

UT BON(AVENTURIAN)I FIAMUS

Studies in St. Bonaventure
on the Occasion of the 800th Anniversary of His Birth



EDITED BY NENA BOBOVNIK,
JAN DOMINIK BOGATAJ, MIRAN ŠPELIČ

Nena Bobovnik, Jan Dominik Bogataj OFM, Miran Špelič OFM

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UT BON(AVENTURIAN)I FIAMUS
Študije o sv. Bonaventuru ob 800-letnici rojstva

Editors/Uredniki:

Nena Bobovnik, Jan Dominik Bogataj, Miran Špelič

Reviewers/Recenzenta:

Asst. Prof. Simon Malmenvall (TEOF UL; Katoliški inštitut, Ljubljana)
Assoc. Prof. Amaury Begasse De Dhaem (Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma)

Proofreading/Lektor:

Thomas Piolata

Cover painting/Slika na naslovnici:

Sv. Bonaventura, kapucinski samostan v Škofji Loki,
domnevno kapucin brat Tomaž iz Kropce, pred polovico 18. stoletja
St. Bonaventure, Capuchin Friary in Škofja Loka, Slovenija,
allegedly Capuchin Brother Thomas of Kropa, before the half of the 18th century

Foto/Photo:

Jakob Kunšič

Technical Editor/Tehnični urednik:

Jan Dominik Bogataj

Published by/Založili:

Založba Univerze v Ljubljani (University of Ljubljana Press)
Edizioni Quarachi (Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas), Roma

For the publishers/Za založbi:

Gregor Majdič, Rector of the University of Ljubljana / rektor Univerze v Ljubljani
William Short, Director of the St. Bonaventure College (Rome) / direktor Kolegija sv. Bonaventura (Rim)

Issued by/Izdala:

Teološka fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani, Poljanska 4, Ljubljana
Založba Brat Frančišek, Prešernov trg 4, Ljubljana

For the issuer/Za izdajatelja:

Janez Vodičar SDB, Dean / dekan Teološke fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani
Miran Špelič OFM, Director / ravnatelj založbe Brat Frančišek

Design and layout/Oblikovanje in prelom:

Tina Bruno ZBF

First Edition/Prva izdaja, 2022

Printed by/Tisk: Demat d.o.o., Ljubljana

Print run/Naklada: 500

Price/Cena: 20 EUR



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Monografija je nastala kot rezultat dela v okviru raziskovalnega programa *Vrednote v judovsko-krščanskih virih in tradiciji ter možnosti dialoga* (P6-0262), ki ga je sofinancirala Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije iz državnega proračuna.

The monograph is the result of work within the research programme *Values in Judaeo-Christian Sources and Traditions and the Possibilities for Dialogue* (P6-0262), which was co-financed by the Public Agency for Research of the Republic of Slovenia from the state budget.

Prva e-izdaja. Publikacija je v digitalni obliki prosto dostopna na
<https://ebooks.uni-lj.si/DOL:10.34291/9789617128765>

Kataložna zapisa o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

Tiskana knjiga

COBISS.SI-ID= 117886467

ISBN 978-961-7128-74-1 (Založba Univerze v Ljubljani)

E-knjiga

COBISS.SI-ID= 118005251

ISBN 978-961-7128-76-5 (Založba Univerze v Ljubljani, PDF)

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Univerza v Ljubljani
Teološka fakulteta



Brat Frančišek



Založba UL – Edizioni Quaracchi
Teološka fakulteta – Brat Frančišek
Ljubljana – Roma 2022

Abbreviations

2C	Thomas de Celano, <i>The Remembrance of the Desire of the Soul</i>
a.	articulus
AC	Assisi Compilation
<i>An. post.</i>	Aristoteles, <i>Analytica posteriora</i>
Bon.	Bonaventura
<i>Brev.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Breviloquium</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	Aristoteles, <i>Categoriae</i>
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina
d.	distinctio
<i>De civ. Dei</i>	Augustinus, <i>De civitate Dei</i>
<i>De donis</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Collationes de septem donis Spiritus sancti</i>
<i>EN</i>	Aristoteles, <i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
<i>Ep. de trib. quaest.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Epistola de tribus quaestionibus</i>
FA:ED	Francis of Assisi. Early Documents
fund.	fundamentum
<i>In Hexaëm.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Collationes in Hexaëmeron</i>
<i>In I, II, III, IV Sent.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Commentarius in I, II, III, IV librum Sententiarium</i>
<i>Itin.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Itinerarium mentis in Deum</i>
JRGS	Joseph Ratzinger Gesammelte Schriften
<i>M. Trin.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitati</i>
<i>Met.</i>	Aristoteles, <i>Metaphysica</i>
<i>Meteor.</i>	Aristoteles, <i>Meteorologica</i>
n.	numerus
prol.	prologus
q.	quaestio
<i>QD</i>	<i>Quaestiones disputatae</i>
<i>QDV</i>	Thomas de Aquino, <i>Questiones disputatae de veritate</i>
<i>Red. art.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>De reductione artium ad theologiam</i>
resp.	respondeo
<i>Sc. Chr.</i>	Bonaventura, <i>Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi</i>
<i>SH</i>	<i>Summa Halensis</i>
<i>ST</i>	Thomas de Aquino, <i>Summa theologiae</i>
<i>Tripl. via</i>	Bonaventura, <i>De triplici via</i>

Introduction: *Ut bon(aventurian)i fiamus*

Haec doctrina est, ut boni fiamus et salvemur.

“This doctrine exists so that we might become good and be saved.”

(Brev. Prol. 5.2)

Choosing this quotation as its motto, the international conference that took place in Ljubljana (September 30–October 2021) commemorating the 800th anniversary of Bonaventure’s birth sought, on the one hand, to express the entire conference’s broader programmatic orientation combining the methodological approaches of philosophy and theology: the formulation *ut boni fiamus* is Aristotle’s (cf. *EN* 2.2 [1103b28]), while the verb *salvemur* suggests a theological component. On the other hand, the conference aimed to acknowledge the *summum bonum*, the highest good, which urges all of us, modern wayfarers of the 21st century, to seek the good, *bonum*, even though we do not bear the good, *bonum*.

If we become more and more *boni*, good, we will become more and more *bonaventuriani*, entering into the same mystery as Bonaventure did eight centuries before us. Conversely, by becoming more and more *bonaventuriani*, that is, gaining a more detailed understanding of different aspects of Bonaventure’s thought, we are hopefully becoming more and more *boni*.

The conference and its accompanying events marked the 800th anniversary of the birth of John of Fidanza, later to be known as St. Bonaventure. However, the exact date of this medieval scholar’s birthdate remains unknown. According to calculations based on the minimum age required for the baccalaureate at the Univer-

sity of Paris at that time and other sources for Bonaventure's biography, researchers mention two possible birth years: 1217 or 1221. Since the celebration of the octocentenary four years ago already bore much fruit, both academic and otherwise, we believed that commemorating the second possible date of Bonaventure's birth (1221) — albeit without any serious intention to enter the biographical debates — would offer an opportunity to approach Bonaventure's inexhaustible legacy anew, with new questions, and new enthusiasm.

The present volume is proving us right. The conference proceedings that you are holding in your hands continue the tradition of a long series of volumes deriving from some important anniversaries connected with the life of St. Bonaventure. In 1974, various initiatives commemorated the 700th anniversary of Bonaventure's death: *in primis*, five volumes edited by the Quaracchi collegium,¹ and an additional three volumes of another congress held in Rome.² In 2017, numerous conferences contributed to the celebration of the 800th anniversary of Bonaventure's birth: *inter alia*, an international congress held in Rome that produced a substantial volume of forty-five contributions;³ an international conference, hosted by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, contributed a volume with twenty-four papers;⁴ a study day organized by the Pontifical Antonianum University on January 15 (2018) produced a special number of the journal *Antonianum* with six contributions;⁵ a conference organized by the Cattedra Marco Arosio di Alti Studi Medievali (Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum) during the years 2015–2017 provided a monograph with twenty contributions;⁶ and lastly, a monograph containing fourteen contributions edited at the Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia (Università di Trento) was dedicated to Bonaventure's anthropology.⁷

The organizers of the conference in Ljubljana, the Faculty of Theology (University of Ljubljana), Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana), Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae (Quaracchi – Rome), the Slovenian Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross, and the Institute for Monastic Studies and Contemplative Sciences, were

¹ Bougerol, J. G., ed. 1973–1974. *San Bonaventura 1274–1974. Volumen commemorativum anni septies centenarii a morte S. Bonaventurae Doctoris Seraphici cura et studio Commissionis Internationalis Bonaventuriana*, 5 vols. Grottaferrata: Collegium S. Bonaventurae.

² Pompei, A., ed. 1976. *San Bonaventura, maestro di vita francescana e di sapienza cristiana. Atti del Congresso internazionale per il VII centenario di San Bonaventura da Bagnoregio, Roma 19-26 settembre 1974*. 3 vols. Rome: Pontificia Facoltà teologica San Bonaventura.

³ Begasse de Dhaem, A., E. Galli, M. Malaguti, R. Pascual, C. Salto Solá, edd. 2018. “*Deus summe cognoscibilis*”: *The Current Theological Relevance of Saint Bonaventure*. Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium 298, Series 3. Leuven: Peeters.

⁴ Johnson, T. J., K. Wisely-Shelby, M. K. Zamora, edd. 2021. *Saint Bonaventure: Friar, Teacher, Minister, Bishop. A Celebration of the Eighth Centenary of His Birth*. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications.

⁵ *Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and Posterity. Translations, Renewed Recourse, Open Questions*. *Antonianum* 93/2 (2018).

⁶ Pandolfi, C., R. Pascual, edd. 2020. *Trilogia bonaventuriana*. Ricerche di storia della filosofia e teologia medioevali 14. Rome: Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, IF Press.

⁷ Zavattoni, I., ed. 2019. *L'uomo nel pensiero di Bonaventura da Bagnoregio*. Flumen Sapientiae: Studi sul pensiero medievale 11. Rome: Aracne editrice.

pleased to welcome many distinguished national and international experts. The present volume collects their enlightening contributions to the conference in a written format. Besides authors whose papers are included in the volume, however, there were also other speakers present who made significant contributions to the lively field of Bonaventurian studies, unfortunately not included in the present volume. Nicola Polloni (KU Leuven) spoke about Bonaventure, Bacon, and hylomorphism; Branko Klun (University of Ljubljana) discussed the possibilities and limits of a phenomenological approach to St. Bonaventure; Edvard Kovač (Institut Catholique de Toulouse) presented Biblical hermeneutics between Bonaventure and Paul Ricoeur; Monika Deželak Trojar (ZRC SAZU, Slovenia) spoke about the reception of Bonaventure's works in Slovenia, particularly, the reception in Skalar's *Eksemplar od svetiga Bonaventura* (1643); Matija Ogrin (ZRC SAZU) focused on St. Bonaventure as articulated in the Baroque sermons of Slovenian Capuchin and Franciscan writers; and Darko Tepert (University of Rijeka) dedicated his paper to Bonaventure's hermeneutics in the *Breviloquium* and in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*.

The present conference proceedings open with philosophy. The first two chapters trace the historical background of the main tenets of Bonaventure's philosophical thought. First, LYDIA SCHUMACHER focuses on Bonaventure's doctrine of the transcendentals, the divine ideas, and his theory of analogy insofar as they were anchored in earlier Franciscan thought. It was Bonaventure's teachers and models that compiled the authorial Franciscan *summa* of the Middle Ages — the *Summa Halensis*. The latter was, in turn, heavily influenced by Avicenna's metaphysics. By uncovering features of Avicenna's philosophy in the *Summa Halensis*, Schumacher ultimately sheds light on the Avicennian influence in Bonaventure's most heralded work, the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.

In the second chapter, FRANZISKA VAN BUREN reaches even further back into history. Van Buren accentuates the need to modify the common perception of Bonaventure's philosophy as being rooted in St. Augustine. This chapter thus engages anew with an important debate that was held among prominent medievalists of the last century. On the one hand, Étienne Gilson and Maurice de Wulf propounded Bonaventure's Augustinianism, whereas on the other hand, Fernand van Steenberghen contended that Bonaventure was "rather" a remarkably faithful reader of Aristotle. Van Buren agrees with the latter: Bonaventure was influenced by Aristotle to a much greater extent than hitherto acknowledged. She argues that Bonaventure's positions regarding knowledge of universal terms and the laws operative in nature are heavily influenced by the thought of Aristotle, and thus making a significant case for rejecting the common notion of Bonaventure as largely un-Aristotelian.

Following the debate on the historical background of Bonaventure's philosophy are two chapters focusing on a specific topic within Bonaventure's philosophical epistemology. First, LEONARDO FEDRIGA analyzes Bonaventure's doctrine of sense perception as articulated in the *De reductione artium ad theologiam* 8. Fedriga

underlines that the notion of *generatio speciei*, which Bonaventure introduces, is not as novel and idiosyncratic as it may seem at first glance. Rather, what is idiosyncratic is Bonaventure's harmonization of Augustine with Aristotle. Fedriga thus argues that Bonaventure's account of sense perception stems from his innovative synthesis of both Augustinian and Aristotelian epistemology.

Next, INGRID KODELJA in her chapter focuses on the theory of divine illumination, the Augustinian heritage that Bonaventure unquestionably embraced but slightly tailored to his own philosophy. Kodelja sheds light on Bonaventure's view of divine illumination by juxtaposing his philosophy with that of Robert Grosseteste, whose conceptualization of light influenced the later Franciscan school. Ultimately, Kodelja avers that whereas Grosseteste employed the theme of light in a more mathematical-cosmological sense, Bonaventure's motif of light has a more aesthetic-metaphysical connotation.

Leaving the philosophical topics, the volume next proceeds to explore the rich heritage of Bonaventure's affective spirituality. First, ALEN ŠIRCA discusses Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* mostly through the prism of the themes of love and death. Širca argues that, although Bonaventure's mystical theology is traditional, influenced especially by Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory the Great, the Cistercians, and the Victorines, it is more than just a mere summary of previous Christian mystical tradition. Rather, claims Širca, Bonaventure subtly transforms the previous tradition, putting forth an original synthesis with an amalgamation of passion, love and apophatic mysticism.

Second, ROBERT KRALJ introduces an interesting theme that opens new horizons for future research: the relationship between Bonaventure's writings and the spiritual experience of Teresa of Avila. Despite the apparent distance between the two figures, Kralj reveals the surprising points of contact between their theologies of the spiritual senses. His penetrating analysis leads to a better understanding of both great spiritual teachers.

The last part of the conference proceedings centers around Bonaventure's theology. MARIANNE SCHLOSSER first brings our attention to Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* and evaluates his account of theology as found in the Prologue of this text. The Prologue — among other things — deals with the fundamental question of the relationship between revelation and faith, between Holy Scripture and theology. After a careful analysis of the Prologue's structure and content, Schlosser also discusses the reception of this remarkable treatise.

Next, ANTON ŠTRUKELJ recounts the exciting episode of the "friendship" between Bonaventure and Joseph Ratzinger, which goes beyond a mere academic interest in the Seraphic Doctor. In this paper, the author presents Ratzinger's theological engagement with Bonaventure, especially in the light of his understanding of revelation and the theology of history. Finally, in an innovative way, Štrukelj shows through various emphases that their lives and works are closely intertwined.

MIRAN ŠPELIČ OFM presents an original study on Bonaventure's sacramental theology, namely on the question of the Eucharist. The article does not approach the subject in a general or systematic way, but rather employs a lexicographical analysis of the terms *caro Christi* and *corpus Christi* in Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*. Špelič observes and unveils the various nuances of the profound and original Eucharistic theology of the Seraphic Doctor.

THOMAS PIOLATA OFM Cap. marks the last chapter in the volume to discuss Bonaventure's theology. Taking Bonaventure's *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis* under scrutiny, Piolata accentuates the richness of this remarkable yet understudied text. In particular, he argues that the term *unitas caritatis*, which Bonaventure utilizes in question 2 on unity, constitutes an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit. This claim enables Piolata to uncover the previously underdiscussed presence of Bonaventure's pneumatology in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*.

The volume concludes with a chapter on Bonaventure as a mediator of the life of St. Francis. WILLIAM SHORT OFM evaluates the role Bonaventure played in the transmission of the legends of the life of St. Francis. Drawing on the earlier *legendae* already in circulation, Bonaventure composed a single and thenceforward official *legenda* of the life of St. Francis. Moreover, Short fittingly emphasizes that Bonaventure as a mediator of St. Francis' life did not lead to "*malavventura*" but was instead — precisely by writing the legend — himself mediated by the inspiring model of St. Francis' life: in the end, the legend had more influence on Bonaventure than he himself had on the legend.

It is along these lines that the present volume seeks to find a place among the scholarly literature on Bonaventure. In other words, let us study, explore, and venture deeper into the inexhaustible sources of Bonaventure's thought. However, let us not only perfect our understanding of Bonaventure's philosophy, theology, or any one of his writings. Rather, let us humbly wish for ourselves to be perfected — *ut boni fiamus* — through this scholarly process as well.

July 15 (the Feast of St. Bonaventure), 2022

Nena Bobovnik,

De Wulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy (KU Leuven)

Jan Dominik Bogataj OFM,

Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum (Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Romae);

Faculty of Theology (University of Ljubljana)

William Short OFM,

Collegium S. Bonaventurae – Frati Editori di Quaracchi;

Franciscan School of Theology (University of San Diego)

Miran Špelič OFM,

Faculty of Theology (University of Ljubljana)

The Most Reverend Stanislav Zore OFM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Ljubljana

Verbum abbreviatum

In Chapter 9 of the *Regula bullata*, Saint Francis instructed his brothers to use few words when preaching: “Preach with short speeches, because the Lord also spoke briefly on earth (*annuntiando cum brevis sermonis, quia verbum abbreviatum fecit Dominus*)” (*Rb* 9.4).

All this does not sound very encouraging as an introduction to an international scientific conference, which is often characterized by a multiplicity of words. But St. Bonaventure himself comes to meet us here. In his exposition of Francis’ *Regula*, Bonaventure does not so much apply this injunction of chapter 9 to the short sermons themselves, since Christ also spoke at length on several occasions, but, instead, by *Verbum abbreviatum* is meant above all the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ: *Sed brevitatis dicitur ibi restrictio omnium legalium ad unum Christum (Expositio super Regulam Fratrum Minorum* 9.12).

In the past, God spoke in many times and in varied ways through the prophets. His word has reached out for centuries. Now instead God speaks through the Son, who is a brief Word. This Word becomes flesh in Jesus and sums up all revelation in itself: God is love. Gueric of Igny, a Cistercian monk, writes: “He is the abridged word, in such a way that the fulfilment of every word of salvation is found in it, for he is the Word which itself accomplishes and sums up God’s plan. We must not be surprised if the Word has summed up all the prophetic words for us, seeing that the Word wanted to ‘abbreviate the message’ and in a way make itself small.”

Shrinking God's Word corresponds to Francis and his brothers making themselves small: the style of the Franciscan Proclamation will be that of making ourselves minors, that is, the least, as did the *Verbum abbreviatum*. It is probably also no coincidence that Bonaventure's remarkable synthesis of the whole of his theology — which is by no means short! — is called the *Breviloquium*, the Brief Discourse.

Francis finished the *Regula bullata* just a few weeks before he celebrated the feast of Christmas in Greccio in a solemn way, setting up a nativity scene for the first time in history. In *Vita prima* (30.86), Thomas of Celano describes how the poor man of Assisi, every time he pronounced the name "Child of Bethlehem," tasted with his lips all the sweetness of the words.

At the beginning of this conference, I express my appreciation and thanks to the organizers, and above all I wish that all the participants may taste — even if it is through *sermonis prolixitas* — during the course of the day, through the teachings of St. Bonaventure, some of this sweetness of the abbreviated Word, *Verbum abbreviatum*.

Fr. Marjan Čuden OFM,

Provincial Minister of the Slovenian Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross

Dulcis cognitio

With the greeting of St. Francis, *Pax et Bonum*, I cordially welcome you all to Ljubljana, the capital of the Republic of Slovenia, on whose territory the Friars Minor arrived during the time of St. Bonaventure. The legacy of Francis' spiritual glow on our soil therefore has a deep foundation, of which we are very proud.

For the Friars Minor, life always takes precedence over thought: it is only out of a genuine life, lived together, that thought also develops, reflecting and ennobling that life. That is why the Poor Man from Assisi, St. Francis, wrote to his confrere Anthony of Padua the well-known words: "I am pleased that you teach sacred theology to the brothers providing that, as is contained in the Rule, you 'do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion' during study of this kind." (*A Letter to Brother Anthony of Padua*) In this spirit we also understand St. Bonaventure, for whom all philosophical and theological effort was in the service of love. For him, knowledge by means of love, *dulcis cognitio*, is more perfect than rational investigation. In his commentary on the *Sentences*, he writes: "The best way to know God is through the experience of grace; it is more perfect, more wonderful and more enchanting than through rational research." (*In III Sent.* d.35, p.1)

Similarly, in the *Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, he says: "This is the fruit of all sciences, that in all, faith may be strengthened, God may be honored, character may be formed, and consolation may be derived from the union of the Spouse with the beloved, a union which takes place through charity: a charity in which the whole purpose of Sacred Scripture, and thus of every illumination descending

from above, comes to rest — a charity without which all knowledge is vain.” (*Red. art. 26*)

I would like to thank Brothers Miran and Jan Dominik and their colleague Nena Bobovnik, who, together with their collaborators, have prepared all the events to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Bonaventure. I would also like to thank all the participants, both Slovenian professors and distinguished foreign guests, for lifting the veil on the works of this medieval giant. I wish you all a fruitful conference, full of grace, love and new knowledge!

Fr. Janez Vodičar SDB,

Dean of Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana

Searching for Answers in Difficult Times

Dear participants of this international conference on St. Bonaventure! On behalf of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Ljubljana, allow me to welcome our Grand Chancellor, Metropolitan Archbishop Stanislav Zore, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, Prof. Dr. Mojca Schlamberger Brezar, and the Franciscan Provincial, Fr. Marjan Čuden. Both the Faculty of Arts and the Franciscan Province are co-organisers with the College of St Bonaventure, and I extend a warm welcome to its Director, Brother William Short.

I am delighted that this international conference on the anniversary of the birth of St. Bonaventure is taking place at a time when humanity is facing the difficulties of coping with the pandemic. More than the disease, it is the lack of understanding, the sense of loss, the sense of powerlessness and the lack of solidarity that are shaking us. It is easy to look for causes, but it is more difficult to find the answers. The sons of the poor man of Assisi knew that man lives more by desire, by experience, than by reason alone. St. Bonaventure himself emphasized that the best way to know God is by the experience of his loving sweetness. This is what we lack today: how much more are we in need of experiencing the joy of living in the simplicity of everyday life. May this thought, which is fed by the wellspring of the medieval spirituality of St. Francis, guide us today so that we may be able to wonder and rejoice more and more.

Lydia Schumacher,

**Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* and its Early
Franciscan Background:
A Study in the Influence of Avicenna**

Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* is an undisputed *tour de force* in the history of Western Christian spirituality. In this work, Bonaventure outlines a breath-taking vision of the way the mind ascends to and ultimately achieves union with God. The journey begins with the purification of the heart and the commitment to prioritize love for God over other considerations. This makes it possible for Bonaventure to explore how God can be known through so-called "vestiges" of the sense world which mirror the divine in different ways. The next step in the journey concerns the image of God on the human mind — and especially in the faculties of memory, understanding, and will, which had been mentioned by Augustine. These make it possible in the first place for us to see God in creatures.

Through reflecting on the power to know which this image provides us, Bonaventure further explains how we can achieve contemplation of the divine unity whose primary name he identifies with Being. This in turn leads to the contemplation of the blessed Trinity which Bonaventure defines as a fundamentally self-diffusive Good such as was described by the Greek father Pseudo-Dionysius. As Bonaventure elaborated more specifically in his *Breviloquium*, the members of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, serve as the efficient, formal, and final cause of

all beings, by virtue of their respective qualities of unity and truth, which manifests itself in the goodness that is foregrounded in the *Itinerarium*.⁸

In addition to its reputation as a classic of Western spirituality, Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* has been heralded as the ultimate medieval effort to synthesize the longstanding tradition of Augustine with the more recently revived interest in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius (Gilson 1965; Hamelin 1961; Cullen 2006). At another level, the work has been acknowledged as significant in Bonaventure's attempts to reconcile competing factions in his own order which respectively opposed and supported academic study, and to establish the academic legitimacy of the Franciscans in the context of the new universities (Schumacher 2011, 110–153).

This was vehemently contested in the university of Paris particularly by many secular masters, who were not part of a religious order, and perceived the increasingly dominant role of the friars as a threat to their own livelihood and existence. In this context, Bonaventure's positioning of love for God and ecstatic union with him as the beginning and end of all knowledge clearly established the Franciscan ethos as the condition of possibility of genuine and certain knowledge of the truth, thus proving to some doubtful friars that there was a role for study within the life of the Franciscan religious order. At the same time, his arguments demonstrated to the secular masters that the mendicant friars had a rightful place in the university, despite their commitment to absolute poverty.

While the readings of Bonaventure's text mentioned above, among others, certainly call attention to important aspects of the work, there is another potentially decisive dimension of the text which until now has been overlooked. This concerns the influence of the eleventh-century Islamic philosopher Avicenna. In the first half of the thirteenth century, which coincides with the first half-century of the Parisian university's existence, Avicenna was enormously popular amongst theologians and philosophers or masters of the arts alike. These figures saw his more religious or Neo-Platonic reading of Aristotle as a welcome aid not only in interpreting Aristotle in accordance with their religious principles but also in line with their own Christian Neo-Platonic authorities such as Augustine and Dionysius (Schumacher 2021a, 183–206).

The situation changed significantly in the latter half of the thirteenth century when Averroes' commentaries, introduced around 1230, began to be utilized more frequently, alongside the improved translations of Aristotle that Thomas Aquinas had commissioned William of Moerbeke to prepare from the 1260s onwards. As Aristotle came to the fore, his scholarly identity was recognized as distinct from Avicenna's in a way that earlier scholars had not apparently fully realized. The same fortune was not however enjoyed by Augustine whose work had been read by first-generation Franciscans not only in unison with Aristotle but also through a

⁸ "In the Father is the efficient principle, in the Son the exemplary principle, and in the Holy Spirit the final principle." (*Brev.* 1.6.1); "Supreme oneness is attributed to the Father; supreme truth, to the Son who proceeds from the Father as his Word; and supreme goodness, to the Holy Spirit." (*Brev.* 1.6.2) Translation is Dominic Monti's (2005, 45–46).

heavily Avicennian lens, to such an extent that the Avicennian reading of Augustine was by Bonaventure's time simply taken for granted.

The purpose of this chapter is to unpack what is presupposed in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* by examining some of the doctrines presented in the *Summa Halensis* which surely lie at its background, including the doctrine of the transcendentals, the divine ideas, and the theory of analogy, which anticipates what later Franciscans would describe in terms of univocity. The *Summa Halensis* is a massive collaborative work,⁹ which was composed by Bonaventure's revered teachers — above all, Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle — with a view to laying down distinctly Franciscan positions on theological and philosophical questions for the first time in the university context. As Bert Roest has noted, it was employed in the education of gifted friars such as Bonaventure, through the thirteenth century at least (Roest 2000, 126). Thus, we can be sure — not least because Bonaventure tells us so (*In II Sent.* Prol., l.2, d.23, a.2) — that he had Alexander's works always at hand and sought to develop their views in his own.

In elucidating the *Summa's* approach to the doctrines mentioned above, I will highlight both the explicit and implicit instances of Avicenna's influence. This will make it possible, in my subsequent assessment of the *Itinerarium*, to show clearly not only how the Halensian *Summa* but also thereby Avicenna influenced the thinking of Bonaventure in areas where he has been to some extent written off as merely an “Augustinian” or “Dionysian.”¹⁰ In the process, my study of the *Itinerarium* in the light of its earlier Franciscan background will help to illustrate how Franciscans working before — and including — Bonaventure drew on their sources, including Avicenna, with a view to forging theological and philosophical perspectives that gave expression to, and bolstered, the unique spiritual vision and ethos of Francis of Assisi.

1. The Transcendentals in the *Summa Halensis*

The *Summa Halensis* develops a sophisticated account of a doctrine — also treated subsequently by Bonaventure — which concerns what John Duns Scotus would only later call the transcendentals, the most common properties of things. The fundamental source of this doctrine in the *Summa's* account was Avicenna,

⁹ The massive text was overseen by Alexander of Hales after he entered the Franciscan order in 1236, and the first three volumes were complete by the time he died in 1245. Although much of the material for the *Summa* is drawn from the work of Alexander himself, or from the work of his chief collaborator, John of La Rochelle, it is not clear that Alexander himself penned any part of the *Summa* personally. Rather, John is likely responsible for the first volume, in which the material on divine ideas appears, and for the third, while another author assembled volume two. Despite the multiple authors, the *Summa* provides a well-coordinated and coherent account of all the major theological issues of the day and bears a distinctly Franciscan tone, such that it is oftentimes the best place to look for a mature indication of the “collective mind” of the early Franciscan school at Paris (Doucet 1947; 1948).

¹⁰ Scholars have tended to interpret Bonaventure's theory of knowledge as either Aristotelian or Augustinian or some combination of the two, although his views cannot directly be traced to either figure. A summary of this mistaken historiography is provided and unfortunately perpetuated in Metselaar 2012, 339–372.

who had posited several concepts which are proper to all beings, and also represent the “first known” objects of the intellect (Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing* 1.1–2). These concepts include *res* and *ens*, which respectively correspond to what something is, or its essence, and whether it is, or its existence. The actual existence of any entity is also denoted by Avicenna’s transcendental of necessity, which is contrasted with mere possible or contingent beings, which could potentially exist but do not do so as yet. Avicenna also occasionally mentions oneness as a property of *ens* which denotes its indivision or distinction from other beings.

