaca 327-331) *Et quidem dicat quis: pro quo, ente vitam et vita⁷⁰⁵ sapientiam superextenta entibus quidem viventia, his autem quecumque vivunt sensitiva, his rationalia, et rationalibus intellectus superexcellunt, et circa deum sunt et magis ipsi approximant; et quidem oportebat maioribus ex deo donis participantia⁷⁰⁶ et meliora esse et reliquis superexcellere?*

Sed si quidem sine substantia et sine vita quis supponeret intellectualia, bene utique haberet ratio. Si autem et sunt divini intellectus super re- <233ra> -liqua entia, et vivunt super alia viventia, et intelligunt et cognoscunt super sensum et rationem et praeter omnia entia pulchrum et bonum appetunt et participant, ipsi magis sunt circa per se bonum,

⁷⁰⁵ vitam et vita] vite et vitam *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁰⁶ participantia] participantium *Dionysiaca*

abundantius ipsis participantes, et plures⁷⁰⁷ et maiores ex ipso Deo donationes accipientes.

Quemadmodum rationalia sensitivis⁷⁰⁸ superexcellunt, plenius ditata superabundantia⁷⁰⁹ rationis, et haec sensu et alia vita. Et est, ut existimo, hoc verum quod⁷¹⁰ magis uno et infinito datore Deo participantia, magis sunt ipsi proximiora et diviniora residuis⁷¹¹.

Quia auctor tangens quasdam divinas nominationes de quibus consequenter post nominationem boni intendit tractare, primo inter eas nominat ens et deinde vitam et tertio sapientiam. Et ex ordine nominum videtur insinuare ordinem creaturarum in⁷¹² quas proprie extenduntur divini processus signati per ipsas nominationes. In ordine autem creaturarum sunt priores et digniores que Deo proximiores ut intelligencie.

Posset alicui videri quod auctor ex ordine nominum inconvenienter preferret in ordine rerum solum entia viventibus et solum viventia sapientibus, cum e contrario se habeat ordo rerum quod utentes intelligentia sunt superiores rationalibus et rationales sensitivis et sensitivis viventibus et viventes entibus. Introduce igitur auctor primo sic dubitantem et opponentem, consequenter subiungens solutionem⁷¹³. Et ait: *et quidem dicat quis pro quo ente vitam et vita sapientiam superextenta⁷¹⁴*, hoc est pro quo ente super extento vitam id est extento super vitam et pro qua vita super extenta sapientiam id est extenta super sapientiam. Or- <233rb> -dinas⁷¹⁵ tu, Dionisi, subintelligere sic sermonem superiorem dicens “*et ens et vitam et sapientiam et cetera*” que sequuntur usque ad sensum participantium. Si enim convenienter ordinas sermonem, ordini rerum correspondet ordo nominum, sed e contrario se habet ordo rerum. Unde sequitur: *Entibus quidem viventia, hiis autem quecumque vivunt sensitiva et hiis id est sensitivis rationalia et rationalibus intellectus id est angeli superexcellunt, et circa deum sunt immediatius videlicet ceteris nominatis, et magis approximant ipsi id est Deo vel secundum aliam lecturam “magis approximant (Deo videlicet) ipsis”⁷¹⁶ id est ceteris nominatis. Et bene secundum dictum ordinem superexcellunt. Et quidem oportebat participantia maioribus donis ex Deo, et meliora esse et reliquis id est hiis qui participant donis minoribus superexcellere. Angeli autem, qui sunt intellectus, participant*

⁷⁰⁷ plures] plus *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁰⁸ sensitivis] sensibilibus *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁰⁹ superabundantia] superabundantiam *Dionysiaca*

⁷¹⁰ quod] quam *Dionysiaca*

⁷¹¹ residuis *om. Dionysiaca*

⁷¹² in *om. M*

⁷¹³ solutionem] solutioni *M*

⁷¹⁴ superextenta] superextendatur *M*

⁷¹⁵ ordinas] ordinans *M*

⁷¹⁶ vel ... lecturam: *non legitur in Dionysiaca, p. 328).*

donis maioribus quam rationalia et alia prenomina et sic secundum ordinem posterius hic nominata participant maioribus donis quam ea que prius eis hic nominantur.

Hac⁷¹⁷ itaque dubitatione et oppositione posita subiungit auctor solutionem. Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum quod sic dubitans et opponens intelligit per nomen entis ut preinsinuat est solum entia carentia vita, sensu, ratione et intellectu ut sunt lapides et huiusmodi; et per nomen vite solum viventia carentia sensu, ratione et intellectu ut sunt plante; secundum quem intellectum dictorum nominum angeli carent essentia et vita. Et hoc supposito firma esset predicta oppositio cum nullum sit solum ens precellit viventi nec sit solum vivens sapienti. Auctor vero intelligit per nomen entis universaliter omne ens in quantum ens⁷¹⁸, et per nomen vite omnem vitam tam plantativam quam sensitivam et rationalem et intellectivam. Et cum superiores participant inferiorum proprietatibus excellentius illis, ut in 'Angelica hierarchia' pretactum est, angeli excellentius sunt et excellentius vivunt omni alio ente et vivente et prius naturaliter sunt, deinde vivunt et consequenter intelligunt et excellentius ratione et sensu cognoscunt. Itaque propter hanc naturalem superextensionem entis ad vitam, et esse ad vivere et vite, et vivere ad sapientiam et sapere, et propter naturalem superextensionem intellectus ad rationem, et rationis ad sensum que tria hic comprehenduntur sub nomine sapientie. Ordinavit auctor predicto modo convenienter valde suum sermonem superiorem.

Oppositionem igitur sui sermonis oppugnativam solvit breviter insinuans se aliter intelligere predicta nomina entis et vite quam ea intellexerit opponens. Sic inquit *sed si quidem sine substantia* seu sine essentia et sine vita quis supponeret intellectualia, sicut supponit predicto modo opponens, *bene utique haberet ratio*. Sic videlicet opponens auctor autem non sic sup- <233va> -ponit sed, ut pretactum est, intellectualia maxime participare essentia et vita concordans cum adversario de preminencia intellectualium ad ceteras creaturas et de eorum approximatione ad Deum. Unde subdit *si autem et divini intellectus sunt super reliqua entia et vivunt super alia viventia* habentes videlicet essentiam et vitam aliis entibus et viventibus excellentius, *et intelligunt veritatem* videlicet absque discursu et super discursum rationis a cognitis ad incognita; *et cognoscunt super sensum et rationem* id est cognitione nobiliori quam sit sensitiva et rationalis cognoscunt sensibilia et ratione perceptibilia; *et appetunt pulchrum et bonum et participant pulchro* videlicet et bono; *preter omnia entia* id est excellentius omnibus aliis entibus. Si inquam ita est *ipsi divini videlicet intellectus magis sunt circa per se bonum, participant* per se bono videlicet *habundantius ipsis* id est ceteris

⁷¹⁷ Hac] hic M

⁷¹⁸ in quantum ens om. M

creaturis, *et accipientes plures et maiores donationes ex ipso per se bono videlicet, quemadmodum et rationalia sensitivis superexcellunt plenius ditata* id est per hoc quod ditantur plenius *super habundantia rationis. Et hec* id est sensitiva ditata resume *sensu, et alia* id est plante ditata resume *vita* vegetali videlicet sola sine sensu et ratione superexcellunt sese videlicet secundum ordinem. Divini igitur intellectus preminent rationalibus et Deo sunt proximiores, et illa sensibilibus et illa sola vita vegetabili participantibus et illa solummodo entibus. Et non solum in hoc concordat auctor cum predicto opponente sed et in hoc quod consequenter adiunxit: oportere maioribus donis participantia reliquis esse meliora et excellentiora. Unde subiungit *et est ut existimo hoc verum quam magis participantia Deo uno et infinito datore, magis sunt ipsi proximiora et diviniore residuis*. Sed de hiis excellentiis divinorum intellectuum plenius dictum est in “Angelica hierarchia”.

Quod autem diximus sine substantia, sine vita, plenius ditata, infinito datore, dictum est in greco per singulas dictiones compositas velut si latine diceretur ‘insubstantialia’, ‘invitalia’, ‘pleniditata’, ‘infiniti datore’.

(Dionysiaca 331-335) *Quia et de his diximus, age per se bonum ut bene ens et entium omnium substantificum laudemus. Quod est totius esse secundum virtutem supersubstantialem est substantificatrix causa, et conditrix entis ex- <233vb> -sistentiae hypostasis, substantie, nature, principium et mensura seculorum et temporum entitas, et seculum entium, tempus factorum, esse qualitercumque existentibus, generatio qualitercumque factis. Ex ente seculum⁷¹⁹ et substantia et ens, et tempus et generatio et factum, in existentibus entia, et qualiter existentia et subsistentia.*

Etenim Deus non aliquo modo est ens, sed simpliciter et incircumdeterminate, totum in se ipso esse coaccipiens et praeaccipiens. Propter quod et rex dicitur seculorum, ut in ipso et circa ipsum omni esse et ente et subsistente. Et neque erat neque erit, neque factus est neque fit neque fiet, magis autem neque est, sed ipse est esse existentibus et non entia solum sed et⁷²⁰ ipsum esse entium ex praeseculariter ente. Ipse enim est seculum seculorum existens ante secula.

Ostenso qualiter sumendum ens et vitam et sapientiam in laudem divinam, et soluta oppositione contra ordinem sui sermonis et solutionis, occasione tacto parumper de angelicis

⁷¹⁹ seculum om. *Dionysiaca*

⁷²⁰ et om. *Dionysiaca*

excellenciis, quia⁷²¹ de hiis alias plenius dixit hiis, hic omissis, transit ad propositum id est ad laudandum Deum ex entis nominatione. Et ait *quia diximus et de hiis* id est de angelicis excellentiis alias videlicet *age laudemus per se bonum ut bene ens et substantificum*, seu si latine diceretur essentificum, *omnium entium*. Nomen enim entis, secundum quod per⁷²² ipsum a nobis laudatur Deus, significat bonificum eius processum essentie factivum insinuans simul ipsum vere ens, hoc est non ab alio ens⁷²³, super omnem essentiam et substantiam.

Hoc autem plenius explanans, subiungit: *Qui est* seu ens masculine dictum in greco supersubstantiale seu superessentiale, id est superexcedens omnem essentiam et substantiam, est causa substantificatrix id est essentie factrix. Nomen enim usie, id est substantie, sumptum est in greco a verbo essendi. Hic autem genitivus *totius esse* potest adiungi huic dictioni *supersubstantiale* qui diceretur ens super- <234ra> -substantiale totius esse id est essentiale super omne esse, vel potest adiungi huic dictioni *substantificatrix* ‘totius esse’⁷²⁴ quasi diceretur: *ens est causa substantificatrix totius esse*. Similiter hec determinatio *secundum virtutem*, id est secundum potentiam, potest adiungi vel ad *supersubstantiale* vel ad *substantificatrix* causa. Et est utroque modo sensus competens cum ens, qui est Deus, secundum propriam virtutem sit supersubstantiale et secundum propriam virtutem causa substantificatrix. Et adverte quod nomini entis masculine sumpto adiungit supersubstantiale neutraliter dictum, forte per hoc insinuans divine essentie superexcellenciam et abstractionem ab omni accidentali vel aliud aliquid quod nos latet.

Sequitur *et conditrix entis*. Hoc est ‘qui est’, seu ens supersubstantiale, est causa substantificatrix totius esse et conditrix entis. Vel distinguatur sic sermo ‘qui est’ est causa substantificatrix et conditrix totius videlicet esse et quinque genitivi sequentes adiungantur huic nomini *principium sic entis, existentie, hypostasis, substantie* seu essentie, *nature*. *Principium* est videlicet ‘qui est’ in quantum enim ens est sui extensivus et processivus⁷²⁵ in creaturas in quantum sunt entes. Et per se accidentibus enti participantibus ad ens autem necessario consequitur actus existendi qui est existentia, et hypostasis id est individuum subsistans, et permanentia in essendo que dicitur substantia vel essentia, et nasci vel natum esse id est a non esse adduci in esse que adductio seu natio et res in quantum nata a nascendo dicitur natura. Ad esse quoque sequitur mensura. Mensura autem carens termino, in quantum huiusmodi apud grecos dicitur ‘aioon’ quasi semper ens, pro quo nos dicimus ‘seculum’. Privatio autem termini in essendo aut est privatio utriusque termini, id est principii et finis, aut

⁷²¹ quia *om.* M

⁷²² per] in M

⁷²³ ens *om.* M

⁷²⁴ totius esse *om.* M, Mz

⁷²⁵ processivus] processus M

privatio finis solum, quia in rerum natura non est habens finem et carens principio licet hoc sit falso imaginabile. Carens autem principio et fine necessario omnia habet simul, nec transit aliquo modo a fuisse in esse vel ab esse in fore, quia nihil ab ipso secedit nec aliquid ei advenit, sed totum simul possidet, et hec similitas ut ita dicam essendi et omnia possidendi carens principio et fine. Et eo quod est, fuisse et fore, est seculum principale quod nos dicimus eternitatem. Nec est aliud secundum hunc modum seculum et quod ipso mensuratur sed illud est ipsum seculum. Posset autem imaginari falsa fictio carens principio et fine non tamen habens totum simul sicut imaginati sunt qui posuerunt mundum sempiternum principio et fine carentem.

Quod autem caret fine et non principio potest intelligi totum possidere simul a principio essendi, ut forte est angelis aut omnis aut aliquis. Et huiusmodi mensura secundo dicitur seculum ut potest intelligi non totum possidere simul sed habere esse successivum ut habent demones et mundus sensibilis quorum mensura tertio etiam dicitur seculum. Convenienter itaque intentioni nominis greci <234rb> hiis modis dicitur seculum licet inveniatur aliqui dictum pro determinata mensura. Mensura autem successivorum et carens fine et terminata fine⁷²⁶ apud nos dicitur communiter tempus, licet in greco sint diversa nomina has diversitates mensure successive determinantia. Seculum itaque, tertio modo dictum, et tempus in quantum carens termino idem sunt. Hec itaque mensure consequentes seculum primo modo⁷²⁷ dictum id est eternitatem, proprie procedunt a seculo primo et eternitate sicut ab ipso primo esse ipsa creata esse, hiis sequentibus mensuris mensurata.

Laudans itaque per se bonum ab ente et per se consequentibus esse, adiungit *et mensura seculorum*. Ens enim, seu ‘qui est’ in quantum ens, est seculum id est eternitas mensura seculorum tam secundo quam tertio modo dictorum. Et *entitas temporum* quia ab eius entitate eterna dependet entitas successiva et ipse est per efficientiam videlicet et continentiam in esse. *Seculum entium* que in quantum entia non habent terminum cum entia in quantum entia non transeunt in non entia. *Tempus factorum* id est habentium esse successivum et terminabile; *esse qualitercumque existentibus* sive videlicet semper existant sive non semper; *generatio qualitercumque factis*. *Ex ente* id est ex preiacente aliquo seculum *et substantia et ens et tempus et generatio et factum entia in existentibus et existentia et subsistentia qualitercumque*. Deus enim (aliud exemplar ‘eternarum rationum’⁷²⁸) faciens omnia causaliter et effective et conservative et superexcellenter est illa, ut secularium seculum superseculariter, et substantiarum substantia supersubstantialiter, et ens entium

⁷²⁶ et terminata fine *om. M*

⁷²⁷ modo *om. M*

⁷²⁸ eternarum rationum: *non legitur in Dionysiaca* (p. 333)

superessentialiter, et tempus temporalium supertemporaliter, et generatio generabilium ingenite et supergenerationem, et factum factorum super factionem et sic consequenter in singulis existentibus. Ipse est ipsa essentia supereminenter et ipsa existentia sive existant per se sive in altero et subsistentia tam superioribus in ordine nature quam accidentibus. Et forte intelligit hic per entia que sunt supra successionem et per existentia que sunt sub successione et per subsistentia in utrisque subordinata.

Ab ente igitur laudamus Deum cum nomine entis, eum nominamus designantes eius substantificum processum in entia sive secularia sive temporalia. Et iterum cum nominamus eum a necessario convenientibus ad esse sive superseculare siveulare sive temporale. Et iterum cum nominamus ipsum nominibus creaturarum ut cum dicimus ipsum esse ignem vel lapidem vel huiusmodi. Non enim intendimus dicere ipsum esse⁷²⁹ hec, sed ipsum eternaliter prehabere hec in se in eternis eorum rationibus et ipsa in⁷³⁰ illis eternis rationibus eternaliter preexistisse et ab illis processisse in esse in se ipsis. Cum igitur dicimus ipsum esse aliquid entium substantificum eius proces- <234va> -sum in esse⁷³¹, illius entis insinuamus. Quod manifestans subiungit *Etenim Deus non aliquid est ens*, ut videlicet sit hoc vel illud ens,⁷³² *sed simpliciter et incircumdeterminate*, quia sicut ipse est⁷³³ per-se-bonum et non hoc vel illud bonum sed ipsum bonum et ipsa bonitas, nullo alio circumdeterminata, sic ipse est per-se-ens et non hoc vel illud ens sed ipsum ens, nullo alio circumdeterminatum. Deus dico *coaccipiens et preaccipiens totum esse in seipso* in eternis videlicet rationibus simul eternaliter habens et, antequam in seipsis sint, omnia totum esse omnium habens, inde producens esse eorum in seipsis. *Propter quod*, id est propter hoc quod predictum est, *et rex dicitur seculorum, ut omni esse et ente et subsistente in ipso* in eternis videlicet rationibus et *circa ipsum* per⁷³⁴ processum videlicet ab ipsis in proprium esse. *Et neque erat neque erit*, quia nihil ei preteritum nec futurum, *neque factus est neque fit neque fiet* licet dicatur generatio et tempus et factum sed solum est eternaliter. *Magis autem neque est* quia super omne esse est *sed ipse est esse existentibus* id est causans et conservans esse omnibus existentibus ac per hoc super omne esse.