Although the *Summa* cites Avicenna explicitly as its source, the version of the transcendentals doctrine it presents was mediated by the work of an earlier contemporary, Philip the Chancellor, who was the first Latin theologian to adapt the list of Avicennian “first intentions” to Christian purposes. In this regard, Philip identified unity, truth, and goodness as the most basic properties of things. He associated these properties with the efficient, formal, and final cause of beings, which he traced in turn to the three members of the Triune God, namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Pouillon 1939, 40–77; Fani 2009, 131–154). The *Summa Halensis* elaborates on this account, identifying Avicenna’s concept of Being as the first and most fundamental transcendental, which is in turn qualified by the three qualities of unity, truth, and goodness. As noted below, these properties respectively demarcate a being as separated from other beings; its knowability as such; and its suitability for a given order or purpose:

Insofar as a being is considered as absolute, undivided in itself, and separated from other [beings], it is delimited by “oneness.” However, insofar as a being is considered in relation to another [being] in terms of its distinctness, it is delimited by “truth,” for “true” stands for the ability of a thing to be detectible. However, insofar as [a being] is considered in relation to another [being] in terms of agreement or order, it is delimited by “goodness,” for “good” stands for the ability of a thing to fit into an order. (*SH* 1, P1, In1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C2, Respondeo, p. 114–115)¹¹

Following Philip, the Summist contends that the three determinations of being correspond to the efficient, formal, and final causes of things, which are in turn appropriated to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respectively. In a step beyond Philip, however, the Summists described Being and its first intentions not just as properties of beings but also as the first objects of the intellect, quoting Avicenna as an explicit source for this opinion as follows: “One must say that because “being”

¹¹ *Secundum quod ens aliquod consideratur absolutum, ut divisum ab aliis et in se indivisum, determinatur per 'unum'. Secundum vero quod consideratur aliquod ens comparatum ad aliud secundum distinctionem, determinatur per 'verum': 'verum' enim est quo res habet discerni. Secundum vero quod consideratur comparatum ad aliud secundum convenientiam sive ordinem, determinatur per 'bonum': 'bonum' enim est ex quo res habet ordinari. Cf. *SH* Vol 1, Tr3, Q2, M1, C2, Respondeo, p. 140. All English translations of *SH* are by Oleg Bychkov (Schumacher and Bychkov 2022). The Latin text is from Quaracchi 4 volumes edition (ed. Klumper) while the citation system used to refer to the *SH* throughout this chapter is grounded on Simon Maria Kopf’s and my “Guide to Citing the *Summa Halensis*” in Schumacher 2020, ix–x.*

is the first intelligible [Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing* 1.6], its meaning is familiar to the intellect; therefore, the first determinations of being — which are one, true, and good [...] are the first impressions of the intellect” (*SH* Vol. 1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C1, Respondeo II (n. 72), p. 113).¹²

For the *Summa* authors, the Being in question here is ultimately God, who is the source of all beings, such that the innate knowledge of Being represents an image of God on the human mind.¹³ On account of this image, the *Summa* states that human beings are able to know any given thing as one or unique in itself; as true, or intelligible in terms of what it is; and good, or fit for a certain purpose. In an attempt to bring its adaptation of Avicenna’s theory into line with the longstanding tradition of Augustine — and thereby legitimize it — the Summist goes on to affirm that these basic concepts — unity, truth, and goodness — are respectively ordained to the memory, the understanding, and the will — a psychological triad that the *Summa* derives from Augustine.¹⁴

While memory is the faculty that retains the picture of what a thing is as distinct from or related to others, intelligence is what perceives the truth, and the will is what loves or approves what is good. In turn, these transcendental concepts enable memory, understanding, and will, respectively, to recognize the Father as the efficient or generating cause of unity, the Son as the formal or exemplar cause of truth, and the Spirit as the final or purpose-giving cause of goodness in beings. According to the *Summa*, rational beings alone are capable of understanding other beings in relation to their efficient, formal, and final cause; this is in virtue of the transcendentals. Non-rational beings which the *Summa* describes as “vestiges” of the Trinity exhibit unity, truth, and goodness, without awareness that they do so.¹⁵

Following Avicenna, however, the *Summa* is quick to insist that the transcendentals do not constitute the actual objects of human knowledge. They merely give

¹² *Dicendum quod cum sit ‘ens’ primum intelligibile, eius intentio apud intellectum est nota primae ergo determinationes entis sunt primae impressiones apud intellectum: eae sunt unum, verum, bonum, sicut patebit.* Cf. *SH* Vol. 2.1, In1, S1, Q1, C2 (n. 2), p. 3.

¹³ *Deus sicut efficiens, primum eius nomen est ens.* (*SH* 1, P1, In2, Tr1, Q1, C2, Ar2, Solutio, p. 522) Cf. *SH* 2.1, In4, Tr 1, S1, Qu3, T1, C5, Ar6, Solutio, p. 414; Augustine, *De Trinitate* 10.

¹⁴ “Also, insofar as [the being of things] is taken in relation to the soul, it has three determinations. Indeed, the being of things is related to the soul in three ways: namely, as things are ordered in the memory, as they are perceived by the intellect, and as they are desired by the will. Every being possesses unity from the efficient cause, which allows it to be ordered and saved in the memory — for the memory organizes the things that it retains according to a pattern of unity and difference among them. Also, every being possesses truth from the exemplary cause, which allows it to be perceived by the intellect. Finally, [every being possesses] goodness from the final cause, which makes it desirable to or approved by the will.” (*Item, per comparisonem ad animam triplicatur eadem determinatio. Nam esse rerum tripliciter comparatur ad animam: videlicet ut res ordinentur in memoria, percipiuntur intelligentia, diliguntur voluntate. Est igitur in ente quolibet a causa efficiente unitas, per quam ordinetur in memoria et servetur: memoria enim ea quae retinet secundum aliquam coordinationem relationis ad unum et discretionem componit. Item, a causa exemplari est veritas in quolibet ente, per quam percipiatur ab intelligentia. Item, a causa finali est bonitas, per quam diligatur vel approbetur voluntate.*) (*SH* 1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C2, Respondeo (n. 73), p. 114–115)

¹⁵ Father, Son, and Spirit as efficient, formal, and final cause of unity, truth, and goodness in creatures. Cf. *SH* 1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C2, Respondeo (n. 73), p. 114–115.

us the cognitive resources to do as Avicenna described when he spoke of abstraction as a matter of stripping away all the material dispositions or attributions of a thing in order to lay bare the form that all things of the same kind have in common.¹⁶ To know such a form correctly — in terms of its unity, truth, and goodness — is for the Summist ultimately to know the thing in accordance with the divine idea after which it is modelled. This brings us to the next topic of our discussion.

2. The Divine Ideas in the *Summa Halensis*

In another instance of Avicennian influence, the Summist insists that the divine ideas do not just exist for things that are actual or necessary but also for things that are possible (*SH* Vol. 1, P1 In1, Tr5, S1 Q 1, M3, C4, p. 254). For the Summist, this gives rise to the view, also inspired by Avicenna, that divine ideas exist for an infinity of things, on the one hand, and for individual beings, on the other (McGinnis 2010, 212–213; 199–222) — rather than just for universal forms like “man” and “horse.”¹⁷ Although the divine ideas are multiplied accordingly, the multiplicity for the *Summa* does not exist in God himself, who knows all things as one in himself as their cause (*SH* 1, P1 In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M2, Ch2, p. 248). Instead, the multiplicity arises on the side of creaturely forms which represent or co-signify different aspects of the one God. That is not necessarily to say that matter is the principle of individuation for the *Summa*, which as yet does not seem to embrace this Aristotelian principle. Rather, it is the multiplicity of creaturely forms themselves that gives rise to their individuality. This principle is important for the *Summa* since it affirms that “God is equally the author of things great and small, therefore he must also know both great and small things” (*SH* 1, P1 In1, Tr5, S1 Q1, M3, C6, Contra, p. 256).¹⁸

Bonaventure was critical of some aspects of the *Summa*'s view of divine ideas — in particular, the idea that God knows all things in himself as cause, so that the multiplicity of the divine ideas arises from creatures in the way mentioned above.

¹⁶ “The being of a sensible thing, as judged and accepted by the sense, is always apprehended with the conditions of matter. However, its truth is apprehended without any condition of matter and therefore only by the intellect or mind.” (*Esse sensibilis, ut indicatur et accipitur sensu, semper apprehenditur cum conditionibus materiae; veritas autem eius apprehenditur absque omni conditione materiae et ideo solo intellectu vel mente.*) (*SH* 1, P1, In1, Tr3, Q2, C4, Ad objecta 3, p. 146); cf. “A species is entirely and absolutely abstracted from corporeity, is understood as it is, it is understood only by an intellectual power that is entirely and absolutely detached from the body and from the corporeal mass.” (*Species omnino abstracta et absoluta a corporeitate si intelligitur sicuti est, non intelligitur nisi a vi intellectiva omnino absoluta a corpore et expedita a mole corporea.*) (*SH* 1, Tr Int, Q2, M1, C5, 4 (n. 12), p. 21)

¹⁷ Contrary to the contention of Wood (1993, 24). *Cum quaeritur an scientia Dei sit infinitorum, dicendum quod scientia Dei est de rebus, et hoc per se causam. Causa autem potest considerari ut potens operari: et sic scientia Dei, quae est per causam, est infinitorum, quia ipsa potentia causa est infinitorum; sed si consideretur causa ut disponens: sic Dei scientia de rebus per se causam est finitorum, quia dispositio est finitorum.* (*SH* 1, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M2, C2, Respondeo, p. 252)

¹⁸ *Ergo ipse Deus aequaliter est artifex magnorum et parvorum; ergo in arte sua aequaliter cognoscit magna et parva. Item, quod potest cognoscere creatura, non potest Deus ignorare. Si ergo creatura potest cognoscere singularia, Deus non potest ignorare singularia.*

On his account, the perfection of God's wisdom requires that he know everything in the most distinct fashion, namely, as an individual, whether past, present, or future, actual or possible being.¹⁹ That is not to say, however, that the specificity Bonaventure attributes to God's knowledge introduces multiplicity into him. According to his argument, every knower possesses a likeness of the things known, and this must be especially true of God given that he is the one of whom things are a likeness.²⁰ Thus, the multiplicity of God's knowledge of the things that are like him does not compromise his unity. As Bonaventure elaborates:

Just as the rational means of knowing (*ratio cognoscendi*) is one, yet it represents many things that are known in completely distinct ways, according to their proper conditions, so, as regards the mode of knowing (*modum cognoscendi*), divine knowledge is one and simple and without distinction. But in comparison with its object, [divine knowledge] knows things distinctly. Therefore, when it is said "God knows all things distinctly," if the distinction is posited in knowledge in comparison to the knower, the statement is false; but if it is posited in knowledge in comparison to the thing known, the statement holds true. (*In I Sent.* d.35, q.2, ad objecta 4)²¹

Although early Franciscan views on divine ideas, including Bonaventure's, are often attributed to Augustine, who is frequently quoted on this topic, I have hinted that they owe more to Avicenna's fundamental distinction between things that do exist actually and those that do not exist — or necessary and possible beings — than to Augustine. As noted above, the presumption of Avicenna's modal ontology gave rise in Franciscan thought to the notion that the source of all beings, in this case, God, must be infinite, and to a preoccupation with individual or finite beings on the other. Although theologically fascinating, such concerns were too different from those of Augustine to simply be projected on to him in the way that Étienne Gilson popularized when he described the early Franciscans' Avicennized Augustinianism as a form of authentic Augustinianism.²²

After all, Augustine saw God as fundamentally simple rather than infinite; he saw the divine ideas as of universals like "man" and "woman" which include particulars like "Peter" and "Mary" and did not posit ideas of particulars themselves. Moreover, he had no metaphysics of necessary and possible being to generate the

¹⁹ "Wisdom is utterly perfect, it knows each and every thing in the most distinct fashion, conceiving them all most clearly and perfectly. Thus, we say that God possesses the principles and ideas of all individual beings." (Bonaventure, *Brev.* 1.8.7)

²⁰ *Et iterum, omne cognoscens, in quantum huiusmodi, simile est cognoscibili: ergo habet eius similitudinem, vel ipsum est similitudo. Et iterum, aliqua cognoscit quae ab ipso non sunt.* (Bonaventure, *In I Sent.* d.35, q.1, p.7) See translation by Houser and Noone 2014, 197. The Latin is from Quaracchi edition, vol. 1, 1882.

²¹ *Ad illud quod objicitur ultimo quod cognoscit secundum exigentiam rationum, dicendum quod, sicut ratio cognoscendi est una, et tamen plura cognita distinctissime repraesentat secundum proprias condiciones; sic divina cognitio, quantum ad modum cognoscendi qui est in ipsa, est una et simplex, non distincta; sed in comparatione ad objectum, distincte cognoscit. Quando ergo dicitur, 'Deus cognoscit omnia distincte,' si distinctio ponitur in cognitione per comparationem ad cognoscentem, falsa est; si autem per comparationem ad cognitum, sic habet veritatem* (English translation by Houser and Noone 2014, 204).

²² Jan Aertsen (2012) has emphasized that Avicenna initiated a "second beginning of metaphysics."

interest in infinite and finite beings in the first place. In that sense, the early Franciscan doctrine of divine ideas owes more to Avicenna than Augustine, and as such, the divine ideas represent the perfect knowledge of ordinary beings to which human beings can or should aspire.

Although we presumably cannot know them directly, just as we cannot know God directly, we can apparently obtain the knowledge of things as God knows them — or as they correspond to a divine idea — with the help of the transcendentals. As noted, these enable us to strip away any material accidents of any being in order to see it for what it is and how it exhibits unity, truth, and goodness. For this very reason, the Summists further argue that the knowledge of natural beings makes it possible to know the divine being himself as one, true, and good, albeit in a limited way that is circumscribed by the creature itself. In short, creatures give us a glimpse into the nature of God.

3. Analogy and Univocity in the *Summa Halensis*

This brings us to the question as to what exactly that glimpse involves and thus to an inquiry concerning the way the *Summa* construes the nature of the analogy between God and creatures. On this score, the *Summa* once again takes its cue from Avicenna. In his metaphysics, the philosopher acknowledges that the divine is wholly other to all the beings he creates, while at the same time insisting that “the fact that God causes creatures establishes an ontological relationship of priority and posteriority between them” (Wood 2016, 296).²³ This relationship results in an “agreed meaning” between the cause and the caused, which have whatever qualities or essence they have in the way of a substance and an accident. In other words, the substance has the quality as a cause or what is prior to the arrival of the accident, while the accident has it as the effect of the substance or because the substance has it and thus has it in a posterior way. Nevertheless, the substance and accident possess the same quality in the same sense — albeit finitely or infinitely. As Avicenna writes:

We now say: Although the existent (*ens*), as you have known, is not a genus and is not predicated equally of what is beneath it, yet it has a meaning agreed on with respect to priority and posteriority. The first thing to which it belongs is the quiddity, which is substance, and then to what comes after it. Since it [has] one meaning, in the manner to which we have alluded, accidental matters adhere to it that are proper to it, as we have shown earlier. For this reason, it is

²³ “Like Porphyry in his *Isagoge*, he [Avicenna] reminds us that ‘being’ is not a genus, but this fact does not lead the Arab philosopher to the conclusion that ‘being’ is said equivocally. Even if ‘being’ is not predicated of its inferiors in an equal way, it still is a notion in which its inferiors ‘agree’ (*conveniunt*) by means of priority and posteriority (*secundum prius et posterius*). The ‘congruence’ is explained in the sense of a ‘focal meaning’: ‘Being’ first belongs to the quiddity which is substance, and then to the accidents. Avicenna’s intention is to show that the unity he had assigned to the concept of being is sufficient for the possibility of a science of metaphysics.” (Aertsen 2012, 96)

taken care of by one science in the same way that anything pertaining to health has one science. (*The Metaphysics of the Healing* 1.5)²⁴

The *Summa* interestingly adopts similar language in speaking of the relationship between God and creatures. There is an agreement between these two extremes in that they are both a type of being. However, God is a being in the prior and proper sense of a term, or in terms of his substance, while a creature is a being in a posterior sense, because it depends upon or participates in God in a way analogous to the manner in which an accident can only exist in a subject. As the *Summa* puts it:

An example of analogical agreement would be substance and accident: they agree in that they are both [a type of] being, which is predicated of them in terms of priority: substance as [a type of] being serves as a substrate to its accidents, and therefore “being” is predicated in a primary sense of substance, which is “being” essentially, and in a secondary sense of accidents, which are “beings” [by virtue of being] in something else. Therefore, one must reply that there is no univocal agreement between God and creatures, but there is an analogical one. For example, if “good” is predicated of God and of creatures, it is predicated of God essentially, and of creatures in terms of participation. This suggests that the predication “good” of God and of creatures is analogical. (*SH* Tr Int, Q2, M3, C2, Respondeo, p. 32)²⁵

Although the *Summa* here describes the relationship between God and creatures as one of analogy, numerous authors have noted that the early Franciscan account involves something more like an analogy of proportionality, which while acknowledging the disparity between the infinite God and finite beings, nonetheless allows for the possibility of referring to them in the same terms with the same meaning. This ultimately marks a dramatic difference from the understanding of analogy that would be advocated by someone like Thomas Aquinas, for whom the most that can be known about God from creatures is what he is not. Indeed, the type of analogy that the Summist seems to have in mind here seems much more similar to the way later Franciscans like Duns Scotus would define univocity (Lewis 2021, 149–170; Aersten 2001, 67; Hellmann 2001, 67; Burrell 2016, 95–118).

As Jacob Wood has observed, the upshot of univocity is that the effects of the divine, namely, creatures, have the power to make something positive, if, again, limited,

²⁴ *Dicemus igitur nunc quod quamvis ens, sicut scis ti, non sit genus nec praedicatum aequaliter de his quae sub eo sunt, tamen est intentio in qua convenient secundum prius et posterius; primum autem est quidditati quae est in substantia, deinde ei quod est post ipsam. Postquam autem una intentio est ens secundum hoc quod assignavimus, sequuntur illud accidentaliter quae ei sunt propria, sicut supra diximus. Et ideo eget aliqua scientia in qua tractetur de eo, sicut omni sanativo necessaria est aliqua scientia* (Van Riet 1977, 40). The English translation is Marmura 2006, 27.

²⁵ *Convenientia secundum analogiam: ut substantia et accidens convenient in ente, quia d dicitur secundum prius et posterius de illis: quia ens substantia est principium accidentis, et ideo per prius dicitur ens de substantia, quae est ens per se; per posterius de accidente, quod est ens in alio. Dicendum ergo quod non est convenientia Dei et creaturae secundum univocationem, sed per analogiam: ut si dicatur bonum de Deo et de creatura, de Deo dicitur per naturam, de creatura per participationem. Similiter omne bonum de Deo et de creatura dicitur secundum analogiam.*

directly known about the nature of God (2016, 293–311). Creatures thus reveal rather than conceal the nature of God. In fact, the *Summa* goes so far as to say that there is no other way to discern the nature of God and his transcendental qualities but through creaturely effects. This is because the transcendentals are first known, so that the knowledge of them can only be triggered through experience.²⁶

To summarize, that knowledge — and the relationship between God and creatures that underlies it — turns on a univocal theory of being which draws inspiration from Avicenna. The *Summa* thus reveals a shift in early Franciscan thought from what Jacob Wood has described as an apophatic tradition such as had dominated in Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, according to which creatures can only tell us what God is not, towards a more cataphatic understanding in which something positive if partial can be known through creatures that exhibit unity, truth, and goodness in a limited way about the nature of the God, who is One, True, and Good, in the proper sense of the term (Wood 2016, 293–311).

The inspiration behind this shift was clearly Avicenna's metaphysics of necessary or actual and possible beings which helped early Franciscans to envisage a God who possesses an idea of all things that are and could be — of the infinite — and whose instantiation of some of those individual ideas makes himself directly accessible to the mind in a finite but nonetheless direct way. Such an account can hardly help but bring to mind Francis' emphasis on the value of creatures great and small, of God's love for them and the way they make God known to us. Moreover, the Avicennian doctrine of the transcendentals itself helps to stress the intimacy of the mind to God, such as Francis enjoyed, which enabled him to find God's love in every creature in the first place. In that sense, I would argue that the appropriation of Avicenna was instrumental to articulating a specifically Franciscan point of view, with all of its emphasis on the uniqueness of creatures as objects of God's love and creative design.

Bonaventure of course picked up many aspects of this perspective and elaborated them in some form himself. However, his reliance on Avicenna is not so apparent, as he generally fails to cite the philosopher. Thus, it remains to reflect on some passages in the *Itinerarium* which render evident his dependence upon the earlier Franciscan tradition of defining the divine ideas as well as the transcendentals and the creature-creator relation. This comparison will call into question the common historiographical notion that Bonaventure merely codified what it meant

²⁶ "Therefore, there could be nothing prior to them specifically for the purpose of making them known. Therefore, if they do become known, this can only be through something posterior, for example, through a negation or a consequent effect. This is why the recognition of 'one' goes both by way of negation and by way of consequent effect. The negation is of the opposite meaning, which is 'division' or 'multitude,' when we refer to a being as 'undivided.' The consequent effect is to distinguish [this being] from other [beings]: indeed, unity distinguishes 'one' from another, and therefore [that one] is referred to as "separated from other [beings]." (*Non poterunt ergo habere aliqua priona specialiter ad sui notificationem. Si ergo notificatio fiat eorum, hoc non erit nisi per posteriora, ut per abnegationem vel effectum consequentem. Hinc est quod in notificatione .unius' est una notio per abnegationem, alia vero per effectum consequentem: per abnegationem oppositae intentionis, quae est divisio vel multitudo, cum dicitur 'ens indivisum,' per effectum consequentem, qui est distinguere ab aliis: unitas enim distinguit 'unum' ab alio et ideo dicitur 'divisum ab aliis.*) (SH 1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C1, Respondeo II (n. 72), p. 113)

to be an Augustinian at the early University of Paris and will illustrate how he, like his forefathers, was not only indebted to Avicenna but also engaged in an effort to adapt his thought to the purpose of constructing a uniquely Franciscan theological and philosophical vision, tailored specifically to explicating and furthering the Franciscan ethos (Aertsen 2012).

4. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*

In the first chapter of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure describes the universe as “a ladder by which we can ascend into God. Some created things are vestiges, others, images [...] In order to contemplate the First Principle, who is most spiritual, eternal, and above us, we must pass through his vestiges, which are material, temporal, and outside us. We must also enter into our soul, which is God’s image, everlasting, spiritual, within us” (tr. Cousins 1978, 60). As Bonaventure elaborates, “everything that exists, exists in three ways: in matter, in the mind, and in the Eternal Art” (ibid., 61) — a view initially advocated by Avicenna, whom Bonaventure does not mention. In relation to these ways of existing, the mind has a three-fold orientation, to material objects, to the self, and to God (ibid., 61; cf. Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of the Healing* 1.2; 1.5; Janos 2020, 428). All these ways of knowing have however been destroyed by sin, whereby we turn first to ourselves and our own way and as a result prioritize things other than God over him.

In order to know him, the self, or anything at all, consequently, Bonaventure claims that we must invert the order of priority, which can only be done through a commitment of the will to a pure and holy life (tr. Cousins 1978, 63). We must restore what Bonaventure calls the proper hierarchy within the soul, so that it loves God more than creatures (ibid., 92). This allows us initially to rise through the knowledge of creatures to the knowledge of their creator. As Bonaventure writes, “all these are vestiges in which we can see our God” (ibid., 72). We can ascribe to him whatever beauty or other qualities we find in them, per the notion of univocity we saw the *Summa* advocating previously. This is possible, Bonaventure states, because creatures exist “eternally in the Eternal Art [another name for the divine ideas] by which, through which, and according to which all beautiful things are formed” (ibid., 74). As Bonaventure summarizes this section: “the creatures of the sense world signify the invisible attributes, partly because God is the origin, exemplar and end of every creature, and every effect is the sign of its cause, the exemplification of its exemplar, and the path to the end, to which it leads” (ibid., 76). In affirming this, consequently, Bonaventure harks back to the *Summa Halensis*’ contention that every being which is caused by God gives a direct window into the nature of God.

From the knowledge of God gained through vestiges, Bonaventure turns next to the knowledge of God that can be found in the self or mind as an image of God. Here, Bonaventure invokes Augustine’s distinction between memory, under-

standing, and will to explain how knowledge is achieved. The memory contains not only all the sense images the mind has obtained through experience as well as ideas formed about them but also the knowledge of the self as an image of God that is capable of knowing him (ibid., 81). The intellect is the faculty that comes to understand beings in terms of their definitions, which we cannot know unless we know the properties of the being, which Bonaventure lists as one, true, and good (ibid., 81). As Bonaventure elaborates, “our intellect cannot come to the point of understanding any created being by a full analysis (*plene resolvens*) unless it is aided by a knowledge of the Being which is most pure, most actual [...] in which are the principles of all things in their purity. How could the intellect know that a particular being is defective and incomplete [i.e., finite] if it had no knowledge of the Being which is free from all defect [i.e., infinite]?” (ibid., 74)

Here, Bonaventure makes clear reference to the idea found in the *Summa Halensis* that Being and its transcendental properties, as first objects of the intellect, make it possible to know beings in an accurate way. According to Bonaventure, in fact, the certainty of our knowledge derives precisely from our ability to judge things by virtue of principles or transcendentals given to us by God, which permit us to know beings as they are reflected in the correlative idea or exemplar they possess in the divine ideas (ibid., 74). This is what Bonaventure refers to when he speaks of knowledge by “full analysis” (ibid., 83).

Finally, the will is important for knowledge in that it teaches us to regard God as the highest good and to love nothing more than him — certainly no creature. For Bonaventure, prioritizing the love for God is the only way to retain access to the principles of knowledge by which we accurately judge what things are. When we reflect on the image of God which gives us the power to know reality, Bonaventure further observes, we simultaneously gain access to the knowledge of the reality of God himself, whose primary name is Being, given he is the source of all beings (ibid., 94). Thus, the soul simply needs to consider what it is and the cognitive ability it has from God in order to know God. In the past, this claim on the part of Bonaventure and his Halensian forebears has been taken as an indication of their adherence to Anselm’s so-called ontological argument. In another context, however, both Jacob Wood and I have shown in different ways that the early Franciscan reading of Anselm — a representative of the Augustinian tradition — cannot actually be traced to Anselm himself (Schumacher 2021, 73–88).

The source of its inspiration is rather Avicenna, whose famous “proof for a necessary existent” turns on the idea that the supreme Being cannot thought not to exist because its essence involves causing its own existence (Wood 2021, 185–206). Bonaventure next moves on to describe the Triune nature of this Being. As we saw previously, he associates unity, truth, and goodness, with the Father, Son, and Spirit, respectively, in the *Breviloquium*. In the *Itinerarium*, however, he collapses unity and truth into goodness which is the primary name he claims here for the Trinity

(tr. Cousins 1978, 102). Following Pseudo-Dionysius, Bonaventure describes God as a fundamentally self-diffusive good, one who gives himself to others by nature.

This diffusion is made possible by all three persons but is ultimately achieved in the Spirit, which is the reason why Bonaventure emphasizes Goodness as the fundamental feature of the Trinity in this context. The crucial component of this idea of God as a self-diffusive good which Bonaventure stresses here is that he literally communicates or manifests his nature in the natural goods that he creates. Thus, we come full circle to the idea that beings manifest the nature of God, within their limitations.

They do this so successfully for those who are attuned through love of God to find God in them that, somewhat paradoxically, the knowledge of them ultimately transports the mind beyond the realm of knowable beings to a union of love with God. Thus, the purification or initial commitment to prioritize God over creatures which gave access to the principles of knowledge which made both them knowable, and him knowable through them, ultimately leads to the perfection of the mind, such as Francis of Assisi achieved in his famous vision of the six-singed seraph on Mount Alverna (tr. Cousins 1978, 110). For Bonaventure, in summary, love gives birth to knowledge which gives way to love.

5. Conclusions

In thus concluding, Bonaventure clearly establishes the spiritual purpose of his treatise which is itself reinforced by the poetic and flowing, deeply pious, language he uses throughout the text which is designed to inspire his readers to pursue knowledge of God in the world, in the self, and in himself. The *Itinerarium* is no scholastic treatise such as the *Summa Halensis* which seeks to outline the philosophical and even technical details involved in knowing God — though one could argue that it did so with a view to inciting love for God as well. Despite the differences in genre, however, we can find doctrinal threads similar to those the *Summa* advocated running through Bonaventure's text. Bonaventure hints, albeit in no uncertain terms, to his adherence to a theory of transcendentals such as was advocated in the *Summa Halensis*, where Being and its three properties form an image of God on the mind, which reflects him in the operations of memory, understanding, and will.

This satisfies the conditions of possibility for the mind's efforts to know ordinary finite beings effectively as God knows them, through a "full analysis" in which our knowledge of a thing corresponds to the being's model in a divine exemplar. Such knowledge triggers and makes possible the knowledge of the transcendentals and God himself. Although this knowledge is inevitably circumscribed by the finitude of creatures, it is nonetheless direct. For there is a univocal relationship between finite and Infinite Being, the caused and the Cause, as a result of which the caused exhibit the qualities of the Cause in exactly the same if limited way. At the foundations of all these perspectives — on the transcendentals, on how we know them, and on

univocity, is the inspiration of Avicenna, whose psychological theories were adapted to Christian purposes and imported into the Christian tradition through their alignment to Christian authorities like Augustine, for whom those theories were nonetheless entirely foreign. This is something that is difficult to discern in looking at Bonaventure's text without reference to its earlier Franciscan context.

However, it comes into relief through a comparison of his thought to that of his great teachers. This in turn highlights that Bonaventure and his predecessors were not merely incorporating Avicenna as a matter of keeping up with the intellectual fashions of the day. They did so with a view to articulating a theological and philosophical vision which gave expression to Francis' unique spiritual vision, his intimacy with God, and the insight into and warmth towards the world to which that relationship with God gave rise. In that sense, the recovery of the Avicennian sources of early Franciscan thought is crucial to illustrating that they were no mere Augustinians but the inventors of their own religious ethos which has the power to inspire intimacy with God and urgently-needed care for his creation to this day.

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Franziska van Buren,

An Aristotelian Account of Universal Knowledge in the Thought of St. Bonaventure

In this chapter,²⁷ I put forth a reading of Bonaventure's account of the extramental status of universals precisely as the objects of human knowledge. My reading puts particular emphasis on the way in which Bonaventure is influenced by and makes use of the texts of Aristotle in forming his own positions. This emphasis on Aristotle's influence on Bonaventure is perhaps surprising, given that so much of scholarship on Bonaventure has considered the influence of Aristotle on his thought to be — at best — minimal. Indeed, at the beginning of our renewed interest in scholastic thought at the end of the 19th and moving into the 20th century, Bonaventure was often portrayed as being not only uninterested in, but indeed hostile to, the thought of Aristotle. Fortunately, this view has been moderated in recent scholarship. Nonetheless, it is widely held that, while Bonaventure uses *some* Aristotle, he is not properly to be categorized as an "Aristotelian" thinker.

In this chapter, I would like to provide, first of all, an exposition of Bonaventure's account of human knowledge of universals. Secondly, along with this exposition, I aim to show, contrary to the common consensus in scholarship, how this account is heavily rooted in Bonaventure's reading of the texts of Aristotle, and how, in turn, Bonaventure's unique reading of Aristotle supports not only the realist understanding of human knowledge which we look to in Aristotle's thought,

²⁷ The work for this paper has been accomplished within the framework of the ERC project PlatoViaAristotle (AdG 885273).

but also Aristotle's wider understanding of human knowledge, extending from our knowledge of terms and definitions to our knowledge of natural phenomena, i.e., processes of generation and growth.

1. Forms: Universal or Individual, Immanent or Separate?

I would like to begin by making two preliminary points about Bonaventure's view of forms: (1) they are universal, and (2) they are ontologically prior to the sensible thing. It is clear from a number of passages in Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*, such as his discussion of angels, that he is strictly committed to the view that forms, properly speaking, are universals. We see this most clearly in his well-known account of individuation, where Bonaventure argues that the form cannot be the cause of individuation. This argument is usually presented as indicating that Bonaventure thinks that the form alone cannot account for individuation simply because the form is universal.

This, of course, presents Bonaventure's argument as being fairly weak. One could simply question the validity of the premise that forms are indeed universals. However, what Bonaventure is objecting to in this argument is more precisely the view — later maintained by Duns Scotus — that an *individual* form is the cause of individuation. To this view, Bonaventure objects in the following way: “Conversely, how the form may be the total and peculiar cause of numerical distinction is rather difficult to understand, given that all created form, insofar as it is from its own nature born to have similitude to another, just as the Philosopher himself says, as is the case regarding the sun and the moon” (*In II Sent.* d.3, p.1, a.2, q.3).²⁸ This is to say, forms are always universals — an individual form is not really a form.

But why? The real thrust of this argument comes from the above slightly obscure and easily skimmed over reference to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.²⁹ Indeed, anyone who is well versed in contemporary scholarship on Aristotle will recognize that Bonaventure is giving us a textbook argument for why forms are universal in Aristotle. In the passage Bonaventure is referencing, Aristotle is in the midst of highlighting the many absurd implications of the Platonic Ideas. Aristotle targets the position that each form is an individual in the way that a particular instance of a universal is, e.g., this man, Cleon. For Aristotle, if Ideas are individual, they are impossible to define. Aristotle addresses this point by saying that substance is of two kinds, the formula (*logos*) and the sensible thing. Substance in the former sense, i.e., the formula in its full sense, “does not admit of any destruction in the sense of it ever being destroyed, since neither does it so admit of generation (for the essence of house is not generated, but only the essence of this house)” (*Met.* 7.15 [1039b28–29]). Substance in the latter sense, i.e., the concrete thing, “admits of destruction, for they also admit of generation” — sensible things are, of course, generable and perishable (*Met.* 7.15

²⁸ All translations are my own.

²⁹ The Quaracchi edition gives the reference as *Met.* 6.15, which must be a typo (insofar as this does not exist). The correct citation is 7.15. They are however right to cross-reference *De cael.* 1.9, a chapter which Bonaventure cites very frequently.

[1039b24–26]). Accordingly, sensible individuals are always changing, but “demonstration and definition cannot vary” (*Met.* 7.15 [1039b39–1040a1]). Thus, the individual is not intelligible — only that which is common to the many is intelligible. And if forms are supposed to be kinds of universal names and definitions, they are certainly intelligible, and so they are not individual, they are universal.

Now we need to say a few words preliminarily about what Bonaventure considers to be the ontological status of universals. It is quite clear that Bonaventure is a realist and he thinks forms exist, and he is also very clear that they have an existence which is primary, prior to the composite. The real issue here is whether forms are separate from sensibles. In a question considering the hylomorphic composition of creatures, Bonaventure writes: “Metaphysics considers the nature of all creatures and the highest substance being in itself (*per se entis*), in which is considered the act of being (*actus essendi*), and this is what the form gives [to composite substances]” (*In II Sent.* d.3, p.1, a.1, q.2). In contrast, the matter gives “existence” (*existere*) and “stability for things existing” (*per se existendi*) (*In II Sent.* d.3, p.1, a.1, q.2). There is a kind of “being” which the form cannot provide to the composite — “being” which is not intelligible and which is not “always and everywhere,” but rather is a kind of “existential” stability — a stability which endures through the many “heres and nows” in the life of a creature existing in space and time. This is what the matter provides: the existential stability as being the substratum for generation and change as this composite leads out a spatio-temporal existence.³⁰ This is to say, the *being* (*esse*) which the form has is not quite the same as the *being* (*existere*) which the matter has. But how is this not simply Plato’s view? It seems that Bonaventure’s distinction between being and existing is but a reiteration of the Platonic distinction between being and becoming — i.e., that the realm of being is something really distinct from the realm of becoming, or as Bonaventure puts it, existing.

Bonaventure, however, quite clearly rules out the possibility for us as interpreters to understand his being/existing distinction as indicating that forms are separate. This is because, in the *Commentary on the Sentences*, he argues explicitly — and quite protractedly — against separate forms taken in the manner of Plato’s transcendent forms and, additionally, in the manner of the Neoplatonic hypostasis of the Intellect. This is to say, Bonaventure argues against both the notion of transcendent forms in general (*In II Sent.* d.1, p.1, a.1, q.1),³¹ as well as the Neoplatonic theory of emanation (*In II Sent.* d.1, p.1, a.2, q.2).

Here, to aid in his critique of the Platonic positions, Bonaventure draws on the discussion of Platonic forms in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. After targeting the obvious implication involved in the Platonic understanding of participation, i.e., the third

³⁰ Accordingly, Bonaventure writes, extending this concept to include the two kinds of matter, spiritual and corporeal: “for, just as the matter of corporeal things sustains and gives to the forms existence (*existere*) and subsistence (*subsistere*), so also does spiritual matter.” (*In I Sent.* d.1, p.1, a.2, q.2)

³¹ It is interesting to note that this explicit dismissal of the Platonic position takes place within Bonaventure’s wider discussion of the position that the world was created from nothing — a position which he sees evidence for in Aristotle, citing *Meteor.* 2.3. and the beginning of *De caelo*. Bonaventure adds that there are so “many other places” where Aristotle indicates that the world was in fact made that he does not need to provide the references himself.

man argument (*In II Sent.* d.1, p.1, a.1, q.1) Bonaventure then turns to the perhaps more important issue — again drawing on Aristotle — that if forms are separate, they do little to account for the existence, generation, and motion of sensible things. If matter is itself imperfect and without *esse*, it only can be perfected, only can exist as some thing, if it receives a form. But if forms are separate, then matter never does receive the form, never does become some thing. Yet things do exist, so such an account of separate universals is impossible. Hence, Bonaventure comes to the same conclusion as Aristotle that it is absurd to say that forms could ever be separate from matter, or as Aristotle puts it: “how can the Ideas, if they are the substances of things, exist in separation from them?” (*Met.* 1.9 [991b3–5]) Given that Bonaventure recognizes these problems with Platonic forms, it is clear that his intention is not to take the route of positing separate or transcendent forms, despite the fact that he wants the forms to be universal and ontologically prior.

2. Alternative Hylomorphic Theories

One may be wondering, at this point, whether Bonaventure ever considers the possibility of simply positing “universal” forms as immanent in the composite, so that we have a neat hylomorphic composite — form combined with matter equals particular thing. This position is indeed entertained by Bonaventure in another section of the *Commentary on the Sentences*. Here, the question being asked is: “are the seminal reasons universals?” — a question which — not to get ahead of ourselves — Bonaventure answers with both a yes and a no. Let’s take a step back, however, and define our terms here. For Bonaventure, a seminal reason — and this is a position on which he insists Aristotle and Augustine equally agree — is a kind of particularized potency or essence, which he also calls a singular or natural form. Bonaventure writes: “the seminal reason is an active power, inserted into the matter [...] and this active power is the essence of the form” (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3). The seminal reason, however, is “incomplete,” i.e., *esse in potentia*, and thereby dependent on the sensible things in order to be actualized, while the universal form is “complete,” i.e., *esse in actu* and, in this sense, independent of the sensible thing (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3).³²

Before explaining his own view, Bonaventure entertains two possible alternative positions — and they are basically two different versions of saying, “forms are immanent in composite substances.” The first is that the universal is the seminal reason, i.e., the universal form is identical with that which is immanent in the composite. The second is that they are not the same thing, i.e., the distinction is real, but the seminal reason, as an individual form, is sufficient in allowing the mind to abstract to the universal form. This second position sounds very much like

³² “[...] the seminal reason is the essence of the productive form, differing from it according to the distinction between being incomplete and complete, i.e., according to being in act and being in potency.” Interesting to note is that Bettoni attributes this definition of seminal reasons as “incomplete” to Gilson’s interpretation of Bonaventure instead of to Bonaventure himself (Bettoni 1973, 147).

a standard interpretation of Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas' account of forms — and, interestingly, Bonaventure himself points out that this reading *seems* to be supported by Aristotle, although he ultimately concludes that it is not.

The first position Bonaventure dismisses utilizing five arguments, each of which rests upon one of the following texts of Aristotle: *De anima*, *Analitica posteriora*, *De Interpretatione*, and the *Categoriae*. The driving force of the arguments comes from the *Categoriae*'s texts which are used in two of the five arguments. In this argument, Bonaventure draws on a well-known position from the *Categoriae* that secondary substance, i.e., the universal species and genus, cannot inhere in a substrate. We can look just to the fourth argument, since it is the strongest and really cuts to the core of the issue. Here, Bonaventure aims at demonstrating the absurdity of claiming that the whole of the universal is present in the particular:

But this is the seminal reason of something (*aliquid*), which preexists in matter, before it may be the complete thing in act (*res completa in actu*): therefore, there is the form of humanity in matter, before there is the complete thing. But this is false and unintelligible, that the form of humanity be in a particular, and that it not be the complete thing: therefore, one may not think that the universal form is the seminal reason. (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3)

Bonaventure's position in the above is that the universal means the complete thing in act — the form of humanity is the whole of humanity — and if the whole of humanity is in one man, this is unintelligible because one man is not the whole of humanity. Socrates is not humanity — he is *a man*. This is clearly a reference to the *Categoriae*, where Aristotle gives the same examples: “man is said of the particular man as substrate, but is not in a substrate: *man is not in the particular man*” (*Cat.* 5.5 [3a10–12]). Whatever is dependent upon Socrates, belongs to him and is particularized in him. With regard to knowledge or predication, what is in the particular sensible thing is itself particular, and thus it is no real predicate or object of knowledge — just as he likewise makes clear in Aristotle's sun and moon argument, which we discussed earlier.

Bonaventure then addresses the position which would say that the place for the universal is simply in the mind. This position would entail answering the original question with a no — the universal and the seminal reason (or individual form) are two distinct things. The individual form exists extra-mentally in the sensible particular and allows us to abstract to the universal which exists only in the mind. This reading certainly prevents the universals from being, as Bonaventure puts it, *fictiones*, but nonetheless deprives the universal itself of its extra-mental reality.

However, this position also does not make sense to Bonaventure. Accordingly, he provides a two-pronged argument, based on (1) cognition of the universal and (2) univocal predication. These arguments show that a universal is necessary not only for knowing the particular, i.e., by connecting the particular with a universal, but also for being able to know that different particulars are of the same kind.

Bonaventure begins his first argument by stating that when we know, we know the universal (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3). While it appears that we know the individual first, because we encounter it first in the senses, nonetheless, knowledge of the universal is prior to knowledge of the individual. This is because knowing an individual consists in connecting the individual to some universal definition, e.g., Socrates is a featherless biped. One needs to know more primarily what humanity is before one can know what Socrates is — not the other way around. The knowledge of the universal is therefore prior to knowledge of the individual, despite the fact that experientially the reverse seems to be true. Bonaventure here, just as much as in the preceding set of arguments, relies on Aristotle, bringing in the fitting quote from *Posterior Analytics* 1.31: “Sense-perception must be concerned with particulars, whereas knowledge depends upon recognition of universals,” and explains as: “it is not complete cognition, if the whole being of the thing (*totum esse rei*) is not cognized; and it is not cognition unless it is through the form” (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3).

We now come to Bonaventure’s second line of argument: without the universal, it is impossible to make univocal predications between particulars. The goal of this second argument, in contrast to the first which concerns our knowledge of universals and particulars, is to show that the universal is necessary for our ability to identify two particulars as being of the same kind, i.e., our ability to predicate of two particulars the same essence with this essence meaning the same thing for both particulars. Bonaventure writes: “similarly, it is not true univocation, except when something (*aliquid*) is *really* assimilated to a common form, which is then essentially predicated of it (i.e., of the *aliquid*)” (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3). He continues: “but this form, to which many assimilate, can only be the universal form; for what is essentially predicated of them can only be the form which embraces them all (*forma totum complectens*)” (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3). This is to say, if we have access only to the particular humanity in Socrates and the particular humanity in Callias, it is impossible to say that they are *both* humans. Even if one could know Socrates’ humanity without knowing first the universal (which as we saw above was not possible either), one still would be knowing a particularized humanity, i.e., the humanity which I would abstract from Socrates would not be applicable to Callias, but only to Socrates. Moreover, when we also take into consideration the fact that the form is universal and “being in act,” it seems plainly absurd to say that what Callias and Socrates assimilate to is already complete (*completus*), i.e., is already the *totum esse rei* in Callias and Socrates — particularly if Callias and Socrates are each assimilating to one and the same thing, how could it already be particularized in each of them?

Thus far, Bonaventure’s conclusions are (1) that universals as universals cannot exist as ontologically dependent upon sensible particulars and (2) that this particularized form is not sufficient to ground knowledge of the universal. Bringing

in our earlier points as well, it is clear additionally that Bonaventure does not want to posit separate forms, as the Platonists do. And so, it seems that Bonaventure has backed himself into a corner: he has rejected both the view that universals are immanent and that they are separate. Moreover, he has rejected the kind of “middle ground” of conceptualism between these two positions. Or we can put this yet another way, in response to the original question of whether seminal reasons are universals, Bonaventure has rejected the view which would answer “yes, they are,” and he has additionally rejected the views which would say “no, they are not” either in the manner of the conceptualist who would say “no, the seminal reason exists extra-mentally, while the universal exists in the mind, or of the Platonist who would say “no, the seminal reason exists in the particular sensible, while the universal exists in a separate reality.” What option then is left for Bonaventure to argue in favour of?

3. A Two-Fold Account of Form

A hint at resolving these difficulties is that Bonaventure did not answer the question of whether seminal reasons are universals with a “yes” or a “no” but with a yes *and* a no. Bonaventure explains his reasoning in the following way: “if the universal form is said properly, according to the thing that is ordered into a genus, which metaphysics considers, the seminal reason is not the universal form. If, however, the universal form is said to be existing (*existens*) according to an incomplete being in matter and indifferent and able to be produced in many, so may one call the seminal reason the universal form” (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3). This is to say, they are equatable only insofar as the universal form is “existing (*existere*) in potency” in some composite (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3). The crux of the distinction brings us back to our original *esse/existere* distinction. The universal form really exists (*esse*), while the seminal reason has merely a contingent *existence* (*existere*). Or put another way, insofar as the universal form exists (*esse*), it is distinct from the fact that it happens to exist (*existere*) as operative in some composite. However, this does not mean that we have two entities, or again that we have merely a conceptual distinction. The distinction is correlate neither to the ontological distinction between “Rye the horse” and “Alejandro the horse,” nor the conceptual distinction between calling Rye “the horse from Germany” or “the horse who won the competition.” We rather have a distinction which is neither real nor conceptual, i.e., the distinction between Rye’s equinity and equinity in general. This is to say, we have more precisely two “modes” of form — one which indicates the real being of the form which is always and everywhere, and one which indicates a contingent existence of the form, which is here and now.

Now it seems as if my theme of Bonaventure’s Aristotelianism has fallen out of the picture as he has made this last step in formulating his view of universals. Not quite. In fact, Bonaventure discovers this relationship between these two “modes”

of form precisely in the texts of Aristotle, whom he cites here as an authority: “For this position [i.e., the preceding account of universals and their relationship to seminal reasons] agrees with authority. For the Philosopher says, ‘when I say heaven, I mean the form; when I say this heaven, I mean the matter’ (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.3).

This passage from Aristotle is one which Bonaventure often utilizes, and indeed with good reason, insofar as it expresses the two-fold understanding of forms: the form itself and the form in the matter (or here, we could say *qua* operative principle in the matter). If we look at the full passage in Aristotle from which Bonaventure is quoting, we see even more clearly what Bonaventure has in mind:

Suppose for instance only one example of a circle was apprehended, the distinction would nonetheless remain between (1) the essential nature of the circle (τὸ κύκλος) and (2) the essential nature of this particular circle (τῷδε τῷ κύκλῳ). The former is simply the form (εἶδος), and the latter is the form-in-matter (τὸ δ’εἶδος ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ) and must be counted among the particulars (καθ’ ἕκαστον). (*De cael.* 1.9 [278a7–11])

From this Aristotle concludes: “This heaven and heaven in general are therefore two different things, the latter being distinguishable as form or shape and the former as something compounded with matter” (*De cael.* 1.9 [278a13–15]). *Prima facie*, one would think that by “this heaven,” Aristotle means the composite of form and matter — the individual sensible hylomorphic composite. But this is not precisely what he says. He rather says that “this heaven” is *that which is compounded with* matter, not the resulting compound of form and matter. This is to say, the “this heaven” is one half of our composite sensible thing, with matter, of course, being the other — and indeed the “this heaven” is not the universal form but τὸ δ’εἶδος ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ or, as Bonaventure would have it, the singular form or seminal reason.³³

4. An Aristotelian Account of Scientific Inquiry

Now much of what I have said thus far is pertinent to questions concerning the existence of universals as objects of human knowledge, considered just as terms in predications: Rye is a horse. However, Bonaventure, as we mentioned earlier, is also concerned with the Platonic account of separate forms, particularly because he saw that separate forms would not be able to account for change in sensible things. Thus, from the side of ontology, Bonaventure’s forms should do just this. Moreover, from the side of epistemology they should lay a foundation not only for human knowledge of universal terms, but also for a method of scientific inquiry — which is still missing from our account of Bonaventure and would have been so important for Franciscan philosophy generally with its emphasis on the sciences.

³³ Here, we see why he states that Augustine and Aristotle both agree when it comes to seminal reasons: *In II Sent.* d.15, a.1, q.1.

In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Bonaventure indeed makes clear that the universal forms act not only as the causes of being in sensible things but also as the causes of natural processes of change: generation and growth. He does so precisely by utilizing the two-fold view of form as universal and seminal reason, now designating the former as the causal reason and the latter as the cause: “But cause and causal reason differ, because cause means the productive principle, but causal reason means the rule (*regula*) directing the principle in its operation” (*In II Sent.* d.18, a.1, q.2). To put this simply, the cause is just the cause (which produces the effect) and the causal reason is the reason for the cause (producing the effect). We can use Bonaventure’s example to illustrate this: man generating man. First of all, we have our causal reason, i.e., our directing rule, which is universal: men generate men — this is clearly a universal rule which is dictated by the universal form, humanity, i.e., humanity entails the ability to create more humans.³⁴ Then we have our cause, which is the particularized form, i.e., the natural form or seminal reason: this man has the ability to generate a man.

Similarly, Aristotle writes, using the very same example of men generating men: “For it is the particular that is the principle of particulars, ‘man’ in general is the principle of ‘man’ in general, but there is no such person as ‘man,’ whereas Peleus is the principle of Achilles, and your father of you, and this particular B of a particular BA; *but* B in general is the principle of BA regarded *absolutely*” (*Met.* 12.5 [1071a17–21]).³⁵ In an absolute sense, the universal is the principle, but proximately, the particularization of the universal is the principle — or to use Bonaventure’s terminology, the particularization of the universal is, properly speaking, the cause, while the universal is the *reason*.

5. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, we can now say that Bonaventure’s two-fold understanding of form not only lays the foundation for a basic understanding of human knowledge, but also for a much richer understanding precisely of scientific knowledge of natural phenomena. To make a contrast — while we would think perhaps at first glance that Aquinas is the more empirically minded of the two, this is not so. For Aquinas, if we want to know what things are, i.e., a universal definition, we arrive at an object of our inquiry which is not something which grounds the existence of the natural substance, but rather something which exists only in the mind. The conceptualist would not be worried about his integrity as a realist yet, because he can rely upon the connection between the individual and the universal which grounds our knowledge and provides for the objectivity of our scientific inquiry.

³⁴ This general discussion of causes being universals or particulars is a reference to *An. Post.* 1.31. The universal cause is the rule which is intelligible, as opposed to the particular cause which is only perceptible.

³⁵ The Quaracchi edition provides a citation to *Met.* 11.4 in which there is nothing on the topic of causation, but rather a discussion of what Philosophy should study.

However, if we take into account Bonaventure's (and later Ockham's) arguments against the notion that the individual form can be sufficient grounding for universal knowledge, that link is severed. One is then left looking for an objectivity for what exists in the mind, be it our understanding of universal terms or our understanding of the motions and changes in the sensible world, such as someone like Kant will do. Indeed, Kant looks for this objectivity on the part of the knower, and he is successful in the sense that he recognizes this as being a major problem for a realist epistemology and so he provides an answer to it.

However, Kant is not Aristotle. And this is why I chose to emphasize this topic and to bring it up at the end of my paper, because in seeing how Bonaventure provides for our knowledge of natural phenomena, we really see how through and through his understanding of human knowledge is Aristotelian. This is to say, contrary to many of his contemporaries, Bonaventure, precisely by utilizing his two-fold understanding of form as universal and seminal reason, actively finds a way to provide an in-depth account of human knowledge both of universal terms and of natural phenomena. To a great extent, the driving force of much of Aristotle's philosophical project is summed up in the view that — contrary to Plato — it is in the natural world itself and not in some world separate from it — that we discover the causes and principles of sensible phenomena, of the reality that we encounter in our every day. And in preserving the extra-mental reality of universals, down to their being the foundation of processes of change and becoming, Bonaventure — so long considered to be un-Aristotelian — has done just this. He has preserved in his own thought the view of nature as the object of human knowledge and scientific inquiry, so central to Aristotle's own thought.

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Leonardo Fedriga,

La sensibilité chez Bonaventure: héritage augustinien et révision du modèle aristotélicien (Bon., *Red. art.* 8)

Un des défis majeurs pour la compréhension de la théorie bonaventurienne de la sensibilité consiste en la difficulté d'en repérer les sources. Cet aspect a bien été souligné par Laure Solignac, qui, avec le premier chapitre de son *La voie de la ressemblance*, constitue une exception parmi les études sur la pensée de Bonaventure (Solignac 2014, 23). En effet, trouver des traitements détaillés du phénomène de la sensibilité et de la perception sensible chez le théologien franciscain s'avère être une tâche plutôt ingrate³⁶. Or, Solignac apporte une aide fondamentale, permettant un aperçu subtil de la complexité qui se cache derrière les rares mentions au processus perceptif faites par Bonaventure.

C'est concernant la question des sources que je souhaite ici avancer une hypothèse : Bonaventure articule son propre modèle de perception sensible à travers un emploi conjoint et étroitement coordonné du *De Trinitate* 11 d'Augustin et du *De anima* d'Aristote. Un tel modèle, présenté une première fois dans le *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (= *De reductione / Red. art.*), indique un effort remarquable visant l'accueil de l'innovation scientifique aristotélicienne et en même temps la garantie de sa cohérence avec l'expérience intellectuelle chrétienne et franciscaine.

³⁶ Au contraire, les analyses de la gnoséologie bonaventurienne portant sur le moment de l'illumination abondent. Par « phénomène de la sensibilité » j'entends le fait même que les choses corporelles puissent être objet de perception sensible.

Augustin pointe une direction possible, mais Bonaventure s'éloigne rapidement, conquérant son propre espace d'action.

Au centre du modèle est la notion de *generatio speciei*, processus émanatif par lequel une substance dotée de corps produit sa ressemblance/espèce sensible dans le *medium*, d'où, ensuite, celle-ci atteint l'organe percevant, donnant effectivement lieu à la perception. L'étrangeté d'une telle manière d'envisager la sensibilité doit sans doute frapper et c'est précisément sur ce point que Bonaventure semble au premier abord être entièrement innovant en appliquant le concept de génération au rapport entre l'objet et son espèce sensible. Or, on verra qu'Augustin a devancé Bonaventure en ce choix singulier et lui en a fourni probablement l'idée.

1.

Bonaventure compose le *De reductione* à l'occasion de son *inceptio* au sein du corps enseignant de l'Université de Paris en 1254, ainsi que l'a montré Joshua Benson (Benson 2009, 149–178). Face à la montée progressive de l'influence de la philosophie aristotélicienne, la communauté académique est engagée dans un processus d'assimilation. Les écrits d'Aristote et de ses commentateurs causent une innovation scientifique majeure en quasiment tous les domaines du savoir (Lohr 1982). Les interdits des autorités ecclésiastiques s'avèrent largement insuffisants, et le 19 mars 1255 un nouveau curriculum de la faculté des Arts officialise le rôle prééminent des doctrines aristotéliciennes dans le cadre de la formation des étudiants³⁷.

Bonaventure prend charge de la chaire franciscaine de théologie quelques mois avant (Hammond 2009, 179). Sa fonction institutionnelle, ainsi que son engagement personnel, ne peuvent pas tolérer de négligence par rapport aux nouveautés culturelles s'offrant aux esprits de l'époque. En tant qu'étudiant et puis bachelier, il avait déjà eu l'occasion de faire lui-même la rencontre d'Aristote, et son commentaire aux livres des *Sententiae* de Pierre Lombard en porte témoignage. Cette œuvre vaste, daté des années 1250–1253, est marquée par plusieurs références aux positions théorétiques du *Philosophus*, qui est d'ailleurs cité souvent avec respect et considération pour ses développements intellectuels (Mauro 2017).

Justement, un passage du commentaire au deuxième livre des *Sententiae* est d'intérêt capital pour le présent sujet. Ayant à définir la notion de *sentire*, Bonaventure recourt à trois autorités : Augustin, Boèce, Aristote. L'ordre des citations reflète une progression d'adéquation, telle que c'est l'option du dernier qui *magis proprie* saisit le cœur du concept à déterminer. Sans aucune ambiguïté, Bonaventure juge que comprendre de manière précise ce que *sentire* signifie implique la référence au modèle du *De anima* : *Sentire idem est, quod speciem existentem in materia praeter*

³⁷ Pour ce qui est du curriculum voir par exemple (Lohr 2002, 17; Goff 2015, 90–96) ; concernant l'efficacité des mesures de restrictions au sujet de l'enseignement de la philosophie naturelle d'Aristote, voir Bianchi 1996, 180–181.

materiam mediante organo suscipere (*In II Sent.* d.8, p.1, a.3, q.2, ad 4 [*Opera omnia* 2, 222b])³⁸. Augustin et Boèce sont ouvertement dépassés par Aristote. Évidemment, Bonaventure trouvait particulièrement satisfaisant le paradigme de ce dernier, qui apparaît comme le seul capable de pourvoir une description du processus perceptif, alors que les définitions des autorités chrétiennes choisies demeurent plutôt génériques. Au point qu'elles n'isolent pas la spécificité de la connaissance sensible, mais restent valides pour l'intellectuelle également (*In II Sent.* d.8, p.1, a.3, q.2, ad 4 [*Opera omnia* 2, 222b]).

Avec un tel bagage conceptuel, en avril 1254, Bonaventure est reçu parmi les maîtres en théologie de Paris (Hammond 2009). La cérémonie d'admission inclut la prononciation d'un discours par le futur *magister* et, suivant une tendance établie au cours des années 50, Bonaventure propose une division des formes du savoir humain et montre comment elles entrent en relation avec la théologie (Benson 2009, 160–164). En offrant une articulation ordonnée de la science humaine, le *De reductione* suit notoirement le modèle du *Didascalicon* de Hughes de St Victor (Solignac 2014, 340–358 ; Martello 2018).

Cependant, du moins deux innovations s'imposent, éloignant le bref traité bonaventurien de l'œuvre du Victorin, à savoir les réflexes aristotéliens sur l'organisation des formes de la connaissance et la curieuse inclusion parmi eux de la perception sensible (Hammond 2009, 219–220 ; Solignac 2014, 349–350). Je considère que cette dernière est une conséquence de la première, et plus généralement de la croissante importance de la gnoséologie aristotélienne telle qu'elle est transmise par le *De anima* et les *Analytica Posteriora*³⁹. Dans le contexte académique au sein duquel il vivait, Bonaventure ne pouvait pas ignorer le rôle cognitif de la perception sensible.

Deux passages du *De reductione* sont dédiés à la *cognitio sensitiva*. Le premier en décrit le fonctionnement sur le plan de la philosophie naturelle, faisant recours à Augustin. Suivant un passage explicitement cité du *De Genesi ad litteram*, Bonaventure établit une correspondance entre chaque sens et un élément constituant le monde corporel (*Red. art.* 3 [*Opera omnia* 5, 320]). Solignac a attiré l'attention sur le fait qu'il n'y a pas de finalité commune entre le schéma Bonaventure et son modèle. Augustin insiste plutôt sur le fait que, nonobstant la correspondance, proposée par certains savants, ce qui effectivement assure la perception est une activité de l'âme. Bonaventure est au contraire intéressé précisément par le rapport

³⁸ Le deuxième livre du *De anima* est cité explicitement par Bonaventure : *Et sic accipit Philosophus in secundo de Anima* (*In II Sent.* d.8, p.1, a.3, q.2, ad 4 [*Opera omnia* 2, 222b]). La citation aristotélienne pourrait être une élaboration de la version latine de Jacques de Venise, aussi bien que d'une formule trouvée dans un florilège aristotélien.

(<i>Opera omnia</i> 2, 222b)	(Hamesse 1974, 182)
<i>Sensus est susceptivus specierum in materia praeter materiam</i>	<i>Omnis sensus est susceptivus omnium specierum sensibilibus sine materia</i>

³⁹ Pour ce qui est de l'influence de la gnoséologie dérivée des *Analytica Posteriora* sur Bonaventure, voir Bougerol 1973, 156–157.

entre les sens et la structure physique du monde. Le passage est donc nominale-ment placé sous l'autorité augustinienne, mais vise un aspect qu'Augustin considérait secondaire. (Solignac 2014, 46–47)

Le deuxième passage, visant la reconduction de la perception au savoir suprême de la Sainte Écriture, rejoint le plan métaphysique. Cela est possible à travers l'application de la grammaire trinitaire au phénomène de la perception. La reconduction de toute forme de connaissance à l'Écriture est accomplie par l'analyse de chaque *cognitio* selon les trois sens spirituels de la Bible, dont le premier, l'allégorique, concerne la vie du Verbe organisée en deux moments : la génération éternelle par le Père et l'Incarnation dans le temps. Ces deux moments articulent la connaissance sensible en ce que l'émission de l'espèce sensible est comparée à la procession du Fils et l'union avec l'organe percevant à l'événement de l'Incarnation (*Red. art. 7–8 [Opera omnia 5, 322]*).

Le recours au sens allégorique et le parallèle établi avec la vie de la seconde personne divine portent Bonaventure à employer la notion de *generatio* dans un contexte d'abord gnoséologique. Tout comme le Père engendre le Fils, l'objet *gignit* sa propre ressemblance sensible. Le résultat de l'application de la logique trinitaire est frappant. Pour devenir objet sensible, la chose doit produire par un processus génératif une *similitudo*, laquelle se répand dans le *medium*, prête à rejoindre un organe de perception.