Et quod causative intelligendum sit quod ipse est esse existentibus, explanat consequenter dicens *Et non solum entia sed et ipsum esse entium ex ente preseculariter* id est ex Deo qui est eternaliter. Quod autem bene dixit preseculariter manifestat adiungens: *Ipse*

⁷²⁹ esse om. M

⁷³⁰ in om. M

⁷³¹ esse] illis M

⁷³² ut ... ens om. M

⁷³³ est om. M, L

⁷³⁴ per om. M

enim Deus videlicet *est seculum seculorum*, id est eternitas ex qua sunt secula et tempora, *existens ante secula*. Bonifici itaque processus divine providentie in entia secundum quod entia et in esse entium laudantur, et per ens et esse simpliciter absque determinatione, et per ens et esse particulariter cum appositione, et per necessario consequentia ad ens et esse inquantum ens et esse. Vel preseculare vel seculare vel temporale dicta de Deo per bonum autem dictum de Deo laudantur iidem bonifici processus, et in similis omnes bonifici processus in quascumque creaturas secundum ipsas, utpote in angelum secundum angelicam naturam et in hominem secundum humanitatem et in leonem secundum leonitatem et sic de aliis cum extensione huius nominationis et in non entia ut supra dictum est.

(Dionysiaca 335-338) *Resumentes igitur dicamus quia⁷³⁵ omnibus existentibus et seculis esse a praeexistente et omne quidem seculum et tempus ex ipso. Omnis autem et seculi et temporis et omnis qualitercumque entis, qui praeest principium et causa.*

Et omnia ipso participant et a nullo entium recedit. Et ipse est ante omnia et omnia in ipso constiterunt. Et simpliciter si quid qualitercumque est, in preexistente et est et intelligitur et salvatur. Et ante alia ipso participantia esse propositum est, et est ipsum secundum ipsum esse antiquius eo quod per se vitam esse, et per se sapientiam esse, et per se similitudinem divinam esse, et alia quibuscumque entia participantia, ante omnia ipsa ipso esse participant. Magis autem et ipsa participant secundum ipsa omnia, quibus entia participant, eo quod est secundum quod ipsum esse participant. Et nihil est ens cuius non est substantia et seculum per se esse.

<234vb> Resumens proximo dicta et si non eodem verborum scemate eodem tamen sensu secundum rem adicit de prioritare essendi ut per hoc sit evidens ordinis congruentia inferre tractandi. Ait itaque *resumentes igitur proximo dicta videlicet dicamus quam omnibus existentibus* seu entibus *et seculis* est suple *esse a preexistente* seu a preente id est a Deo sine principio ente, dante esse omnibus principiatis et essendi mensuris. *Et omne quidem seculum et tempus ex ipso* preexistente videlicet. *Omnis autem et seculi et temporis et omnis qualitercumque entis qui preest* seu preens *principium et causa. Et omnia participant ipso* id est preente cuius videlicet participatione sunt, *et a nullo entium recedit* ut eius videlicet presentia permaneant in esse quantum eis convenit. *Et ipse est ante omnia* prioritare eternitatis sine principio *et omnia constituerunt in ipso*, in eternis videlicet rationibus sine principio. *Et*

⁷³⁵ quia] quam *Dionysiaca*

simpliciter, si quid qualitercumque est, in preexistente seu preente, et est et intelligitur et salvatur. In eternis enim rationibus, in preexistente Deo, omne qualitercumque in seipso ens eternaliter est, et inde habet suum esse sive seculare sive temporale et in illis rationibus intelligitur eternaliter ab ipso preente. Et a defecatis intelligentiis creatis intelligitur purius in illis eternis rationibus quam in se ipso, et ipsius preentis visio per eternas rationes et refulgentia super illud est eius speculo.

In hiis autem verbis prepositis posset videri eiusdem inutilis repetitio. In quo enim est aliud alicui esse a preexistente et illud esse ex ipso preexistente et illud preexistens esse principium <235ra> et causam illius, item quid aliud est omnibus preexistere et ante omnia esse. In operibus tamen artificii et nature possumus videre horum diversitatem statue enim in quantum statue est⁷³⁶ esse a statuifare. Statua tamen unde lignum vel lapis non est ex⁷³⁷ ipso sed ex opere, nec lignum autem vel lapis, licet sit ex natura ipsa, tamen natura non principiat et causat illud ex nihilo. A Deo autem, cuius nomen est ens et preens, est esse formale omnibus et ex ipso est omnibus esse materiale et ipse omnia principiavit et causavit ex nihilo quod longe est a potentia artificis et nature. ‘Preesse’ autem communiter accipitur ad omne genus prioritatis; ‘esse’ autem ante omnia specialiter accipitur pro⁷³⁸ preexistentia eternitatis. Hiis itaque resumtis, adicit de prioritare esse dicens ‘ipsum esse’. Esse prius et antiquius secundum quod prius et antiquius est a quo non convertitur consequentia omnibus aliis Deo participantibus utpote eo quod est vivere et eo quod est sapere et eo quod est Dei similitudinem esse et ceteris. Si enim vivit, est et non convertitur; et si sapit, est et non convertitur et sic de ceteris a Deo productis et ipso⁷³⁹ participantibus. Unde sequitur *et ante alia participantia ipso*, id est Deo, *esse propositum est* quod aliquid videlicet proponitur quod sequitur et a quo non convertitur consequentia, *et ipsum esse videlicet secundum ipsum esse est antiquius* predicto videlicet modo antiquitatis *eo quod per se vitam esse et per se sapientiam esse et per se similitudinem divinam esse* hoc est esse secundum seipsum consideratum antiquius est vita et sapientia et Dei similitudine secundum seipsas consideratis.

Et alia entia a tribus predictis videlicet participantia quibuscumque utpote celum et celestia participantia motu circulari et figura spherica et aliis convenientibus ipsis, et elementa participantia ponderositate vel levitate et commiscibilitate et aliis sibi propriis, et elementata participantia singula singulis sibi naturaliter convenientibus.

Alia inquam entia sic quibuscumque naturaliter sibi convenientibus participantia ante

⁷³⁶ est] et M

⁷³⁷ ex] in M

⁷³⁸ pro om. M

⁷³⁹ ipso] ipsis M

omnia ipsa sic videlicet participata *participant ipso esse* et non solum participatur esse ab omnibus ante omnia alia participata sed et magis ab omnibus⁷⁴⁰ participatur aliis; enim, omnibus ablati, ipsum esse remanet. Unde sequitur *Magis autem et cetera*, et est constructio sic ordinanda et *ipsa omnia*, id est vita, sapientia, similitudo divina et alia entia, *participant secundum se ipsa quibus entia participant* hoc est quibus ipsa singula secundum quod determinata entia sunt participant. *Magis autem participant eo quod est ipsum esse secundum ipsum. Et nihil est ens, cuius per se esse seu ipsum esse non est substantia* seu essentia et *seculum* ac per hoc magis participans eo quod est esse omnibus aliis participatis. Omnis enim entis esse,⁷⁴¹ in quantum esse consideratum, necessario conservat enti substantiam et essentiam et essendi mensuram et quasi earum conservativo ei quod est esse attribuuntur.

(Dionysiaca 338-343) *Omnibus igitur convenienter aliis principalius <235rb>, ut ens, deus ex antiquiore aliarum ipsius donationum⁷⁴² laudatur. Etenim preesse prehabens et superhabens esse omnia ipsum⁷⁴³, aio secundum ipsum esse, presubstitit, et esse ipsi omne qualitercumque ens substituit.*

Et quidem principia entium omnia, ipso esse participantia, sunt et principia sunt et primum⁷⁴⁴ sunt deinde principia sunt. Et si vult⁷⁴⁵ viventium ut viventium, principium dicere per-se-vitam; et similium ut similium, per-se-similitudinem; et unitorum ut unitorum, per-se-unionem; et ordinatorum ut ordinatorum, per-se-ordinationem; et aliorum quaecumque hec aliquo aut hoc aliquo aut utrisque aut multis participantia hec aliquid vel hoc aliquid vel utraque vel multa per se participationes invenies ipso esse primum ipsas participantes. Et esse primum quid existentes, deinde huius alicuius⁷⁴⁶ vel huius alicuius⁷⁴⁷ principia existentes et participare esse et existentes et participatas.

Si autem hec participatione esse sunt, multo quidem magis ipsis participantia. Primam igitur per se esse donationem per-se-superbonitas⁷⁴⁸ proponens⁷⁴⁹, antiquiore prima participationum laudatur. Et est ex ipsa et in ipsa et ipsum esse, et entium principia et entia omnia et qualitercumque esse continentia et haec irretentive et convolute et unitive.

⁷⁴⁰ ante ... omnibus om. M

⁷⁴¹ esse om. M

⁷⁴² donationum] donationem *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴³ ipsum] omne *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴⁴ principia ... primum: om. *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴⁵ vult] velis *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴⁶ alicuius] alterius *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴⁷ alicuius] alterius *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴⁸ per-se-superbonitas om. *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁴⁹ proponens] preponens *Dionysiaca*

Ostensa prioritatem eius quod est esse ad alia participata, concludit ex ea quod con-
 <235va> -venienter laudatur Deus prius ut ens quam ut vita vel sapientia vel ut aliquid aliud
 consequentium⁷⁵⁰ divinorum nominum, cum esse sit ipsius donatio aliis ipsius donationibus
 antiquior et prior. Unde ait *omnibus igitur aliis* quibus videlicet laudatur Deus *convenienter*
principalius seu antiquius id est prius, est hoc videlicet quod *Deus laudatur ut ens ex*
antiquiore aliarum ipsius donationum. Cum enim in humana laude Dei dicitur Deus, ens
 attribuitur ei processus in largitionem esse quod, ut preostensum est, prius est omnibus aliis
 predicabilibus de creaturis.

Considerans autem latinum sermonem tantum acciperet de facili hanc dictionem
 ‘principalius’ adverbialiter, cum tamen sit in greco nomen, unde oportet facere suppletionem
 ut fecimus; vel quod nos transtulimus⁷⁵¹ in ‘ut’ transferre in ‘quod’ et erit planius sermo: hoc
 enim est ‘principalius’ quod Deus laudatur ens ex antiquiore aliarum donationum ipsius. Et
 bene dicitur esse antiquior ipsius donatio.

Et enim prehabens Deus videlicet *preesse*, id est esse ante omnia sine principio, *et*
super habens esse omnia vel secundum aliud exemplar ‘esse omne’⁷⁵², *super habens dico*⁷⁵³ in
 eternis omnium rationibus; *presubstituit*, id est ante alia statuit⁷⁵⁴ *ipsum esse secundum ipsum*
aio, hoc est ipsum esse non in quantum hoc vel illud esse, sed in quantum esse abstractum ab
 omni particulari esse. Et *substituit ipsi esse* hoc est statuit post ipsum esse *omne*
qualitercumque ens prius enim, ut preostensum est, non tempore sed prioritatem non
 convertendi convenientiam. Est ipsum esse secundum se consideratum a preente de⁷⁵⁵ Deo, et
 consequenter est ens particulatum. Aliqua differentia utpote ea quod est non in altero ens vel
 in altero ens, vel eo quod est vivere vel non vivere, vel non quod esse vel ens sit genus, cum
 de diversis dictum non omnino univoce sed omonime dicatur.

Ad declarationem autem maiorem, quod esse, in quantum esse, sit antiquior
 donationum Dei, adiungit *principia entium*. Qualitercumque dicta principia sive ut prima inter
 entia sunt, sive ut quatuor causae, dicuntur principia participare esse et prius participare esse
 quam participatione. Si enim principia entium, prius omnibus participatis, participant esse,
 multo fortius etiam que sunt post principia. Unde sequitur: *Et quidem principia entium omnia*
*ipso esse participantia et sunt, et principia sunt,*⁷⁵⁶ *et primum sunt deinde principia sunt*. Et si

⁷⁵⁰ consequentium] convenientium M, L

⁷⁵¹ transtulimus] sustulimus M

⁷⁵² Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 338)

⁷⁵³ dico *om.* M

⁷⁵⁴ id ... statuit *om.* M

⁷⁵⁵ de *om.* M

⁷⁵⁶ et principia sunt *om.* M

quis vult dicere abstracta et in se considerata, principia concretorum inveniet ipsa abstracta prius participantia esse et deinde esse principia concretorum. Utpote si quis dicat vitam in se consideratam esse principium viventium inquantum viventium, inveniet ipsam vitam prius participantem esse et deinde esse principium viventium et sic de consimilibus. Unde subiungit: *Et si vult aliquis videlicet dicere per se vitam, id est vitam inquantum vitam, principium viventium ut viventium, id est inquantum viventium, et per se similitudinem similibus ut similibus et per se unionem unitorum ut unitorum et per se ordinem ordinatorum ut ordinatorum.* Vult dicere videlicet <235vb> singulum horum singulorum ab hiis denominatorum inquantum talium esse principium et 'hoc aliquid' vel 'hoc aliquid' utpote albedinem vel nigredinem *vel utraque* id est duo aliqua simul, vel *multa per se participationes* id est abstracta in se considerata participata a concretis et denominatis ab ipsis abstractis que abstracta, hic vocat per se⁷⁵⁷ participationes et adiungit appositively ad predicta neutraliter. Et si inquam vult aliud⁷⁵⁸ aliquis huius per se participationes unam vel aliam vel duas vel multas dicere esse principia *aliorum quecumque* sunt suple *participantia hec aliquo vel hoc aliquo* utpote albedine vel nigredine *vel utrisque vel multis* huius *invenies ipsas*, id est *per se participationes, participantes primum ipso esse, et existentes* seu entes *primum quidem esse* id est suscipientes primum predicationem essendi. *Deinde existentes principia huius alicuius vel huius alicuius*⁷⁵⁹ utpote albi vel nigri vel alicuius *huius et participare esse et existentes* secundum se ipsas videlicet in abstractione consideratas *et participatas* id est in subiectis existentes et ea denominantes. Tam enim albedo quam album primo omni participat esse et sic de similibus et ipsa *principia* prius participant principiat. *Si autem haec* id est abstracta, que hic vocat principia, *sunt participatione esse, multo quidem magis participantia ipsis* id est concreta participantia abstractis sunt videlicet participatione esse. Participant enim et esse principiorum, id est abstractorum, et esse subiecti et esse resultante ex concretione forme cum subiecto et ipsa principiat, quia elongatiora sunt a primo ente et primo esse quam principia, minus possent dici esse quam principia nisi participarent ipso esse.

Ostensa itaque clarius prioritate eius quod est esse secundum se, repetit iterato concludens convenienter Deum laudari primo a prima eius donatione dicens *primam igitur donationem per se esse* id est eius quod est esse secundum se consideratum. *Proponens* per se superbonitas hoc est quia hanc donationem proponit primam *laudatur prima participationum antiquiore* ceteris videlicet participationibus, id est donationibus participatis a creaturis.

Et est ex ipsa per se superbonitate videlicet, *et in ipsa* in eternis videlicet rationibus

⁷⁵⁷ per se om. M

⁷⁵⁸ aliud om. M

⁷⁵⁹ huius alicuius om. M

exemplaribus, *et ipsum esse et entium principia et entia omnia et continentia esse qualitercumque* id est ea de quibus predicatur esse qualitercumque; et *hoc* id est esse ex ipsa et in ipsa est *irretentive et convolute et unitive*. Ipsa enim per se superbonitas, continens in se eternaliter omnia in eorum rationibus exemplaribus, sic continet ea in se quod etiam ea producit in esse seculare vel temporale in se ipsis ab esse quod eternaliter habent in ipsa. Et sic continet ea irretentive quia provisive in eorum proprium esse in ipsa quorum per se superbonitate sunt omnia simul et sic convolute et ex ipsa et in ipsa <236ra> sunt omnia unitive, quia ex parte ipsius causantis et continentis nulla est multitudo vel diversitas essentialis. Intelligens enim se, in essentia simplicissimam et superunitam, intelligit omnia et sic diligens se diligit omnia. Et intellectus diligens, seu dilectio intelligens, in sui simplicitate omnia est rationes exemplares et causales omnium, licet in se diversorum, unitorum tamen in superbonitatis simplicitate.

Dictiones autem quibus in hac particula preponitur ‘per se’ sunt in greco composite cum eo quod transferimus in ‘per se’ quod sonat in greco ‘ipsum’ ut si diceremus pro per se esse ipsum esse.

(Dionysiaca 343-346) *Etenim in monade omnis numerus uniformiter preexistit, et omnem habet numerum monas in se ipsa universaliter. Et omnis numerus unitur quidem in⁷⁶⁰ monade; secundum quantum autem ab unitate procedit, secundum tantum discernitur et multiplicatur. Et in centro omnes circuli lineae secundum unam unionem coextiterunt et omnes habet signum in se ipso rectas uniformiter unitas et ad se invicem et ad unum principium a quo processerunt.*

Et in ipso quidem centro omnino perfecte uniuntur, brevi autem ab ipso distantes, brevi et discernuntur; magis autem recedentes, magis et simpliciter secundum quantum centro propinquiores sunt, secundum tantum et ipsi et ad invicem uniuntur, secundum quantum ab ipso, secundum tantum ab invicem destiterunt.

Sed et in tota totorum natura omnes eius quae secundum unumquodque naturae rationes convolutae sunt secundum unam inconfusam unionem et in anima uniformiter eorum quae secundum partem omnium provi- <236rb> -sive totius corporis virtutes.

Dicto quod omnia sunt ex per se superbonitate et in ipsa irretentive convolute⁷⁶¹ et

⁷⁶⁰ in *om. Dionysiaca*

⁷⁶¹ convolute] contravolute M

unitive, explanat hoc per exempla unitatis et centri et nature generaliter divise in multas particulares et virtutis unius diversa individuus⁷⁶² operantis. Sic inquit *Etenim in monade* id est unitate *preexistit omnis numerus uniformiter*. Omnis enim numerus est uniformiter ex unitatis replicatione et in unitate equipotenter preexistit. Unde sequitur *et habet omnem numerum monas in se ipsa universaliter et omnis numerus unitur quidem in monade secundum quantum autem procedit ab unitate secundum tantum discernitur et multiplicatur. Et in centro omnis circuli lineae* id est diametri *coextiterunt secundum unam unionem omnes*⁷⁶³ enim diametros uniformiter et indifferenter cuncti in se centrum. *Et signum* id est centrum *habet omnes rectas unitas uniformiter in se ipso et ad se invicem et ad unum principium a quo processunt*. In centro enim omnis diametri uniuntur tam ad invicem in centro sese intersecantes quam ad centrum a quo uniformiter procedunt. *Et in ipso quidem centro omnino perfecte uniuntur* omnes videlicet diametri, quia in ipso centro non sunt nisi ipsum centrum *distantes autem diametri videlicet brevi ab ipso* id est centro *et discernuntur brevi*, quia parum differunt secundum situm localem; *magis autem recedentes a centro videlicet magis discernuntur*. Resume⁷⁶⁴ *et simpliciter secundum*⁷⁶⁵ *quantum centro propinquiores sunt, secundum tantum uniuntur* locali videlicet situ approximando *et ipsi* id est centro *et adinvicem* ut videlicet in centro omnino sint in discreta et unita et *secundum quantum destiterunt ab ipso secundum tantum et ab invicem destiterunt* videlicet.