Aucune autorité n'est expressément invoquée et, cependant, la présence implicite d'Aristote peut être décelée. *Nullum enim sensibile movet potentiam sensitivam, nisi mediante similitudine, quae egreditur ab obiecto.* (*Red. art. 8 [Opera omnia 5, 322a]*) Deux aspects renvoient ici au modèle perceptif du *De anima*, à savoir (a) la direction objet→sujet animant la dynamique cognitive et (b) le rôle de la *similitudo* qui, en tant que *egressa ab obiecto* peut bien être synonyme de la *species praeter materiam* (*In II Sent. d.8, p.1, a.3, q.2, ad 4 [Opera omnia 2, 222b]*)⁴⁰. Le schéma aristotélicien est donc actif dans le *De reductione* en 1254.

Aristote était par ailleurs présent aussi dans le premier passage sur la perception. Les correspondances sens-éléments, qui n'intéressent pas tellement Augustin, peuvent être lues en lien avec la notion de *sensibile proprium* dérivée du deuxième livre du *De anima* (418a7–25). Le fait que chaque organe percevant ait un objet de perception spécifique (Aristote) est fondée dans la spécularité entre la composition physique intime du monde et la structure de la sensorialité humaine (Augustin).

Au sujet de la perception sensible, Bonaventure entretient donc un dialogue avec Aristote dans le *De reductione*, bien que le nom du *Philosophus* ne soit jamais évoqué. Une confrontation qui se joue par l'entremise d'Augustin, de manière ouverte dans le premier passage, implicitement dans le deuxième. Je souhaite justement montrer la présence discrète d'Augustin dans l'application du discours trini-

⁴⁰ A propos de cette direction objet→sujet pour ce qui est de l'acte perceptif, voir Aristote, *De anima* 416b34–35, 424a.

taire à la connaissance sensible. Une influence terminologique et conceptuelle de ce genre peut bien expliquer l'emploi du verbe *gignere* dans le contexte gnoséologique, et donc aider une compréhension meilleure de la *generatio speciei* bonaventurienne.

2.

L'interprétation de certains phénomènes concernant l'âme humaine à travers les dynamiques et les relations internes à la Trinité n'est pas une innovation attribuable à Bonaventure. Du moins un exemple magistral le précède, à savoir le *De Trinitate* d'Augustin. Aucun doute ne peut se poser sur le fait que Bonaventure eut connaissance du traité augustinien. Bougerol nous informe que, parmi les écrits d'Augustin, le *De Trinitate* compte le nombre majeur de citations dans les œuvres bonaventuriennes (Bougerol 1988, 58). Mais décisif est le témoignage offert par Bonaventure lui-même à cet égard.

Entre 1254 et 1255, les hésitations d'un anonyme potentiel confrère poussent Bonaventure à clarifier certains points concernant la Règle de l'ordre et l'adhérence aux principes y contenus dont font preuve les membres (Hughes 2014, 523–526). Ainsi naît l'*Epistola de tribus quaestionibus*, qui révèle la conscience que Bonaventure avait de la droite vie religieuse prescrite par les indications de la Règle franciscaine. Une des questions soulevées par le maître anonyme concerne l'opportunité pour un frère de s'engager dans les études.

Bonaventure répond par une distinction : s'il est vivement déconseillé de s'abandonner à la curiosité, laquelle risque de nous entraîner dans une recherche sans fin autour de matières marginales et oisives, l'étude comme poursuite de la vraie connaissance ne peut pas endommager l'intégrité de la vie spirituelle. Ainsi, étudier les doctrines hérétiques pour en entrevoir les erreurs et être par conséquent mieux placé pour les éviter n'est pas un exercice mauvais ou inutile. (*Ep. de trib. quaest.* 12 [*Opera omnia* 8, 335])

Puis viennent les *philosophi*, dont Bonaventure reconnaît que certaines doctrines peuvent s'avérer cruciales afin d'obtenir une intelligence solide de plusieurs questions de foi. Par ailleurs, une des autorités capitales du christianisme est aussi le plus grand des philosophes, à savoir Augustin. Cela est montré par ses œuvres majeures, lesquelles ont traité de façon magistrale des nœuds théorétiques centraux pour toute réflexion philosophique, ainsi que Bonaventure le suggère par une liste de grand intérêt. Le *De Trinitate* est cité après les *Confessiones* et le *De Genesi ad litteram* et avant le *De civitate Dei*⁴¹.

Chacun des traités est loué pour une contribution intellectuelle spécifique et au *De Trinitate* Bonaventure associe le plus haut traitement qui soit *de anima et de Deo* (*Ep. de trib. quaest.* 12 [*Opera omnia* 8, 335b]). La table des matières miniaturisée est déjà plutôt éloquente. Un traité dédié par son auteur au mystère trinitaire est perçu

⁴¹ L'importance du passage en question pour la définition de l'horizon philosophique bonaventurien a bien été remarquée par Robert (1950, 157–161), puis encore par Cullen (2006, 22) et Johnson (2009, 145).

environ huit siècles plus tard avant tout comme enquête psychologique méritoire et puis comme œuvre de théologie. Or, du moins depuis Platon, la théorie de l'âme implique souvent une réflexion gnoséologique. Aristote, de sa part, avait articulé la psychologie selon les trois groupes d'opérations qui organisent le phénomène de la vie, à savoir la puissance végétative, la puissance sensible et la puissance intellectuelle (414b32–415a11).

Un tel modèle devait bien être présent à l'esprit d'un théologien formé à la faculté des Arts de Paris. La densité conceptuelle suggérée par le syntagme *de anima* s'impose d'autant plus, car Bonaventure entend ici dévoiler les prouesses philosophiques d'Augustin. C'est donc en termes philosophiques que l'on doit comprendre la valeur de l'analyse psychologique contenue dans le *De Trinitate*. Autrement dit, sous l'expression *de anima* Bonaventure peut bien cacher en ce contexte toute une série de questions d'ordre philosophique, telles des points de théorie de la connaissance. Il semble qu'il en ait été le cas, du moins pour ce qui est de la perception sensible.

3.

Augustin consacre une partie du livre onzième du *De Trinitate* à celle qui s'avère probablement la plus subtile parmi ses analyses du fonctionnement de la perception sensible. La nécessité de repérer des *vestigia* trinitaires qui puissent, aider la pénétration intellectuelle du mystère de la Trinité, pousse Augustin à prendre en compte l'*homo exterioris*, à savoir les manifestations fonctionnelles les moins intimes de l'âme humaine. Certes, l'extériorité étant donnée, on ne peut pas prétendre à des vestiges éloquentes. D'autre part, ce même caractère rend les traces trinitaires plus saisissables pour l'intelligence amoindrie de l'homme tourné vers le monde sensible. Ainsi est justifié l'effort que se propose Augustin : *Nitamur igitur, si possumus, in hoc quoque exteriori indagare qualecumque vestigium Trinitatis* (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 11.1.1).⁴² L'entreprise est fondamentalement heuristique, car il s'agit de pourvoir un aperçu de la structure relationnelle interne à la Trinité par l'entremise d'un modèle insuffisant mais aisément compréhensible⁴³.

La première opération analysée est justement la perception sensible. En cohérence avec sa finalité, Augustin isole trois éléments constituant l'acte perceptif, à savoir : (i) la *res*, (ii) la *visio* et (iii) l'*animi intentio* (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 11.2.2). Une telle tripartition peut bien s'inscrire dans la lignée néoplatonicienne, visant le renversement des rapports établis par Aristote entre objet et faculté (Toulouse 2009, 225–235). Cependant, on constatera que le schéma du *De Trinitate* demeure un peu plus compliqué. Implicitement, Augustin trace le profil ontologique de chaque composant, pour établir que (i) est indépendant de l'acte perceptif, là où (ii) et (iii) ne le sont pas.

⁴² Le traité *De Trinitate* d'Augustin est cité selon l'édition du CCSL 50, 50A.

⁴³ Cf. *Ad dignoscendum faciliorem*. (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 11.1.1)

Pour ce qui concerne le sujet de cet article, l'élément à analyser attentivement est (ii). Lisant les paragraphes 1.1–2.5 du onzième livre du *De Trinitate*, on s'aperçoit rapidement du fait que la notion de *visio* est complexe, au point que l'on pourrait accuser Augustin d'une certaine ambiguïté conceptuelle. *Visio* est définie en 2.2 en tant que *sensus formatus extrinsecus*, à savoir le fait que le sens soit impressionné par une forme venant de l'externe, le sens en tant qu'informé et percevant en acte (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 11.2.2). Ce n'est pas un objet qui est ici désigné, mais plutôt un phénomène, résultat de l'interaction de deux acteurs (*sensus et res sensibilis*).

En 2.3, une nouvelle profondeur d'analyse est atteinte. La *visio* est dite produit conjoint du *visibilis* et du *videns*, parce que le *sensus* des yeux vient du sujet percevant, alors que l'information du sens, qui justement est dite *visio*, vient de l'impression de l'objet sensible⁴⁴. On note d'abord que le même terme est employé pour deux notions différentes : d'une part on a une *visio* au sens large, qui comprend explicitement le sujet percevant ; de l'autre, une *visio* centrée sur l'impression de l'objet sensible. C'est afin de mieux éclairer ce point que Augustin précise davantage que la *res visibilis* ne produit pas le *sensus*, mais une *formam velut similitudinem suam* (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 11.2.3). En tant que produit de la *res*, la *visio* s'enrichit donc d'une notion supplémentaire, celle de forme ou ressemblance. Le cas échéant, une chose plutôt qu'un phénomène complexe semble concerné.

Une telle ambivalence se reflète dans la récente littérature critique. Mark E. Kalderon représente assez efficacement la première option et se concentre sur la relation entre sujet percevant et objet perçu, dont le lieu de rencontre est le *sensus informatus* (Kalderon 2017, 23–24, 27). De sa part, Tamer Nawar porte plutôt l'attention sur la *forma* comme produit issu de l'objet agissant en tant que moyen entre le percevant et la *res visibilis* (Nawar 2021, 92–100). Kalderon voit ainsi en Augustin un réaliste soutenant le contact direct entre intention cognitive du percevant et *res*, alors que Nawar qualifie la position augustiniennne de réaliste indirecte, à cause justement du rôle de la *forma velut similitudo* qui s'interpose entre sens et objet sensible. En effet, Nawar arrive à conférer à la *forma* venant de l'objet le statut d'un *item*, rendant par là évidente la densité qu'il lui accorde (Nawar 2021, 92).

L'analyse augustiniennne est très subtile et se prête aisément à différentes lectures. Je souhaite précisément suggérer que, face à ces passages du livre onzième du *De Trinitate*, Bonaventure dut à son tour opter pour une certaine interprétation, laquelle informa à son tour radicalement son propre modèle de connaissance sensible. Je vais d'abord montrer les évidences terminologiques du lien entre le *De Trinitate* et le *De reductione*.

⁴⁴ *Gignitur ergo ex re visibili visio, sed non ex sola, nisi adsit et videns. Quocirca ex visibili et vidente gignitur visio, ita sane ut ex vidente sit sensus oculorum, et aspicientis atque intuentis intentio; illa tamen informatio sensus, quae visio dicitur, a solo imprimatur corpore quod videtur, id est, a re aliqua visibili.* (Augustinus, *De Trinitate* 11.2.3)

4.

Le point de départ était le concept bonaventurien de *generatio speciei*. Une exposition particulièrement ouverte de cette notion se trouve dans le paragraphe 8 du *De reductione artium ad theologiam*. Lorsqu'il s'agit de montrer comment la connaissance sensible peut être ramenée au savoir suprême de l'Écriture, dont elle porte en soi la trace, Bonaventure établit un parallèle décisif entre la vie de la seconde personne divine et le phénomène de la sensibilité. Le parallèle s'articule en (i) un moment émanatif et (ii) un moment unitif. Ainsi, (i) comme le Verbe est généré par le Père éternellement, la ressemblance sort de l'objet *sicut proles a parente* (*Red. art.* 8 [*Opera omnia* 5, 322a]). Et (ii) comme le Verbe s'unit à l'homme donnant lieu au phénomène de l'Incarnation, ainsi la ressemblance s'unit à l'organe et à la puissance sensible donnant lieu à l'acte perceptif proprement dit.

Deux aspects rapprochent la formulation bonaventurienne à celle du *De Trinitate* 11, à savoir le contexte trinitaire de fond et l'emploi du concept de génération sur le plan gnoséologique. Afin d'en avoir un aperçu clair, je mets en comparaison les textes latins :

<i>Red. art. 8</i>	<i>De Trinitate 11</i>
(1) <i>Nullum enim sensibile movet potentiam cognitivam, nisi mediante similitudinem, quae egreditur ab obiecto sicut proles a parente</i>	(a) <i>Visionis illius, id est formae quae fit in sensu cernentis, quasi parens est forma corporis ex qua fit (5.9)</i>
(2) <i>Et licet non semper obiectum sentiat, semper tamen, quantum est de se, gignit similitudinem</i>	(b) <i>res visibilis [...] gignit tamen formam velut similitudinem suam, quae fit in sensu, cum aliquid videndo sentimus (2.3)</i>

Il ne s'agit évidemment pas de citations littérales. Cela n'empêche pas toutefois de constater que les tours de phrase sont assez proches et de supposer que Bonaventure ait pu faire un choix de vocabulaire assez singulier inspiré par le *De Trinitate*. Dans les deux cas la grammaire trinitaire est appliquée au domaine de la connaissance sensible, ce qui se manifeste par l'emploi du verbe *gignere* pour désigner le rapport entre l'objet et sa *similitudo*. Dans les deux cas on reconnaît à l'objet une activité productive passant par l'engendrement de quelque chose qui entretient avec lui une relation de ressemblance.

En raison de ces évidences textuelles et du témoignage fourni par l'*Epistola de tribus quaestionibus* à propos de l'autorité que Bonaventure attribuait au *De Trinitate* en matière de questions *de anima*, on peut raisonnablement conclure qu'un emprunt terminologique a eu lieu. Les formules augustinienne ont exercé une influence majeure sur Bonaventure et lui ont fourni un répertoire singulier. Voici donc l'origine, du moins lexicale, de la notion de *generatio speciei*.

Mais lorsque l'on pousse plus loin l'analyse et l'on dépasse le plan du lexique pour rejoindre le contenu conceptuel, on s'aperçoit rapidement de l'écart qui sépare les deux approches. **Le texte en gras** a déjà fait son travail en ce sens, il s'agit simplement d'explicitier.

Si (1) et (a) partagent l'idée qu'une génération se produit, ils ne coïncident cependant pas tout à fait au sujet des pôles qui entraînent cette relation générative. Bonaventure est clair : c'est l'objet (*sensibile/obiectum*) qui remplit la fonction de parent à l'égard d'une *similitudo* qui se dégage de lui comme le fruit d'un engendrement. Augustin nous parle de quelque chose nommé de deux façons différentes (*visio* et *forma*) issue de la forme du corps, à savoir l'objet sensible. En outre il ne se permet pas l'attribution totale de la fonction générative à l'objet extérieur, qui reste seulement un *quasi parens*, un principe génératif partiel et non autonome.

Face à l'ambiguïté augustinienne, oscillante entre un phénomène complexe (*visio*) et un *item (forma)*, selon Nawar, Bonaventure semble trancher pour la dernière option. L'objet sensible engendre bien une chose, notamment une ressemblance, et ne se limite pas à participer à un processus impliquant de nécessité le facteur 'subjectif' du percevant. Cette prise de position est davantage explicitée en (2).

Bonaventure arrive à dire que, en dépit du fait d'être ou pas perçu, l'objet *semper tamen, quantum est de se* engendre sa ressemblance. Sortie de l'augustinisme, du moins de la fidélité à la lettre du *De Trinitate* 11. Le contraste est décidément retentissant, d'autant plus que (b) est beaucoup moins ambivalent que (a), car c'est clairement la *res visibilis* qui génère la *similitudo*. Mais, et c'est le point de rupture, cela se produit *cum aliquid videndo sentimus*. Réponse de Bonaventure : *Et licet non semper obiectum sentiatur, semper tamen, quantum est de se, gignit similitudinem*.

On constate ainsi l'écart conceptuel s'interposant entre Bonaventure et Augustin. Un écart qui se mesure aussi par la différente nature des deux appels aux dynamiques trinitaires. Ainsi que lui-même l'avoue, Augustin fait un effort dont le résultat lui semble être douteux. L'enjeu permanent du *De Trinitate* est de gagner le plus haut niveau possible d'intelligence du mystère trinitaire, et le onzième livre ne fait qu'ouvrir un autre possible chemin. Augustin analyse l'acte perceptif parce qu'il pourrait délivrer un modèle utile, encore qu'éloigné, des relations entre les personnes divines. Le *nitamur si possumus* cache une tentative heuristique.

De sa part, Bonaventure décrit avec assurance un processus ayant un lien réel et profond avec la vie trinitaire. Il est tellement persuadé de la radicalité du paradigme trinitaire, qu'il pousse l'analogie jusqu'à postuler une génération effective de la ressemblance sensible par l'objet, indépendamment du fait d'être perçu. Nous sommes ainsi confrontés à un trait propre à toute chose corporelle par sa simple existence. Le discours ne demeure pas uniquement gnoséologique, mais s'étend à la métaphysique.

5.

Les choix lexicaux de Bonaventure, ainsi que la considération réservée au *De Trinitate* dans l'*Epistola de tribus quaestionibus* indiquent une dérivation possible de la notion bonaventurienne de *generatio speciei*. Ce même concept reste cependant authentiquement bonaventurien en ce qu'il désigne un trait constitutif de la réalité que Augustin n'avait pas pris en considération, du moins ouvertement.

On peut ainsi revenir à Aristote. Peut-être, précisément l'influence du modèle perceptif du *De anima* fournit une explication de la formulation bonaventurienne. Pas besoin d'insister davantage sur la puissance culturelle de l'aristotélisme, véritable innovation scientifique, vers la moitié du XIII^{ème} siècle. Rappelons toutefois que Bonaventure n'est pas indifférent à un tel événement intellectuel, au contraire il en montre les traces dans son commentaire aux livres des *Sententiae*, fruit d'environ trois années de travail en tant que bachelier. Le commentaire au deuxième livre contient la définition de *sentire* déjà citée, témoin efficace de la réception bonaventurienne des doctrines du *De anima*.

Comme on l'a constaté, c'est Aristote qui isole *magis proprie* la nature du processus cognitif désigné par le verbe *sentire*. Cela consiste en la réception de l'espèce de l'objet sensible par l'organe percevant. On peut donc comprendre l'inclination interprétative de Bonaventure devant *De Trinitate* 11 : afin de mieux rendre raison de la *susceptio*, il est plutôt utile de concevoir la ressemblance sensible comme un produit de l'objet passible d'être reçu par le sujet percevant. La dynamique gnoséologique aristotélicienne objet → sujet semble exercer une influence remarquable.

Mais il y a plus, car la théologie trinitaire est ici à l'œuvre. L'emploi de la notion de *similitudo*, laquelle semble s'identifier à celle d'espèce, en est un indice fiable. Il ne s'agit pas simplement de l'analogie proposée dans le *De reductione* lors que phénomène de la sensibilité et vie du Verbe sont mis en parallèle. La notion de ressemblance est explicitement employée comme appropriation de la seconde personne divine dans le commentaire au premier livre des *Sententiae* : *Congrue appropriatur [...] Filio autem species, quia species dicit similitudinem, rationem cognoscendi et pulcritudinem* (*In I Sent.* d.31, p.2, a.1, q.3, ad 5 [*Opera omnia* 1, 543b]). L'espèce est appropriée au Fils parce que la ressemblance lui est appropriée.

Au-delà de la simple uniformité lexicale, on repère une cohérence conceptuelle. Le Fils, seconde personne divine, n'est pas substance en soi ; mieux, sa substance n'est autre chose que celle des deux autres personnes composant la Trinité. Dans l'ordre établi par l'origine, la substance du Fils est la substance du Père. Le terme « Fils » n'indique en soi aucune substance qui ne soit pas celle du Père. Ce dernier est, par ailleurs, le siège véritable de la primauté de l'essence divine et, dans une perspective de dérivation on peut considérer que le Fils repose sur la substantialité du Père dont il est expression. La seconde personne est concevable comme *modus essendi* de l'unique et identique substance (*M. Trin.* 3, a.2, 11 [*Opera omnia* 5, 78a]).

De manière semblable, la *species* ou *similitudo* sensible manque en soi de substantialité propre. Cette déficience est compensée par l'objet auquel la ressemblance reste attachée et d'où elle tire sa propre consistance ontologique. Par ailleurs, le syntagme *modus essendi* s'applique également à l'espèce ou ressemblance, montrant une fois de plus un degré élevé d'harmonie conceptuelle entre la seconde personne divine et la ressemblance sensible. (Solignac 2014, 54–55)

Le parallèle proposé par Bonaventure dans le *De reductione* ainsi que dans l'*Itinerarium* semble donc bien pouvoir outrepasser la portée de simple suggestion analogique. Adoptant une lecture forte, on pourrait soutenir un lien causal entre la première ressemblance, à savoir la génération du Fils, et l'émission de l'espèce sensible. En tant qu'archétype de toute génération et donc de toute production de ressemblance, le Fils peut bien être la cause exemplaire de l'émission de l'espèce sensible par l'objet.

Cela est rendu possible par la relation que Bonaventure conçoit entre la Trinité et la création. La première laisse partout dans la deuxième une trace profonde de sa propre structure interne. La constitution même des êtres, leur façon de se manifester témoignent du principe qui les a tirés du néant et qui en soutient constamment l'existence⁴⁵. A plusieurs reprises Bonaventure bâtit une ontologie fondée sur la correspondance entre des traits universellement propre à toute créature et les trois personnes divines⁴⁶. Dans ce contexte, le Fils est constamment associé à l'aspect manifestatif et intelligible des choses (*species, veritas, numerus*)⁴⁷.

Puisque la Trinité détermine la structure du réel, laquelle reflète à son tour certaines aspects propres aux relations entre les personnes divines, on peut considérer chaque personne comme exemplaire responsable d'un trait spécifique de l'existant. Le Fils, en sa génération, qui est expression éternelle de l'unique substance divine, est la condition de toute manifestation à tous les niveaux du réel⁴⁸. Zachary Hayes disait très à propos que « La seconde personne, donc, est Dieu précisément en tant qu'être expressif et c'est la première et propre fonction du Verbe que d'être la *ratio exprimens* » (Hayes 1978, 90).

Or, sans doute la génération de l'espèce sensible par la substance corporelle est une forme de manifestation. Il s'agit justement du processus par lequel se constitue le monde de l'expérience sensible. D'après ce que l'on a pu constater ci-dessus, on peut conclure que la génération de la ressemblance sensible n'est possible que grâce

⁴⁵ A propos de la présence « conservatrice » de Dieu: *Ex parte creaturae est necessitas / existendi Deum in omnibus /, quia creatura habet in se possibilitatem et vanitatem [...], quia producta est de nihilo [...] ideo caret stabilitate et ideo non potest esse nisi per praesentiam eius qui dedit ei esse.* (In *I Sent.* d.37, p.1, a.1, q.1, resp. [*Opera omnia* 1, 639a])

⁴⁶ *Habet enim omnis creatura modum, speciem et ordinem, sive unitatem, veritatem et bonitatem, sive mensuram, numerum et pondus; quae per appropriationem correspondent trinitati personarum et per quae testificatur, Deum esse trinum.* (M. Trin. 1, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 54b]) Voir également *Itin.* 1.11 (*Opera omnia* 5, 298b).

⁴⁷ *Congrue appropriatur [...] Filio autem species.* (In *I Sent.* d.31, p.2, a.1, q.3, ad 5 [*Opera omnia* 1, 543b]); *Filio / dicitur appropriari / veritas.* (Brev. 1.6.1 [*Opera omnia* 5, 214b])

⁴⁸ Pour ce qui est du lien entre l'expression première du Verbe et l'expression propre à chaque chose : *Omnia enim vera sunt et nata sunt se exprimere per expressionem illius summi luminis.* (In *I Sent.* d.8, p.1, a.1, q.1, ad 4 et 7 [*Opera omnia* 1, 151b])

à la génération éternelle de la seconde personne divine. Le parallèle proposé par Bonaventure dans le *De reductione* et dans l'*Itinerarium* avance donc une suggestion ambitieuse : la *susceptio* de l'espèce qui permet l'acte perceptif selon le modèle aristotélicien ne se comprend pas pleinement sans la doctrine trinitaire.

L'analyse du passage du *De reductione* concernant la *generatio speciei* et sa fonction dans le processus perceptif nous permet un aperçu sur l'emploi bonaventurien des sources. Augustin et Aristote sont, tous les deux, présents, bien qu'implicitement, et ils sont en profonde interaction. La leçon du *De anima*, ouvertement assumée dans le commentaire au deuxième livre des *Sententiae*, continue ici de manifester son influence (*sensibile movet potentiam cognitivam*). Elle contribue même à orienter la lecture bonaventurienne des passages du *De Trinitate* 11 concernant la perception sensible.

D'autre part, le modèle aristotélicien est à son tour relu en profondeur à travers la grammaire du discours trinitaire appliquée aux processus gnoséologiques, héritage augustinien. Chez Bonaventure, pour être reçue par l'organe percevant, la *species* doit bien être produite par l'objet et cette production emprunte les traits de la génération d'une *similitudo*. L'archétype de toute production de ressemblance est la génération du Fils. Sans doute, Aristote a saisi le fonctionnement propre à l'acte perceptif. Cependant, son modèle ne peut être entièrement compris sans l'aide de la doctrine trinitaire qui seule nous explique le statut ontologique de la ressemblance et sa relation avec son origine.

Étant donné le milieu culturel où se place le *De reductione*, une telle complexité d'approche ne doit pas faire merveille. Bonaventure est en train de faire face aux innovations 'scientifiques' de l'aristotélisme. Il le fait en ce cas de façon brillante, accueillant d'une part, de l'autre mettant en place un dispositif d'interprétation efficace qui lui permet de montrer une fois encore la primauté de la Trinité au niveau métaphysique et du savoir théologique sur le plan de l'épistémologie.

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Ingrid Kodelja,

Metaphysics of Light: Bonaventure and Grosseteste

The theme of light has greatly influenced centuries of philosophical speculation and has led to metaphysical, cosmological, and epistemological theories.⁴⁹ Various reflections on light show a rather surprising continuity throughout all periods in history. The understanding of God as light, and the notion that the divine shines in or through light, are present in many religious conceptions, as well as in many attempts to philosophically comprehend the world.

These reflections use the notion of light not only to explain the cognition of the spiritual, but to more precisely define the essence, the absolute divine essence, as well as the emanation of finite things from it. There is therefore an epistemological as well as a metaphysical and ontological aspect to light (Baeumker 1908, 360). The philosophical system referring to light must justify the presence and function of light at every stage of reality. Light becomes the element that connects the various stages of being and enables communication among them.

The rich medieval tradition of using the motif of light for theological, metaphysical, and epistemological purposes derives not only from ancient and patristic sources but also from Neoplatonism and Arab interpretations. The Bible describes God and Christ as light and the light of the world, respectively. On these grounds, medieval writers understood God to be an uncreated light, and visible light to be

⁴⁹ The term "metaphysics of light" was introduced by Clemens Baeumker in *Der Platonismus im Mittelalter* in 1916. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, this term was not used.

God in action. To study light is to study God and all things in relation to God (Oliver 2004, 153–154).

In this paper, I deal with the philosophy of light in the works of Grosseteste and Bonaventura, mainly in the theory of knowledge and in their understanding of matter and form.

1. Theory of Knowledge

Both Grosseteste and Bonaventure in principle accept the Augustinian theory of divine illumination, in postulating that everything which is known to be true is observed to be true in the light of the supreme truth, and that everything that is known with certitude is known in the light of eternal reasons. However, Bonaventure advocates a moderate Illuminist position, one that depends on both divine and created causes. In the fourth question of *Quaestiones disputate de scientia Christi*, Bonaventure states that

for knowledge with certitude, an eternal reason is necessarily required as regulative and motive principle – not, indeed, as the sole principle, or in its own complete clarity, but acting with the created reason, and seen by us “in part” in accordance with our wayfaring condition.⁵⁰

Bonaventure claims that above and beyond created causes attained in the mental acts of deduction and induction, full knowledge also requires an eternal cause:

If then, for full knowledge recourse is had to a wholly immutable and stable truth and to a wholly infallible light, in knowledge of this kind it is necessary to have recourse to the heavenly art, as to light and truth – light, I say, giving infallibility to the knower, and truth giving immutability to the object of knowledge. (*Sc. Chr.* q.4)

For Bonaventure there are two sides of certitude, so it is the certainty, and only the certainty, found in human knowledge that requires divine illumination; all other features of human knowledge – abstraction, universality, correspondence – come from created causes (Noone and Houser 2020, 5.1).

In *De Veritate* Grosseteste says: *Verum est igitur, sicut testatur Augustinus, quod nulla conspicitur veritas nisi in luce summae veritas* (Baur 1912, 138). However, does the light of this supreme truth obliterate all other truth, just as the sun is able to wipe out the power of other luminaries? And how is the unity of the supreme truth related to the possibility of a genuinely other, multiple truth? Grosseteste considers truth as inhering in the eternal word of God. This is not just a mere adequation of speech and thing, the truth is found fundamentally and eternally in the “interior” speech of God, namely, in the emanation of the Son from the Father (Baur 1912, 134). This speech forms an *exemplar* of all things. The conformity (*conformitas*) of things to this eternal speaking is the rightness of them and obligation to be what

⁵⁰ Translations of this work are Eugene R. Fainweather’s (1970).

they are (ibid., 134–135). The truth of every created reality thus depends on its resemblance to its ideal, which is in the mind of God (ibid., 135; Bonaventure, *Itin.* 3.3).

In order to obtain the truth, we must observe both the created thing and its eternal exemplar. This, however, is only possible if the light of eternal reason is present in us (Bonaventure, *Itin.* 3.2). Both the object and the subject must be illuminated with the highest light. Just as a body cannot be seen to be coloured without the presence of an external light, something cannot be known within its created truth alone (Baur 1912, 137; Bonaventure, *Red. art.* 1.1).

The human mind reaches a complete truth about an individual thing if it sees not only the created thing but also the exemplar that is its measure. However, the normal state of man is not a state of enlightenment; every mind cannot see this highest light, it cannot see God directly. This is possible only for the few individuals who have a pure heart and are completely without sin, and even the cleansed may be deprived of this vision (Baur 1912, 138; Bonaventure *Itin.* Prol. 4). There is also another way to attain the truth that does not lead to a direct vision of God's ideas or God that is based on the Augustinian tradition: God's light shines on created things and thus allows the human mind to discover the truth (Marrone 2001, 42–43). We could compare the light of God to the light of the sun, which makes created things visible. The created mind can thus perceive the created truth only in the light of the highest truth, but it cannot directly see the light of this highest truth. The highest truth is mediated to created being.

Illumination and exemplarism are thus closely connected: just as we cannot fully know created things if we do not perceive them as an *exemplar* of God's *exemplar*, we cannot make definite judgments about them without the light of God's word (Kušar 1996, 355).

Both Grosseteste and Bonaventure consider the sensory experience in the process of knowing, too. The senses are the tools that make cognition possible; they provide traces of that knowledge humanity has lost. The mind, which can be awakened through sensory experience, can analyse things that we accept through the senses. The soul therefore awakens with the repetitive movement of the bodily senses over time. In this case, the order of cognition is reversed according to the order of being and intelligibility. Because of the fall into sin, we must begin with the help of the movement of the senses, with recognition of the less intelligible, created, and bodily being, and then ascend to the highest intelligible light of God's ideas (Baur 1912, 340–365 = *Commentarius in posteriorum analyticorum libros* 1.17; Bonaventure, *Itin.* 2.4–6). Without the action of the senses, there would be no beginning of cognition, abstraction, proof, and knowledge. There is no dualism between the two modes of knowledge, since all levels of knowledge are connected in light and the lower type of knowledge participates in the higher.

In this sense, we can distinguish between different sciences that bring different types of knowledge, or between pagan philosophy and the knowledge we come to in the light of Christian revelation. Even pagan teachings, pagan philosophies, contain a certain amount of truth; they have their value and represent, indirectly, knowledge of the highest truth. There is, however, a difference between the illumination obtained by Christian revelation and that obtained by pagan teaching. It is the difference between the light of the highest truth, which is eternal, uniform and simple, and the light that is reflected in the creations, which is created, multiplied and therefore less certain. Just as the created light is not autonomous but differs from the highest light, the sciences also differ from theology, but they are not autonomous (*Red. art.*; Baur 1912, 341–347).

2. Light as First Corporeal / Substantial Form

God began His immense work of creation by giving to heaven and earth the wonderful gift of light. Without light the earth was “without form and void” (Gen 1:1-5). These first verses of *Genesis* give to light an absolute precedence of creation. Precedence over the sun, which was created on the fourth day, and over man, who was created on the last day. In this sense, we could say that light created on the first day has an existence of its own, independent of its source and of its receiver (Ronchi 1970, 1).

2.1 Grosseteste

Grosseteste begins his work *De luce* in a similar way. At the very beginning of this treatise, he highlights the central idea of his philosophy: “The first corporeal form, which some call corporeity, is in my opinion light” (Baur 1912, 51). He substantiates the thesis of light as the first form of corporeality for several reasons. Light spreads itself instantly from a single point in every direction and so forms a sphere. Light is dynamic and possesses an instantaneous self-motion and self-propagation (*ibid.*; *In Hexaëm.* 2.10.1). Continuing with a consideration of the nature of corporeity and matter, Grosseteste emphasises the following: corporeity is that which necessarily accompanies the extension of matter in three dimensions, yet in themselves matter and corporeity are simple substance without dimension. However, a consideration of matter on its own could only be conceptual: it cannot be separate from form (and vice versa, form cannot be separate from matter). Form could introduce dimensions into simple matter only by its self-generation and instantaneous self-diffusion, drawing matter with it. The only thing that behaves in this way is light. Therefore, concludes Grosseteste, corporeity either must be light itself or must effect its self-diffusion by participating in light. But corporeity is the first form, thus it cannot be the principle of extension in virtue of any subsequent form. Therefore, light is not a form that appears only after corporeity, but corporeity itself: light is the first bodily form (Baur 1912, 52). “It is not correct to say that light gives origin to corporeity but light itself is corporeity, three-dimensionality” (Miccoli 2001, 76). Three-dimensionality

is both form and corporeity, since it is what gives status of body to unformed matter. To be a body means to have corporeity (Panti 2012, 114). This conclusion is verified by the dignity and nobility of light, excellences which place it beyond all corporeal and material things and liken its nature to forms which exist separately, such as intelligences (*formis stantibus separatis, quae sunt intelligentiae*; Baur 1912, 52). Within the cosmological hierarchy, light as the first corporeal form stands at the juncture between the physical and separate substances, sharing more intensely in the nobility and greater being of the higher realms. Through the mediation of light as its first form, matter is thereby exalted to share in the greater being.

According to the forms separated from matter, light is a subordinate product of the creation of God, but it becomes for the corporeal world the first principle. Light, then, is not a body composed of form and matter, but form, more precisely, is the first substantial form that realizes and actualizes matter. Light is a formal principle of corporeality in general. Light, as the first substantial form and formal principle of corporeality, represents the actuality, the reality, of matter, and can only exist united with matter. Light and formless matter are constitutive principles of bodily reality. The moment God created them from nothing, the universe came into being (*In Hexaëm. 2.5.5–6; 2.10.1–2*).

Having outlined the primacy and excellence of light, Grosseteste deploys the mathematics of relative infinities to explain the finite extension of the universe from a simple point of light multiplying itself infinite times. Because the infinities by which light is multiplied may vary and there can be mathematical proportions between infinities, Grosseteste claims that light extends matter into larger or smaller dimensions according to the proportional infinities by which it is multiplied (Baur 1912, 52–53).

In the following section of *De Luce*, Grosseteste yields the mechanics of the unequal distribution of matter in terms of rarefaction and condensation. He describes how the first corporeal form (*lux*) emits a *lumen* (luminosity) which acts from the outer zone of the universe, the firmament, shaping and perfecting the lower zones, so as to form the nine superior celestial spheres and to make the lowest elemental ones. The work ends with concluding remarks on perfect numbers and the proportional and mathematical beauty of the universe.

2.2 Bonaventure

The theme of light is one of the characteristic features of Bonaventure's philosophy, too. He gives a prominent place to light in his system of thought. To understand his doctrine in reference to light, we must consider some of his speculations on matter and form.

Matter, considered in an abstract way, appears to us as purely passive, as a mere potency to become something. Although matter can be thought of as completely deprived of form, in its actual state we never find matter except as actuated by some form. Therefore, for Bonaventure prime matter is a logical thing. It does not exist

in nature; it is a product of abstraction. All matter that is informed is defined by place and endowed with the attributes that constitute it as some object. By its own nature, prime matter is mere possibility. It becomes actuality by the form distinct from it (Bertling 1937, 61–62; *In II Sent.* d.12, q.1, a.1, con., t.2).

According to Bonaventure, prime matter is from the moment of creation provided with a form and is thereby determined. The question that arises at this point is whether it has been determined from the beginning to a perfect actuality or, in other words, did God create all things in the finished conditions in which they are now or is creation a gradual process? Bonaventure follows the Augustinian doctrine of *rationes seminales*. He echoes Augustine when he says:

Prime matter raw and unformed was created embodying the four elements mixed and confused. But from that matter in the interval of six days the *genera* of corporal beings were formed each according to its *species*. (*In II Sent.* d.12, q.1, a.1, con., t.2)⁵¹

Thus, corporal matter was created from the first day and during the successive days the distinction of bodies by means of their forms was progressively made. Matter was neither deprived of all form nor constituted in all its forms (Bertling 1937, 63). At this stage, we have sensible things having forms, but this is not sufficient to satisfy their potency, which demanded other ulterior forms. Matter is in a condition similar to heterogeneity or confusion, in which none of the members are defined but from which all can develop. Since matter could be determined only by its form, Bonaventure had to define such an informing principle.

Even at the beginning of time, when matter was directly created by God, it was created with a cover of some form. In other words, corporeal matter was never a formless and inert mass, because the first form which was given to it from the beginning of time was light as the active principle. Miccoli thinks that this idea seems to have been given more credit with experience, because there are no bodies on earth which are so opaque that they cannot become shiny or sparkling by means of some process of refinement or purification, like in the case of sand which becomes glass or of a mineral which becomes a precious stone. The greater or lesser participation in the active principle of light is what makes up the degree of reality and of perfection of the bodies (Miccoli 2001, 79).

On the other hand, we must consider two positions that Bonaventure discusses concerning light. The first we may call a broadly Aristotelian position, one eventually adopted by Thomas Aquinas, and the second a broadly Augustinian position advocated by Robert Grosseteste in his *De luce*. According to the first, light is simply an accidental form, one found in degrees in different bodies, but according to the second, light is a substance or at least a substantial form which confers extension and visibility on physical things (Noone and Houser 2020, 3.4).

The fundamental characteristic of light is that it is the most “active” of all corporeal forms, so active that it was considered almost an intermediary between corporeal forms and spiritual ones. Light is the first form, which actuates bodies,

⁵¹ Translation is from Bertling 1937, 62.

gives them extension preparing them to receive any other form. It also gives all the other forms stability and operative capability. Light cannot, therefore, be simply an accidental form but a substantial one (Miccoli 2001, 79).

Bonaventure considers the possibility that light is a substance, because it is purely active. But if it were a substance in its own right, it would be God and not a creature. Even though we could say that light is analogous to the divine light, and light is more analogous to God himself than any other physical creature, it could not be affirmed that there is any existing body whose substance is light itself (*In II Sent.* d.13, q.3, a.2 concl. t.2; Berthing 1937, 64–65).

We could speak similarly about light as pure form. No corporal or spiritual being is a pure form but is rather made up of prime matter and form united. God alone is an exception, for he is pure form or pure act; he is properly light. All other beings are composed of matter and form.

That is to say, all bodies are extended, and extension supposes a material body. Thus, no body could be a mere form without matter, and since light is a form, no body could have as its essence a purely luminous form. Light is to be thought of as a form actuating a body and not existing separately, except in our thought (*ibid.*).

For Bonaventure, light is a substantial form and is the substantial form that is concomitant with the mass of matter in its primordial state. In this originating condition, light gave the mass of matter its extension and visibility. The hierarchy of heavenly bodies corresponds to the hierarchy of things capable of partaking either more or less in the light that renders bodies active and extended. Even though light is a substantial form, it is only the partial perfection of any given physical substance, whether celestial or terrestrial. Since Bonaventure endorses the general claim that there is a plurality of substantial forms within any composite thing, his doctrine of light really means that light is the first form, endowing each thing with extension and preparing the way for further perfections such as the forms of the elements or the forms of mixtures or compounds. Two distinct things can be distinguished in corporeal matter: the first confers on bodies the forms which make them elements or mixtures; the second is general and common to all bodies as such, and this form is light.

These are the main points about the role of light in the philosophy of Robert Grosseteste and Bonaventure. In conclusion, I will show the direction of the metaphysics of light developed by each thinker.

3. Conclusive Comparison

3.1 Grosseteste

I believe that we can define Grosseteste's *De luce* as a work whose geometrical imagination provides an insight into the internal structure of a mathematically functioning reality. We namely find three fundamental principles of mathematical analysis in this treatise.

In the above-mentioned section of *De luce*, in which Grosseteste deploys the mathematics of relative infinities to explain the finite extension of the universe from a simple point of light multiplying itself infinite times, it is possible to see a Platonic understanding of mathematics. Grosseteste begins with a primordial light which is single and one. Considered mathematically, unity or one is the principle of all numbers, it is not the first number. Multiple entities participate in unity, because they are multiplications of a unity which is their conceptual and ontological basis (Oliver 2004, 157). Analogously, light, as the first bodily form, is not only the first body — it is the basis of all material extension. This material extension into three dimensions participates in the single unity of the first bodily form, which is light. As Oliver (*ibid.*) points out:

The formation of the material realm is a participation in the mathematics of the one and the many, where mathematics forms a mediatory bridge between metaphysics, which is concerned with the higher being of unchanging simplicity (*lux*), and physics, which is concerned with the multiplicity of differentiated, complex, moving beings in the cosmos (*lumen*). The one and the many, *lux* and *lumen*, are not in dualistic opposition: the latter participates in the former.

The second principle of mathematical interpretation is reflected in the explanation of the creation of space with the extension of light, which is set at the beginning of the existence of the universe. Grosseteste attempts to prove mathematically that light expands matter from a primordial point evenly and continuously, that three-dimensional space is the result of matter extension according to the laws of geometry. The space is thus relatively homogeneous and co-extensive with physical reality. It is finite and bounded, for it has two “natural” places, centre and circumference (McEvoy 1986, 173).

The third principle which shows the mathematical basis of reality in *De luce* is Grosseteste’s attempt to derive the qualitative properties of the Aristotelian world system from concepts of a more quantitative nature. Grosseteste attempts to show that the universe is finite and that there is no emptiness in it by describing a mathematically programmed extension which takes place through infinite multiplication of light with respect to infinite ratios and through mechanisms of rarefaction and condensation that determine the formation of the world more quantitatively than qualitatively, since they are based on the distribution of matter with respect to the degree of density. The qualitative differences between supralunary and sublunary areas are also the consequences of relative rarity and density. Similarly, we can say that the circular and rectilinear movements are determined according to the intensity of light in the spheres and elements, where the intensity is again the result of different degrees of condensation and rarefaction.

Grosseteste is able to formulate a cosmogony based on light with mathematics providing not just a conceptual hinge between metaphysics and cosmology but also the ontological mediation between the simple, motionless singularity of the

first bodily form and the moving multiplicity of an extended, material creation. Mathematics is for Grosseteste more than a convenient language for describing the cosmos, because the number is integral to the being of the materially extended, moving and harmonically unified creation.

It should be mentioned that for Grosseteste light does not merely relate to the first corporeal form or to visible light in creation but to God himself. His cosmology is linked with the doctrine of God through analogical participation in the supreme light of Trinity. In his *Hexaemeron* (8.3.5), he relates light analogically to the Trinity: “From the fact that God is a Trinity of persons, it follows that God is light: not bodily light but non-bodily light. Or rather, perhaps, neither bodily nor non-bodily, but beyond either.”

Grosseteste’s deployment of light in describing God and the formation and motions of the cosmos is not merely a convenient metaphor. Light is for Grosseteste the basis of a wider metaphysics which also encompasses a theological understanding of truth and science. As can be seen in *De luce*, geometry describes reality; creation is shown in terms of geometric optical atomism. Because earthly light reflects metaphysical light, and because both operate in a geometric way, cognition in optics and in the philosophy of nature in general is essentially geometric cognition. His treatise *De lineis, angulis et figuris* begins with the famous sentence: “It is very important to understand lines, angles and figures (*Utilitas considerationis linearum, angulorum et figurarum est maxima*), because without them it is impossible to understand the philosophy of nature (*quoniam impossibile est sciri naturalem philosophiam sine illis*)” (Baur 1912, 59–60). However, we must not forget that Grosseteste’s cosmogony of light takes its character from the idea of the God whose word planned and accomplished it and that he describes God as a mathematician who established the basic indivisible units of space and time from which the whole extension and unfolding of the material world is effected (McEvoy 1979, 132).

3.2 Bonaventure

If the theme of light is used by Grosseteste in *De luce* in the mathematical–cosmological sense, then in Bonaventure it takes on connotations which are more typically aesthetic–metaphysical, notes Miccoli. Bonaventure gave considerable importance to beauty as an intrinsic and fundamental aspect of the physical universe and to the aesthetic value of light (Miccoli 2001, 77). Bonaventure’s view of the universe, of metaphysics, of ontology, of epistemology, is a profoundly aesthetic one, drawn from and building upon Augustinian concepts of beauty and significance (Ost 1976, 233). Light itself is the principle of beauty. Of all bodies, physical light is the best, the most pleasing and the most beautiful. From light, objects receive the colour and brilliance which constitute their beauty (De Bruyne 1969, 57–58). In one of his early works, Bonaventure considered the *pulchrum* as a fourth transcendental property of the being, alongside unity, truth and goodness,

which were common stock among medieval philosophers.⁵² This work makes explicit Bonaventure's conception of the transcendental attributes of being, and even assigns a kind of primacy to beauty. Compared to the traditional doctrine, this was an absolute novelty which Bonaventure did not develop in the future (*ibid.*). In the *Breviloquium* (1.6.1–2), only three transcendental properties of the being are actually indicated – *unum*, *verum*, and *bonum*. Bonaventure, however, indicates other properties of the things created which are derived from the impression of order and harmony which God wanted to give the world and which, therefore, are resolved in a certain way in aesthetic values (Miccoli 2001, 77). In *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1.14), he speaks of the sevenfold testimony of created things about the power, wisdom, and goodness of God (*origo*, *magnitudo*, *multitudo*, *pulchritudo*, *plenitudo*, *operatio*, *ordo*). Among them, he puts the beauty (*pulchritudo*) of things with respect to the diversity of lights, images, and colours in bodies.

The first impression, which the sensory world produces in whoever perceives it, is an impression of beauty, of sweetness, of healthiness. As can be seen from Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (2.3), all knowledge came from sensation, but every sensation is not a simple act of apprehension of the external object. It is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure or delight which is something instinctive and prior to any reasoning. But not all acts of apprehension result in delight. Bonaventure says that all delight is by reason of proportion (*Itin.* 2.5). Beauty consists in order; and order is a mathematical relation of part to whole, i.e., proportion; and proportion occasions all delight (Ost 1976, 236). The next step after sensation and delight is judgment (*diudicatio*). Judgment reveals why something is delightful (*Itin.* 2.6). At this stage we become conscious of the feeling we have experienced, and we try to understand the cause of it. Beauty, the sensitive value of things, in particular does not only exist in relation to a feeling or to an emotive state of the subject who is feeling it. It has an objective basis in things because it corresponds to qualities which belong to their nature: these qualities are proportion, which makes up the quantitative and numerical aspect of the beauty of the world, and luminosity, which is the qualitative aspect (Miccoli 2001, 77).

The two mentioned aspects have a common origin: the idea of an ordered world in accordance with mathematical relationships which originate from the biblical Book of Wisdom (11:21), where it is written that God arranged all things by measure, number and weight *omnia numero, pondere et mensura disposuisti*.

Light is, therefore, the principle of the mathematical structure of the universe; it was the first thing created by God and because of its capacity for spreading and multiplying it produced all other existing things. At the same time, because light itself is the principle of beauty (*lux per se pulchra est*), it takes the intrinsic beauty of Creation into account. The beauty of the created world reflects the beauty of God, all is beautiful in the Bonaventuran vision, insofar as it manifests the light form that constitutes it.

⁵² In the 1930s, P. Henquinet uncovered an early (ca. 1250) and unpublished manuscript signed by Bonaventure, in which beauty is affirmed as a fourth transcendental, convertible with being (Ost 1976, 242).

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Alen Širca,

Love and Death in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*

John Fidenza from Bagnoregio, known simply as Bonaventure (d. 1272), composed his celebrated *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (*The Journey of the Mind into God*) in 1259, thirty-three years after Francis' death, six years after Clare's death and just two years after he became General Minister of the Friars Minor. He was seeking retreat in Mount La Verna in Tuscany, the place where Francis had a vision of the six-winged seraph in the form of a man affixed to a cross and famously received the stigmata, the wounds of Christ's passion. Commenting on the prologue of the *Itinerarium*, Étienne Gilson elucidates that Bonaventure in fact did find what he was searching for:

And it was while he sought in his soul the interior ascent by which he might obtain it, that he remembered the miracle wrought upon St. Francis in the same spot, that vision of a winged seraph in the form of a crucifix. Immediately his mind was filled with light; the seraphic vision indicated both the ecstasy in which St. Francis had then been and the way by which it may be attained; the six wings of the seraph are the six mystical contemplations by which, as by so many degrees or roads, the soul fits itself to enter into the peace of ecstasy. (Gilson 1938, 67–68)

In the prologue, then, Bonaventure makes clear that the symbol of the six-winged seraph is the structuring principle of the treatise as it is linked to the experience of the love for Christ Crucified that is the only way to attain God: "The six wings of the seraph can rightly be taken to symbolize the six levels of illumination by which, as if by six steps or stages, the soul can pass over to

peace through ecstatic elevations of Christian wisdom. There is no other path [to God] than through the burning love of the Crucified" (*Itin.* Prol. 3).⁵³ It is, thus, Francis with his following of the poor, humble, suffering and crucified Christ, his profound participation in the passion of Christ, that enabled Bonaventure to expound his mystical thought as essentially Christ mysticism. Although not explicitly stated, it is nonetheless pointed to that Francis is, for Bonaventure, the exemplar or the perfect model for contemplation and mystical union with God. In the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar:

The Stigmata are the living, organizing center of Bonaventure's intellectual world, the thing that lifts it above the level of a mere interweaving of the threads of tradition. His world is Franciscan, and so is his theology, however many stones he may use to erect his spiritual cathedral over the mystery of humility and poverty [...] And yet, when we have established that the Franciscan mystery is the center that crystallizes all, we have not yet uncovered the ethos that is peculiar to Bonaventure. For Bonaventure does not only take Francis as his center: he is his own sun and mission. (von Balthasar 1984, 263)

It is true that much of Bonaventure's mystical theology is traditional, influenced especially by Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite, Gregory the Great, the Cistercians, and the Victorines, but this is not to say that all his endeavor in mystical theology is a mere summary or synthesis of previous Christian mystical tradition. As I will attempt to demonstrate later on, *doctor seraphicus* exhibits subtle transformation of this tradition, and an original synthesis of passion, love and apophatic mysticism. This originality has been inscribed in the essence of what has become eminently Franciscan which can, in turn, never be reduced to the simple claims of primacy of love over knowledge or exclusive focus on the theology of the cross. The goal of the present study is to suggest that Bonaventure's theology anticipates or paves the way for the mystical theology of annihilation in the later centuries in the West.

The Ascent to God

Although Bonaventure employs the scheme of six stages (with an additional seventh stage), as "a refinement of a larger division of three stages" (Cousins 1978, 20), the progress of the soul's pilgrimage in the first chapter of the *Itinerarium* is not linear but simultaneous and interactive as is also perhaps true for any religious experience. Yet, there is more, in the experience of God's presence whereby the soul enters in the transcendent realm of the coincidence of the opposites, the ordinary human notions of space and time are defied. This experience can be most obviously seen in the fact that, for Bonaventure, as a true Christian Neoplatonist,

⁵³ *Nam per senas alas illas recte intelligi possunt sex illuminationum suspensiones quibus anima quasi quibusdam gradibus vel itineribus disponitur ut transeat ad pacem per ecstáticos excessus sapientiae christianae. Via autem non est nisi per ardentissimum amorem crucifixi.* I resort to the Latin text of Leonardi (2012), equipped with helpful commentary of Daniele Solvi, which reproduces the standard Quaracchi edition of *Itinerarium* in *Opera omnia*, vol. 5 (1891, 295–316). All English translations of the *Itinerarium* are that of Ewert Cousins.

ascension to God is at the same introversion in one's own self. Thus, it is of no wonder that the treatment of the seven stages of soul's journey into God is very complex and detailed and eschews hard and fast descriptions and summaries. Nevertheless, for the sake of a better understanding of the culmination of Bonaventure's ascent into God that appears in the last, seventh chapter of the treatise, I will provide a very brief overview of the first six stages.

In the first three chapters of *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure discusses the three lowest modes of intellectual endeavor. At the beginning (*Itin.* 1) he treats the way in *corporalia* (created things that are outside, *extra nos*), which are objects of our external senses, provide us with knowledge of God through reason, faith and intellectual contemplation. He then moves to his treatment of imagination (*Itin.* 2), with which God is contemplated in creation *in vestigiis* (or traces). This stage reveals how God is in these creaturely vestiges by essence, power, and presence. In the next chapter (*Itin.* 3), Bonaventure discusses the introversion of the mind, the (Augustinian) movement of the soul into itself (*intra nos*). The soul considers itself as the image of Trinity as it encompasses three main powers: memory, intellect, and will. Then we move to the contemplation of the First Principle in the mind which leads us to discovery of the operations of divine grace (*Itin.* 4). Here, the spiritual senses — the capacities for experiencing Christ in affective, loving relation — are awakened and restored by the three theological virtues (hope, faith, love). Bonaventure here employs language of bridal mysticism. The soul becomes the bride that can sing with the language of the Song of the Songs to his beloved Groom, Christ. Here, love is of particular importance for when the soul embraces Christ it passes over (*transiens*) to him in ecstatic love (*ecstaticum amorem*). At the end of this stage, Bonaventure elucidates that the operation of divine virtues has accomplished in the soul the threefold steps of every spiritual experience: purgation, illumination, and perfection. It is in the fifth chapter, however, that we — according to Bonaventure's terms — enter in *mystica theologia* proper as we leave behind *theologia symbolica* and *propria*. Now, "mind" is able to go beyond or transcend itself. At first, it reaches the contemplation of suprarational *intelligentia* (intellectual things/beings) that is mediated through divine light (*per lumen divinae*), and only then (*Itin.* 6) will it reach the contemplation of God in the divine light (*in lumen*). Just as God rested after the sixth day of creation, so now there is nothing remaining except "the day of rest" which is the seventh stage. Only now the soul is wholly prepared to experience ecstasy, mystical union as such.

Transitus

The final, seventh stage of the *Itinerarium* attempts to describe the union that succeeds the six illuminative stages and is therefore envisioned as a breakthrough to or passing over (*transitus*) to the transcendent realm of *excessus mentis*, mystical ecstasy. For Bonaventure, the most supreme contact of the human soul with God, mystical union as ecstasy, is also called *transitus* — a passing over. On the one hand,

this term evokes the notion of Pascha (Ex. 12:11) — an etymology that was accepted both in Antiquity as well as in the Middle Ages — and as such also Christ's paschal mystery, but on the other hand it means also death, a physical death of a saint that is a passing over into heaven.

This stage, however, is not to be thought of as some additional stage added to a previous six, so it probably should not even be called a step or stage at all since it is of a wholly different order. In other words, there is an insurmountable gap, a discontinuity between the first six stages and the final, seventh one. Here Bonaventure attempts to recast the whole spiritual itinerary in terms of *ecstasis*, that is mystical ecstasy (Davies 2017, 91).

Ecstasy of the mind basically means that the soul is drawn out of itself and into God. By abandoning all cognitive operations, knowledge, her previous activity, various types of contemplations are completely silenced, and the soul is, therefore, moved over to love — the only medium of attaining union with the Divine. In the fourth paragraph of the seventh chapter of the *Itinerarium* we are perhaps faced with one of the most important passages of mystical theology in the thirteenth century:

In this passing over, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual activities must be left behind and the summit of our affection must be totally transferred and transformed into God. This, however, is mystical and most secret which no one knows except him who receives it, no one receives except him who desires it, and no one desires except him who is inflamed in his very marrow by the fire of the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent into the world. (*Itin.* 7.4)⁵⁴

Many renowned interpreters of Bonaventure's work have commented on this famous passage. Though the majority of scholars have emphasized that, on the level of mystical *unio*, intellect is never completely suppressed since we are dealing with a deeper form of knowledge (Gilson 1938, 417–21; Rahner 1979, 123–25; von Balthasar 1984),⁵⁵ others, including, for example, Joseph Ratzinger, posited a simple "Franciscan" affectivity over intellect (1971, 90). Both extremes are probably, in a way, too simple (Davies 2017, 41).

Apex affectus

In order to clarify a bit this *crux interpretum*, it is worth pausing at the crucial term of the passage, namely *apex affectus*. This leads us to Thomas Gallus (or of St. Victor or Vercelli, d. 1246) — a regular canon who taught at St. Victor in

⁵⁴ *In hoc autem transitu si sit perfectus oportet quod relinquuntur omnes intellectuales operationes et apex affectus totus transferatur et transformatur in Deum. Hoc autem est mysticum et secretissimum quod nemo novit nisi qui accipit nec accipit nisi qui desiderat nec desiderat nisi quem ignis Spiritus Sancti medullitus inflammat quem Christus misit in terram.*

⁵⁵ Regarding this view, we sometimes even get the impression that affective mystical experience would be unworthy of a great mystical theologian: "Es ist dies kein Bekenntnis zu einer affektiven Gotteserfahrung, sondern der Abschluß des durch *speculatio*, durch Denken schlechthin bestimmtem Weges zu Gott, das Verstummen vor dem Unbegreiflichen." (Ruh 1993, 427)

Paris in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. Gallus is a central figure in the intellectual landscape of thirteenth-century mystical theology who seems to be the first that coined this term. In the distinctive context of his interpretation of *Corpus Dionysiicum*, he talks about *apex affectus* or *apex affectionis*, and/or *scintilla synderesis*. To put it simply, we are dealing here with the notion “of the spark of the soul” which Gallus defined as “the principle and pure participation of divine Goodness,” the notion that had great impact on late medieval mysticism (McGinn 1998, 82).

Regarding Gallus’ theological and exegetical project, it is correct to speak of affective Dionysianism, or the affective turn in medieval mysticism that emerged in the thirteenth century — also a century of the so-called “Dionysius renaissance” (Ratzinger 1971, 87–91). While the notion of eros in Dionysius the Areopagite is always cosmic or metaontological in character, and never affective, anthropological, or psychological, in Gallus it is the opposite since he seems to be the first who linked his explanation of *Corpus Dionysiicum* with Song of Songs exegesis. This new reading of Dionysian mysticism as an affective transformation toward union with God “left a decisive mark on later Christian mystical theology, a mark perhaps nowhere more clearly legible than in the writings of Bonaventure. In the concept of an innate affective power by which the soul exceeds its own capacities (which Gallus and Bonaventure call *synderesis*), and in the association of this power with the rank of the Seraphim, Thomas Gallus furnished Bonaventure with the hermeneutical key to reading the exemplary life, vision, and embodied piety of Francis of Assisi.” (Davies 2017, 36)

Thus, in accordance with Gallus, we should conceive of the notion of *apex affectus* as referring to the realm of the soul that is above intellect. It is essentially a passive capacity that is capable of being moved or drawn by the transcendent force of Divine grace. As Davies aptly puts it: “Bonaventure establishes *synderesis* as a (non)space of pure interiority as the exclusion of exterior species, prior to and uninterrupted by representation” (Davies 2017, 64). And it is, perhaps paradoxically, precisely this pure interiority that, in its essential passivity, is capable to undergo a radical otherness of Divine motion or activity, force — to be drawn out of itself in mystical ecstasy. It is an act that the soul itself can never perform. *Apex affectus*, therefore, points to the fact that it is only the affective part of the soul which is at the very center of a human person that can be the only locus of mystical union. Of course, affection here should not be confused with the terminology of modern psychology, let alone some naïve sentimentality, as it primarily means to be drawn to something (a very passive sense, indeed). Accordingly, *apex affectus* means that the summit (or the highest point) of the soul is out of reach of intellect and therefore the only part of the soul that is capable of unitive relation to God. It is an organ for union and this conception can be traced all the way back to Neoplatonism; its

origins are terms such as “One in us,” *anthos tou nou*, “the flower of the intellect” (Beierwaltes 1984, 416).

Mystical Darkness and Death

In the next few passages of the treatise, Bonaventure asks himself, and the readers, to be sure, how can this contact with God in *apex affectus* really happen?