Quemadmodum autem numeri in se diversi ab unitate et lineae in se diverse universaliter et equipotenter a centro procedunt, et universaliter et equipotenter recolliguntur et uniuntur in unitate et centro, sic dividenda unam naturam generalem in se diversa procedunt universaliter et equipotenter a natura generali potentia autem habente eorum que sub ipsa differentias et universaliter et equipotenter participatione generalis nature sunt unum. Unde sequitur *sed et in tota natura totorum* hoc est in generali natura omnium sub se contentorum, utpote in substantia que est generalis natura omnium per se et non in altero entium, *sunt convolute secundum unam inconfusam unionem* hoc est simul habite equipotenter et unite et in progressu a potentia in actum distincte et inconfuse.

Omnes rationes eius nature que secundum unumquodque hoc est omnes differentie assumptibiles in diffinitione nature particularis et substantie generali nature. Similiter virtus anime vivifica, in se considerata,⁷⁶⁶ uniformiter est in se et tamen diversa inconfuse operatur <236va> in corpore vivificato, illud nutriens et augens et generandum aptans; similiter virtus

⁷⁶² individuus *om.* M

⁷⁶³ omnes] diversos M

⁷⁶⁴ a ... resume *om.* M

⁷⁶⁵ secundum *om.* M

⁷⁶⁶ considerata] unifica M

sensitiva in se unita per diversas corporis partes diversa operatur et sic est de aliis virtutibus secundum quas anima providet corpori. Unde subiungitur: *Sed in anima sunt suple uniformiter provisive virtutes seu potentie totius corporis. Virtutes dico seu potentie eorum omnium que secundum partem id est que particulariter et differenter proaguntur videlicet a potentiis in se unite existentibus.*

(Dionysiaca 346-352) *Nihil igitur inconueniens, ex obscuris imaginibus ad omnium causam ascendentes, supermundanis oculis contemplari omnia in omnium causa et sibi invicem contraria, uniformiter et unite.*

Principium enim est entium, a quo et ipsum esse et omnia qualitercumque entia: omne principium, omnis terminus, omnis vita, omnis immortalitas, omnis sapientia, omnis ordo, omnis harmonia, omnis virtus, omnis custodia, omnis firmitas, omnis distributio, omnis intelligentia⁷⁶⁷, omnis ratio, omnis sensus, omnis habitus, omnis statio, omnis motio, omnis unio, omnis completio, omnis amicitia, omnis concordatio, omnis discretio, omnis definitio et alia quecumque, ipso esse entia, entia omnia characterizant⁷⁶⁸.

Et ex eadem omnium causa intelligibiles et intellectuales deiformium angelorum substantiae et animarum et omnis mundi naturae et qualitercumque aut in alteris existere aut secundum intelligentiam esse dicta.

Et quidem omnino sancte et propectissime virtutes <236vb>, vere existentes, et velut in vestibulis supersubstantialis trinitatis collocatae, ab ipsa et in ipsa et esse et deiformiter esse habent.

Et post illas subiectae, subiecte et extremae, extremae⁷⁶⁹ sicut ad angelos, ut ad nos autem supermundane. Et animae et alia omnia entia, secundum eandem rationem, et esse et bene esse habent. Et sunt et bene sunt ex⁷⁷⁰ praeexistente esse et bene esse habentia, et in ipso et entia et bene entia et ex ipso inchoata et in ipso custodita et in ipsum terminata.

Expositis exemplis in quibus perspicuum est multa et diversa uniri in uno et uniformiter esse in illo, concludit ex illis, licet obscuris ad manifestationem divinorum, quod non est inconueniens si omnia in se ipsis diversa et etiam que sibi invicem sunt contraria sint in Deo causa omnium, et videantur in ipso⁷⁷¹ supermundanis oculis uniformiter et unite. Et

⁷⁶⁷ intelligentia] intellectus *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁶⁸ characterizant] characterizat *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁶⁹ extremae om. *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁷⁰ ex] et *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁷¹ in ipso om. M

dicit *nihil igitur inconueniens ascendentes ex imaginibus obscuris ad manifestandum videlicet divina licet in se perspicuis. Cum omnes imagines, create a vera divinorum similitudine, sint multum elongate, ascendentes inquam ex hiis ad omnium causam contemplari supermundanis oculis id est a fantasmatibus materialium et mundanorum defecatis omnia uniformiter et unite in causa omnium et id est etiam sibi invicem contraria in seipso videlicet. Quidem autem hoc non sit inconueniens sed conueniens valde manifestat adhuc per hoc quod ipse Deus in se superunus et simplicissimus est omnium principium et causa et causative omnium.*

Unde sequitur *principium enim est entium utpote eternaliter prehabens ea in eternis rationibus et ad exemplum earum educens ea ab omnino non esse in seipsis ad esse in se ipsis*⁷⁷². Unde subiungit *a quo et ipsum esse et omnia qualitercumque entia* sive videlicet per se, sive in altero, sive generaliter, sive particulariter, sive quocumque alio modo. A quo resume *omne principium* principiatur videlicet quocumque modo dictum principium *omnis terminus* quocumque modo terminans, *omnis vita, omnis immortalitas, omnis sapientia, omnis ordo, omnis armonia, omnis virtus* seu potentia, *omnis custodia, omnis firmitas*⁷⁷³ *omnis distributio, omnis intelligentia, omnis ratio omnis sensus, omnis habitus, omnis statio, omnis motio, omnis unio, omnis complexio,* vel secundum aliud exemplar ‘omne iudicium’⁷⁷⁴, *omnis amicitia, omnis concordatio, omnis discretio, omnis diffinitio et alia quecumque entia ipso esse caracterizat omnia entia utpote consimilia predictis consimiliter abstractive dicta que sic considerata dicuntur entia participa-* <237ra> *-tione ipsius esse tantum et nondum ab esse subiectorum sine quibus tamen actu non possunt existere. Vita enim vel immortalitas vel amicitia vel aliquod predictorum vel color vel figura vel aliquod similitum non existit actu nisi in subiecto quod ipso caracterizatur et denominatur. Caracterizata itaque subiecta. hic dicit simpliciter entia ipsa vero caracterizantia, hic dicit ipso esse entia. Sequitur et ex eadem omnium causa intelligibiles et intellectuales substantie deiformium angelorum et animarum et nature omnis mundi et dicta esse qualitercumque vel in alteris existere vel existendo in alteris vel secundum intelligentiam. Differentia autem intelligibilis et intellectualis sepe superius dicta est esse autem secundum intelligentiam dicuntur que sola intelligentia comprehenduntur ut immaterialia et incorporalia.*

Sermo itaque iste quo ad seriem constructionis planissimus est, sed quo ad rationem ordinis verborum in eo positorum dilucide assignandam non sic, neque enim verisimile est quod tantus pater casu et irrationabiliter verba hic posita collocaverit. Posset autem quis circa ordinis rationem studiosus forte sic vel aliter melius dicere.

⁷⁷² ad ... ipsis *om.* M, L

⁷⁷³ omnis firmitas *om.* M

⁷⁷⁴ Hilduin, Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 348)

Primus processus providentie Dei ad creaturas est earum principiatio et ex nihilo creatio, et primum ab ea largitum est ipsum esse quod ad omnia sequitur etiam ad materiam informem, que licet secundum quod talis quodammodo non sit, non tamen simpliciter non est. A participatione autem ipsius esse consequenter sunt et dicuntur entia in quantum entia. Ad esse autem et ens creatum sequitur primo inchoatio essendi et principium aut seculariter aut temporaliter. Et quia huiusmodi principio opponitur terminus, qui est defectio aut defictionis privatio, et oppositorum coniuncta est scientia, convenienter post⁷⁷⁵ essendi principium adiunxit terminum. Et quia sub nomine principii comprehenduntur et primo entia et quattuor causae, efficiens videlicet, materialis, formalis et finalis, que precedunt omnis entis complementum, ut quod potest fieri uno non fiat pluribus, sub nomine principii comprehendit convenienter hoc genera principiora. Primum autem participans esse et entitate et essendi mensura est vita creature supermundane et immaterialis, id est creature spiritalis que vita necessario est immortalis. Unde et huic vite convenienter coniungitur immortalitas, vita autem immortalis. Unde talis apta nata est cognoscere Deum et divina et in Deo omnia. Unde ad vitam immortalem naturaliter et ut oportet se habentem immediate consequitur sapientia. Sapientia autem non solum comprehendit res scitas sed et ipsarum ordinem, et magis est sapientia ab ordinis rerum cognitione quam ab ipsarum rerum comprehensione, et propter hoc sapientie bene adnectitur ordo. Ordo autem, qui est dispositio tribuens cuique quod sibi congruit, ipsorum ordinatorum generat ad invicem armoniam et comproportionalitatem consonam. Quod autem incomproportionaliter est, impotens est ad ordinatos actus producendos. Ex quo patet quod solum harmonice se habens, potens est ad ordinatos actus et quod <237rb> ad armoniam sequitur potentia et virtus recte et ordinate agendi. Armonia quoque est conservativa et custoditiva armonice compositorum et ad invicem armonice se habentium ac per hoc eorum firmitas et firmamentum. Soluta enim armonia pereunt. Iustitia quoque distributiva per geometricam dirigitur proportionalitatem. Ad armoniam igitur ordinate consequitur virtus, custodia, firmitas et distributio.

Positis itaque immediate post sapientiam que secundum ordinem immediate consequuntur ad ipsam et quasi locantur in ipsa, redit ad ordinem virtutum et potentiarum speculativarum quarum suprema et prima est sapientia, et post illam est intelligentia, que est virtus comprehensiva principiorum immediatarum; quam consequitur ratio, que est virtus progressiva a principiiis immediatis in conclusiones sive scientificae seu probabiliter, ac per hoc comprehendens virtutem scientie et virtutem artis, postquam sequitur sensus. Per sensum

⁷⁷⁵ post] est M

enim hic credo⁷⁷⁶ comprehendi virtutes apprehensivas quas habet animal; unde animal et sensibile est que cum in homine diriguntur ratione. Virtute prudentie adornatur homo, que virtus quia media est inter pure speculativas et activas, quandoque cum speculativis quandoque cum activis conversatur. Post virtutes autem speculativas sequuntur virtutes active, que proveniunt ex frequenti bene agere, et que maxime et principaliter dicuntur habitus. Quia a nulla vi possunt moveri et auferri⁷⁷⁷, ab hiis virtutibus activis, directis per speculativas, est ordinata quies; ab inordinata actione et motione et ordinata motio et actio, ab hiis est animorum unio ut ipsum sentiant et dicant omnes; ab hiis est animorum in adinvicem incessio et temperantia et spiritalis complexio; ab hiis est idem velle et idem nolle impermutabiliter in rebus honestis quod est firma amicitia; ab hiis est in actibus uniformitas et concordatio et in actibus differentia et discretio. Non enim omnibus conveniunt per omnem modum essendi actiones. Ab hiis tandem est⁷⁷⁸ omnium agendorum et omittendorum diffinitio et determinatio.

Hoc itaque modo vel a melius intelligente modo meliori potest ordinis verborum auctoris⁷⁷⁹ ratio assignari. In predictis tamen verbis non comprehendit solum sensus eorum que nos tetigimus, sed in quolibet verbo comprehendit totalitatem rerum eodem verba comprehensibilem ne, ut prediximus, faciat pluribus quod potest congrue fieri paucioribus. Nec forte querenda est ratio ordinis verborum hic positorum secundum omnis sensus quos habent singula verba hic posita sed secundum sensus eorum principaliores et de quibus principaliter intendit auctor.

Enuntiatis itaque secundum ordinem predictis <237va> caracterizantibus et comprehensis generaliter per hanc particulam *et alia quecumque ipso esse essentia, entia omnia chararterizantur* omnibus aliis caracterizantibus a Deo ut a causa in se simplicissima et omnia in se eternaliter prehabente existentibus; consequenter adiungit breviter *ex eadem omnium causa* caracterizata que sunt *substantie angelicæ et substantie animarum et nature* huiusmodi *mundi* sensibilis et quecumque sunt *vel in alteris entia vel secundum intelligentiam* comprehensibilia.

Si autem in hac generali comprehensione caracterizatorum videantur comprehendi omnia et sic ipsa caracterizantia non est inconveniens, quia nihil impedit idem esse caracterizans unum et caracterizatum ab alio, vel forte duo esse sese reciproce caracterizantia, ut intelligentiam et dilectionem (intelligentia enim est diligens et dilectio intelligens), non

⁷⁷⁶ credo] ordo M

⁷⁷⁷ et auferri *om.* M

⁷⁷⁸ est *om.* M

⁷⁷⁹ auctoris *om.* M

solum autem ex ipso et in ipso Deo est omnium esse sed et eorundem bene esse. Unde sequitur *Et quidem omnino sanctae et provecitissime* seu antiquissime seu honorabilissime *virtutes* id est supremi angeli *vere existentes* quia incorruptibilissime et immortalissime sunt, etiam secundum existentiam naturalem. *Et velut collocate in vestibulis supersubstantialis trinitatis*, id est ei secundum naturam proxime habent, *ab ipsa et in ipsa*, omnium videlicet causa, *et esse et deiformiter esse*, quod est illis bene esse. *Et subiecte* virtutes videlicet *post illas* provecitissimas videlicet virtutes habent, *resurrexerunt, et esse et deiformiter esse; subiecte et extreme* virtutes scilicet *extreme habent* videlicet *et esse et deiformiter esse*. Extreme inquam *ut ad angelos, ut ad nos autem supermundane*. Infimus enim ordo angelicus respectu superiorum ordinum angelicorum habet esse et deiformiter esse, infime et extreme inter ordines angelicos; respectu autem nostri habet utrumque esse excellenter et supermundane id est omnino immaterialiter. *Et anime et alia omnia entia habent et esse et bene esse secundum eandem rationem*, id est sic quod suprema supreme et subiecta subiecte et extrema extreme. *Et habentia esse et bene esse ex preexistente Deo videlicet sunt et bene sunt et in ipso* ut in causa videlicet prehabente et inesse adducente et conservante sunt *supra et entia et bene entia*. *Et ex ipso incohata et in ipso custodita* in essendi videlicet permanentia *et in ipsum* ut in finem quem appetunt omnia et pro sue susceptibilitatis mensura participantia bene sunt *terminata*. Quod autem ex ipso est et esse et bene esse omnium laudantium est benefici processus ipsius in quantum entis in entia et bene entia.

(Dionysiaca 352-357) *Et honorabilissima quidem eius quod est⁷⁸⁰ esse tribuit melioribus substantiis⁷⁸¹, quas et sempiternas vo- <237vb> -cant eloquia. Esse autem ipsum entium omnium neque aliquando⁷⁸² deficit. Sed et ipsum esse ex praeexistente, et ipsius est esse et non ipse ipsius esse, et in ipso est esse et non ipse in esse, et ipsum habet esse et non ipse habet esse. Et ipse est ipsius esse saeculum et principium et mensura, ante substantiam ens, et ante ens et saeculum et omnium⁷⁸³ substantificum principium et mediatio et finis. Et propter hoc ab eloquiis qui vere praeest secundum omnem entium intelligentiam multiplicatur. Et erat in ipso et est et erit et factum est et fit et fiet proprie laudatur. Haec enim omnia deodecenter laudantibus secundum omnem intelligentiam ipsum supersubstantialiter esse significant, et ubique entium causam. Etenim non hoc aliquid*

⁷⁸⁰ eius quod est] eiusque *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁸¹ substantiis *om. Dionysiaca*

⁷⁸² aliquando] alteri *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁸³ omnium] omne *Dionysiaca*

quidem est hoc aliquid autem non est; neque quo quidem est, quo autem non est; sed omnia est, ut omnium causa et in ipso omnia principia, omnes conclusiones, omnium totorum comprehendens et praehabens, et super omnia est ut ante omnia supersubstantialiter superens.

Propter quod et omnia de ipso et simul praedicantur, et nihil est omnium; omnino defiguratus omnis formis, sine forma, sine pulchritudine. Principia et media et fines entium irretentive et segregatim in ipso praeaccipiens, et omnibus esse secundum unam et superunitam causam immaculate superfulgens.

<238ra>Procedens ad laudandum per se bonitatem ex bonificis eius processibus in entia secundum quod entia, laudat ipsum ab ordinata et commensurata distributione eius quod est esse entibus; quia melioribus et dignioribus substantiis tribuit esse melius et dignius ex quo innuitur quod inferioribus substantiis tribuit esse inferius et indignius. Supremis enim substantiis tribuit esse immateriale et incorruptibile; substantiis vero in mundo hoc sensibili superioribus quidem tribuit esse materiale et incorruptibile inferioribus vero tribuit esse materiale et corruptibile. Hec igitur insinuans ait: *Et honorabilissima quidem seu dignissima eius quod est esse tribuit melioribus substantiis, quas et sempiternas seu seculares vocant eloquia.*

Quia autem posset quis, ex iam dicto et insinuatibus per iam dictam, putare quod auctor insinuaret ipsum esse simpliciter corrumpi corrupto aliquo entium, cum tamen, ut preostensum est, corrupto aliquo ente et eius particulari esse, ipsum esse non corrumpitur sed manet⁷⁸⁴ in ente in quod secedit illud quod⁷⁸⁵ corrumpitur. Occurrit hinc auctor dicens: *Esse autem ipsum entium omnium sive incorruptibilium videlicet sive corruptibilium neque aliquando deficit.* Aliqui autem transtulerunt hunc genitivum in greco ‘entium omnium’ in ablativum cum prepositione, sic “esse autem ipsum ab entibus omnibus, neque aliquando deficit” seu derelinquitur. Et si enim corrumpantur entia inferiora ut hec elementa et elementata, quia tamen non secedit aliquod eorum in simpliciter non ens sed in aliud ens vel alia entia, ipsum simpliciter esse aliquorum corruptione non deficit nec ab aliquo quod corrumpitur ipsum esse derelinquitur. In hoc itaque non modicum laudatur ipse nominatus ens in scriptura quod simpliciter esse ab eo largitum non deficit nec derelinquitur umquam ab aliquo cui semel est largitum.