But if you wish to know how these things come about, ask grace not instruction, desire not understanding, [...] darkness not clarity, not light but the fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by ecstatic unctious and burning affections. (*Itin.* 7.6)⁵⁶

Caliginem not claritatem, “darkness not clarity,” explicitly evokes Dionysius’ treatise *Mystica Theologia*.⁵⁷ In fact, in previous passages Bonaventure has already drawn from Dionysius’ text. Although there is in this passage a strong emphasis on love, as the infused “fire” of Spirit that clings to the passion of Christ, we should not downplay the apophatic dimension of mystical darkness which is due to the essential unknowing of the mystical process.

A little bit further, we stumble on another crucial point, as the Seraphic Doctor invites us in what is one of the most important expositions of the so-called topic of *mors mystica* (mystical death) in the thirteenth century: *Moriamur igitur et ingrediamur in caliginem* (“Let us die, then, and enter into the darkness,” *Itin.* 7.6).

This profound emphasis on mystical death evokes the inextricable link with Christ’s passion, his death on the cross. Undoubtedly, Bonaventure’s expression of mystical death, then, as Alois M. Haas puts it, is in its deepest ground linked to the event of the cross (1979, 409). However, the notion of mystical death also calls for a comparison with the earliest mystical elements in Franciscan spirituality.

That leads us to Giles of Assisi (ca. 1190–1262), a “fool of God and archetypal Franciscan” (Brunette and Lachance 2006, 86). He is known as the third companion of Francis’ *fraternitas* and he is unique among Francis’ first followers in having his own hagiographical tradition. He left behind three hundred *Dicta* (*Sayings*) ascribed to him. Although a simple and unlearned man (*homo idiota et sine litteris, rusticus et simplex*), as Bonaventure describes him in his *Legenda Major*, he was an extraordinary mystically gifted person. Bonaventure observes that he himself was an eyewitness that Giles was so often rapt into God in ecstasy that “he seemed to live among men more like an angel than a human being.” Bonaventure, moreover, specifies that he should be a model of the perfect

⁵⁶ *Si autem quearas quomodo haec fiant interroga gratiam non doctrinam desiderium not intellectum [...] caliginem non claritatem non lucem ignem totaliter inflammantem et in Deum excessivis unctioibus et ardentissimis affectionibus transferentem.*

⁵⁷ In this regard, the key passage, *Mystical Theology* 1.3, refers to the biblical narrative of Moses’ ascent (Ex 19; 20:18–21): “But he [Moses] breaks free of them, away from what sees and is seen, and he plunges into truly mysterious darkness of unknowing. Here, renouncing all that the mind may conceive, wrapped entirely in the intangible and the invisible, he belongs completely to him who is beyond everything. Here, being neither oneself nor someone else, one is supremely united to the completely unknown by an inactivity of all knowledge, and knows beyond the mind by knowing nothing.” (tr. Colm Luibheid)

contemplative as he “was raised to the exalted contemplation” or “he was lifted up to the summit of the highest contemplation” (Brunette and Lachance 2006, 87).

There is a very important saying of Giles mentioned in the account of his life, written probably by Brother Leo (*Vita Beati Fratris Egidii*), which suggests that Giles likely influenced Bonaventure’s notion of ecstatic mystical death. Toward the end of his life, when someone reminded Giles that Francis had said that every servant of God wants to die a martyr’s death, he reflected that he had once shared this view when he went off to preach to Muslims in Tunisia, but now — he said — “I don’t wish to die a better death than that of contemplation” (*Ego, inquit, nolo mori meliori morte quam de contemplatione*; Brooke 1970, 346).

This profound and provocative saying has an apophatic flavor that is also perceivable in Bonaventure’s exposition of *mors mystica* as it becomes obvious when he leans on the *Mystical Theology* of Dionysius the Areopagite. Commenting on the apophatic character of the culmination of Bonaventure’s *The Soul’s Journey into God*, Paul Rorem highlights that Bonaventure has integrated love into unknowing, following a recognizable Victorine line, especially when he explicitly quotes Dionysius’ *Mystical Theology* at some length. Nevertheless, as Rorem emphasizes, Bonaventure’s mystical theology remains firmly Christological as he dwells on the culmination of the incarnation in the cross and the Pauline *kénosis* (Rorem 2008, 461).

In my view, however, Bonaventure’s climax at the end of *Itinerarium* is characterized precisely by the special equilibrium or even paradoxical coincidence between passion and apophatic aspects of mystical death. Thus, apophatic element should not be relegated to a mere decorum within the firmly Christological framework. In this regard, we could raise another question — which is, to be sure, more related to the large impact of Bonaventure’s mystical theology: What exactly is the nature of this death? Is it an eradication of the corrupted human will as the power of the soul or destruction of will in a deeper sense of death of the self? And, if the latter is true, does Bonaventure in a way imply the so-called mystical annihilation of the soul, radical reduction to nothingness, although he never explicitly employs that term?

As Barbara Newman has shown, the inherently complex doctrine of mystical annihilation emerged towards the end of the thirteenth century whereby the notion of mystical death underwent significant radicalization as it became linked to the experience of indistinct union with God: “The human soul, with all its powers of knowing, willing, and loving, must be reduced to nothing and merge into God without remainder, sacrificing its unique identity in indistinct union with the Beloved.” (Newman 2016, 591) This essentially apophatic perspective clearly moves beyond the usual accounts of evangelical *abnegatio sui* (Mt 16:24) — a decisive theme in Christian spirituality in general — as well as the conception of the emptying or dissolution of the sinful will in order to attain union with God. Rather, the theology of mystical annihilation perceives the created will (or self) as the impediment to full *unio mystica*. In this “new” mysticism of the Christian West, an-

nihilation of the created self, which reduces self to “no-thing,” appears to be the only way that the “No-thing” — apophatically expressed God (“God beyond God”) — can make himself present in the deepest ground of the soul (McGinn 1998, 157).

Newman focuses on three women mystics of the period, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Angela of Foligno, and Marguerite Porete, but we can add another male testimony of this doctrine from Franciscan circles,⁵⁸ namely Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1236–1306) who was the most poetically gifted mind among Franciscan Spirituals and whose ecstatic mystical poetry has sometimes been compared to Sufi poetry.

Jacopone has borrowed a lot of his vocabulary and teachings from Bonaventure. In his last poems (called lauds), where his mystical poetry culminates, he describes burning love for the Crucified Christ as unrestrainedly ecstatic. Written in his medieval Umbrian dialect, he is particularly faithful to Bonaventurian mysticism:

*Amor, Amor-Iesù descideroso,
Amor, voglio morire te abbracciando,
Amore, Amor-Iesù, dolce meo sposo,
Amore, Amor, la morte t'ademando.*

*Love, Love-Jesus, most desirable,
Love, I wish to die embracing you,
Love, Love-Jesus, my sweet spouse,
Love, Love, I demand death from you.⁵⁹*

Yet in the next poem, *Laud* 91, he develops the topic of mystical death as a result of Love of God much further. In *Laud* 91, death as the death of the will is not enough, not even of not-willing (*volere, non volere*). Mystical death rather indicates that everything created in the soul must become nothing in order that mystical union with God can truly be attained. God, the Lord, is regarded as the agent of this supreme mystical annihilation and his activity opens the door for finite created being to become one with the infinite Divine being:

*Questa sì summa altezza
en nichil è fondata,
nichilità, enformata,
messa en lo suo Signore.
Alta nichilitate,
tuo atto è tanto forte,
che <o>pre tutte porte,*

⁵⁸ To be sure, Angela of Foligno too belongs to the history of Franciscan mysticism as she was living as a Franciscan tertiary and is sometimes even called “Mistress of Theologians.”

⁵⁹ I have attempted to make my own translations since the existing English translation by Serge and Elizabeth Hughes (1982) is often imprecise. The original text is from Matteo Leonard’s edition.

*et entr'ello 'nfinito.
 This so supreme height
 is founded in nothing,
 Nothingness, formed,
 placed in the Lord.
 Supreme Nothingness,
 your action is so powerful,
 it opens all the doors
 and enters infinity.*

Among other women mystics of the time, such startling and daring compositions have ushered in a new understanding of mystical consciousness that will mark the tumultuous fourteenth century. Meister Eckhart and his Dominican followers will become the chief theological explorers of this new radical spiritual experience. Bonaventure's notion of mystical death probably cannot yet be identified with Jacopone's more daring poetical expositions of annihilation since his mystical theology is overall much more traditional, indebted mainly to monastic theology, and especially fully faithful to the Francis' charisma. Nevertheless, with its synthesis of affective and apophatic mysticism, especially with the connection of *apex affectionis* and mystical darkness and death, as expressed in his exceptionally influential *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure's notion of mystical death certainly helped to pave the way to this new shift in Western mysticism.

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Robert Kralj,

Los sentidos espirituales en Teresa de Jesús a partir del planteamiento bonaventuriano

Introducción

Orígenes fue el primero que introdujo el tema de los sentidos espirituales en la doctrina cristiana. En san Agustín y en san Gregorio ocupan un lugar importante. Entre los teólogos medievales es Guillermo de Saint Thierry quien los enfatiza y cuyos escritos se divulgan en gran medida bajo el nombre de su coetáneo Bernardo de Claraval, hasta que san Buenaventura les diera una forma más completa y desarrollada (Schlosser 2010, 1).

A continuación, nos interesa tratar el tema de los sentidos espirituales en Teresa de Jesús a partir del pensamiento bonaventuriano. A primera vista, este planteamiento puede parecer extraño. Por un lado, no hay señas explícitas de que santa Teresa leyese algún escrito del gran teólogo franciscano. De hecho, ella nunca lo menciona en sus escritos, ni siquiera por su nombre, ni se refiere a ningún texto suyo. Pero, por otro lado, podemos estar seguros de que por lo menos conocía el nombre san Buenaventura. Ella, ciertamente, topaba con él en los libros que leía, escritos por los teólogos y espirituales coetáneos. Es más, Tomás Álvarez, el gran teresianista, pone de relieve una cierta semejanza estructural entre *Camino de Perfección* y el escrito bonaventuriano *De perfectione vitae ad sorores* (Santa Teresa de Jesús 1965, 56, n. 2). Él no excluye del todo que la Santa haber leído este librito suyo. El problema es que no sabemos si existe una traducción castellana anterior

a la edición del año 1597. Si existiera, entonces la Santa podría haber entrado en contacto inmediato con dicho texto bonaventuriano.

Ahora bien, lo que a nosotros aquí nos interesa no es tanto demostrar una relación directa entre los dos autores, sino que nos inclinamos por observar un cierto parentesco espiritual entre ellos, sobre todo en lo que afecta al fenómeno de los sentidos espirituales. Pero para adentrarnos en el tema, sería conveniente primero presentar a grandes rasgos las vías a través de las que la Santa pudo entrar en contacto con el doctor seráfico.

Como bien sabemos, nuestra autora es autodidacta. A las mujeres de su época no se les permitía cursar estudios en la universidad. Para educarse a sí misma lee los libros de los teólogos y de los autores espirituales, tanto los de sus coetáneos, como los de tiempos pasados. De esta manera aprende mucho. La fuente principal de su teología es su experiencia personal de oración. Pero, por otro lado, no debemos pasar por alto que otra fuente importante de su saber teológico es justamente la lectura de los libros espirituales y las conversaciones con los letrados y espirituales. De estos dos surtidores va sacando el conocimiento y la doctrina teológica. En realidad, se van uniendo y compenetrando cada vez más, hasta transformarse en una auténtica sabiduría divina.

En primer lugar, nuestra autora seguramente topará con el nombre de san Buenaventura leyendo el libro *Tercer abecedario* de Francisco de Osuna que le impacta mucho y deja una profunda huella en ella.⁶⁰ El gran maestro de la vía del recogimiento cita en él al Doctor Seráfico nueve veces, tres de las cuales no son del teólogo franciscano, sino de un cartujano medieval, Hugo de Balma.⁶¹

Otro autor a través del que santa Teresa pudo familiarizarse con el doctor seráfico es fray Luis de Granada. La Santa misma recomienda en las *Constituciones* la lectura de sus obras: «Tenga cuenta la priora que haya buenos libros, en especial los de fray Luis de Granada y del padre fray Pedro de Alcántara» (n. 7). Según Álvarez, la doctora mística seguramente leyó el *Libro de la oración y meditación*. En la primera edición de su famosa obra (1555), hace un elogio de la oración mental tomando a san Buenaventura como modelo en el que quiere fundamentar su exposición:

Porque, como dice santo Buenaventura, allí enciende Dios el ánima con su amor, y la unge con su gracia; la cual, así ungienda, es levantada en espíritu; y levantada contempla; y contemplando ama; y amando gusta; y gustando reposa;

⁶⁰ »Cuando iba, me dio aquel tío mío [...] un libro: llámase Tercer Abecedario, que trata de enseñar oración de recogimiento; [...] no sabía [yo] cómo proceder en oración ni cómo recogerme, y así holguéme mucho con él y determinéme a seguir aquel camino con todas mis fuerzas.» (V 4.7) Véase también V 23.15.

⁶¹ López Santidrián en su Introducción al *Tercer Abecedario* habla de 9 citas de san Buenaventura, 3 de las cuales se atribuyen, en realidad, a Hugo de Balma (Francisco de Osuna 1998, 61). Es bastante difícil detectar si las citas usadas por Osuna son de Buenaventura o no. Por un lado, la dificultad viene del hecho de que la tradición se equivoca atribuyendo a san Buenaventura la obra *De mystica theologia* que cita Osuna en su libro. Pero por otro, los expertos en san Buenaventura a finales del siglo XIX demostraron que el autor de dicha obra no es el famoso teólogo franciscano, sino un cartujo medieval, Hugo de Balma.

y en este reposo tiene toda aquella gloria que en este mundo se puede alcanzar. (Fray Luis de Granada 1994, 593)

A pesar de que el maestro granadino se refiere, en realidad, al pseudo-Buenaventura, ya que no le preocupan los criterios de la crítica textual-literaria, es evidente que el doctor seráfico influyó notablemente en él (Huerga 1976, 69–101).

En tercer lugar, santa Teresa puede familiarizarse con el gran teólogo medieval también mediante las conversaciones que tiene con sus confesores, directores espirituales, letrados y los profesores universitarios. Unos son los teólogos de renombre (Barrón, Báñez, Medina, Yanguas), mientras que los otros pertenecen al grupo de los espirituales (Borja, Álvarez, Salazar).

De ahí podemos deducir que la Santa seguramente conoce el nombre de san Buenaventura. Pero lo conoce a través de otros autores como Francisco de Osuna, fray Luis de Granada y Pedro de Alcántara. Es poco probable que leyese alguna obra suya auténtica en la traducción castellana, como *Soliloquio o Incendio de amor o la triple vía*. Sin embargo, es posible que en alguna ocasión haya ojeado alguna de las numerosas ediciones castellanas de dos obras muy influyentes en aquella época que se atribuyen a san Buenaventura, pero que son, en realidad, apócrifos, a saber: *Meditationes vitae Christi* y *Mística teología* (Melquíades 1976, 128–139). Con todo, la influencia de san Buenaventura en santa Teresa no la podemos demostrar con las citas del Santo en los textos teresianos, porque no existen, sino que podemos descubrir —en cuanto a los sentidos espirituales— un profundo parentesco espiritual entre los dos autores y maestros.

Los sentidos espirituales – ¿qué son?

Tanto san Buenaventura como santa Teresa intentan describir con los sentidos espirituales una experiencia de la inhabitación de Dios trinitario en el alma. Se trata de una experiencia difícil de describir, porque supera nuestro lenguaje. Justamente por eso, aluden a los «sentidos espirituales», a algo que en nuestro mundo ordinario no conocemos.

En la vista, en el oído o en el toque espiritual no se trata de una percepción sensible, sino que los asociamos con un «acontecimiento espiritual». Con los sentidos corporales señalamos las capacidades mediante las cuales percibimos un objeto sensible. Ahora surge la pregunta de si el alma es capaz de percibir también un objeto espiritual, por ejemplo, Dios o los ángeles. A lo largo del tiempo, los autores cristianos desarrollaron un lenguaje con el que podían expresar sus vivencias con Dios. Y precisamente de este modo nació el término los «sentidos espirituales». Estos no son tanto los órganos o las capacidades humanas, sino más bien una especie de descripciones con que los místicos expresan una experiencia espiritual o mística pura. Así que se sirven de la palabra «sentidos» de una manera análoga.

Después, la percepción sensible tiene en común con los sentidos espirituales algo que podríamos llamar la «exigencia de lo real»: el objeto percibido no es una

cosa abstracta, sino que lo encontramos como algo verdadero y concreto (Schlosser 2000, 159). Hay otra semejanza entre los sentidos corporales y espirituales: igual que los sentidos corporales perciben un mismo objeto bajo aspectos diferentes, también la experiencia espiritual aparece en determinadas formas.

En cuanto a la terminología, santa Teresa no suele emplear conceptos teológicos. Por tanto, en sus escritos no aparece el término técnico «sentidos espirituales». Pero, a pesar de ello, usa otras expresiones para referirse a la misma realidad. Los describe así: «Mirad, entendedme, que ni se siente calor ni se huele olor, que más delicada cosa es que estas cosas» (4 M 2.6); «unos medios tan delicados» y «unos impulsos tan delicados y sutiles» (6 M 2.2); «Entiende el alma, por una manera muy fuera de entender con los sentidos exteriores, que está ya junto cabe su Dios» (CV 31.2); «muchos modos tiene [el Señor] de mostrarse al alma por grandes sentimientos interiores y por diferentes vías» (CV 34.10). Estos ejemplos nos muestran que el fenómeno de los sentidos espirituales aparece en los escritos teresianos de maneras y formas muy variadas.

A continuación, vamos a exponer unas observaciones fenomenológicas fundamentales acerca de nuestro tema.

En primer lugar, san Buenaventura en su *Comentario a las Sentencias* expone en qué consiste lo que denominamos con este término poniendo de relieve un rasgo constitutivo:

Con el «sentido espiritual» señalamos el aprovechamiento interior de la gracia de cara a Dios mismo, según la proporción con los cinco sentidos. [...] Pues cualquiera de estos sentidos [...] se sitúa en el entendimiento y el afecto, por lo cual lo llaman «conocimiento por experiencia.» (Bonaventura, *In III Sent.* d.13, dub. 1 [*Opera omnia* 3, 291b–292a])⁶²

En un contexto diferente santa Teresa afirma algo parecido. Hablando de la gracia ella distingue el «auxilio general» y «auxilio particular». Con ello quiere simplemente decir que hay gracia que Dios otorga a todos y que hay gracias particulares que concede a algunas personas o en algunas ocasiones. He aquí el ejemplo de la gracia o auxilio general:

Entonces comienza a tener vida este gusano, cuando con el calor del Espíritu Santo se comienza a aprovechar del auxilio general que a todos nos da Dios y cuando comienza a aprovecharse de los remedios que dejó en su Iglesia, así de continuar las confesiones, como con buenas lecciones y sermones, que es el remedio que un alma que está muerta en su descuido y pecados y metida en ocasiones puede tener. (5 M 2.3)⁶³

⁶² *Et sic sensus spiritualis dicitur usus gratiae interior respectu ipsius Dei secundum proportionem ad quinque sensus. [...] Quilibet enim illorum sensuum [...] radicem habet in intellectu et affectu, pro eo quod cognitionem experimentalem dicant.*

⁶³ En cuanto a los «remedios que dejó en su Iglesia», es significativa una frase paralela con la que nuestra autora, poniéndola entre paréntesis, quiere prevenir las interpretaciones equivocadas: «Hace de entender, con la disposición y medios que esta alma habrá tenido, como la Iglesia lo enseña.» (6 M 4.3)

Es sorprendente la sintonía de este párrafo de Teresa con la frase del Doctor Seráfico. También ella usa aquí dos veces el verbo «aprovechar(se)» que equivaldría al *usus interior* del Santo. Es decir, con la iniciativa del Espíritu Santo, el alma comienza a aprovecharse de los medios de la Iglesia con el fin de abrirse a una vida nueva en Cristo.

Ahora veremos una cita en la que la Santa explícitamente habla del «auxilio particular» o sea de las gracias singulares. También ella —como el Doctor Seráfico— subraya que hay una relación intrínseca entre la gracia singular y el conocimiento experiencial:

Parece impertinente decir esto, pues sabemos que siempre nos entiende Dios y está con nosotros. En esto no hay que dudar que es así, mas quiere este Emperador y Señor nuestro que entendamos aquí que nos entiende, y lo que hace su presencia, y que quiere particularmente comenzar a obrar en el alma. [...] Porque aquí viniera bien dar aquí a entender qué es auxilio general o particular —que hay muchos que lo ignoran—, y cómo este particular quiere el Señor aquí que casi le vea el alma por vista de ojos, como dicen. (V 14.6)

La cita es clara y casi no necesita comentario. Aquí la Santa, en contraste con el pasaje anterior, describe cómo Dios «quiere particularmente comenzar a obrar en el alma». Al mismo tiempo, da a entender que las gracias singulares que Dios dispensa a algunas personas llevan consigo el conocimiento por experiencia: «quiere el Señor aquí que casi le vea el alma por vista de ojos». ¿Qué tenemos en mente con el término técnico «conocimiento por experiencia»? Las verdades de la revelación nosotros las acogemos y adoptamos dentro de la fe. La fe es un conocimiento oscuro, mientras que el conocimiento por experiencia sugiere que se trata de un contacto inmediato. Por eso se suele hablar de «vista de ojos». Sin embargo, el conocimiento experiencial no anula la fe, sino que la profundiza. He aquí otra cita paralela de nuestra autora que disipa toda duda:

Aquí es de otra manera: quiere ya nuestro buen Dios quitarla las escamas de los ojos y que vea y entienda algo de la merced que le hace, aunque es por una manera extraña; [...] de manera que lo que tenemos por fe, allí lo entiende el alma, podemos decir, por vista, aunque no es vista con los ojos del cuerpo, porque no es visión imaginaria. (7 M 1.6)

Nuestra autora deja claro que, a pesar de sugerir un contacto inmediato o encuentro personal, sin embargo, nunca es «cara a cara» como en la visión beatífica, sino siempre dentro de la fe («por un espejo y obscuramente» 1 Cor 13,12).

En segundo lugar, san Buenaventura y santa Teresa ponen de relieve que todos los sentidos espirituales se refieren a Jesucristo y están orientados hacia Él. Si nos permitimos hablar así, es Él el «objeto» o el fin último de la vida del alma. Pero por otra parte, también Cristo se da a sentir a las potencias del alma de maneras diferentes y en un grado más o menos intenso. El Doctor Seráfico, citando a san Juan (10,9), afirma:

De aquí es que, por muy iluminado que uno esté por la luz de la razón natural y de la ciencia adquirida, no puede entrar en sí para gozarse en el Señor si no es por medio de Cristo, quien dice: Yo soy la puerta. El que por mí entrare se salvará, y entrará, y saldrá, y hallará pastos. (*Itin.* 4.2 [*Opera omnia* 5, 306a])

El alma, con toda la ciencia del mundo, no se puede salvar a sí misma. Necesita que alguien le saque de su naturaleza caída, como el Santo subraya unas líneas antes. Y esto lo realizó Jesucristo al tomar la carne humana, o sea, mediante su encarnación. La Santa nos cuenta algo parecido en el *Castillo Interior*. El hombre, entrando dentro de sí a través de la oración, se va acercando al Rey que está en la morada más honda del castillo. O mejor dicho, el Rey es el que le llama, ya que en su estado del «pecado de Adán» no es capaz de entrar solo con la ayuda de sus fuerzas humanas.

Porque parece cosa contraria dar a entender el Amado claramente que está con el alma, y parecer que la llama con una seña tan cierta que no se puede dudar y un silbo tan penetrativo para entenderle el alma que no le puede dejar de oír; porque no parece sino que en hablando el Esposo, que está en la séptima morada, por esta manera (que no es habla formada), toda la gente que está en las otras no se osan bullir, ni sentidos, ni imaginación, ni potencias. (6 M 2.3; véase 4 M 3.2)

En este precioso pasaje nuestra autora nos describe con rigor fenomenológico, que toda la gente del castillo –encerrando los sentidos y las potencias espirituales del alma– está dirigida al Esposo en el centro del alma y que, al llamarles desde la última morada «con un silbo tan penetrativo», se quedan perplejos. Además, aquí merece la pena mencionar un detalle que reza así «que no es habla formada». ¿Que quiere decir esto? Como veremos más adelante, conocemos dos tipos de hablas divinas: las hablas formadas o imaginarias y las hablas «sin imagen ni forma de palabras» (V 27.6). Estas podemos llamarlas también hablas intelectuales que, en cuanto al ver místico, equivalen a las visiones intelectuales.

El tercer momento de nuestra descripción de los sentidos espirituales consiste en que el alma –ya que por su naturaleza se encuentra en un estado de pecado– los va recuperando mediante las tres virtudes teologales que son la fe, esperanza y la caridad (véase *Itin.* 4.3). La fe corresponde a la vista y el oído espiritual, la esperanza al olfato, mientras que la caridad se refiere al sabor y el toque. Aquí no podemos entrar en más detalle. Sin embargo, a lo largo de nuestra exposición, vamos a tocar algún aspecto particular de este tema.⁶⁴ A continuación, vamos a tratar unos ejemplos más representativos en santa Teresa, en cuanto a cada uno de los sentidos espirituales, basándonos principalmente en dos textos clave de san Buenaventura.

La audición espiritual

Comenzamos nuestra presentación con la audición o locución mística. Se trata de «hablas que hace Dios al alma» (V 25 tit.). Primero, cabe subrayar que la Santa

⁶⁴ Al respecto remitimos a la bibliografía siguiente: Schlosser 1990, 130–165; García (segunda parte, cap. 2); Álvarez 1996, 173–188.

– igual que en el caso de las visiones⁶⁵– no sabía siquiera que las palabras interiores pudieran tener lugar, sino que pensaba que se podían oír o entender solo con los oídos corporales.⁶⁶ En este sentido, es clave la primera palabra interior que Dios le dice (véanse V 24.5; CV 25.2; 6 M 3.16). A partir de esta experiencia, se propone describir la locución espiritual.

En segundo lugar, nuestra autora distingue dos tipos de hablas místicas: unas son «palabras bien formadas» (V 25.1), es decir, con «contenido ideológico y con expresión verbal» (T. Álvarez), mientras que otras son «noticias puras» más allá de verbalización: «Dios enseña el alma y la habla sin hablar» (V 27.6) o «lo representa sin imagen ni forma de palabras» (ibid.).⁶⁷ Nos parece importante resaltar que estas hablas ocurren en el espíritu. Lo dice la misma Santa: «Es una cosa tan de espíritu esta manera de visión y de lenguaje» (V 27.7). El espíritu no lo entendemos en oposición a la corporalidad, sino como «una fuerza espiritual y vital de Dios que abarca toda la persona y la transforma» (Guardini 1955, 154; véase también Guardini 1992, 31, n. 10). También podemos decir que se trata de un estado de gracia. Lo característico de él es que no se puede producir con las capacidades humanas, sino que es un don de Dios que concede cuando quiere y a quien quiere (véanse V 22.16; 29.1; 34.11; 39.10; CV 3.6; 4 M 1.2; 2.9). Justamente a esto se refiere santa Teresa al describir estas gracias místicas:

Es como cuando ya está puesto el manjar en el estómago, sin comerle, ni saber nosotros cómo se puso allí, mas entiende bien que está, aunque aquí no se entiende el manjar que es, ni quién le puso. Acá sí; mas cómo se puso no lo sé, que ni se vio, ni se entiende, ni jamás se había movido a desearlo, ni había venido a mi noticia podía ser. (V 27.7)⁶⁸

Ahora nos vamos a centrar en una audición mística en Teresa apoyándonos en algunos textos de san Buenaventura. Nuestra autora narra en el último capítulo del *Libro de la Vida* una experiencia excepcional:

Estando una vez en oración, era tanto el deleite que en mí sentía, que, como indigna de tal bien, comencé a pensar en cómo merecía mejor estar en el lugar que yo había visto estar para mí en el infierno, que, como he dicho, nunca olvido de la manera que allí me vi.

⁶⁵ «Hízome mucho daño no saber yo que era posible ver nada si no era con los ojos del cuerpo.» (V 7.7) Véase también V 27.2.

⁶⁶ «Páreceme que quien quisiese engañar a los otros, diciendo que entiende de Dios lo que es de sí, que poco le cuesta decir que lo oye con los oídos corporales; y es así cierto con verdad, que jamás pensé había otra manera de oír ni entender hasta que lo vi por mí.» (V 25.9)

⁶⁷ He aquí otros ejemplos: «que sin palabra exterior ni interior entiende el alma clarísimamente quién es, y hacia qué parte está, y a las veces lo que quiere significar.» (R 4a.20); «Entiende que sin ruido de palabras le está enseñando este Maestro divino, suspendiendo las potencias, porque entonces antes dañarían que aprovecharían si obrasen.» (CV 25.2)

⁶⁸ «Es en lo muy íntimo de ella esta satisfacción, y no sabe por dónde ni cómo le vino, ni muchas veces sabe qué hacer ni qué querer ni qué pedir. Todo parece lo halla junto y no sabe lo que ha hallado, ni aun yo sé cómo darlo a entender.» (V 14.6)

Comenzóse con esta consideración a inflamar más mi alma, y vínome un arrobamiento de espíritu de suerte que yo no lo sé decir. Parecióme estar metido [el espíritu] y lleno de aquella majestad que he entendido otras veces. En esta majestad se me dio a entender una verdad, que es cumplimiento de todas las verdades. No sé yo decir cómo, porque no vi nada.

Dijéronme, sin ver quién, mas bien entendí ser la misma Verdad: *No es poco esto que hago por ti, que una de las cosas es en que mucho me debes. Porque todo el daño que viene al mundo es no conocer las verdades de la Escritura con clara verdad. No faltará una tilde de ella.*

A mí me pareció que siempre yo había creído esto, y que todos los fieles lo creían. Díjome: *¡Ay, hija, qué pocos me aman de verdad! que si me amasen, no les encubriría Yo mis secretos. ¿Sabes qué es amarme con verdad? Entender que todo es mentira lo que no es agradable a mí. Con claridad verás esto que ahora no entiendes, en lo que aprovecha a tu alma.* (V 40.1)

Esta descripción que abarca los primeros cuatro números del capítulo es sumamente rica de contenido. En realidad, deberíamos leerla junto con otras dos experiencias que siguen a esta, porque las tres forman un conjunto (hasta el n. 11). Pero aquí nos permitimos analizar solo la primera, ya que se trata de una audición o habla mística, mientras que las dos siguientes son visiones en sentido estricto de la palabra.