Accedit quoque ad ipsius entis laudem, quod esse largitum ab ipso preente est ipsius ut

⁷⁸⁴ manet] magis M

⁷⁸⁵ quod] non M

habentis ipsum in se eternaliter in eterna ratione, et ut causae producentis ipsum et efficientis et ut causae conservantis et finalis ipse vero nominatus ens. Non est ipsius esse vel ut continentis ipsum vel ut causantis vel ut conservantis, cum ipse sic sit ens quod superens et ante esse. Et hoc est quod sequitur *Sed et ipsum esse ex preexistente* seu preente ut predictum est. Repetitur tamen, ut decenter inducantur subsequencia, ipsum inquam esse ex praeeunte *et est esse ipsius* preentis videlicet modis predictis essendi hoc huiusmodi *et non ipse* preens scilicet est resume *ipsius esse*.

Et quia obscurum est quomodo esse est ipsius preentis et non ipse preens est ipsius esse, declarans subiungit *et in ipso* ut in prehabente in eterna ratione et ut in conservante et ut in fine *est esse et non ipse* aliquo dictorum modorum *in esse et esse habet*⁷⁸⁶ *ipsum* prehabentem videlicet subsistendi causam et efficientem et non ipse preens videlicet *habet esse* subsistendi adhuc causam. Ipse enim nullo modo causatur et, quia esse⁷⁸⁷ causatum et conservatum a preente et mensuratur seculo, et ipsum seculum est ipsius tribus pretactis modis, convenienter attribuit auctor ipsi preenti esse seculum, ipsius esse, et principium et mensuram.

Insinuans per huius directam attributionem non quod ipse est aliquod creatum, sed quod ipse prehabens in eterna ratione omne creatum cum cuiuslibet adductivum et conservativum et finis. Unde subiungit *et ipse preens*⁷⁸⁸ videlicet *est seculum ipsius esse et principium et mensura*. Seculum enim est quodam principium conservativum in esse seculari secularium quemadmodum, et tempus potest dici principium conservativum inesse temporali temporalium. Et licet hec tria nomina hic significant idem subiecto, habent tamen diversitates secundum rationem. Seculum enim ut pretactum est dicit essendi sempiternitatem, principium autem essendi causationem, mensura vero adequationem cum mensurato.

Quod autem esse sit ipsius preentis et non e converso, declarat adhuc per subsequencia dicens *ante substantiam* seu essentiam *ens et ante ens et seculum* hoc est ante seculum. Ipse enim preens eternitate precedit essentiam et ens et mensuram essendi. *Et est suple omnium substantificum principium et mediatio* seu medietas *et finis* seu consummatio.

Et propter hoc quod videlicet ipse sic est omnia omnium et in omnibus *qui vere preest* seu vere preens *multiplicatur* id est multipliciter significatur *ab eloquiis secundum omnem intelligentiam entium*. Omne enim ens in intelligentia vel speculatione cuiuslibet intelligentis vel speculantis sursum ducit illam in cause ipsius entis speculationem et intelligentiam, et in ente speculato sicut in speculo vel vestigio speculatur entis causam et eam ab ipso ente

⁷⁸⁶ et non ipse ... habet *om.* M

⁷⁸⁷ esse] ipse M

⁷⁸⁸ preens] prehabens M, Mz

nominat et preentem ipsius entis causam designat.

Sequitur *et erat et est et erit et factum est et fit et fiet proprie* seu principaliter *laudantur in ipso* id est in Deo ut in causa eorum. Licet enim in ipso non sit erat vel erit, quia nihil preteritum nihil futurum, nec factum est nec fit nec fiet cum ipse nec sit creatus nec conditus, ipse tamen principaliter est horum causa et ab hiis, sicut a causatis, laudatur. Et per hoc que evidenter non cadunt in ipsum satis convenienter manifestatur quod alia ei attributa attribuuntur ipsi non sicut participantis sed sicut prehabenti et causanti. Quod manifestat subiungens: *hec enim omnia* predicta videlicet et eis consimilia attributa deo, vel dicta esse in ipso, *significant laudantibus* vel secundum aliud exemplar⁷⁸⁹ “intelligentibus” deum videlicet *Deo decenter ipsum esse supersubstantialiter, secundum omnem intelligentiam entium et ubique*⁷⁹⁰ *causam*. Omne enim attributum ipsi nihil dictum esse <238va> in ipso cum intelligitur a laudantibus Deum sicut decet ipsos Deum laudare. Sursum ducit, ut pretactum est, eorum intelligentiam ad intelligendum ipsum supersubstantialiter esse super omne causatum et causam entium, sive in celis sive in terra. Et bene non intelligitur a digne laudantibus ipsum esse ea que ei attribuuntur. *Etenim non est hoc aliquid quidem hoc aliquid autem non est, neque quo quidem est quo autem non est; sed omnia est ut omnium causa comprehendens et prehabens in ipso* seu in seipso in eternis videlicet rationibus exemplaribus et causabilibus *omnia principia, omnes conclusiones, omnium totorum* vel secundum aliud exemplar ‘omnium entium’⁷⁹¹ *et super omnia est ut superens supersubstantialiter ante omnia* anterioritate videlicet proritatis eternitatis et privationis principii.

Propter quod, id est propter hoc quod ipse prehabet omnia superens ante omnia et causans, *omnia et de ipso simul predicantur omnia*. Hoc est in ipso predictis modis intelliguntur omnia et ei vocaliter in huiusmodi designationem assignantur. *Et nihil est omnium* ut sepe pretactum est. Ipse dico *omnino defiguratus, omnis formis* secundum scripture videlicet assignationem quia omnis figura et omnis forma predictis modis in ipso est. *Sine forma* quia non est formabilis sed super forma; *sine pulchritudine* quia non est pulchrificabilis sed super pulchritudo. Ipse dico *preaccipiens* in seipso *principia et media et fines entium irretentive* ut preexpositum est, *et segregatim* id est excellenter et excellentius quam possint esse in seipsis.

Et *superfulgens immaculate secundum unam et superunitam causam esse omnibus*. Et si enim diversificata et diversa sint esse omnibus diversis entibus a divini radii superfulgentia

⁷⁸⁹ Hilduin, Eriugena et Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 354)

⁷⁹⁰ et ubique *om. M*

⁷⁹¹ omnium entium: *non legitur in Dionysiaca* (p. 356).

largita, ex parte tamen ipsius radii⁷⁹² refulgentis et causantis est omnimoda superunita unitas, ut sepe tactum est, et omnimoda immaculatio non solum ex parte causantis, sed et ex parte causatorum in quantum causatorum.

Ubi nos posuimus huic verbo ‘esse’ ‘eius quod est’ vel ‘ipsius’ in greco non ponitur nisi articulis genitivis, ad designandum ipsum verbum ibi sumi nominaliter et genitive in cuius designationem nos posuimus ‘eius quod est’ vel ‘ipsius’. hec autem ‘omnimode figuratus’, ‘omni formis’, ‘sine forma’, ‘sine pulchritudine’ sunt in greco singule dictiones composite.

(Dionysiaca 357-361) *Si enim qui secundum nos sol sensibilibus substantias et qualitates, quamvis multas et differentes existentes, tamen ipse unus ens et uniforme superfulgens lumen renovat et nutrit et custodit et perficit et discernit et unit et refovet et germinabilia esse facit et auget et commutat et collocat et naturalia perficere facit et auget et remo- <238vb> -vet et vivificat omnia, et totorum unumquodque proprie sibi ipsi eodem et uno sole participat et multorum participantium habens⁷⁹³ unus sol causas in seipso uniformiter prae-habet, multo quidem magis in ea quae et ipsius et omnium causa presubsistere omnium entium exemplaria secundum unam supersubstantiam⁷⁹⁴ unionem, concedendum, quia et substantias adducit secundum eam que a substantia egressionem.*

Exemplaria quidem dicimus esse eas que in Deo entium substantificas et unitivas presubsistentes rationes, quas theologia predeterminationes vocat, et divinas et bonas voluntates entium discretivas et factivas, secundum quas qui⁷⁹⁵ supersubstantialis⁷⁹⁶ entia omnia et predeterminavit⁷⁹⁷ et adduxit.

Hoc quod proximo dixit primum secundum entem “superfulgere immaculate omnibus esse secundum unam et superunitam causam”, explanat per exemplum huius solis visibilis qui, cum sit unus in se et uniforme lumen superrefulgens diversitates, tamen in hoc inferiori mundo et differentias perficit universas. Ait itaque *si enim sol qui secundum nos substantias sensibilibus et qualitates quamvis existentes multas et differentes tamen ipse ens unus et superrefulgens uniforme lumen renovat* per generationem videlicet et seminum productionem

⁷⁹² superfulgentia ... radii om. M

⁷⁹³ habens] his *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁹⁴ supersubstantiam] substantiam *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁹⁵ qui] quae *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁹⁶ supersubstantialis] supersubstantia *Dionysiaca*

⁷⁹⁷ predeterminavit] predeterminat *Dionysiaca*

et conceptionem; *et* convenienter *nutrit* adhuc in matrice vel in eo quod est pro matrice; *et custodit* per nutrimentum; *et perficit* per adaptationem videlicet perfectam ad susceptionem forme specificae et vite convenientis et perficientis; *et discernit* ab aliis per proprias forme susceptae differentias; *et unit* cum aliis per differentias generaliores, et sic iam perfecta⁷⁹⁸ per specialem naturam non tamen adhuc solidata; *refovet* calore suo vitali; *et facit esse germinabilia* seu, ut aliquis transtulit, ‘fecunda’⁷⁹⁹ id est augmentabilia usque ad statum in quo uti poterunt virtute generativa vel virtutem generativam tribuit; *et auget et commutat* ab etate videlicet in etatem; *et collocat* seu firmat cum venerit videlicet ad perfectum augmentum; *et naturalia perficere facit* seu, si latine diceretur uno verbo composito <239ra> sicut est in greco, ‘exnaturat’ id est naturalia et naturales actus perfecte explicat. In etate enim completi et augmenti et status perficiuntur plene naturales actus. *Et removet* a statu videlicet perfecto per declinationem in senectutem senium; *et vivificat omnia* id est viventibus omnibus tam terre nascentibus quam sensibilibus vitam tribuit et conservat; *et unumquodque totorum*, id est universorum hic viventium, *participat proprie sibi ipsi* id est secundum quod sue susceptibilitati convenit, *eodem et uno sole, et unus sol hiis multorum participantium causas prehabet*, vel secundum aliud exemplar ‘preaccipit’⁸⁰⁰, quia a causante ipsum accepit *uniformiter* in se ipso multorum videlicet causas.

In uniformi enim natura solis uniformiter presunt et prehabentur omnes figure et omnes qualitates, que multiformiter causantur et sunt in istis inferioribus. Si inquam ita est de isto sole visibili *multo quidem magis concedendum*⁸⁰¹ *presubsistere exempla omnium entium* id est ideas et rationes exemplares et causales omnium entium *secundum unam unionem super substantiam* vel secundum aliud exemplar “secundum unam supersubstantialem unionem”⁸⁰² *in ea causa que et ipsius solis videlicet et omnium est causa* videlicet. Et bene est hoc *concedendum, quia et adducit* a non esse videlicet in esse, illa solis et omnium causa *substantias secundum eam egressionem que a substantia* hoc est secundum intelligentiam benevolam qua, intelligens propriam substantiam et essentiam, intelligit omnia benevole et complacenter. Hec enim intelligentia benivola, qua intelligens se intelligit omnia in quantum est omnium intelligentia ea predeterminans, dicitur hic, ut existimo, egressio⁸⁰³ a substantia. Cum itaque intelligentia sui sit intelligentia simplicitatis et unitatis in termino quin supersimplicitatis et superunitatis, et in illa sint omnia predeterminata, manifestum est quod in

⁷⁹⁸ et sic iam perfecta *om.* M

⁷⁹⁹ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 358)

⁸⁰⁰ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 359)

⁸⁰¹ concedendum] extendendum M

⁸⁰² Hilduin, Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 359)

⁸⁰³ egressio *om.* M

ea sunt omnia secundum unam unionem supersubstantialem et super omnem substantiam.

Ubi autem supra posuimus “*et multorum participantium habens unus sol causas et cetera*” aliqui translatores non ponunt ‘habens’⁸⁰⁴.

Quia autem mentionem fecit de exemplis presubsistentibus in causa omnium, de quibus diversi diversimode senserunt, explanat hic suum intellectum de illis exemplis dicens ea esse eternaliter preexistentes rationes et bonas voluntates divinas, id est intelligentias Dei benivolas omnium predeterminativas et secundum predeterminationem in esse adductivas et⁸⁰⁵ ad se et in se unitivas. Que rationes benivole cum non sint nisi⁸⁰⁶ supersimplex et superuna sui bonivola intelligentia, propter multitudinem tamen entium in illa sui intelligentia intellectorum dicuntur plures rationes et voluntates. Ait itaque: *Exempla quidem dicimus esse eas rationes que in Deo presubsistentes substantificas* id est inesse adducentes et unitivas in se et ad se *entium quas rationes videlicet theologia vocat predeterminationes, et divinas et bonas voluntates discretivas*. Causa in eterna predeterminatione quam in eorum proprio <239rb> esse *et factivas entium, secundum quas rationes videlicet qui supersubstantialis et predeterminavit eternaliter videlicet et adduxit in esse videlicet in seipsis omnia entia*.

Quod autem nos hic transtulimus ‘in predeterminationem’ aliqui⁸⁰⁷ transtulerunt ‘in predestinationem’ sicut interpretes epistole beati Pauli ad romanos fecerunt.⁸⁰⁸

(Dionysiaca 361-362) *Si autem philosophus dignificat Clemens et ad quaedam exemplaria dici que in existentibus principaliora, procedit quidem non per⁸⁰⁹ propria et omnino perfecta et simplicia nomina ratio ipsi, concedentem autem et hoc recte dici, theologiae recordandum dicentis quam⁸¹⁰ “non ostendit tibi ipsa ad ambulare post ipsa”⁸¹¹ sed ut per horum analogicam cognitionem ad omnium causam, ut et possibles sumus, reducatur.*

Determinato qualiter intelligenda sunt exempla ad que fiunt entia – quia beatus Clemens, Rome episcopus, usus est nomine exempli non secundum eundem intellectum, sed dicens exempla similitudines sumptas ex rebus creatis vel causas creatas in se causaliter

⁸⁰⁴ habens: *non legitur in Dionysiaca* (see. p. 359)

⁸⁰⁵ secundum ... adductivas et *om.* M

⁸⁰⁶ nisi *om.* M

⁸⁰⁷ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 361)

⁸⁰⁸ See *Romans* 8:29

⁸⁰⁹ per *om.* *Dionysiaca*

⁸¹⁰ quam] quia *Dionysiaca*

⁸¹¹ Fortasse *Wisdom* 13:5, *Exodus* 25:40, *Deuteronomy* 4:19.

prehabentes ea que efficiunt in causatis –, manifestat auctor quod beatus Clemens non utitur nomine exempli secundum primam et principalem et propriissimam significationem illius nominis. Primo enim et principaliter et propriissime dicuntur exempla, ut predictum est, idee et rationes eterne rerum omnium ad earum imitationes fiendarum. Secundo autem, et minus proprie, possunt dici exempla causae create rerum ab ipsis causatarum imitationem quadam causas habentium. Tertio autem dicitur exemplum res causata in quantum est vestigium et imago causantis reducens cognitionem in speculationem causantis. Dicitur etiam exemplum quilibet inductum ad manifestandum⁸¹² aliud per aliquam sui⁸¹³ similitudinem ad illud. Si itaque quis dicat recte, dici exemplum secundum quod eo nomine usus est beatus Clemens, et post exempla propriissime dicta sit omnino ambulandum, et cum non sint aliud ab ipso Deo ipsa sint adoranda.

Post exempla autem, alia et aliter dicta, non sit ambulandum nec sint adoranda ne per nominis idenptitatem decipiatur. Ambulans post exempla creata recordari debet scripture que precipit non ambulandum post exempla creata sed ab hiis sursum duci ad solius creantis speculationem et adorationem. Ait itaque *si autem clemens philosophus dignificat et que in existentibus principaliora sine causatione videlicet sine manifestatione in manifestorum, dici exempla ad quedam ut ad causata videlicet vel manifestata, ratio procedit quidem ipsi Clementi non per propria et omnino perfecta et simplicia nomina hoc est non per proprie et perfecte et simpliciter et principaliter significantia. Concedentes autem et hoc quod videlicet dicit Clemens recte dici, recordandum theologie dicentis quam “non ostendit tibi ipsa exempla videlicet creata ad ambulare post ipsa”⁸¹⁴ sed ut reducamur, ut et possibles sumus, per horum analogicam id est comproportionalem cognitionem ad omnium causam.*

(Dionysiaca 362-367) *Omnia igitur ipsi entia, secundum unam ab omnibus segregatam unionem reponendum; quia quidem ab esse substantificum processum et bonitatem inchoans, et per omnia incedens, et omnia ex ipsa ipso esse implens, et in omnibus existentibus exultans.*

Omnia quidem in se ipsa prehabet, secundum unam simplicitatis superabundantiam omnem duplicitatem refutans. Perfecte autem similiter continet secundum supersimplificatam ipsius infinitatem; et ab omnibus singulariter participatur; quemadmodum et vox una existens et eadem a multis auditibus ut una participatur.

⁸¹² ad manifestandum *om.* M

⁸¹³ sui *om.* M

⁸¹⁴ See n. 131.

Omne igitur principium et finis entium, qui praeest. Principium quidem, ut causa; finis autem, ut huius gratia. Et terminus omnium et infinitas omnis infinitatis et termini superexcellenter ut oppositorum. In uno enim, ut multoties dictum est, entia omnia et prehabet et substituit⁸¹⁵, presens omnibus <239vb> et ubique.

Et secundum unum et idem et secundum idem omne, et ad omnia procedens, et manens in seipso, et stans et motus, et neque stans neque motus, neque principium habens aut medium aut finem; neque in quodam entium ens, neque sic adhuc entium ens; et neque totaliter ipsi convenit aliquid seculariter entium aut temporaliter subsistentium.

Sed et a tempore et seculo, et his que in seculo⁸¹⁶ et his que in tempore ab omnibus segregatur, quia et per se seculum et entia et mensurae entium et mensurata per ipsum et ab ipso.