Al principio, resalta el verbo «sentir» con el que la Santa señala el rasgo pasivo de la experiencia. También llama la atención el arrobamiento de «espíritu». Aquí el «espíritu» tiene que ver con un estado pneumático; es una fuerza vital de Dios que abarca toda la persona y la transforma, como ya hemos dicho arriba. Es más, es el Espíritu Santo quien hace posible que Cristo pueda entrar dentro de la persona y habitar en ella. El Resucitado ya no está condicionado por la existencia histórica que supone una ubicación en el espacio y el tiempo. Este existir de Cristo en el alma lo expresa san Pablo con su conocida frase: «Ya no vivo yo, es Cristo quien vive en mí» (Gal 2,20). Y justamente a esta experiencia paulina se refiere la Santa. «Parecióme estar metido [mí espíritu] y lleno de aquella majestad que he entendido otras veces.» Ella está en Cristo y Cristo está en ella. Aunque no lo nombra explícitamente, podemos suponer que alude a él con las palabras «aquella majestad que he entendido otras veces»: aquí, sin duda, tiene en mente las decisivas experiencias cristológicas (V 27–29).

Y sigue: «En esta majestad [en Cristo] se me dio a entender una verdad, que es cumplimiento de todas las verdades». Es una clara repercusión del episodio del libro vivo: «Su Majestad ha sido el libro verdadero adonde he visto las verdades» (V 26.5). La descripción cierra una breve observación: «No sé yo decir cómo, porque no vi nada». Primero dice que se le dio a entender una verdad, inmediatamente después afirma que no vio nada. Todo el pasaje está lleno de paradojas de este tipo. Acerca de ello hay que decir lo siguiente: el arrobamiento que equivale al término

técnico «éxtasis» tanto en la Santa como en el Doctor Seráfico no tiene que ver principalmente con los fenómenos místicos extraordinarios, sino que significa la incapacidad de entender a Dios que es de por sí incomprendible (Schlosser 2000, 161). La luz de la revelación de Dios es tan fuerte que cuanto más ilumina al alma, tanto más ciega sus capacidades naturales de entender (véase *Itin.* 5.4). Buenaventura habla alguna vez de una «oscuridad luminosa», mientras que la Santa usa expresiones como «una nube de grandísima claridad» (7 M 1.6) o la «sombra de la divinidad» (Cp 5.4). Como la actividad ordinaria de entender está oscurecida, el alma suele recibir esta iluminación o el conocimiento de Dios en el descanso místico: «una manera de descanso siente allí el alma» (ibid.; véase 7 M 3.11; Gardini 1964, 64; Schlosser 2000, 162). Esto en cuanto al arrobamiento. En cuanto a la visión, hay que decir que aquí nos referimos a una visión intelectual. La Santa varias veces sostiene que no «vio nada». Pero junto con la visión intelectual tiene lugar también el habla con la expresión verbal. Vamos a desplegar ahora la forma del habla y después su contenido.

Primero, en esas hablas podemos observar una relación intrínseca entre el oír espiritual y la fe teologal. El Doctor Seráfico en su *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* afirma:

El alma, pues, que cree, espera y ama a Jesucristo, que es el Verbo encarnado, increado e inspirado, esto es, camino, verdad y vida, al creer por la fe en Cristo, en cuanto es Verbo increado, palabra y esplendor del Padre, recupera el oído y la vista espiritual; el oído, para recibir las palabras de Cristo; la vista, para mirar con atención los esplendores de su luz. (*Itin.* 4.3 [*Opera omnia* 5, 306b])⁶⁹

En este pasaje el Santo subraya que las virtudes teologales: la fe, esperanza y caridad son el horizonte dentro del cual el alma obtiene el verdadero conocimiento. El entendimiento humano está orientado hacia la verdad, hacia el sentido. Pero con el pecado perdimos el norte. La consecuencia de este estado es que no buscamos el sentido, sino que nos atenemos a lo que nos ofrece el mundo. La Santa lo dice bellamente: «Porque es tan muerto nuestro natural que nos vamos a lo que presente vemos» (V 10.6).⁷⁰ Sin embargo, lo que viene del mundo no nos puede salvar. El verdadero conocimiento de nosotros mismos y de todo lo creado lo obtenemos con la fe en Cristo. Esta es el principio de una nueva vida en nosotros cuyo origen es Él. Por eso también recuperamos los sentidos espirituales con los que nos referimos al hombre nuevo del que habla san Pablo.

Dediquémonos ahora al contenido del habla dirigida a Teresa que comienza así: «*Porque todo el daño que viene al mundo es no conocer las verdades de la Escritura con clara verdad. No faltará una tilde de ella*» (n. 1). Es el eco de las palabras de Jesús: «Porque en verdad os digo que antes pasarán el cielo y la tierra que falte una

⁶⁹ La traducción al español la citamos según la edición de la Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos.

⁷⁰ La cita paralela: «Porque está tan muerta la fe, que queremos más lo que vemos que lo que ella nos dice; y a la verdad, no vemos sino harta malaventura en los que se van tras estas cosas visibles.» (2 M 1.5)

jota o una tilde de la Ley hasta que todo se cumpla» (Mt 5,18). Aquí deberíamos preguntarnos qué es la Escritura para la Santa. Por supuesto, la entiende como la Palabra de Dios. Incluso podríamos decir que para ella es su misma encarnación. Detrás de la palabra que ella oye desde la Escritura es Cristo en persona quien le habla. Desde luego, no le puede escuchar como a una de las hermanas que viven a su lado, sin embargo, le puede oír claramente en el interior de la fe. Es más, Cristo le puede dar a entender que es él la verdadera revelación de Dios, su misma epifanía. Como veremos, lo va a decir unas líneas más abajo.

Pero antes queremos detenernos en las palabras que siguen al pasaje citado: «A mí me pareció que siempre yo había creído esto, y que todos los fieles lo creían». Con el verbo «creer» que usa dos veces subraya la importancia de la fe. Ya hemos dicho que la fe ilumina el entendimiento de manera diferente a la naturaleza humana, deformada por el pecado. En ella se le descubre al alma –con la gracia de Dios– quién es ella ante Él. Reconoce su estado de pecadora y cree que Dios en Cristo realizó la salvación. En la fe de que está salvada por Cristo también recibe una cierta comprensión de esta nueva vida. De ahí que el creer y el entender se presuponen y condicionan mutuamente. Escuchemos a la Santa al respecto: «Porque cuando digo “credo,” razón me parece será que entienda y sepa lo que creo» (CV 24.2). Nuestra autora piensa que «todos los fieles» aspiran al conocimiento iluminado por la fe. Sin embargo, recibe una respuesta negativa: «¡Ay, hija, qué pocos me aman de verdad! que si me amasen, no les encubriría Yo mis secretos. ¿Sabes qué es amarme con verdad? Entender que todo es mentira lo que no es agradable a mí» (n.1). Parece que los fieles no hacen de su parte todo lo que podrían. Si lo hiciesen, «Dios no les encubriría sus secretos». En definitiva, a la Santa le importa mucho que no nos contentemos con creer y rezar a Dios solo por costumbre (véase CV 24.2). Porque Dios –el Verbo– se hizo carne y si uno de verdad cree en Él también puede experimentar este secreto – se sobreentiende, por la bondad de Dios. Así le ocurrió a la Santa:

Esta verdad que digo se me dio a entender, es en sí misma verdad, y es sin principio ni fin, y todas las demás verdades dependen de esta verdad, como todos los demás amores de este amor, y todas las demás grandezas de esta grandeza, aunque esto va dicho oscuro para la claridad con que a mí el Señor quiso se me diese a entender. (V 40.4)

El pasaje citado parece ser el eco del prólogo de Juan el Evangelista, si sustituimos el Verbo por la Verdad: «Al principio era la Verdad, y la Verdad estaba en Dios y la Verdad era Dios.» A la Santa se le dio a entender dentro de la fe que la Verdad de todas las verdades es Cristo: «Todas las cosas fueron hechas por Él, y sin Él no se hizo nada de cuanto ha sido hecho» (Jn 1,3). Con otras palabras, Cristo es la autorrevelación del Padre: «A Dios nadie le vio jamás; Dios Unigénito, que está en el seno del Padre, ese nos lo ha dado a conocer» (Jn 1,18). A Dios no lo podemos ver de por sí, Él se ha dado a conocer en la encarnación de su Hijo. Él es, como dice Guardini, «la “apertura” esencial, el desocultamiento, *alétheia*, la “Verdad” del Padre» (Guardini

1987, 66). La palabra que la Santa acoge y adopta en la fe se hace carne. «Conocer las verdades de la Escritura con clara verdad» (V 40.1) significa para ella tomar cuerpo, encarnarse. Lo que cree en la fe —a saber, que Cristo es la palabra de Dios Padre— se le dio a experimentar en la audición espiritual o el habla mística.

Hablando de Cristo como la Suma Verdad hay que resaltar dos cosas. La primera, en cuanto a los oídos espirituales o las hablas místicas, el alma conoce a través del otro. Dicho de otro modo, el entendimiento no conoce de manera inmediata como en la visión mediante la percepción, sino que conoce por la enseñanza del otro (Bonaventura, *In III Sent.* d.13, dub. 1 (*Opera omnia* 3, 292a)). La segunda, san Buenaventura en otro lugar pone de relieve que el alma no puede conocer ninguna verdad sino por Cristo, que la enseña desde dentro:

Asimismo, porque él mismo es doctor, enseña infaliblemente y certifica de tal modo que es imposible que la cosa sea de otro modo. [...] Cristo es doctor interiormente, ni se sabe verdad alguna sino por él, no hablando como nosotros, sino ilustrando interiormente. (Bonaventura, *In Hexaëm.* 12.5 [*Opera omnia* 4, 385a])

En ese asunto, los dos Doctores de la Iglesia que estamos tratando coinciden plenamente. Tres rasgos cabe subrayar. La certeza absoluta de la enseñanza. También la Santa lo confirma: «No me quedó ninguna sospecha de que era ilusión» (V 40.3). Cristo enseña desde dentro: «pues nunca el maestro está tan lejos del discípulo que sea menester dar voces, sino muy junto» (CV 24.5). Y por último, Él habla más allá del lenguaje humano infundiendo la luz: «Todo lo que he dicho entendí hablándome algunas veces, y otras sin hablarme, con más claridad algunas cosas que las que por palabra se me decían» (V 40.3).⁷¹ La Santa no oye con los oídos naturales o corporales, sino que se trata de un oír diferente: «que allá parece tiene el alma otros oídos con que oye, y que la hace escuchar» (V 27.8). Desde el pasaje entero podemos deducir que es el espíritu de Cristo quien hace que estos oídos le escuchen.

En este capítulo, hemos intentado mostrar que hay una relación intrínseca entre la fe teológica, la Sagrada Escritura y la audición espiritual. Hemos visto que lo que santa Teresa cree en el interior de la fe se le dio a entender por experiencia como la Suma Verdad de la que dependen todas las verdades. A continuación, vamos a exponer qué ocurre en la visión espiritual.

La visión espiritual

Teniendo en cuenta el vasto tema de la visión nos vamos a limitar a algunos puntos comunes entre nuestros dos autores al respecto. Como hemos visto en el apartado sobre la locución mística, también la visión está principalmente relacionada con la fe teológica. La estructura del fenómeno es prácticamente la misma. Al alma se le da a conocer la presencia de Dios en la persona de Cristo. Si Cristo, Hijo

⁷¹ «Entiende [el alma] que sin ruido de palabras le está enseñando este maestro divino, suspendiendo las potencias, porque entonces antes dañarían que aprovecharían si obrasen.» (CV 25.2)

del Padre, en el que creemos en el interior de la fe, tiende a manifestarse mediante la audición como verdad, en el caso de la visión, se muestra como belleza.

Durante muchos años santa Teresa cultivaba la relación con Dios tratando con la persona de Cristo. Para ella, como bien sabemos, la oración es el trato de amistad: «estando muchas veces tratando a solas con quien sabemos [que] nos ama» (V 8.5). En un momento dado que ella no esperaba le ocurrió lo que narra en el conocido capítulo 27 del *Libro de la Vida*. Dice así:

[...] estando un día del glorioso San Pedro en oración, vi cabe mí o sentí, por mejor decir, que con los ojos del cuerpo ni del alma no vi nada, mas parecíame estaba junto cabe mí Cristo y veía ser Él el que me hablaba, a mí parecer. [...] Parecíame andar siempre a mi lado Jesucristo, y como no era visión imaginaria, no veía en qué forma; mas estar siempre al lado derecho, sentíalo muy claro, y que era testigo de todo lo que yo hacía, y que ninguna vez que me recogiese un poco o no estuviese muy divertida podía ignorar que estaba cabe mí. (V 27.2)

Es la famosa descripción de la visión intelectual de Jesucristo al lado derecho que tuvo a sus 45 años de edad. Hay que decir que la Santa no conoce el cultismo «visión intelectual» a la hora de escribir el *Libro de la Vida*. Los letrados se lo explicarán, por eso lo va a usar doce años más tarde en su exposición de las *Moradas*. Pero su descripción primera tiene tanto valor porque no está condicionada por los esquemas teológicos. Tres rasgos del fenómeno cabe resaltar.

En primer lugar, según Buenaventura, el alma puede «llegar al conocimiento de una cosa de doble manera: Ya sea gracias a la percepción de uno, como ocurre con la visión, ya sea gracias a un despertar o enseñanza ajena, como ocurre con el oído» (Bonaventura, *In III Sent.* d.13, dub. 1 [*Opera omnia* 3, 292a]). Aquí Teresa «siente» a Cristo presente a su lado derecho de manera inmediata. No se trata de la presencia de Dios por los efectos que uno siente (V 27.4), sino que es Él en persona, «Cristo vivo» (V 28.8).

Después, el elemento constitutivo del fenómeno es la «luz». Esta luz nos recuerda a la misma luz que iluminó a san Pablo de camino a Damasco. Es Cristo en su estado pneumático, capaz de entrar en el ambiente personal y concienical del alma. También el Doctor Seráfico pone de relieve la importancia de la luz en el proceso de conocer a Dios. Ninguna cosa creada es capaz de iluminar y perfeccionar al alma en el conocimiento de Dios, sino que es Él mismo quien ilumina el entendimiento de manera inmediata.⁷² Al mismo tiempo, denominando a Dios luz, de manera general, hay que decir que en el contexto de la revelación positiva pertenece este nombre en un «sentido eminente» a la segunda persona de la Trinidad, al Verbo, a Cristo como el Hijo (Guardini 1964, 44). Nuestra autora, de nuevo, coincide con las observaciones de san Buenaventura:

⁷² *Nulla enim substantia creata potentiam habet illuminandi et perficiendi animam, proprie intelligendo; immo secundum mentem immediate habet a Deo illuminari* (Bonaventura, *In II Sent.* d.24, p.1, a.2, q.4 [*Opera omnia* 2, 568ab]).

Acá no hay nada de esto [de las impresiones sensibles], ni se ve oscuridad, sino que se representa [Cristo] por una noticia al alma más clara que el sol. No digo que se ve sol ni claridad, sino una luz que, sin ver luz, alumbra el entendimiento, para que goce el alma de tan gran bien. Trae consigo grandes bienes. (V 27.3)

No es resplandor que deslumbre, sino una blancura suave y el resplandor infuso, que da deleite grandísimo a la vista y no la cansa, ni la claridad que se ve para ver esta hermosura tan divina. Es una luz tan diferente de las de acá, que parece una cosa tan deslustrada la claridad del sol que vemos, en comparación de aquella claridad y luz que se representa a la vista, que no se querían abrir los ojos después. Es como ver un agua clara, que corre sobre cristal y reverbera en ello el sol, a una muy turbia y con gran nublado y corre por encima de la tierra. No porque se representa sol, ni la luz es como la del sol; parece, en fin, luz natural y estotra cosa artificial. Es luz que no tiene noche, sino que, como siempre es luz, no la turba nada. (V 28.5; véanse los pasajes paralelos: V 38.3; 6 M 5.7)

La última frase es un claro eco de lo que dice Juan el Evangelista: «[...] que Dios es luz y que en Él no hay tiniebla alguna» (1 Jn 1,5). El sol y la claridad todavía sugieren algo de imaginativo, mientras que la palabra «luz», por la que opta la Santa, remite a un símbolo fundamental e irreductible. Lo confirma también Guardini, hablando del proceso de conocer en san Buenaventura, y pone de relieve que la palabra «luz» expresa una forma de la experiencia espiritual que no se puede representar de otro modo. Se trata de una experiencia de la verdad que es la experiencia de la luz (Guardini 1963, 464).

En tercer lugar, la presencia de Dios mismo el alma la percibe con una certeza absoluta. Lo subrayan una y otra vez los dos autores (Guardini 1964, 58–59, 62). La Santa, en dicha visión intelectual, lo repite como un estribillo: «Parecíame andar siempre a mi lado Jesucristo»; «estar siempre al lado derecho, sentíalo muy claro»; «y que ninguna vez [...] podía ignorar que estaba cabe mí» (n. 1); «no podía dejar de entender estaba cabe mí y lo veía claro y sentía»; «y que era cosa muy clara» (n. 3); «que no parece se puede dudar»; «que no se puede dudar más que lo que se ve, ni tanto»; «queda por una parte gran certidumbre que no tiene fuerza la duda» (n. 5). Además, la Santa insiste en el carácter noético de la experiencia. Dios en Cristo «alumbra el entendimiento»; «se imprimió en mi entendimiento que era El»; «que quiere el Señor esté tan esculpido en el entendimiento» (n. 5). Se trata del entender y ver en el interior de la fe. La fe aguza el oído y afila el ojo:

Porque hace [el Señor] algunas mercedes que consigo traen la sospecha, por ser de tanta admiración y hechas a quien tan poco las ha merecido, que si no hay muy viva fe no se podrán creer. (V 27.9)

[...] mas entiendo que quedan unas verdades en esta alma tan fijas de la grandeza de Dios, que cuando no tuviera fe que le dice quién es y que está obligada a creerle por Dios, le adorara desde aquel punto por tal [...] (6 M 4.6)

Como ya hemos visto arriba, la fe ilumina el entendimiento. El alma, con seguridad, entiende que está en Dios el sentido de su vida. Por eso no conoce de una manera arbitraria lo que correspondería a *curiositas*, sino con el «acatamiento» (V 40.3) y con «tanta admiración». Ella «está obligada a creerle por Dios» o como diría el Doctor Seráfico: «es imposible que la cosa sea de otro modo».

Por otra parte, el núcleo de la experiencia que estamos tratando consiste en el encuentro personal con Cristo más allá de toda imaginación, es decir, en el espíritu (véase Stein 2007, 45–46, 47, 49). Cristo «trata con ella con tanta amistad y amor que no se sufre escribir» (n. 9); «que se entienden Dios y el alma con sólo querer Su Majestad que lo entienda, sin otro artificio para darse a entender el amor que se tienen estos dos amigos» (n. 10). Este encuentro personal entre Dios y el alma es posible, ya que es Dios presente en ella de una manera íntima, como sostiene san Buenaventura (véase Guardini 1964, 30).

Ahora bien, el entendimiento es la potencia principal en el oír y el ver místico. La luz de la fe no afecta solo el entendimiento, sino que se comunica también a otras potencias del alma, a la memoria y voluntad, pero también tiene repercusión en el actuar y obrar. Por tanto, Cristo, que se representa al alma en la visión intelectual «sin imagen ni forma de palabras», puede manifestarse mediante la visión imaginaria como belleza.⁷³ Y justamente esto le ocurre a santa Teresa. Lo expone en los capítulos 28 y 29 de *Vida*. Partiendo de su propia experiencia insiste: «Y casi vienen juntas estas dos maneras de visión siempre» (V 28.9; véase 6 M 9.2–3). He aquí el párrafo más representativo:

Estando un día en oración, quiso el Señor mostrarme solas las manos con tan grandísima hermosura que no lo podría yo encarecer. [...] Desde a pocos días, vi también aquel divino rostro, que del todo me parece me dejó absorta. No podía yo entender por qué el Señor se mostraba así poco a poco, pues después me había de hacer merced de que yo le viese del todo, hasta después que he entendido que me iba Su Majestad llevando conforme a mi flaqueza natural. (V 28.1; remitimos a los textos paralelos: V 37.4; 6 M 9.3–5.10)

En los capítulos mencionados, una y otra vez topamos con las palabras «hermoso/hermosa», «la hermosura», «la majestad», «la grandeza», «el resplandor», «la luz», etc. La confirmación de lo dicho por Teresa la encontramos también en san Buenaventura que dice: «El divino rostro es la belleza de la sabiduría eterna que todo lo origina y todo lo gobierna».⁷⁴ Como hemos dicho, el Señor se comunica también a la imaginación y la memoria:

[...] cuando nuestro Señor es servido de regalar más a esta alma, muéstrale claramente su sacratísima Humanidad de la manera que quiere, o como andaba

⁷³ Esto no ocurre automáticamente, sino por la gracia de Dios. Lo dice la Santa explícitamente: «Estando un día en oración, *quiso* el Señor mostrarme solas las manos [...]» (V 28.1; subrayado mío) En V 27.2 leemos: «Me acació esto.»

⁷⁴ *Facies Dei est pulchritudo sapientiae aeternae omnia originantis, omnia gubernantis* [...] (Bonaventura, *Serm. I De Sanctis Angelis* [*Opera omnia* 9, 616a]) Véase Guardini 1964, 44.

en el mundo, o después de resucitado; y aunque es con tanta presteza que lo podríamos comparar a la de un relámpago, queda tan esculpido en la imaginación esta imagen gloriosísima, que tengo por imposible quitarse de ella hasta que la vea adonde para sin fin la pueda gozar. (6 M 9.3)

Asimismo, esta experiencia influye en la voluntad, o sea, en la parte afectiva del alma, y le incita al amor. Pero como hemos indicado ya, también en el obrar cotidiano intenta vivir según la gracia de Dios y no ofenderle.

Queda el alma otra, siempre embebida. Parécele comienza de nuevo amor vivo de Dios en muy alto grado, a mi parecer. (V 28.9)

Desde a poco tiempo comenzó Su Majestad, como me lo tenía prometido, a señalar más que era Él, creciendo en mí un amor tan grande de Dios, que no sabía quién me le ponía, porque era muy sobrenatural, ni yo le procuraba. Veíame morir con deseo de ver a Dios [...] (V 29.8)⁷⁵

[...] y quedaba muy esforzada y alegre con tan buena compañía; que veía claro serle gran ayuda para andar con una ordinaria memoria de Dios y un miramiento grande de no hacer cosa que le desagradase, porque le parecía la estaba siempre mirando. (6 M 8.3)

Resumiendo, podemos decir que en la visión mística cristiana ocurre lo siguiente: Dios, de por sí invisible, puede —cuando quiere y como quiere— dar a entender al alma que es Cristo su misma epifanía. Cristo se le muestra como el sentido y el centro de su existencia en un encuentro personal e íntimo. Esta experiencia puede ser acompañada por la visión intelectual más allá de toda imaginación y por la visión imaginaria. En esta se manifiesta Cristo como la misma belleza. El conocimiento de Dios que comienza en el entendimiento se comunica también a otras potencias del alma. El espíritu de Dios es el que hace al alma capaz de verle. Este hecho se expresa, sobre todo, en el símbolo de la luz. Hay que subrayar, por fin, que el ver místico no anula la fe, sino que la intensifica. El alma ve a su Dios bajo la «nube de grandísima claridad», como lo dice hermosamente la Santa.

El olfato, el sabor y el toque místico

En la última parte de nuestro trabajo, vamos a poner de relieve solo algunos rasgos del fenómeno que estamos desplegando. Cabe comenzar con la observación de san Buenaventura de que en dichos sentidos, es decir, en el olfato, sabor y el toque, no prevalece el entendimiento como suele ocurrir en el oír y la visión, sino el afecto (véase Bonaventura, *In III Sent.* d.13, dub. 1 [*Opera omnia* 3, 292a]). En la terminología teresiana, esta potencia abarca una vasta gama de conceptos: la voluntad, el deseo, los gustos, el deleite, el gozo, el regalo, la suavidad, la quietud etc. En el mi-

⁷⁵ He aquí las citas paralelas: «Quédase tan espantada, que basta una merced de éstas para trocar toda un alma y hacerla no amar cosa, sino a quien ve que, sin trabajo ninguno suyo [...]» (V 27.9); «Yo me veía crecer en amarle muy mucho [al Señor].» (V 29.4)

smo pasaje, el Santo precisa que el alma puede adoptar una triple posición ante el objeto del conocimiento: o estando remoto como el olfato; o estando cercano como ocurre con el sabor; o estando en unión, como ocurre con el tacto. Esta descripción bonaventuriana nos va a servir para detectar el fenómeno en los escritos teresianos.

Veamos primero unos ejemplos respecto al olfato. La Santa, en cuartas moradas del *Castillo Interior*, expone la conocida diferencia entre los contentos y los gustos en el proceso de oración. Los contentos pertenecen aún a la oración activa o ascética, mientras que con los gustos indica un grado de oración ya propiamente mística. Para darlo a entender se sirve del sentido del olfato. He aquí el texto:

Entiende [el alma] una fragancia -digamos ahora- como si en aquel hondón interior estuviese un brasero adonde se echan olorosos perfumes; ni se ve la lumbre, ni dónde está; mas el calor y humo oloroso penetra toda el alma y aun hartas veces -como he dicho- participa el cuerpo. Mirad, entendedme, que ni se siente calor ni se huele olor, que más delicada cosa es que estas cosas; sino para dároslo a entender. Y entiendan las personas que no han pasado por esto, que es verdad que pasa así y que se entiende, y lo entiende el alma más claro que yo lo digo ahora; que no es esto cosa que se puede antojar, porque por diligencias que hagamos no lo podemos adquirir, y en ello mismo se ve no ser de nuestro metal, sino de aquel purísimo oro de la sabiduría divina. (4 M 2.6; véanse los lugares paralelos: 6 M 2.8; Cp 4.2-3)

Aquí se ve muy claro lo que sostiene el Doctor Seráfico, a saber, que el objeto del conocimiento queda «remoto», alejado. Esto lo da a entender nuestra autora con imágenes como «una fragancia», «un brasero», «olorosos perfumes», «el calor», «el humo». Son los gustos de los que en el capítulo anterior decía que «comienzan de Dios y siéntelos el natural» (4 M 1.4). Los autores espirituales, entre ellos también Buenaventura, asocian el sentido del olfato, normalmente, con la esperanza. El alma posee a Cristo deseándolo. Hay que tener en cuenta, a la vez, que en los gustos la potencia principal es la voluntad: «La voluntad bien me parece que debe estar unida en alguna manera con la de Dios» (4 M 2.8). La capacidad de entender, en cambio, puede ser algo que dificulta o molesta el ingreso en la oración infusa o mística.⁷⁶ Nuestra autora lo repite una y otra vez. Hemos mencionado la esperanza. Esta tiene raíces en la generosidad de Dios. Por eso, la Santa insiste en que los gustos no se pueden adquirir con los esfuerzos humanos o las técnicas psicósomáticas, sino que son un don gratuito de Dios. Y precisa que «su nacimiento [no] es del corazón, sino de otra parte aún más interior, como una cosa profunda. Pienso que debe ser el centro del alma» (n. 5). Se trata de la dimensión del espíritu que no queda al libre acceso del alma, sino que es Dios quien, por su gracia, puede verter su amor en ella. Este amor se va derramando por las potencias del alma hasta penetrar el cuerpo como lo testimonia la Doctora mística en el texto citado.

⁷⁶ Hay muchos pasajes que lo corroboran. El texto más claro al respecto nos parece V 15.6. La consigna teresiana en este estado es: «[...] no está la cosa en pensar mucho, sino en amar mucho.» (4 M 1.7)

El sentido del sabor solo vamos a tocarlo de pasada, ya que tiene que ver, en parte, con los «gustos» y el «gozo» que acabamos de exponer. Para desarrollar el tema, deberíamos preguntarnos, entre otras cosas, también qué entiende la Doctrina mística con el término «sabiduría», porque hay un cierto parentesco etimológico entre el «sabor» y el «saber» o la «sabiduría». Pero esto desbordaría el marco de nuestro trabajo, por eso solo haremos un par de observaciones generales al respecto.⁷⁷

En primer lugar, cabe poner de relieve que el concepto de la sabiduría ocupa un lugar especial en el pensamiento bonaventuriano (véase Schlosser 2000, 158). Hay una relación orgánica entre el conocimiento y el sentido de gustar. Solo aquel que ha llegado a saborear y gustar el objeto presentado lo ha conocido de verdad. Esto también podemos aplicarlo a las cosas espirituales y, sobre todo, a Dios. El sabio es la persona que conoce a Dios por experiencia. Por consiguiente, quien conoce a Dios se sabe amado íntimamente por Él. Vemos que hay una conexión intrínseca entre la sabiduría y el amor. Pongamos un ejemplo significativo:

Es un sueño de las potencias, que ni del todo se pierden ni entienden cómo obran. El gusto y suavidad y deleite es más sin comparación que lo pasado; es que da el agua a la garganta, a esta alma, de la gracia, que no puede ya ir adelante, ni sabe cómo, ni tornar atrás. Querría gozar de grandísima gloria. Es como uno que está, la candela en la mano, que le falta poco para morir muerte que la desea; está gozando en aquella agonía con el mayor deleite que se puede decir. No me parece que es otra cosa sino un morir casi del todo a todas las cosas del mundo y estar gozando de Dios. Yo no sé otros términos cómo lo decir ni cómo lo declarar, ni entonces sabe el alma qué hacer; porque ni sabe si hable ni si calle, ni si ría, ni si llore. Es un glorioso desatino, una celestial locura, adonde se depende la verdadera sabiduría, y es deleitosísima manera de gozar el alma. (V 16.1)

La Santa describe aquí la oración pre-extática. Con la imagen del «sueño» señala la actividad del alma contraria a la habitual. Después, abundan las expresiones que en el plano psicológico indican una fuerte implicación de la voluntad: «el gusto y suavidad y deleite»; «gozar de grandísima gloria»; «gozar de agonía»; «glorioso desatino»; «celestial locura». Pero en el plano teologal apuntan a la infusión de la gracia sobreabundante: el Señor «da el agua de la gracia a la garganta de esta alma». Quiere ya morir para verse junto con el Señor: «un morir y estar gozando de Dios» (n. 1); «Querría ya esta alma verse libre»; «pues ya no querría vivir en sí sino en Vos» (n. 4). «No sabe qué desee, mas bien entiende que no desea otra cosa sino a Vos» (n. 5). Es la conocida tensión de la esperanza entre «ya» y «todavía no», entre el tiempo presente y el futuro escatológico. Además, el alma siente un amor loco de Dios hacia ella: «¡Quered ahora, Rey mío, suplicóoslo yo, que [...] o estén todos los que yo tratare locos de vuestro amor, o permitáis que no trate yo con nadie, u

⁷⁷ Solo el verbo «saber» tiene en las *Concordancias de los escritos de Teresa de Jesús* 2.672 apariencias (Astigarraga y Borrell 2002).

ordenad, Señor, cómo no tenga ya cuenta en cosa del mundo o me sacad de él!» (n. 4). Saberse amado por Dios es, como hemos dicho, una señal de la «verdadera sabiduría». De ahí que el sentido del sabor esté relacionado con la caridad.