Interposita intentione beati Clementis de exemplis, redit ad suam intentionem recapitulando concludens omnia entia⁸¹⁷ esse in Deo secundum unam et superunitam unionem, dicens *Omnia igitur entia reponendum ipsi* id est omnium causae *secundum unam ab omnibus segregatam* quia omnibus superexcellenter enim *unionem* vel secundum aliud exemplar ‘cognitionem’⁸¹⁸. In cognitione enim sui qua etiam cognoscit omnia, sunt omnia unita.

Recapitulando quoque et huius manifestationem subiungit *quia quidem inchoans* ipsa videlicet omnium causa *substantificum processum et bonitatem* id est extensionem sui in omnem utilitatem *ab esse*, ut preostensum est, *et incedens per omnia* ipso videlicet suo processu, attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponens omnia suaviter; et *implens omnia ipso esse ex ipsa* omnium videlicet causa *et exultans* id est sibi complacens *in omnibus existentibus*. *Prehabet quidem omnia in seipsa* quia in eternis rationibus continet et predeterminat omnia *secundum unam simplicitatis superhabundantiam, refutans omnem duplicitatem* substantialem videlicet. Multitudo enim eternarum rationum, ut patet ex predictis, non multiplicat substantiam vel essentiam sed omnis uniuntur in super simplicissima unitate.

Quod autem nos transtulimus “in substantificum processum et bonitatem” accusative, in greco est genitivi casus. Verbum enim ‘inchoandi’ in greco exigit genitivum casum.

⁸¹⁵ substituit] subsistit *Dionysiaca*

⁸¹⁶ et his que in seculo *om. Dionysiaca*

⁸¹⁷ entia *om. M*

⁸¹⁸ vel ... exemplar: *non legitur in Dionysiaca.*

Quidam⁸¹⁹ tamen transtulerunt illud in genitivum quidam⁸²⁰ vero in ablativum.

Qui casus si sumantur in designationem causae, satis convenienter ponuntur, quia esse, quod est primum largitum a substantifico processu et boni- <240ra> -tate largitur, predicto itaque modo, prehabet omnia in se ipsa omnium causa et superperfecte et similiter continet ea secundum infinitatem virtutis sue supersimplicem et supersimplificatam. In ipsa enim omnia etiam in se non viventia sunt vita et que non sapiunt sapientia et que mutabilia sunt et corruptibilia in ipsa sunt immutabilitas et incorruptibilitas. Perfectissime igitur et simillime sunt in ipsa omnium causa.

Omnia et singula participant ea non diversificata in se. ex diversorum participatione et hoc est quod sequitur *perfecte* autem seu omnino perfecte *similiter continet* omnia videlicet ipsa omnium causa *secundum supersimplificatam* seu super expansam ipsius causae videlicet *infinitatem*; et *participatur singulariter* seu unice ex parte videlicet ipsius causae participate ab omnibus. *Quemadmodum et vox existens una et eadem a multis auditibus ut una participatur.* Plures enim auditus licet forte hic acutius ille vero obtusius eam⁸²¹ suscipiens non iudicant eam plures et diversas voces sed ut in se omnimode unam.

Recapitulans itaque breviter predicta, finem ponit huic capitulo dicens *Omnium igitur principium et finis entium qui preest* seu preens. *Principium quidem ut causa* efficiens videlicet et ex non ente inesse adducens; *finis autem ut huius gratia.* omnia enim facit ut omnia et singula participant ipso secundum quod eis est possibile.

Et *terminus omnium* quia omnia ipsum appetentia cum ad ipsum pro ut eis est possibile⁸²² attigerint non ultra tendunt, vel ‘terminus omnium’ dicitur quia omnibus terminatis terminos qui preteriri non poterunt constituit et termini et videlicet est terminus. Sic enim oportet coniungere in constructione licet in sermone distent ‘terminus’ et ‘termini’ et *infinitas* omnis *infinitatis* quia termini privationem sive temporis vel seculi seu numeri in augendo seu quanti continui in dividendo et minuendo sive materie in trasfigurando in formas ipse sua infinita virtute.

Adducit *superexcellenter* est videlicet infinitas infinitatis et terminus termini *ut oppositorum* opponuntur enim ne ut affirmatio et abnegatio terminus et infinitas quia terminum abnegat infinitas. Est autem “qui pre est” hoc et omnia alia, quia omnia prehabet, ut sepe dictum est, *in se uno* in eternis rationibus et ex illis ea substituit in esse et in esse conservat. Unde subiungit *In uno enim ut multotiens dictum est, et prehabet omnia entia et*

⁸¹⁹ Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 362)

⁸²⁰ Hilduin, Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 362)

⁸²¹ eam] etiam M

⁸²² et terminus ... possibile *om.* M

substituit ea videlicet *presens omnibus* per omnium intelligentiam et complacentiam in illis, ea conservans et ubique celum et terram, ut dicit, implens non mole corporeo aut dimensione quantitativa sed nihil relinquendo vacuum a sua gubernatione. *Et secundum unum et idem* est videlicet *presens omnibus et ubique*.

Et secundum idem omne. In nullo enim ex parte sui diversificatas est presens diversis et ubique et dictus omne omnium, ut pretactum est, suscipiens nominationes *et ad omnia procedens* per bonificas videlicet largitiones <240rb> *et manens in seipso*. Non enim procedens egreditur a se, sed manet immutabiliter in se nec contrariatur, hoc est quod supra dicitur secundum eam que a substantia egressionem.

Et stans per immutabilitatem, *et motus* per rerum productionem et gubernationem in esse seculari vel temporali, *et neque stans neque motus* quia nihil dictum de creatura univoce dicitur de ipso sed super substantialiter et super omnem intelligentiam. *Neque principium habens* quia non habet causam efficientem *vel medium* quia omnia habet⁸²³ simul, *vel finem* quia nihil quod ab ipso habet recedit; *neque in quodam entium ens* et in quodam non subintelligit quia in omnibus et ubique ens vel neque in quodam entium ens, quia nihil entium ipsum continet et circumscibit; *neque adhuc entium ens* quia, ut supra dictum est, ipsius est esse, et non ipse ipsius esse.

Et neque totaliter convenit ipsi aliquid seculariter entium vel temporaliter subsistentium. Sed segregatur et a tempore et a seculo et hiis que in seculo et hiis que in tempore omnibus. et quia per se seculum et entia et mensura entium et mensurata per ipsum et ab ipso. Quia itaque hec omnia per ipsum sunt et ab ipso, ipse non est secundum substantiam aliquid horum sed supersubstantialiter ab omni segregatus qui tamen supersubstantialiter est hec omnia. Seculariter autem entia dicit hic intelligibilia et temporaliter subsistentia dicit materialia et sensibilia.

⁸²³ habet] habent M

Capitulum Septimum: De sapientia, intellectu, ratione, veritate, fide

(Dionysiaca 380-385) *Age autem si videtur veram et eternam vitam ut sapientem et ut per se sapientiam laudemus, magis autem ut omnis sapientie substantiam, super omnem sapientiam et intelligentiam superexistentem: non enim solum Deus superplenus est sapientia, et intellectione⁸²⁴ ipsius non est numerus, sed et omni rationi et intellectui et sapientie supercollocatur. Et hoc supernaturaliter intelligens divinus vere vir et communis nostri et ducis sol, «stultum Dei sapientius hominibus» ait. Non solum quam⁸²⁵ omnis humana deliberatio error quidam⁸²⁶ est, iudicata ad firmum et permansivum divinarum et perfectissimarum intelligentiarum, sed quia et consuetum est theologis contraria passione in Deo ea que privationis abnegare. Sic et invisibile aiunt eloquia omnino manifestum lumen; et multum laudabilem et multivocum ineffabilem et innominabilem; et omnibus praesentem et ex omnibus inventum incomprehensibilem et non investigabilem. Et hoc utique modo et nunc divinus apostolus laudare dicitur stultitiam Dei, quod apparet in ipsa praeter rationem et inconueniens in ineffabilem et ante rationem omnem reducens veritatem. Sed quod in aliis dixi, proprie nobis quae super nos <243ra> accipientes et connutrito sensibus infixi et hiis que secundum nos divina comparantes, decipimur, secundum apparens divinam et ineffabilem rationem persequentes.⁸²⁷*

Quia sapientia est, in habentibus⁸²⁸ vitam sempiternam, suprema virtus comprehensiva Dei et divinorum, in esse adducta et conservata et illuminata a divina sapientia, post laudem Dei per nominationem vite laudat ipsum per nominationem sapientie ut substantificum omnis sapientie et super omnem sapientiam sine mensura supercollocatam. Ait itaque *Age autem (si videtur)*, tibi videlicet o timothee, *laudemus veram*, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸²⁹ “bonam”, *et eternam*, seu saecularem, *vitam* quam videlicet laudavimus in precedenti capitulo ut vitam, laudemus inquam in hoc capitulo *et ut sapientem et ut per se sapientiam*. Ipsa enim est sapiens non sapientia participata ut qualitate sed ut per se naturaliter, essentialiter,⁸³⁰ et substantialiter sapientia. sic inquam laudemus eam et non solum sic, *magis autem ut*

⁸²⁴ intellectione] intellectionis *Dionysiaca*

⁸²⁵ quam] quia *Dyonisiaca*

⁸²⁶ quidam] quidem *Dyonisiaca*

⁸²⁷ persequentes] prosequentes *Dyonisiaca*

⁸²⁸ in habentibus *om. M*

⁸²⁹ Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 380)

⁸³⁰ essentialiter] generaliter *M*

substantiam, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸³¹ autem rursus “substantificam”, *omnis sapientie, et superexistentem super omnem sapientiam et intelligentiam*, id est actionem virtutis⁸³² sapientialis. Et bonum sic est laudanda *non enim Deus est solum superplenus sapientia, non est numerus intelligentiae ipsius sed et supercollocatur*, seu superfirmatur, *et omni rationi et intellectui et sapientie*.

Hanc autem supereminenciam divine sapientie manifestavit divinus Paulus cum dixit “stultus Dei, sapientius est hominibus”.⁸³³ Quem divinum apostulum⁸³⁴ vocat hic auctor solem sui et ducis ipsius, id est sancti Ierothei, qui dux et doctor fuit beati Dionysii. Utriusque enim illuminator ad fidem fuit beatus Paulus, hoc itaque apostoli dictum inducens auctor subiungit et *divinus vere vir*, id est Paulus sapientissimus et fortissimus, et *communis sol nostri*⁸³⁵ et *ducis*, id est Hierothei, *intelligens supernaturaliter*, id est mente⁸³⁶ excedens Deo, *hoc*, id est supereminenciam divine sapientiae, *ait “stultum Dei, sapientius hominibus”*.⁸³⁷ Hoc dicens *Non solum quam omnis humana deliberatio est, iudicata quidam error ad firmum*, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸³⁸ “ad stabile”, *et permansivum divinarum et perfectissimarum intelligentiarum, sed quam theologis est consuetum abnegare*, id est privato sermone dicere, *in Deo*, seu de Deo, *contraria passione ea que privationis*, hoc est attribuere Deo significantia privationes. Cuiusmodi attributio videtur esse oppositi habitus abnegatio in designationem quod ei conveniunt⁸³⁹ superexcellenter habitus oppositi privationis utpote cum ei attribuitur stultitia que est privatio sapientie et insipientia. Secundum sermonis faciem, abnegatio sapientie attribuitur ei sapientie privatio, sed secundum interiorem sermonis intentionem econtrario attribuitur ei divinarum sapientie et scientie incomprehensibilis altitudo, et sic patitur sermo contrarium eius quod pretendit secundum faciem. Potest quoque supereminens Dei sapientia ideo dici stultitia quia hereticis et gentilibus videtur stultitia quod non possunt sillogistice ex principiis sumptis a sensibilibus demonstrare ut esse nostre redemptionis dispensatio.

Ad declarationem autem eius quod dixit “theologis esse consuetum”, et specialiter sermonis apostoli, inducit exempla dicens *sic*, id est contraria passione, *aiunt eloquia et lumen omnino manifestum invisibile*, lucem enim inaccessibleem quam inhabitat Deus dicunt

⁸³¹ Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 380)

⁸³² actionem virtutis om. M

⁸³³ 1 *Corinthians* 1:25

⁸³⁴ apostolum om. M

⁸³⁵ nostri om. M

⁸³⁶ mente om. M

⁸³⁷ 1 *Corinthians* 1:25

⁸³⁸ Hilduin, Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 380)

⁸³⁹ ei conveniunt om. M

tenebram et eius latibulum. *Et multum laudabilem et multivocum*, id est dictum ex omnibus, laudatum et nominatum aiunt *ineffabilem et innominabilem, et omnibus presentem et ex omnibus inventum*, aiunt *incomprehensibilem et non investigabilem*, seu inperscrutabilem, has videlicet privationes et consimiles ei attribuentia in designationem superexcellencie eorum que ab ipso privatur.

Hoc utique modo et nunc, id est in proposito sermone, *divinus apostolus laudare dicitur stulticiam Dei*, ipse dico, *reducens in veritatem ineffabilem et ante rationem omnem*, id est in veritatem anteriorem et superiorem omni ratione investigativa, *apparens in ipsa*, id est in divina stulticia hoc est in eius supereminenti sapientia, *praeter rationem et inconveniens*. Verbi enim incarnationem et mortem in carne visam preter rationem et inconvenientem, et sic stulticiam reduxit apostolus sua doctrina in veritatem qua non potest effari lingua vel investigare ratio, maxime fide non precedente. Mente enim excessit Deo transcendens omnia materialia et sensibilia. Non ex hiis iudicans divina. Iudicantes enim divina ex hiis que secundum nos decipiuntur, et divinam veritatem ut falsam et stultam prosequuntur, quod manifestans auctor subiungit *sed (quod in aliis dixi) accipientes que supra nos proprie nobis*, tamquam videlicet essent similia et equalia hiis que secundum nos, *et infixi*, seu involuti id est inviscati, *connutrigo sensibus*, id est phantasie imaginative sensibilibus, *et comparantes divina hiis quae secundum nos, decipimur, secundum apparens persequentes divinam et ineffabilem rationem*.

Hec autem determinatio “secundum apparens” adiungi potest et “ad decipimur” et “ad perse- <243va> -quentes.” Ubi autem nos supra posuimus “sol” aliqua translatio⁸⁴⁰ habet “leticia” quia in aliquo exemplari greco pro “hlios” quod est “sol”, scribitur “hdis” quod sonat in “leticiam” seu “delectationem”, sed verior lectura est “sol” sicut patet per scolium marginale. Ex eo autem quod in principio capituli dicit “veram vitam” quae Deus est, secundum grecam linguam saecularem. Patens est quod saeculum quandoque sumitur pro eternitate.

(Dionysiaca 385-386) *Oportet⁸⁴¹ scire eum, qui secundum nos intellectum habere quidem virtutem ad intelligere per quam intelligibilia conspicit, unionem autem superexcellentem intellectus naturam per quam convertitur ad ulteriora seipso. Secundum hanc igitur divina intelligendum non secundum nos, sed totos ipsos a totis nobismet ipsis*

⁸⁴⁰ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 381)

⁸⁴¹ oportet] oportunum *Dionysiaca*

extra statutos et totos Dei effectos. Melius enim esse Dei et non nostri ipsorum sic enim erunt divina data cum Deo effectis.

Dicto in proximo unde decipimur circa divina, adiungit auctor breviter modum cavendi hanc deceptionem que est quod intellectus noster naturaliter potens intelligere et conspicere intelligibilia transcendat non solum omnia sensibilia, sed et omnia intelligibilia et seipsam, et sic copuletur et uniatur ad superiora seipso, hoc est ad divina, divino radio elevante ipsum intellectum omnia transcendentem ad se. Et velut absorbente eum in se ut totus sit non sui sed absorbentis eum divini radii sic enim unitus cum divinis circa illa non errabit. Hoc igitur manifestans auctor ait *Oportet scire hoc videlicet eum intellectum qui secundum nos id est humanum intellectum habere quidem virtutem, seu potentiam ad intelligere, per quam virtutem scilicet, conspicit intelligibilia unione, autem habere videlicet superexcellentem naturam intellectus per quam unionem, videlicet, connectitur, seu copulatur, ad ulteriora seipso id est ad divinum et divina.*

Secundum hanc igitur, unionem videlicet excedentem naturam intellectus, intelligendum divina non secundum nos, sed totos ipsos, id est nos ipsos, extra statutos a totis nobismet ipsis et totos effectos ei. Oportet subsistendi intelligere divina vel resume hanc particulam secundum sic non secundum nos intelligendum divina, sed secundum totos ipsos. Et cum *melius enim esse Dei*, secundum conformitatem videlicet voluntatis nostre omnimodam cum voluntate divina, *et non nostri ipsorum*, sequendo videlicet voluntatem propriam, *sic enim*, id est essendo Dei, *erunt divina data*, divinarum videlicet illuminationum, *effectis cum Deo.* Virtutem itaque intellectus ad intelligere habemus ex conditione unionem, autem eius ad superiora ipso habemus ex divino radio ipsum super omnia elevante et velut in seipsum absorbente.

(Dionysiaca 386-388) *Hanc igitur irrationalem et sine intellectu et stultam sapientiam superexcellenter laudantes, dicamus quam⁸⁴² omnis est intellectus et rationis et omnis sapientie et intelligentie causa, et ipsius est omne consilium et ab ipsa omnis cognitio et intelligentia, et in ipsa omnis thesauri sapientiae et cognitionis sunt absconditi. Etenim consequenter iam predictis, supersapiens et omnisapiens causa et per se sapientie⁸⁴³ et totius et eius que secundum⁸⁴⁴ unumquodque est substantificatrix.*

⁸⁴² quam] quia *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁴³ sapientie] sapiens *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁴⁴ Secundum] per *Dionysiaca*

Hiis praehabitis, accedit ad principale propositum huius capituli, hoc est ad laudandum sapientiam divinam ut superexcellentem omnem rationem et intelligentiam et sapientiam, et ut existentem causam omnis habentis per aliquam vim apprehensivam sapientie resonationem. Et ait *hanc igitur sapientiam*, de qua videlicet locutus est Paulus, *irrationalem*, id est super omnem rationem, *et sine intellectu*, seu si latine diceretur sicut est in greco uno vocabulo “inintellectualem” vel “inintellectivam”, id est supra omnem intellectum, *et stultam*, id est excedentem omnem sapientiam reputatam tamen ab hominibus stultitiam, quia ad eius supereminentiam non possunt attingere. Hanc inquam sapientiam *laudantes superexcellenter*, id est ut superexcellentem, *dicamus quam*, ipsa videlicet, *est causa omnis intellectus et rationis et omnis sapientie et intelligentie, et ipsius*, ut cause videlicet, *est omne consilium et ab ipsa omnis cognitio et intelligentia et in ipsa*, in eternis <244ra> videlicet rationibus, *sunt omnes thesauri sapientie et cognitionis absconditi*. Et vere est sic. *Etenim consequenter predictis iam supersapiens causa et omnis sapiens est substantificatrix et per se sapientie*, id est sapientie secundum se considerate, *et totius*, id est universaliter considerate, *et eius que secundum unumquodque*, id est cuiuslibet particularis sapientie, sicut enim supra dictum est quod super bona et omnibona causa *est substantificatrix* omnimode bonitatis. Et consimiliter de superente et supervita, sic consequenter est de supersapiente et omnisapiente causa.

Licet autem in superioribus tetigimus quorundam nominum hic positorum proprias significationes et eorum differentias, non existimo inconveniens esse et hic de hiis tangere, quia poterit esse aliquis huius loci lector qui non legerit, vel memoritur, vel retinuerit superiora. Sapientia itaque est virtus apprehensiva Dei qui est lux in se manifestissima propter sue tamen supereminentie vehementiam nostre infirmitati inaccessibleis. Intellectus vero est virtus et potentia apprehensiva principiorum immediatorum et per se notorum quorum lux est menti nostre manifestissima. Ratio autem est virtus que decurrit a principiis notis in cognitionem conclusionis; hec autem subdividitur in virtutem que dicitur scientia, que est discursiva a principiis per se notis, necessariis, et necessario in conclusiones; et in virtutem artis que est discursiva a principiis notis ut plurimum uno modo in semper se habentibus in conclusiones prius ignotas. Uno modo ut plurimum semper se habentes sub ratione quoque est virtus que dicitur consilium que, posito fine optimo, inoperabili a nobis est perscrutativa et electiva vie que optime et directissime ducit ad finem propositum. Actio autem tam virtutis artis quam virtutis scientie dicitur cognitio et actio virtutis intellectus dicitur intelligentia; hec itaque sunt nominum predictorum hic positorum proprie significationes sumuntur tamen pluramque communiter ita etiam quod unumquodque pro unoquoque extenso et nomine

cognitionis usque ad sensitivam.

(Dionysiaca 388-390) *Ex ipsa intelligibiles et intellectuales angelicorum intellectuum virtutes simplices et beatas habent intelligentias, non in partibilibus aut a partibilibus aut sensibus aut rationibus egressivis <244rb> congregantes divinam cognitionem, neque ab aliquo communi ad hec contente. Omni autem materiali et multitudine purgate, intellectualiter, immaterialiter et intelligibiliter⁸⁴⁵ intelligibilia divinorum intelligunt. Et est ipsis intellectualis virtus et operatio inmixta et immaculata puritate splendificata, et conspectiva divinarum intelligentiarum; impartibilitate et immaterialitate et deiformiter unio ad divinum et supersapiens et intellectum et rationem ut possibile refigurata.*

Dicto generaliter quod divina sapientia est causa virtutum habentium resonationem sapientie, adicit quod ipsa est causa virtutum specialium angelicorum dicens: *Ex ipsa*, divina videlicet sapientia, *virtutes intellectuum angelicorum*, id est intellectuum qui sunt angeli, *intelligibiles*, quia intelliguntur a nobis et superiores inter illas virtutes intelliguntur⁸⁴⁶ ab inferioribus, *et intellectuales*, quia Deum eis superiorem intelligentes, *habent simplices et beatas intelligentias*, id est actiones virtutis sapientie, quibus⁸⁴⁷ comprehendunt Deum simplicem non per imagines et symbola, ut nos, sed simplici contemplatione in quam et omnia contemplantur quod est beatissimum, quia optimum ad angelicas voluntates habitum.

Habent inquam simplices intelligentias ille virtutes *non congregantes divinam cognitionem in partibilibus*, id est in virtutibus apprehensivis et retentivis multis et partitis ut sunt in nobis quinque sensus et phantasia et memoria et ratio egressiva, *vel a partibilibus*, utpote a materialibus, *vel sensibus vel rationibus egressivis*. Non enim utuntur actione sensitiva, vel rationis discursu successivo a principiis in conclusiones, vel rationis egressu ad exteriora, nec ab hiis tanquam a symbolis colligunt divinam cognitionem, *neque ab aliquo communi*, congregantes videlicet divinam cognitionem, non enim ut nos a communioribus inveniunt specialia, nec Deus habet aliquid cum aliquo commune a quo possit investigari. Simplici itaque intelligentia contuentur Deum celestes virtutes et in <244va> ipso, ut pretactum est, omnia et in omnibus ipsum.

Non tamen contemplatur ipsum in causatis et ex creatis ut nos non potentes ipsum

⁸⁴⁵ intelligibiliter] uniformiter *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁴⁶ a nobis...intelliguntur *om. M*

⁸⁴⁷ quibus *om. M*

aliter speculari nisi ex causatis, et ideo quasi contenti ad⁸⁴⁸ illa. Ille vero virtutes in omnibus et ex omnibus Deum conspiciunt, non tamen contente ad illa tanquam ex illis colligentes eam quam de ipso habent cognitionem. Unde adiungitur *ad hec contente*, seu si latine diceretur, sicut est in greco, ad hoc “circumhabite” vel “circumtente”, quasi diceret habent quidem celestes virtutes divinam cognitionem et in se et in omnibus causatis; non tamen habent⁸⁴⁹ eam in causatis ut contente ad hec et secundum modum eorum cognoscentes, sed secundum modum eorum⁸⁵⁰ simplicitatis proprie et simplicitatis divine. Quod manifestans subiungit *Omni autem materiali et multitudine purgate*. Non enim utuntur sensitiva aut imaginativa comprehensivis materialium tantum, nec multitudine virium apprehensivarum, sed simplici intelligentia veritatem agnoscunt hiis inquam purgate intelligunt *intellectualiter*, quia per modum virtutis proprie intellective, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁵¹ “pure”, *immaterialiter*, *intelligibiliter*, quia secundum quod possibile est intelligi divina, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁵² “uniformiter”, *intelligibilia divinorum* id est ea que de Deo sunt intelligibilia; non enim ut saepe dictum est omnino incomprehensibile⁸⁵³ est a creatura quid et ut est in se divina essentia.

Et est ipsis virtutibus videlicet celestibus *virtus* seu potentia *intellectualis et operatio* intellectualis simpliciter *splendificata puritate immixta et immaculata, et conspectiva impartibilitate divinarum intelligentiarum et immaterialitate et refigurata*, intellectualis videlicet virtus et operatio, *intellectum et rationem*, id est habens refiguratum intellectum et refiguratam rationem, *(ut possibile) deiformiter unio*, id est deiformi unitate, *ad divinum*, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁵⁴ “ad intellectuale”, et *supersapiens*, id est ad Deum et eius super sapientiam.

Virtus enim intellectualis angelica clara est eo quod non egreditur ad spirituales entium ut ex earum admixtionem intelligat entia ex huius commixtione sibi preter naturam maculata et eo quod impartibili conspectu et simplici et immateriali conspicit rationes omnium eternas et exemplares in mente divina, in quibus conspicit se et omnia, quas rationes hic dicit divinas intelligentias. Et hac claritate refigurata est et reformata secundum actum diligendi Deum. Quem actum hic dicitur intellectum, et secundum actum intelligendi in ipso omnia quem actum hic vocat rationem deiformi unione ad divinitatem supersapientem.

⁸⁴⁸ ad] de M

⁸⁴⁹ habent *om. Dionysiaca*

⁸⁵⁰ eorum *om. L, Maz*

⁸⁵¹ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 389)

⁸⁵² Hilduin, Eriugena, Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 389)

⁸⁵³ incomprehensibile] comprehensibile Maz

⁸⁵⁴ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 390)

(Dionysiaca 390-392) <244vb> *Propter divinam sapientiam et anime rationale habent, egressive quidem et circulo circa entium veritatem circumambulantes, et partibilium et omnimodorum varietate deficientes ab unitivis intellectibus, ea autem que multorum convolutione in unum, et equalibus angelorum intellectibus in quantum animabus proprium et possibile dignificate. Sed et sensus ipsos non utique quis peccet intentione sapientie resonationem dicens.*

Ostendo quod angelice intelligibiles virtutes et intellectuales sunt per se ex divina sapientia, consequenter ostendit quod et anime virtutes ex eadem per se sapientia et directe causantur earum insinuans proprietatem et differentiam ad virtutes angelicas sic inquit *propter divinam sapientiam et anime habent rationale circumambulantes* per varios videlicet ratiocinationum modos. *Egressive*, ad varias videlicet, *entium* species et *circulo*, entia videlicet circumeundo et non repentine eorum cognitionem accipiendo, de qua circulatione in superioribus latius dictum est. Circumambulantes inquam sic et sic circa entium *veritatem* adquirendam videlicet et *deficientes ab unitivis intelligentiis*, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁵⁵ “ab unitivis intellectibus”, id est ab angelis simplici intelligentia veritatis cognitionem accipientibus. *Varietate partibilium et omnimodorum*; variis enim virtutibus et modis accipiunt cognitionem partitorum et multimode differentium in quo deficient ab angelica uniformi deformitate vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁵⁶ “partibili et omnimodo varietatis deficientes” et cum et est idem in sensu cum priori littera; sic enim deficient anime ab unitivis intelligentiis angelorum dum hic vident per speculum in enigmate.

Sed cum in resurrectione videbunt facie ad faciem et erunt homines beati sicut angeli Dei in caelis, multitudinem et varietatem cognitionum convolvent in unam contemplationem Dei⁸⁵⁷ absque et symbolis subfigurationibus et nuda et simpli- <245ra> -ci contemplatione contemplantes ipsum et in ipso omnia sic quantum animabus est possibile et conveniens dignificare intelligentiis equalibus angelorum. Et hoc est quod sequitur *ea autem convolutione que multorum in unum*, hoc est multarum cognitionum et multorum cognitorum in unam contemplationem Dei, quia in illo contemplantur. Et omnia *dignificate (in quantum animabus proprium, id est conveniens, et possibile) et*, id est etiam, *intellectibus equalibus angelorum* seu si latine diceretur uno vocabulo sicut est in greco “equangelis” vel “equangelicis”.

Quidem autem anime non solum habent rationem et rationale a divina sapientia sed et

⁸⁵⁵ ab unitivis intellectibus *non legitur in Dionysiaca* (p. 391)

⁸⁵⁶ partibili et omnimodo varietatis deficientes *non legitur in Dionysiaca* (p. 391)

⁸⁵⁷ Dei om. M

sensus et sensitivum in quibus duobus comprehendi possunt omnes vires anime apprehensive, manifestat per hoc quod subsequenter dicit *ipsos sensus* esse resonationem sapientie. Non enim directe resonarent et tamquam vestigium, licet minus formatum, subobscurè nuntiarent sapientiam nisi ab ea directe procederent. Hoc itaque manifestans subiungit *sed non utique quis peccet intentione*, sue dictionis videlicet., *dicens* et sensus ipsos *resonationem sapientie* ac per consequens ipsos a divina sapientia causatos.

Nec dicat aliquis auctorem quod⁸⁵⁸ in superfluis laborare enumerans quidam quasi specialiter sapientie causata cum omnia⁸⁵⁹ in sapientia fecerit Deus quia cum de Deo dicantur multa ut vita, sapientia, intellectus, veritas et quam plurima huiusmodi. Intentio sua est ostendere que procedunt ab ipso vita in quantum vita et ab ipso sapientia in quantum sapientia et sic de ceteris ut pretactum est. Licet enim dicta de Deo ex parte ipsius de⁸⁶⁰ quo dicuntur sunt omnimode unum et idem, comparatione tamen ad creaturas habent aliquas varietates et est uni convenienter appropriatum quod non sic proprie convenit alii.

(Dionysiaca 392) *Et quidem et demonius intellectus, secundum quod intellectus ex ipsa est. Secundum quantum⁸⁶¹ quam causam autem intellectus est a ratione decidens, ut sortiri quod appetit non sciens neque volens, casum a sapientia magis proprie ipsum⁸⁶² asserendum.*

Quod etiam demonum intellectus, in quantum intellectus, est a divina sapientia. Est casus autem eorum a sapientia ex voluntate propria appetente quod eis non convenit et preter naturam, ostendit consequenter dicens *et quidem demonius intellectus secundum quod intellectus ex ipsa est*, divina videlicet <245rb> sapientia. *Secundum quantum autem intellectus est a ratione decidens, ut non sciens sortiri quod appetit*, id est esse equalem Deo, *neque volens* ordinata videlicet et rationabili voluntate, sed appetens illud irrationabili et libidinosa cupiditate. Secundum hoc, inquam, *asserendum ipsum*, id est demonium intellectum, *magis proprie casum a sapientia*; appetens enim absque ratione quod nescivit qualiter apprehenderet et quod ei est preter naturam omnino decidit a ratione; qui casus nequaquam est a sapientia causatus.

Ubi autem nos posuimus “a ratione decidens”, quod est in greco una dictio, velut si

⁸⁵⁸ quod] quasi L, Maz

⁸⁵⁹ omnia *om.* M

⁸⁶⁰ de] in M

⁸⁶¹ quantum] quam causam *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁶² ipsum] ipsam *Dionysiaca*

latine diceretur “irrationizatus”, aliud exemplar⁸⁶³ habet “si ratione quidem”, et secundum hoc sic ordinanda est lectura: “secundum quantum autem intellectus est si non sciens neque volens ratione quidem ut id est qualiter sortiri quod appetit asserendum ipsum et cetera”. Intellectus enim si ratione non sciat qualiter sortiatur quod appetit neque rationabiliter velit viam sortiendi quod appetit casus est a sapientia.

(Dionysiaca 392-398) *Sed quam⁸⁶⁴ quidem sapientie ipsius et omnis et intellectus omnis et rationis et omnis sensus divina sapientia et principium et causa et hypostasis et perfectio et custodia et terminus dicta est, qualiter autem ipse Deus supersapientia⁸⁶⁵ et intellectus et ratio et cognitor laudatur? Qualiter enim intelliget⁸⁶⁶ aliquid intelligibilem, non habens intellectuales operationes? Aut qualiter cognoscat sensibilia, omni sensui⁸⁶⁷ supercollocatus? Et quidem omnia ipsum scire aiunt eloquia et nihil effugere divinam cognitionem. Sed quod dixi multotiens divina deodecenter intelligendum. Sine intellectu enim et insensibile secundum superexcellentiam, non secundum defectum, in Deo ordi- <245va>-nandum; quemadmodum et irrationale reponimus ei qui super rationem, et imperfectionem superperfecto et praeperfecto et impalpabilem et invisibilem caliginem lumini inaccessiblei secundum superexcellentiam invisibilis luminis.*

Quare divinus intellectus omnia continet ab omnibus segregata cognitione, secundum omnium causam in seipso omnium scientiam praeaccipiens, ante angelos fieri sciens et adducens angelos, et omnia alia ab intus et ab ipso, ut sic dicam, principio sciens, et in substantiam ducens.

Et hoc existimo tradere eloquium quando ait: “qui scit omnia ante generationem ipsorum”⁸⁶⁸.

Non enim ex existentibus entia dicens, novit divinus intellectus; sed⁸⁶⁹ ex ipso et in ipso, secundum causam, omnium scientiam et cognitionem⁸⁷⁰ et substantiam praehabet et praecepit, non secundum ideam singulis apponens, sed secundum unam cause continentiam omnia sciens et continens. Quemadmodum et lumen secundum, causam in seipso⁸⁷¹, scientiam

⁸⁶³ Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca*, 392)

⁸⁶⁴ quam] quia *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁶⁵ supersapientia] supersapiens sapientia *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁶⁶ intelliget] intelligit *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁶⁷ omni sensui] omnem sensum *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁶⁸ *Ecclesiastes* 23:29: “Domino enim Deo, antequam crearentur, omnia sunt agnita.”

⁸⁶⁹ sed] secundum *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁷⁰ et cognitionem *om. Dionysiaca*

⁸⁷¹ seipso] semetipso *Dionysiaca*

tenebrose praecepit, non aliunde sciens tenebram⁸⁷² quam a lumine.

<245vb> Laudato Deo ex nominatione sapientie et consequenter laudando ex nominationibus intellectus et rationis quia et eorum, sicut et sapientie, est causa. Quia tamen hec nominationes videntur inferiores nominatione sapientie, et inferior virtus virtute sapientie, non videtur infra Deo convenire, querit primo qualiter hiis nominationibus convenienter laudatur, dicens *sed quam, quidem divina sapientia dicta est et principium* ex nihilo adducens in aliquid, *et causa* formans, *et hypostasis* supportans videlicet inesse, *et perfectio* per largitionem bene esse, *et custodia* per conservationem in benefice largitis, *et terminis* ad quem et non ultra tendunt *ipsius* sapientie id est sapientie in se considerate, *et omnis* particularis videlicet sapientie *et intellectus omnis et rationis et omnis sensus* id est potentie apprehensivae inferioris ratione quam inquam ita est, *qualiter autem ipse Deus supersapiens sapientia laudatur et intellectus et ratio et cognitorum? Qualiter enim intelliget aliquid intelligibilium, non habens intellectuales operationes? Vel qualiter cognoscet sensibilia, supercollocatus omni sensui?*

Sic quoque intellige de ratione. Non enim videtur quod alia virtute, quam virtute intellectuali qualem habent angeli et anime, possint intelligi intelligibilia, nec alia virtute quam sensitiva cognosci sensibilia quibus virtutibus vel earum operationibus non participat Deus. Scriptura tamen horum omnem cognitionem etiam supercertam Deo attribuit. Unde sequitur *et quidem omnia ipsum scire aiunt eloquia et nihil effugere divinam cognitionem.* Huius autem dubitationis posite subiungit solutionem dicens *sed (quod dixi multotiens) intelligendum divina deodecenter.* Dicta enim de Deo ut sepe dictum est non secundum significationes proprias sed superexcellenter intelligendum. Quemadmodum se habet in exemplis subnexis. *Sine intellectu enim,* seu si latine diceretur sicut est in greco “inintelligens “et “insensibile”, *ordinandum in Deo* hoc est dicendum de Deo *secundum superexcellenciam, non secundum defectum.* Non enim auferunt a Deo cognoscitivum intelligibilium et sensibillum, sed insinuant ipsum cognoscere illa excellentius quam intellectu vel sensu *quemadmodum et irrationale reponimus ei qui super rationem, et imperfectionem superperfectio et praeperfectio, et impalpabilem et invisibilem caliginem lumini inaccessiblei secundum superexcellenciam invisibilis luminis* vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁷³ “visibilis luminis”. Attribuentes enim Deo caliginem, significamus ipsum esse lumen inaccessible propter superexcellenciam luminis eiusdem, nobis invisibilis propter suam supereminentiam

⁸⁷² tenebram] tenebras *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁷³ Sarrazin (see *Dionysiaca*, 396)

ad nostram videndi possibilitatem, secundum <246ra> sui, tamen manifestum maxime visibilis. Est quoque Deus lumen inaccessible propter superexcellenciam sui ad omne aliud lumen et invisibile et visibile, spiritale et corporale.

Quia itaque omnia dicta de Deo sive positive sive privative secundum superexcellenciam dicuntur de ipso et insinuant ipsum superexcellente virtute simplicis sapientie omnia superexcellenter facere quae creatis virtutibus faciunt creata, consequenter laudatur Deus inferiorum virtutum nominationibus. Non enim signatur quod in ipso sint virtutes inferiores⁸⁷⁴ nec quod habeat earum proprias actiones sed quod que ipse agunt propriis actibus ipse supereminenter agit. Superexcellencia divine virtutis simplici enim et supereminente cognitione sui supereminenter cognoscit que intellectuali operatione cognoscit intellectus et que rationali ratio et que sensitiva sensus et que omnis virtus apprehensiva propria operatione. Hec itaque manifestans subiungit: *Quare*, hoc est quia, secundum superexcellenciam ordinandum in Deo dicta de ipso *divinus intellectus* id est intellectus dictus de Deo *omnia continet cognitione segregata* id est superelevata *ab omnibus secundum omnium causam*. Cum enim dicitur Deus est intellectus vel Deus intelligit significatur quod superelevata ab omnibus secundum omnem causam. Cum enim dicitur Deus est intellectus vel Deus intelligit significatur quod superelevata ab omnibus cognitione sui existentis causae omnium continet omnia in ipsa sui cognitione omnium creativa. Ille dico divinus intellectus *preaccipiens* id est eternaliter habens antequam res cognite sint in seipsis. *Scientiam omnium in seipso* utpote *ante fieri angelos sciens et adducens angelos, et omnia alia ab intus sciens*. Non enim a rebus exterioribus accipit earum scientiam, *et ducens* in substantiam, *ab ipso principio*, id est a sui ipsius interiori cognitione principiante omnia. *Ut sic dicam*, id est ut nomen principii ad illam superexcellenciam super eveham.

Sed si adductio rerum in esse sic eas facere et facere et fieri naturalis sint quomodo dicit adducens angelos ante angelos fieri. Eorum et aliorum adductio quantum est ex parte adducentis est eorum eterna benivola scientia et cognitio. Propter hoc sicut scientia divina eternitate priori est rebus factis sic et adductio earum quantum est ex parte adducentis. Quod autem dixit de hac prioritate confirmat per eloquia subiungens: *Et hoc existimo tradere eloquium quando ait: "qui scit omnia ante generationem ipsorum"*. *Non enim ex entibus entia, discens novit divinus intellectus; sed ex ipso et in ipso, secundum causam*, hoc est ut omnium causa, *praehabet et preaccepit omnium scientiam et cognitionem et substantiam* eternaliter enim sciens se et cognoscens in ipsa eterna scientia sui sciens omnia accepit <246rb> ea eternaliter in sua scientia; *non apponens singulis*, hoc est non intelligens singula

⁸⁷⁴ inferiores] maiores M

secundum ideam, id est secundum formam et speciem ab unoquoque acceptam, sicut cognoscunt nostre vires apprehensive, *sed sciens et continens omnia secundum unam continentiam cause*. Sciens enim et continens se causam omnium scit et continet in se causa omnia causata. Insuper quoque in se causa omnium cognoscit malum cuius non est causa quia nec habet causam nec est principium ei oppositum, sed est defectio et privatio boni et eius quod secundum naturam ipsam existens preter naturam.

Quemadmodum lumen etc. Sicut et sciens in eo quod cognosceret se et sui naturam naturaliter protensivam sui undique et illuminativam circumstanciam in hoc cognosceret et illuminationes illuminatorum quarum est causa. Et in eodem agnosceret tenebram que est defectus et absentia luminis et privatio illuminationis. Quod explanans auctor subiungit *quemadmodum et lumen secundum causam*, hoc est in eo quod ipsa est causa illuminationum, *praecepit*. Posito videlicet quod ipsum sit sciens *in seipso scientiam tenebre non aliunde sciens tenebram quam a lumine*. Unde enim aliter sciret lumen tenebram cum ubi lumen est et illuminatio non sit tenebra nisi a sui et in sui natura cognita naturaliter protensiva sui undique et circumstantiam illuminativa cuius absentia est tenebra

(Dionysiaca 398-402) *Seipsam igitur divina sapientia cognoscens, cognoscat omnia: immaterialiter materialia, et impartibiliter partibilia, et multa unitive, ipso uno omnia et cognoscens et adducens. Etenim si secundum unam causam Deus omnibus existentibus esse tribuit, secundum ipsam singularem causam sciet omnia, ut ex ipso entia et in ipso presubsistentia. Et non ex entibus suscipiet ipsorum cognitionem; sed et ipsis singulis eius que ipsorum et aliis eius que aliorum cognitionis erit largitor. <246va> Non igitur Deus propriam habet sui ipsius cognitionem, alteram autem communem entia omnia comprehendentem. Ipsa enim se ipsam omnium⁸⁷⁵ causam⁸⁷⁶ cognoscens, vacatione alicubi ea que ab ipsa et quorum est causa ignorabit? Sic Deus igitur entia cognoscit non scientia entium, sed ea que sui ipsius.*

Etenim et angelos scire aiunt eloquia que in terra, non secundum sensus ipsa cognoscentes sensibilia quidem entia, secundum propriam autem deiformis intellectus virtutem et naturam.

Ostenso quod divinus intellectus, qui idem est cum divina sapientia, cognoscens se

⁸⁷⁵ omnium om. *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁷⁶ causam] causa *Dionysiaca*

cognoscit omnia, adiungit quod cognoscit ea non per modum cognitorum sed per modum ipsius cognoscentis dicens *seipsam igitur cognoscens divina sapientia, cognoscet omnia* ita videlicet quod *immaterialiter materialia, et impartibiliter partibilia, et multa unitive*. Sicut ipsa a se cognita in hoc cognoscens omnia; est immaterialis et impartibilis et una ipsa dico et *cognoscens et adducens omnia* entia videlicet et causata *ipso uno* hoc est ipsa unitate immaterialis et impartibilis et simplicis essentie.

Quod autem sic cognoscit, declarat per hoc quod ipse Deus omnibus existentibus variis et diversis, secundum unitatem causalem esse tribuit. Verissima enim cuiusque cognitio est cause ipsius et eius in sua causa cognitio. Unde sequitur *etenim si Deus secundum unam causam*, ex parte videlicet cause non multiplicatam, *tribuit esse omnibus existentibus, sciet omnia secundum ipsam singularem causam ut entia ex ipso et presubsistentia in ipso*, in eius videlicet eterna sui intelligentia. *Et non suscipiet cognitionem ipsorum ex entibus, sed erit largitor et ipsis singulis*, habentibus videlicet intellectivam cognitionem, *eius cognitionis que ipsorum et aliis*, id est ipsis existentibus aliis ab hiis qui extra se, <246vb> *eius cognitionis que aliorum*. Tribuit enim Deus unicuique intellectivo et cognitionem sui ipsius et cognitionem aliorum a se.

Ex hiis itaque manifestum quod simplici intelligentia intelligens se, Deus simplicem causam omnium eadem et non alia intelligentia intelligit omnia. Ex quo sequitur quod non alteram_habet cognitionem sui et alteram entium. Unde sequitur *non ergo Deus habet propriam cognitionem sui ipsius, alteram autem communem entia omnia comprehendentem. Ipsa enim causa omnium cognoscens seipsam, vacatione alicubi*, hoc est si cognoscens seipsam vacat in hac cognitione, id est a cognitione alicuius alterius, *ignorabit ea que ab ipsa et quorum est causa?* Cum ab ipsis, ut predictum est, non suscipiat eorum cognitionem. Esset enim secundum hoc aut posterior rebus cognitis aut aliquando non cognoscens quod est inconueniens.

Ex predictis itaque patet quod unica cognitione cognoscit Deus se et omnia non sumens scientiam entium ab entibus sed in scientia sui sciens ea. Unde sequitur: *sic igitur Deus entia cognoscit non scientia entium sed ea*, scientia videlicet, *que sui ipsius*. Quod hoc non sit admirandum in Deo declarat per hoc quod est in angelis, videlicet quod isti cognoscunt sensibilia que sunt in terra non accipientes earum cognitionem ab ipsis sensibilibus, cum ipsi angeli non utantur instrumentis sensitivis, sed virtute et natura intellectus, qua supereminenter operantes sensibilia comprehendunt et cognoscunt, ut patet ex eloquiis in pluribus locis. Hoc itaque est quod sequitur. *Etenim et angelos aiunt eloquia scire que in terra ipsos dico non cognoscentes ipsa entia sensibilia quidem secundum sensus, secundum*

propriam autem virtutem et naturam intellectus deiformis cognoscentes videlicet sensibilia. Modis itaque predictis laudatur Deus deodecenter per nominationem intellectus.

(Dionysiaca 402-408) *In his autem quaerere oportet qualiter nos Deum cognoscimus, neque intelligibilem neque sensibilem neque quid universaliter entium existentem. Ne forte igitur verum dicere quam⁸⁷⁷ Deum cognoscimus non ex ipsius natura, incognoscibile enim hoc et omnem rationem et intellectum superexcedens.*

Sed ex omnium <247ra> entium ordinatione, ut ex ipso proposita, et imagines quasdam et similitudines divinorum ipsius exemplorum habente, in quod ultra omnia via et ordine, secundum virtutem, redeundum, in omnium ablatione et superexcellencia, in omnium causa.

Propter quod et in omnibus Deus cognoscitur et sine omnibus. Et per cognitionem Deus cognoscitur et per ignorantiam. Et est ipsius intelligentia⁸⁷⁸ et ratio et scientia, et tactus et sensus et opinio et phantasia et nomen et alia omnia, et neque intelligitur neque dicitur neque nominatur.

Et non est aliquid entium, neque in aliquo entium cognoscitur, et in omnibus omnia est et in nullo nihil, et ex omnibus omnibus cognoscitur et ex nullo nulli.

Etenim et hec et recte de Deo dicimus: et ex entibus omnibus laudatur, secundum omnium analogiam quorum est causa.

Et est rursus divinissima Dei cognitio per ignorantiam cognita, secundum eam que super intellectum unionem, quando intellectus, ab omnibus entibus recedens, deinde et seipsum dimittens, unitur supersplendentibus radiis, inde et illic imperscrutabili profunditate sapientie illuminatus.

Et quidem et ex omnibus, quod quidem dixi, ipsam cognoscendum; ipsa enim est, secundum eloquium, omnium factiva, <247rb> et semper omnia concordans, et indissolubilis omnium concordie et ordinis causa, et semper fines priorum connectens principiis secundorum, et unam universi conspirationem et harmoniam pulchrificans.

Quesito qualiter Deus cognoscit intelligibilia et sensibilia cum non habeat intellectuales et sensitivas operationes, quia hec operationes et virtutes ex quibus ille egrediuntur sunt inferiores quam deceant et convenient divine nature, querit consequenter

⁸⁷⁷ quam] quia *Dyonisiaca*

⁸⁷⁸ intelligentia] intellectus *Dionysiaca*

qualiter nos cognoscimus Deum, cum ipse sit superior omni virtute nostra apprehensiva et cognoscitiva et omni operatione omnis virtutis nostre apprehensive et cognoscitive, dicens: *in hiis autem*, id est consequenter predictis, *oportet quaerere qualiter nos cognoscimus Deum, neque intelligibilem*, id est inapprehensibilem, vel cognoscibilem virtute creata cognoscitiva immaterialium et spiritalium, *neque sensibilem* id est apprehensibilem virtute apprehensiva materialium et corporalium; *neque existentem universaliter quid entium* vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁷⁹ “quid intelligibilem”.

Nullum enim omnino ens aut intelligibile est Deus, sed super omne ens et omnem intellectum ac per hoc nullum ens aut intellectus potest ad ipsum. Posita itaque questione et motivus ad dubitandum subiungit solutionem dicens quod non cognoscimus Deum ex ipsius natura. Quemadmodum cognoscimus intelligibilia et sensibilia per species eorum intelligibiles et sensibiles nostris viribus apprehensivis eis apponentes sed cognoscimus eum primo ex entium ordinatione. In cuiusque entis comprehensi a nobis, unitate quasi in vestigio et speculo comprehendentes Dei factoris unitatem in materia et forma et compositione ipsius entis⁸⁸⁰ potentiam factoris ex nihilo educentis et sapientiam formantis et bonitatem compositis⁸⁸¹ et sic in unitatem trinitatem.

Et in entibus inferioribus inferiori⁸⁸² virtute comprehensis, cognoscitur minus limpide tanquam in vestigio minus formato et speculo minus lucido et imagine minus imitante. In entibus vero superioribus superiori virtute comprehensis, cognoscitur limpidius tanquam in predictis formationibus lucidioribus et magis imitantibus. Cum vero per ordinem creaturarum ordinatis operationibus virium apprehensivarum sic ascendimus ab imis usque ad supremas. Oportet etiam transcendere supremas creaturas et operationes omnium virium apprehensivarum et fieri in actuali omnium ignorantia et in illa supersplendentem divinum <247va> radium suscipere et ab eo illuminari et ei uniri. Et in hac unione Deum, ut possibile, sine imaginibus videre.

Potentiam itaque quam dicimus virtutem naturalem sapientie, id est cognitionis Dei in se, ut possibile, sine imaginibus, est potentia transcendendi operationes omnium virium apprehensivarum et fieri in supereminencia, in ignorantia omnium, secundum se impotens, superius agere et apponere in divinum radium. Sed solum potens suscipere ab ipso quod dignatur largiri. Sic itaque solvens quesitum subiungit: *ne forte igitur verum dicere*, et insinuat per istud “ne forte” quod non presumptuose asserit, sed pie credit, “verum dicere”

⁸⁷⁹ quid intelligibilem non legitur in *Dionysiaca* (p. 402)

⁸⁸⁰ entis *om.* M

⁸⁸¹ et sapientiam...compositis *om.* M

⁸⁸² inferiori *om.* M

hoc videlicet quod sequitur quam *Deum cognoscimus non ex ipsius natura*, per nostram videlicet potentiam apponentes et agentes in ipsius naturam. *Incognoscibile enim hoc et superexcedens omnem intellectum et rationem. Sed ex omnium entium ordinatione, ut proposita*, hoc est ut in esse posita, *ex ipso* et nobis ostensa *et habente imagines quasdam et similitudines divinatorum exemplorum*, id est idearum et rationum eternarum, *ipsius*, Dei videlicet.

Omnis enim natura imago est et similitudo eterne rationis in mente divina ad cuius exemplum est formata et ex ipsa tamquam ex imagine et similitudine ascendi potest in divinam rationem que ipsius est exemplum prout possibile speculandam. Ex hac inquam entium ordinatione sic proposita et habente divinatorum exemplorum imagines et similitudines *redeundum*, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁸³ “redimus”, (*secundum virtutem*) *via et ordine*, gradatim videlicet, ab infimis ad suprema ascendendo *in quod ultra omnia*, id est in Deum, *in omnium ablatione et superexcellencia, et in omni causa*. Quia cum gradatim ascendimus ad summitatem creaturarum per summas operationes summarum virium apprehensivarum, abnegamus a Deo has omnis attendentes ipsum hiis omnibus incomparabiliter superexcellentem, utpote *omnium* causam educentem omnia in esse et bene esse ex nihilo. Et sic ut ipsius illuminationem et manifestationem suscipiamus, auferimus a nobis omnes operationes omnium virium apprehensivarum in actuali omnium ignorantia, exspectantes divini radii gratuitam superfusionem.

Redimus itaque ad Deum, ut possibile nobis, cognoscendum post speculationem eius via ordinata in creaturis, velut in ipsius vestigiis speculis et in imaginibus, in ablatione et abnegatione omnium ab ipso Deo. Et in ablatione omnium ab operationibus et apprehensionibus nostrarum virium apprehensivarum attendentes eius inapprehensibilem ad omnia superexcellenti- <247vb> -am omnium inapprehensibiliter causativam. *propter quod*, id est propter hoc quod predicto modo *redeundum* in id quod ultra omnia cognoscendum, *et in omnibus cognoscitur Deus*. Dum ex omnibus, videlicet ut ex vestigiis et imaginibus ipsum speculamur, *et sine omnibus* dum videlicet in omnium ignorantia radii ipsius superfusionem suscipimus *et per cognitionem Deus cognoscitur*. Cum videlicet in creaturarum speculis videtur *et per ignorantiam* cum superegressi omnia et actu ignorantes per ipsam ignorantiam⁸⁸⁴ susceptioni radii ipsius adaptamus. *Et est ipsius intelligentia et ratio et scientia, et tactus et sensus et opinio et phantasia et nomen et alia omnia*. Quia in intellectis spiritualibus per intelligentiam, et incognitis artificialibus per rationem, et in necessariis

⁸⁸³ redimus non legitur in *Dionysiaca* (p. 403)

⁸⁸⁴ cum superegressi...ignorantiam om. M

cognitis per scientiam, et in corporalibus apprehensis per infimum corporalium sensuum, id est tactum, et in sensibilibus per alios sensus corporeos, et in opinabilibus, id est estimabilibus, ex sensatis, et in imaginabilibus per fantasiam id est imaginativam.

Speculatur ipsum vis speculativa non ut est et quid est in se, nec sine symbolo et imagine, sed, ut saepe dictum est, ut causam in causatis, ut artificem in artificiis, ut rem veram in rei imaginibus et in obscuris speculis. Et propter hoc vis speculativa Dei in omnibus apprehensis quacumque virtute apprehensiva cum speculatur ipsum in propriis apprehensibilibus huius alicuius virtutis et illa virtus in actu ipsius speculative cognoscit Deum. Et sic est omnis virtus apprehensiva aliquo modo per speculum et in enigmate Dei cognoscitiva. Ac per hoc convenienter ipsius Dei dicta et omne nomen, ut in superioribus dictum est, ipsum nominat. Et sic est ipsius et alia omnia a virtutibus pretactis ipsius sunt ut in ipsum reducentia virtutem speculativam, et in virtute speculativa virtutes proprie eorum apprehensivas. Ita inquam sunt hec predicta ipsius et tamen *neque intelligitur*, propria videlicet operatione intellectus ut est in se et absque enigmate, et per hoc nec virtute aliqua inferiori apprehensiva apprehenditur. *Neque dicitur*, hoc est sermone enarratur, *neque nominatur*, aliquo videlicet simplici nomine ut est in se sed, ut saepe dictum est, nominatur secundum superexcellendam et beneficos eius processus in creaturas. *Et non est aliquid entium, neque cognoscitur in aliquo entium* ut est videlicet in se, *et in omnibus omnia est*. Illa videlicet omnino causans inesse supportans, promovens, consummans et secundum omnia dirigens et in *nullo nihil* id est non est aliquid eorum que in quocumque *et cognoscitur omnibus* cognoscitivis videlicet ipsius *ex omnibus* ut ex predictis est liquidum <248ra> *et ex nullo nulli* quia ex nullo cognoscitur alicui ut est in se. Et bene opposita sic attribuuntur Deo qui est super omnia.

Etenim hec opposita videlicet ut quod eius est intellectus et non intelligitur et similia *dicimus de Deo* et *recte* quia *suple et laudatur ex omnibus entibus quorum est causa secundum omnium analogiam* quia excellentioribus excellentius et ex inferioribus secundum quod competit eorum dignitati. Et sic eius dicuntur omnia. *Et est rursus divinissima Dei cognitio cognita* id est *adepta per ignorantiam, secundum eam unionem quae super intellectum*. Cum enim transcederit mens operationes intellectuales et facta in omnium ignorantia suscipiens divinum radium ei unitur. Et est hec eminentissima nobis possibilis Dei cognitio. Et potentia ascendendi in hanc ignorantiam est in nobis virtus suprema quam et supra nominavimus virtutem sapientie.

Explanans autem hanc ignorantiam et in ea unionem adiungit *quando intellectus recedens ab omnibus entibus, deinde et se ipsum dimittens* per superexcessum videlicet sui et

omnium *unitur radiis supersplendentibus, inde* id est ex illis radiis *et illic* id est in illis radiis *illuminatus imperscutabili profunditate sapientie* hoc enim est rari in tertium et supremum celum. Et videre ibi secreta que non licet homini loqui.⁸⁸⁵ In primum namque caelum rapitur qui in actus virtutis artis et scientiae sustollitur incognitis per artem et scientiam speculans Deum. In secundum vero qui in actus virtutis intellectus elevatur et in intellectis limpidius Deum⁸⁸⁶ speculatur. Post quod caelum non est superius nisi illud quod prediximus. In hac itaque cognitione omnia a Deo auferuntur et sic quasi opposita non inconvenienter ei attribuuntur.

Quod autem a creaturis sic ascendendum in Dei cognitionem et tandem in sapientiae profunditatem in caligine supereminens omnium ignorantiae, explanat adhuc manifestius adiungens. *Et quidem et cognoscendum ipsam* id est supremam et profundissimam divinam sapientiam *ex omnibus (quod quidem dixi)* inferioribus videlicet pluries. Et bene cognoscenda est ex omnibus quia ipsa est causa effectiva omnium et concordativa et causa indissolubilitatis concordie et ordinis omnium adinvicem non solum similis existentium sed et sibi consequenter succedentium et sic omnium adinvicem concordie ordine universitatem pulchrificans. Unde subiungit: *ipsa enim, divina videlicet sapientia, est, secundum eloquium, factiva omnium, causa artifex est enim, omnium secundum eloquia divina sapientia et cuncta componens. Cum patre omnia in sapientia faciente et causa concordans semper omnia, et causa indissolubilis concordie et ordinis* <248rb> *omnium connectens semper* armonice videlicet *fines priorum principis secundorum*, id est consequenter succedentium, et pulchrificans seu *pulchrificans unam conspirationem*, id est unam appetitionem naturalem universorum qua appetunt pacificam et ordinatam permanentiam in universitate, *et harmoniam* id est concordiam appetitam universi. Dicitur autem sapientia pulchrificare unam conspirationem et armoniam universi quia facit eam pulchritudinem universi qua pulchritudine ipsum universum pulchrificatur.

(Dionysiaca 408-414) *Ratio autem Deus laudatur a sacris eloquiis, non solum quam⁸⁸⁷ et rationis et intellectus et sapientie est largitor,⁸⁸⁸ sed quam⁸⁸⁹ et omnium causas in seipso uniformiter praecepit, et quam⁸⁹⁰ per omnia incedit, attingens (ut eloquia aiunt) usque ad*

⁸⁸⁵ et videre...loqui om. M

⁸⁸⁶ Deum om. L, M

⁸⁸⁷ quam] quia *Dyonysiaca*

⁸⁸⁸ est largitor] indultor est *Dyonysiaca*

⁸⁸⁹ quam] quia *Dyonysiaca*

⁸⁹⁰ quam] quia *Dyonysiaca*

omnium finem; et ante hec quidem quam⁸⁹¹ omni simplicitati divina supersimplificatur ratio, et ab omnibus est super omnia secundum supersubstantiale absoluta.

Ista ratio est simplex et vere existens veritas, circa quam, ut puram et inerrabilem totorum cognitionem, divina fides est, manens credentium collocatio, hos collocans in veritate, et in ipsis veritatem, intransmutabili identitate, simplicem veritatis cognitionem habentibus credentibus. Si enim cognitio unitiva cognoscentium et cognitorum, ignorantia autem transmutationis semper et eius quae ex ipso ignoranti divisionis causa, in <248va> veritate credentem secundum sacram rationem, nihil removebit ab ea que secundum veram⁸⁹² fidem communicatione, in qua mansionem habebit immobilis et intransmutabilis identitatis.

Bene enim novit ad veritatem unitus quam bene habet, et si multi corripiant ipsum ut extasim passum. Latet quidem enim (ut conveniens) ipsos ex errore veritate per eam que vere fidem mente excedens. Ipse autem vere novit seipsum non (quod⁸⁹³ aiunt illi) insanientem, sed ab instabili et alterata circa omnimodam erroris varietatem latione, per simplicem et semper secundum eadem et sic habentem veritatem liberatum. Sic igitur eius que secundum nos divine sapientie principales duces pro veritate moriuntur omni die, testificantes (ut conveniens) et verbo omni et opere unitive christianorum veritati et cognitioni, omnibus ipsam esse et simpliciore et divinior, magis autem ipsam esse solam veram et unam et simplicem Dei cognitionem.⁸⁹⁴

Laudato Deo ex nominatione intellectus, et consequenter ostenso qualiter nos cognoscimus Deum qui est super omnem intellectum, secundum ordinem praelibatum, in titulo huius capituli laudat ipsum ex nominationibus rationis seu verbi in greco. Enim habetur logos quod significat rationem et verbum que de Deo dicta non differunt et veritatis et fidei. Laudant itaque eloquia Deum nominantia ipsum hoc nomine logos non solum quam ipse est omnis rationis et verbi causa et largitor quemadmodum et omnis sapientie et intellectus, sed et quam eterno verbo et eterna ratione <248vb> dicendo se dicens omnia. In ipsa dictione omnium prae-habet in se ideas omnium et rationes causales que non sunt aliud nisi ipsa dictio omnium in dicendo se ipsum quibus ordine rationabili causat et disponit omnia unicuique tribuens sibi ad se et ad alia rationabiliter congruentia. Et quam ipsa dictio et ratio Dei que non est nisi dictio et intelligentia sui ipsius simplicissimi est supersimplex, et nullo modo in se multiplex. Quemadmodum est dictio et ratio nostra dicens et comprehendens diversa. Et quam

⁸⁹¹ quam] quia *Dyonysiaca*

⁸⁹² veram om. *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁹³ quod] quoad *Dionysiaca*

⁸⁹⁴ cognitionem] cognitione *Dionysiaca*

nihil accipit ab hiis quae dicit et intelligit, sed omnino est ab hiis superelevata et segregata.

Hoc igitur manifestans ait. *Ratio autem* seu verbum Deus *laudatur a sacriis eloquiis* id est sacra eloquia laudando Deum dicunt quam est logos id est ratio seu verbum *non solum quam est largitor et rationis*, ut suple, *et intellectus et sapientie, sed quam et praeacceptit*, id est eternaliter prehabuit uniformiter, *in seipso omnium causas*, id est eternas omnium rationes causales. Dicendo se unico, id est uniformi verbo, dicens omnia. *Et quam per omnia incedit*, ipsa videlicet suo verbo inesse adducendo rationabiliter, disponendo in esse ordinato, supportando, promovendo et consummando. Et sic (*ut eloquia aiunt*) *attingens usque ad finem omnium* tam iniciativum secundum esse quam perfectivum tam inchoativum secundum durationem quam terminativum tam summum secundum dignitatem et nobilitatem quam unum in hoc incessu necessario attingens ad omnia inter finem et finem intermedia.

Et ante hec, quidem duo videlicet que praedicta sunt propter que laudatur Deus ab eloquiis, ut ratio seu verbum laudatur, resume ab eisdem quam divina ratio seu divinum verbum *supersimplificatur omnium simplicitati, et absoluta est ab omnibus secundum supersubstantiale*, ipsius videlicet divinitatis *super omnia*, primum enim est secundum ordinem naturalem quod Deus supersubstantialis ab omnibus supersubstantialiter segregatus. Supersimplici verbo eterno dicit se et consequens est ut dicendo se eodem eterno verbo dicat omnia. Et ipsa dictione omnium eternaliter praehabeat in se eternas omnium ideas et rationes et tertium est quod secundum has rationes omnia educat in esse, ut praetactum est, per omnia incedat attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponat omnia suaviter.

Hec itaque ratio et hoc verbum est prima et eterna veritas. Communiter enim apud nos dicta veritas est adequatio sermonis cum re per sermonem dicta cum videlicet sic est res sicut sermo dicit eam esse verbum autem eternum eternaliter dicens se est summe adequatum ei quod dicit et sic est res dicta sicut verbum dicit eam esse. Et cum dicens se dicat omnia et ipsa dictione faciat omnia esse sicut eternaliter <249ra> dicta sunt. Ipsum verbum est adequatum non aequalitate paritatis, cum ei nihil parificetur, sed⁸⁹⁵ privatione dissonantie cum rebus dictis. Sic enim sunt res dicte ut eternum verbum eternaliter dicit eas esse. Est enim unaquoque et id et tale et tantum et tunc et ibi et eo ordine et eo modo utpote necessario vel contingenter quod et quale et quantum et quando et ubi et quo ordine et quo modo dicit unamquamque esse. Et similiter de aliis unicuique accidentibus. Hec igitur adequatio, quae non est aliud secundum rem quam ipsum eternum verbum adequatum, et eterna ratio est veritas simplicitatis et vere existens quia eternaliter et non ab aliquo extra se existens. Circa hanc veritatem quae vere est, Dominus noster Jesus Christus est divina fides credentium. Hec

⁸⁹⁵ sed] si M

enim veritas illuminat vim creditivam et unit secum ad videndum se et per se patrem et spiritum sanctum et ipsius incarnationem et reductionem nostram per ipsam ad patrem et cetera divinitus credenda.

Fides autem est comprehensio aliquorum non per se notorum, ut sunt axiomata, que vocat dignitates et communes animi conceptiones nec notorum sillogistice ex per se notis aut ex notis per se nota aut alio modo logice ratiocinationis sed notorum ex auditu solo verbi Dei divina illuminatione uniente potentiam naturalem aptam natam ex solo auditu consentire cum rebus ex auditu susceptis. Et est hoc vis apprehensiva sic unita cum suis propriis apprehensibilibus id est ex solo auditu absque logicis ratiocinationibus supponibilibus firmioris cognitionis aliis virtutibus apprehensivis et illis omnino certior unde cum hoc vis per divinam illuminationem unitur suis propriis apprehensibilibus id est credibilibus non potest eam sic formatam scindere vel avertere tribulatio vel angustia vel aliquod de ceteris⁸⁹⁶ que cum hiis enumerat apostolus. Hec igitur declarans auctor ait *ista ratio*, seu istud verbum, *est simplex et vere existens veritas, circa quam veritatem videlicet ut puram et inerrabilem cognitionem totorum*, id est universorum, *est divina fides*, qua scilicet nos credimus in Deum trinum et unum et verbum incarnatum et cetera divinitus credenda. Fides dico *manens collocatio*, seu firmitas, *credentium* collocans seu firmans, *hos*, id est credentes, *in veritate*, creditorum videlicet in ipsis, seu ipsis *identitate intransmutabili*, seu si latine diceretur intranscendibili⁸⁹⁷, id est a fide non transmutabili. Et hoc dico *credentibus habentibus simplicem cognitionem veritatis* creditorum videlicet. Quia enim non sillogistice sed simplici, ut <249rb> dictum est, cognitione cognoscunt credentes divinitus credenda firmi et stabiles sunt in veritate et firma et stabilis est semper eadem veritas creditorum in ipsis.

Quod autem in credentibus est intransmutabilitas a fide probat subsequenter per hoc quod fides est⁸⁹⁸ *cognitio unitiva cognoscentium* cum cognitio que cognita per fidem, per eandem videntur identiter semper vera et certissime, videntur vera et sequuntur summe delectabilia. Unde sequitur *si enim cognitio*, quae per fidem videlicet maxime unitiva cognoscentium et cognitorum, *ignorantia autem causa semper transmutationis et eius divisionis seu separationis*, id est variationis et multiplicationis in varias dubitationes et varias circa idem sententias quae divino videlicet *ignoranti ex ipso*, id est ex seipso in quantum ignorante si inquam: ita est *nihil removebit credentem in veritatem secundum sacram rationem* seu secundum sacrum verbum hoc est vere credentem secundum doctrinam sacre scripture *ab ea communicatione quae secundum veram fidem*, id est a leta et iocunda et

⁸⁹⁶ de ceteris *om.* M

⁸⁹⁷ seu si...intranscendibile *om.* M

⁸⁹⁸ est *om.* M

refectiva mentis delectatione quam habet, et vera fide *in qua*, consummatione videlicet, *habebit mansivum*, id est perseverativum, *identitatis*. In fide scilicet *immobilis et intransmutabilis*, identitatem enim fidei immobilem et intransmutabilem habebit perseveranter in omni vento doctrine et tribulationum turbine.

Et merito *bene enim novit unitus ad veritatem quam bene habet*, vel secundum aliud exemplar⁸⁹⁹ “ubi”, bene habet veritatem videlicet fidei vere et firmiter cognoscendo. *Etsi multi corripiant ipsum ut passum exstasim*, seu ut excedentem, seu ut extra-stantem, id est extra mentem sanam stantem. *Latet quidem enim mente excedens* seu exstasim passus seu extra stans *veritate per eam quae vere fidem* hoc est qui mente excedit Deo et supra se elevatus est veritate vere fidei. *Latet ipsos*, multos videlicet corripientes vere credentem. Latet inquam ipsos *ex errore*, eorum videlicet ut conveniens est videlicet quod mente excedens Deo per vere fidei cognitionem lateat errantes in fide et reputetur ab eis insane mentis. Aliquis autem legeret hanc lecturam sub hoc sensu videlicet quod qui mente excedit Deo per fidei cognitionem latet erroneos in fide (*ut conveniens*) hoc est quod ipse est conveniens et non erroneus sed greca scriptura ostendit hoc nomen conveniens positum neutraliter et hoc nomen extra stans pro quo nos posuimus mente excedens positum masculine ita inquam mente excedens per fidem latet erroneos in fide. *Ipse autem vere novit seipsum non* (quod autem *illi aiunt*) *insani* hoc est non passum <249va> extasim per mentis insaniam quod dicunt multi ipsimet insani per errorem circa fidem quemadmodum Festus dixit Paulo: “insanis Paule”.⁹⁰⁰ *Sed novit*, resume liberatum se ipsum videlicet, *ab instabili et*⁹⁰¹ *alterata*, id est aliter et aliter per vices se habente, *lacione circa omnimodam varietatem erroris liberatum* inquam ab huius lacione *per simplicem veritatem et habentem semper secundum eandem*. Et similiter, hoc est per veritatem fidei quae simplex est, ut predictum est, et non variabilis in multitudinem errorum licet multi multipliciter ab ea aberrent. Et quia fides christiana talis est qualis predicta est in veritate firmitate et delectatione doctores divine sapientie gloriantur pro ipsa moriuntur et testificantur verbo et opere quod ipsa est omnibus aliis simplicior et diviniore et quod ipsa sola est vera et simplex Dei cognitio. Omnes enim alie credulitates in quibus confidunt alii se salvos fieri, falsae sunt et errore corrupte et non sunt vere Dei cognitiones. Unde sequitur: *sic igitur* id est quia fides christiana se habet ut predictum est *principales duces eius divine sapientie que secundum nos* id est apostoli et eorum imitatores doctores sacre scripture moriuntur *pro veritate* fidei videlicet christiane *testificantes omni die*, id est per omnem diem et omni tempore, (*ut conveniens*) convenit enim omni tempore veritatem fidei

⁸⁹⁹ Hilduin, Eriugena (see *Dionysiaca* 411)

⁹⁰⁰ *Actes of Apostles* 26:24.

⁹⁰¹ et om. M

protestari testificantes inquam et testimonium per habentes *unitive veritati et cognitioni christianorum* id est vere fidei christianorum unienti eos Christo testificantes inquam illi *et verbo omni et opere* hoc videlicet *ipsam esse omnibus et simpliciore et diviniorem, magis autem* hoc est quod maius est testificantes hoc scilicet *ipsam esse solam veram et unam et simplicem Dei cognitionem.*

“Divine sapientie” autem, et “veritatis cognitionem” sunt singule dictiones in greco composite.

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