Nos queda, por último, tratar brevemente el sentido del tacto o el toque, que el teólogo franciscano cuyo pensamiento hemos tomado como base de nuestro trabajo considera el más espiritual de todos. Como también precisa el Santo, el tacto ya indica la unión plena entre el alma y su Amado. He aquí dos ejemplos de la Doctora mística, los dos desde las séptimas moradas que representan la cumbre de la vida espiritual:

Por cierto, cuando no hubiera otra cosa de ganancia en este camino de oración, sino entender el particular cuidado que Dios tiene de comunicarse con nosotros y andarnos rogando -que no parece esto otra cosa- que nos estemos con Él, me parece eran bien empleados cuantos trabajos se pasan por gozar de estos toques de su amor, tan suaves y penetrativos. [...] porque acaecerá muchas veces en público querer nuestro Señor haceros esta secreta merced, y es muy fácil -como ha de ser la respuesta interior- hacer lo que digo haciendo un acto de amor, o decir lo que San Pablo: ¿qué queréis, Señor, que haga? de muchas maneras os enseñará allí con qué le agradéis y es tiempo acepto; porque parece se entiende que nos oye, y casi siempre dispone el alma este toque tan delicado para poder hacer lo que queda dicho con voluntad determinada. (7 M 3.9)

Estos efectos, con todos los demás que hemos dicho que sean buenos en los grados de oración que quedan dichos, da Dios cuando llega el alma a Sí, con este ósculo que pedía la Esposa, que yo entiendo aquí se le cumple esta petición. (n. 13)

El místico ya mira desde la plenitud de la vida nueva. Este estado terminal nuestra autora lo expresa con la frase: «Ahora, pues, decimos que esta mariposica ya murió [...] y que vive en ella Cristo» (n. 1). Nos recuerda al conocido lema de san Pablo: «Ya no vivo yo, es Cristo quien vive en mí» (Gal 2,20). Si en el primer capítulo de las séptimas moradas la Santa introduce la situación final del cristiano con la experiencia trinitaria de la inhabitación, nos cuenta en el segundo capítulo la unión plena con Cristo. Este hecho nos parece importante respecto al sentido del tacto. Ya al principio, hemos mencionado a Tomás Álvarez. En sus *Comentarios al Castillo Interior*, lúcidamente interpreta que en las últimas moradas podemos observar un cambio notable: la Santa ya no describe la actividad ascendente del hombre mediante las virtudes teologales como en las moradas pasadas, sino que al final del camino la relación entre el hombre y Dios se vuelve descendente (véase Álvarez 2004, 294). Lo pone de relieve la misma Santa: «entender el particular cuidado que Dios tiene de comunicarse con nosotros» (n. 9). De ahí que en los textos citados arriba usa dos imágenes que sugieren el contacto inmediato entre Dios y el alma: «toques de su amor» y el «ósculo», o sea, el beso. En el matrimonio espiritual ha descendido Dios en Cristo de una manera definitiva al alma y se comunica con ella.

De lo dicho está claro que el sentido del tacto corresponde a la caridad. La Santa lo da a entender al hablar de los efectos que produce en ella la unión plena. En primer lugar, «un olvido de sí» (n. 3). Como su vida es Cristo, cualquier forma del centramiento en sí misma desaparece. Su relación hacia los demás se distingue por un rasgo especial: el alma queda «sin ninguna enemistad» (n. 5); es más, a los enemigos cobra un «amor particular» (ibid.). Si antes la Santa sentía en sí un deseo de morir para gozar de Dios, es ahora su único deseo servir a los demás (n. 6.). Aquí coincide con el Doctor Seráfico que también subraya el amor al prójimo como la señal o la prueba del amor a Dios. Quien ama a todos, hasta a sus enemigos, es capaz de ver en cada ser humano la imagen de Dios. De ahí que haya una estrecha relación entre el amor y la paz: «Dichosos los que trabajan por la paz» (Mt 5,9). Es bien sabido que la paz es una palabra clave en la espiritualidad franciscana: ya san Francisco saludaba con las palabras «paz y bien» (*pax et bonum*). El Doctor Seráfico considera la paz como un don escatológico que nos adquirió Cristo: «él es nuestra paz» (Schlosser 2010, 6). También en este aspecto la Santa concuerda con el Santo:

Pasa con tanta quietud y tan sin ruido todo lo que el Señor aprovecha aquí al alma y la enseña, que me parece es como en la edificación del templo de Salomón, adonde no se había de oír ningún ruido; así en este templo de Dios, en esta morada suya, sólo El y el alma se gozan con grandísimo silencio. (n. 11)

La paz profunda que no viene del mundo, sino de Cristo en el centro del alma, empuja al místico a vivir en paz con todos los hombres. El matrimonio místico o espiritual, por tanto, no está dado para que uno goce de la presencia de Dios encerrado en sí mismo, sino, como dice claramente nuestra autora, para «que nazcan siempre obras, obras» (7 M 4.6). Estar siempre al servicio de los demás, como estaba Cristo.

A manera de conclusión

Al principio de nuestro estudio, hemos intentado averiguar si san Buenaventura influyó en la Doctora mística. Por una parte, hemos mostrado que indudablemente conoció el nombre del gran teólogo franciscano, pero por otra, no nos quedan pruebas de que ella, efectivamente, leyese sus escritos. A pesar de ello, tenemos que admitir, según las constataciones de Tomás Álvarez, la posibilidad de que la Santa pudiese ojear al menos un extracto o una recopilación de sus obras.

Pero lo que más destaca en nuestra presentación de los sentidos espirituales en santa Teresa a partir del planteamiento bonaventuriano es una gran sintonía entre los dos Doctores de la Iglesia. Al fin y al cabo, tenemos que reconocer que, en esencia, coinciden y se corroboran mutuamente en los puntos más importantes del fenómeno estudiado. Por un lado, hemos visto que en lo que santa Teresa describe, partiendo de su experiencia espiritual, concuerda con la reflexión teológica del Doctor Seráfico. Y, por otro lado, lo que él expone sobre los sentidos espirituales en los textos a los que nos hemos ido refiriendo, se traduce, en gran parte, en la

experiencia de la Santa. De ello podemos deducir que nuestros dos autores viviendo en épocas muy diversas pudieron llegar a descripciones parecidas, en cuanto a la doctrina de los sentidos espirituales, ya que la experiencia y la teología se condicionan y compenetran.

Finalmente, la única diferencia entre los dos que hemos notado a lo largo de nuestra exposición no afecta a la doctrina misma, sino que es una diferencia de estilo. La Santa se muestra más libre y audaz en sus descripciones de los sentidos espirituales en comparación con el Santo. Esto no habla contra San Buenaventura, de ninguna manera, solo pone de manifiesto la originalidad de la expresión literaria de santa Teresa.

Siglas de los escritos teresianos:

- Cp – *Conceptos del amor de Dios*
- CV – *Camino de Perfección* (Manuscrito de Valladolid)
- M – *Moradas o Castillo Interior*
- R – *Relaciones*
- V – *Libro de la Vida*

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Marianne Schlosser,

A “Jewel Box”: Bonaventure’s View on Theology Described in the Prologue of the *Breviloquium*

The *Breviloquium* is one of the most important and best-known works of Bonaventure (c.1217–1274). M. D. Chenu praised it as “incarnation of Franciscan theology” (Chenu 1969, 57). In its genre, it is a compendium of theology written at the request of his student brethren. The year of its composition cannot be stated with absolute certainty, but there is a prevailing opinion among scholars that the work has been written at the end of Bonaventure’s teaching career, in the years 1256–1257, at least before his election as Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor (2 Feb. 1257).⁷⁸

Bonaventure wrote the *Breviloquium* with a clear purpose explained in the Prologue (7): Many students considered studying “Sacred Scripture” — i.e., the theological lectures consisting mainly of commentaries on single books of Sacred Scripture — to be “like a gloomy forest (*silva opaca*).” This difficulty was primarily due to the fact that the basic theological knowledge required for the interpretation of Scripture was not taught in a systematical way, if at all.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Jay M. Hammond has recently (2017) taken up the thesis of a later dating (between 1262–1267) once put forward by Bérubé.

⁷⁹ Cf. Thomas Aquinas at the very beginning of the *Summa theologiae*: *Consideravimus namque huius doctrinae novitios, in his quae a diversis conscripta sunt, plurimum impedi, partim quidem propter multiplicationem inutilium quaestionum, articulorum et argumentorum; partim etiam quia ea quae sunt necessaria talibus ad sciendum, non traduntur secundum ordinem disciplinae, sed secundum quod requirebat librorum expositio, vel secundum quod se praebebat occasio disputandi; partim quidem quia eorundem frequens repetitio et fastidium et confusionem generabat in animis auditorum. Haec igitur et alia huiusmodi evitare studentes, tentabimus, cum confidentia divini auxilii, ea quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinent, breviter ac dilucide prosequi [...] (Prol.)* Cited according to the edition *Textum Leoninum*, published in Rome (1888). <https://www.corpusthomicum.org/sth0000.html>.

In 1256, Bonaventure already had a rich experience in academic teaching: he had given an introductory lecture on the Gospel of St. Luke in 1248, which he revised again after his doctorate (1254); as a professor he had commented on the Book of Kohelet and the Gospel of St. John, and earlier, as a Baccalaureus, on the Sentences of Peter Lombardus (1250–1252). He had also held various series of disputations.⁸⁰

In the *Breviloquium* he now wants to present the basic knowledge that students need in order to attend lectures on the biblical books. In this “short word” the main parts of dogmatic theology are presented: God the One and Triune (1), Creation and the Fall (2 and 3), Christ and His Work of Salvation (4: the center of the *Breviloquium*), Pneumatology and the Doctrine of Grace, virtues, spiritual life and prayer (5), Sacramental Theology (6), and Eschatology (7). The seven parts are divided into 72 chapters — a number that recalls both the 72 disciples sent out as well as the number of translators of the Septuagint. Each chapter, as well as the sections of the Prologue, is divided into two parts: a first short paragraph presents what is “to be held fast (*quid tenendum est*)” as doctrine of faith. In a second, much more detailed paragraph, a theological explanation is given, “for better understanding (*ad intelligendum*).”

Since in Bonaventure’s view, neither Sacred Scripture nor theological science simply intend to increase knowledge about God, but rather have the sanctification of man as their ultimate goal — “so that man may become good (*ut boni fiamus*)” (*Brev. Prol.* 2; 6; cf. *In I Sent.* Prooem. q.2)⁸¹ — the *Breviloquium* also contains questions of moral theology and spiritual life (especially in parts 3 and 5, on sin and the life of grace). Questions of canon law or liturgy are also woven in (e.g., in connection with the sacraments). Theology thus is shown to be *one* science, although it encompasses many areas.⁸²

The unifying principle of theological science is the *unum principium*, God himself: God is not only the origin of all created things, but in a special sense the origin and base of theological knowledge. Speaking about God, theo-logy, is possible because first (*principaliter*, originally) God speaks about himself, in other words: he reveals himself. The strikingly detailed Prologue, which M.-D. Chenu called “the most beautiful programme of spiritual hermeneutics developed in the 13th century” (Chenu 1969, 54), deals with these fundamental questions: the relationship between revelation and faith, between Holy Scripture and theology.

The great importance of the Prologue is reflected in the various titles under which the *Breviloquium* was handed down: in addition to the designation *Summarium* or *Summa fratris Bonaventurae*, we find such titles as: *Compendium sacrae*

⁸⁰ The *Quaestiones disputatae* (*De perfectione evangelica*, *De scientia Christi* and *De mysterio Trinitatis*) antecede the composition of the *Breviloquium*.

⁸¹ Nota bene: The number of these paragraphs differs according to different editions: Vol. 5 of the Quaracchi-edition does not count the first section of the Prologue but is beginning with the second. I follow Vicetia’s edition (1881) that counts the beginning. This edition provides many annotations and rich material from other works of Bonaventure.

⁸² Cf. the detailed introduction to the English translation (Monti 2005, xxii–xxxviii) All quotations are provided in accordance with his translation..

Scripturae, Introductorius totius Sacrae Scripturae, Breviloquium de articulis fidei et de intelligentia sacrae Scripturae, Tractatus pauperis in divina Pagina or: in Scriptura (Distelbrink 1975, 3).

Since the 1940s, beginning with an essay by P. Bordoy-Torrants (cited in Monti 2005, xxxviii), some scholars proposed the hypothesis that the Prologue might originally have been written as an independent opusculum — as an introduction or “recommendation” of Sacred Scripture — and was only later combined with the following 72 chapters, which provide a compendium of theology (Maranesi 2008, 94, 110). Other scholars, such as Monti and Falque, considered this thesis less plausible.

In any case, the combining of the two parts must have been done very early by Bonaventure himself; for the manuscript tradition testifies to the connection of the Prologue and the theological compendium.⁸³ In my opinion, the inner relationship between “theology” and “Holy Scripture,” as emphasised at the beginning of the Prologue and in *Brev. Prol. 7*, as well as Bonaventure’s claim to explain the entire content of the doctrine of faith from the *primum principium* — which he does in all 72 chapters and especially in the Prologue itself — also argues for a deliberately coherent composition.

The Prologue shows a very clear structure. Bonaventure starts, as usual, with a quotation from Scripture, which is of programmatic character for the following explanations and provides the structure. The text chosen here, Eph 3:14-19, is a prayer, or more precisely, an intercession, which at the same time contains the Trinitarian creed: the Apostle “bows his knees” in adoration of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and prays for those to whom the letter is addressed, that they might receive the Spirit, who gives the grace of faith, love and insight into faith:

Flecto genua mea ad Patrem Domini nostri Iesu Christi,
 ex quo omnis paternitas in caelo et in terra nominatur,
 ut det vobis secundum divitias gloriae suae virtutem corroborari
 per Spiritum eius in interiori homine,
 habitare Christum per fidem in cordibus vestris,
 in caritate radicati et fundati,
 ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis,
 quae sit latitudo, longitudo, sublimitas et profundum,
 scire etiam supereminentem scientiae caritatem Christi,
 ut impleamini in omnem plenitudinem Dei.⁸⁴

⁸³ Cf. on this *Opera omnia* 5, xv–xxvi (Prolegomena III).

⁸⁴ “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 From whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named,
 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in
 the inner man;
 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,
 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Bonaventure adopts the Apostle's words as his own program: as a teacher of theology, he is working towards the same goal.

Speaking about God has its origin in God, the Trinity: God takes the initiative by revealing Himself and thus calling man into a new relationship with Him. Faith is therefore described as a gift and personal relationship with Christ ("indwelling in the heart"); and the deeper knowledge longed-for is interpreted as "growth in understanding," even to comprehend "what transcends all human sense or knowledge."

Therefore, the Prologue has to show first of all the "origin (*ortus*)" of theology: God's revealing activity (*Brev. Prol. 1*). The following paragraphs explain the "unfolding (*progressus*)," the way in which revelation is realised in history and reflected in Holy Scripture, i.e., how God's revelation reaches man as the addressee. Finally, the goal of revelation, and thus the goal (*status*) of Holy Scripture and theological interpretation as well are declared. The *progressus* is described in detail (*Brev. Prol. 2–7*): here the keywords "length, breadth, height, depth" from the opening quotation are echoed.

1. "Origin," "Development," "Final Goal"

"The origin of Holy Scripture, which is called theology, is not in human inquiry but in divine revelation (*non est per humanam investigationem, sed per divinam revelationem*):" a most concise sentence with rich implications. It has often been remarked that Bonaventure is, to a certain extent, identifying "Holy Scripture" and "theology." In the strict sense, however, he merely affirms that Sacred Scripture is called "theology" (not vice versa), thus recalling, without going into further detail, the concept of Dionysius Ps. Areopagita, who called Sacred Scripture *theologia* and its human authors *theologoi* (Ratzinger 2008, 395).⁸⁵ Bonaventure is aware that the theology of the *doctores* is proceeding systematically, by means of reason and arguments. The content or *materia* of Scripture, of faith as virtue (*habitus*), and of theology is one and the same, but formally differentiated: what is to be believed (*credibile*) is object of faith, in respect of assent to First Truth; in respect of being presented as to be believed (*credibile ratione auctoritatis, credibile ut credibile*), it is the object of Holy Scripture; in respect of being accessible to insight or understanding (*credibile ut intelligibile*), it is the object of theological science (cf. *Brev. 1.1; In I Sent. Prooem. q.1, ad 5.6*).

The revelation of God, however, is not simply identical with Holy Scripture. For Bonaventure, revelation (*revelatio*) is above all an activity of God seeking to evoke responding faith in man (Ratzinger 2008, 85; 255).⁸⁶ The external word of proclamation or preaching, however, is co-cause of the assent of faith, which comes

⁸⁵ Ratzinger refers here to *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* 1.1 and *Ep. 9 ad Titum* 1.

⁸⁶ The object or content of revelation is mostly named *credibile, credenda* or simply "*fides (catholica)*."

about because of an inner light of grace.⁸⁷ Therefore, faith does not primarily refer to Scripture, but to the Triune God Himself.⁸⁸ “Faith is knowledge of Jesus Christ (*notitia Jesu Christi*)” (cf. *Brev. Prol.* 7) — more than theoretical knowledge, rather a personal relationship or attachment (*inhabitatio*), in other words: a virtue effected by God (*virtus infusa*). *Fides quae* and *fides qua* are not separated from each other. Knowing Christ by his revelation and trusting in him because of his revelation precedes the understanding of Scripture. Faith is the prerequisite for being able to grasp the “reliability (*firmitas*)” of Holy Scripture and to understand its “meaning (*intelligentia*).” In this life faith “is the lamp, the gateway and the foundation of all supernatural knowledge (*omnium supernaturalium illuminationum, quamdiu peregrinamur a Domino, et fundamentum stabiliens et lucerna dirigens et ianua introducens*).” This means, in turn, that no wisdom of theological knowledge, but also no contemplative enlightenment, can “exhaust” or fully comprehend the content of faith or leave it behind; rather, all further knowledge is built on faith and has to be measured by it (cf. Rom 12:3).

How does revelation happen in the course of history (*progressus*), what does Holy Scripture communicate? The “path,” according to Bonaventure, corresponds to the addressee, the human person and his or her receptivity. The content of Scripture is, in some sense, “comprehensive,” a wide variety of issues and realities are addressed; but the aim is not the mere increase of knowledge or material completeness, but “sufficient knowledge, as it serves man in the state of pilgrimage to salvation (*notitiam rerum sufficientem, secundum quod expedit ad salutem*).” At the same time, the richness of the Holy Scriptures, both in expression and in content, corresponds to the dignity of man, whose capacity for knowledge is not narrowly limited:

Sic exigebat conditio capacitatis humanae, quae magna et multa nata est magnifice et multipliciter capere, tamquam speculum quoddam nobilissimum, in quo nata est describi non solum naturaliter, verum etiam supernaturaliter rerum universitas mundanarum.

Just as man is already by his nature open to all things knowable, and to truth itself, so also the knowledge imparted by Holy Scripture is not meagre, but rich in content and expression: Bonaventure describes (*Brev. Prol.* 2–5) the “length, breadth, height and depth” of Holy Scripture.

⁸⁷ *Quia veritas supra rationem sive praeter rationem est veritas non visa nec apprens, sed magis occulta et ad credendum difficillima, ideo ad hoc, quod firmiter credatur, necessaria est illustratio veritatis animam elevans, necessaria etiam testificatio auctoritatis animam firmans. Primum fit per fidem infusam, secundum per Scripturam authenticam, quarum utraque est a veritate summa per Iesum Christum, qui est Splendor et Verbum, et per Spiritum sanctum, qui veritatem ostendit et docet et nihilominus credere facit. Hinc est quod auctoritas praebet fulcimentum fidei, et fides assentit auctoritati. Et quia auctoritas principaliter residet in Sacra Scriptura, quae per Spiritum sanctum est condita tota ad dirigendam fidem catholicam, hinc est quod vera fides a Scriptura non dissonat, sed ei assentit assensione non ficta. (Brev. 5.7)*

⁸⁸ Neither Holy Scripture, nor miracles, nor the personal witness of martyrs, nor theological arguments can bring forth faith, strictly speaking. They are *adminicula*; cf. *M. Trin.* q.1, a.2.

The “goal” of revelation is the beatitude of man. Scripture contains “words of eternal life,” “it is written not only that we may believe, but that we may have eternal life.” The eternal life of heaven will consist in the clear vision of God and everlasting joy in his love. The Holy Scriptures intend to introduce us to this fullness of God already in this life, by strengthening faith, love and hope: *Hoc fine, hac intentione sacra Scriptura perscrutanda est et docenda et etiam audienda.*

2. The “Breadth” of Sacred Scripture — The Two Testaments and Their Fundamental Literary Genres

To demonstrate the comprehensive character of Sacred Scripture, Bonaventure mentions the division into the Old and the New Testament: the writings that tell of the Logos before his incarnation and those that testify to his incarnation. The books of the Old and New Testaments are interrelated, not only because “the old is in the new and vice versa,” but also because the main genres: Law, History, Wisdom and Prophecy, provide structure to both the books of the Old Testament and the New. The five books of the Law (Pentateuch) correspond to the four Gospels — Bonaventure does not consider the Gospels as “history,” but understands them as the foundation of the new life in Christ — the Acts of the Apostles correspond to the ten Old Testament historical books, the New Testament epistles correspond to the five books of Wisdom, most of which were attributed to King Solomon, and the Revelation of John corresponds to the six prophetic books.⁸⁹ Bonaventure considers the fourfoldness of the Holy Scriptures in the aforementioned genres to be signified by the fourfold *animalia*, that form the wheels on the throne of YHWH (Ez 1:10.15f.); and he briefly refers to the symbolism of the “interlocking” wheels, which since the patristic times have been considered as a mysterious symbol for the inner correlation of the Old and New Testament.

He then turns his attention to another aspect: what is common and what is different in the two Testaments. Both parts of the Holy Scriptures contain “knowledge that moves” (the listening or reading person) *ad bonum*. Again: Holy Scripture does not teach a merely “theoretical” wisdom or knowledge of facts (*notitia rerum*). Faith in God can never be separated from moral life and the question: what is well pleasing to God (*notitia morum*) — unlike philosophy, where the speculative and practical parts can be separated from each other. Holy Scripture of both Testaments calls man to be good and warns against evil. The difference is seen in the central means by which man is to be attracted to the good and dissuaded from evil. The two basic effects of the endeavour are fear or love, and in this particular emphasis lies the difference between the Old and New Testament — an idea that was *sententia communis*, once formulated by Augustine.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ These are: Isaiah, Jeremiah with the Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, the XII Minor Prophets, and the Psalms.

⁹⁰ *Timor* and *amor*: “that is the shortest and most clear difference between Old and New Testament [...] but both have their origin in God’s merciful acting” (*Contra Adamantium* 17).

Nota bene: Bonaventure is not talking about a different concept of God in the Old and the New Testament, nor does he suggest that after Christ's coming there is no longer any "fear" or that it was not necessary any longer. He is rather speaking of two ways of educating God's people. This education to sensitivity for the good, for God's good, is provided by all four genres: by the law through commandments and prohibitions, by history through concrete examples of God's benefits, by the books of wisdom through the demonstration of truth, and by prophetic books in all three ways. The pedagogy of the Scriptures takes into account the different condition and character of all human beings.

True to his Trinitarian form of thought — which could be called a system-building element in his thought — Bonaventure concludes this section by relating the genres of Scripture to the Trinity, more specifically, to the attributes appropriated to the three divine persons: Majesty or holiness to the Father (commandments), truth to the Son (wisdom) and love or goodness to the Holy Spirit (guidance through history, benefits). As God is holy, wise and good by his nature, so man is to be led by God's revelation to become holy, wise and good by participation.

3. The Length — Unfolding Through History

The "length of Scripture" means that it encompasses all times: it starts with the creation of heaven and earth and concludes with the final judgement and the consummation of world and history. At the centre is the person of Christ. As the eternal Word of the Father made man in time, he himself is the *verbum abbreviatum*, the summary of all that God has to reveal.

Bonaventure briefly sums up the familiar divisions of periods in salvation history: First, history is divided into three states, namely the time before the Sinai covenant, which is the time of the *lex naturae*, then the time of the Mosaic Law (*lex scripta*), and finally the time of grace, the *lex gratiae* given by Christ (Augustine, *De Trinitate* 4.4.7; cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei* 1.8.3). The first two periods — the time of the Old Covenant — are again subdivided into five *aetates*: the time from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham (*circumcisio*), then to David, to the Babylonian Captivity, finally to Christ (cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei* 1.8.3; 2.2.1; Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 1.23; *De Genesi ad litteram* 4.11.21). With the incarnation of the Son of God, the sixth *aetas* begins, which will last until the end of the world; it is in a sense congruent with the *status legis gratiae*. The seventh *aetas* — according to the *Breviloquium* — is not a period of time that follows the sixth, but "runs parallel with the sixth": this *aetas* begins with Holy Saturday, the burial rest of Jesus, and will end with the dawning of the "eighth day," the resurrection of the body. The seventh *aetas* is thus the "time" of those who have already passed away and are waiting for the resurrection of the flesh and consummation of the world.

This division of history as a whole is set in parallel with the six or seven days of the work of creation on the one hand, and with the ages of the individual human being on the other; for “the world was created for the sake of man,” but above all towards the man Jesus Christ, incarnate Son of God. Likewise, Sacred Scripture grows towards the *evangelica doctrina* and is completed by the Spirit-inspired apostolic *documenta*:

Nam cum primo in Scriptura essent libri legales, postea supervenit aqua sapientiae historialium librorum, tertio vero superadvenit doctrina sapientissimi Salomonis, post haec etiam doctrina sanctorum Prophetarum et tandem doctrina evangelica revelata est, per os carnis Christi prolata, per Evangelistas conscripta, per sanctos Apostolos divulgata; additis etiam documentis, quae Spiritus sanctus, super eos veniens, docuit nos per eos: ut sic omnem veritatem, per Spiritum sanctum iuxta divinum promissum edocti, omnis veritatis salutaris doctrinam Ecclesiae Christi darent et sacram Scripturam consummando veritatis notitiam dilatarent. (*Brev. Prol.* 2; cf. also *In III Sent.* dist. 9, a.1, q.2, ad 6)⁹¹

As a mirror reflecting the history from creation to consummation, Sacred Scripture as a whole can be compared with “a beautiful poem (*carmen venustissimum*).” To understand a poem, one must know it as a whole. Through Sacred Scripture the temporally limited human person receives insight into the whole of history, which could never be obtained through his own research: hence Bonaventure’s urgent exhortation to study the Holy Scriptures in their entirety and to imprint them on one’s memory.

4. The Height — Sublimity and Beauty

In this paragraph the focus lies on the vertical dimension of the content. Sacred Scripture not only speaks of the earthly world, but also of the supernatural reality, the angels (*hierarchia coelestis*, the heavenly world) and of the mystery of God (*hierarchia supercoelestis*, the Trinity): Holy Scripture intends to “make us familiar with the contemplation of divine things.”

Est enim pulchritudo magna in machina mundana, sed longe maior in Ecclesia pulchritudine sanctorum charismatum adornata, maxima autem in Ierusalem superna, supermaxima autem in illa Trinitate summa et beatissima.⁹²

⁹¹ “For first were the books of the Law, then came the water of wisdom in the books of history, in the third place came the teaching of the wise Solomon, after this the teaching of the holy prophets, at last the teaching revealed in the Gospel. Proclaimed on earth by the mouth of Christ, written down by the evangelists, spread by the apostles. To these were added the testimonies in which the Holy Spirit, descending upon the apostles, instructed us through them, so that — as the Lord promised (John 16:13) — they were instructed by the Holy Spirit in all truth, they delivered the teaching of all salvific truth to the Church of Christ, and so — completing the Holy Scriptures — spread the knowledge of the truth.”

⁹² “Great is the beauty of the image of the world, but much greater is the beauty of the Church, which shines in the adornment of the holy gifts of grace, mightily great the beauty of the heavenly Jerusalem, all surpassing great the beauty of the Most High and Most Holy Trinity.”

Because these things are not directly accessible to the human mind, the Holy Scriptures use a more or less mysterious form of expression, for example by using figures or symbols for realities that cannot (yet) be seen. The invisible beauty can only be seen *in speculo*, “in the mirror”; therefore “Sacred Scripture makes a mirror or a ladder” (Gen 28:12). Bonaventure emphasises that this mirror cannot be made “from below” but must be shown “from above”: it is not men who invent the images and analogies, but they are chosen by the one witness who knows what he is talking about — Christ. The reality of creation is indeed from the beginning designed to be the “way” and “ladder” to the knowledge of God, but because of the Fall, the creatures “became mute” and man “deaf” to their message; it was necessary to “restore the ladder” through the revelation in Christ. The Scripture, speaking of him, is thus a commentary on the “Book of Creation,” the meaning of which must be explained anew (cf. *De mysterio Trinitatis* q.1, a.2; *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* 1.7).

5. The Depth — Manifold Spiritual Meaning

The “depth” of Sacred Scripture consists in the “multiplicity of spiritual insights (*mysticae intelligentiae*)” that may be hidden beneath the plain form of the literal meaning. In this paragraph, Bonaventure undertakes a theological explanation of the well-known doctrine of the “threefold spiritual sense” within the “one literal sense” (cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon* 5.2). First, this plurality corresponds to the faith or content of theology, which is defined differently by different scholastic authors: God, Christ, or the work of redemption (*opus reparationis*). Whichever definition one prefers, in each one the elements are assigned to build an inward unity: God is “one and triune,” Christ is the one Word of the Father in whom all things are created, i.e., who is the *causa exemplaris* of all created things (cf. *QD De scientia Christi* qq. 1–3), and the redemptive work of God comprises many deeds, all of which culminate in the self-giving sacrifice of Christ.

Secondly, the diversity of spiritual meaning also corresponds to the diversity of addressees. All too self-confident recipients (*superbi*) should become aware of and acknowledge their limitations when they realise that the meaning of a text is not always obvious. And those who teach or hear “with humility, with a pure heart, full of faith and earnest zeal (*humilis, mundus, fidelis, studiosus*)” are to be addressed according to their situation and according to their spiritual progress: Bonaventure argues with St. Paul that the Holy Scripture wants to “take every mind (intellect) captive” (2 Cor 10:5). Everyone is to receive something he can understand, and at the same time everyone’s understanding is also to be surpassed. For “the human soul does not find its peace in something she fully comprehends, but in an object that exceeds the soul and exalts the soul above herself” (*QD De scientia Christi* q.6, ad 15).⁹³

⁹³ *Anima non est contenta aliquo bono, quod capiat et comprehendat, quia nihil tale est summum; sed bono tali et tanto, quod capiat et apprehendat per aspectum et affectum, et a quo capiatur per superexcedentiam et excessum.*

Thirdly, the multiple sense corresponds to the multiplicity of divine revelation as testified to in the Scripture: Not only in words but also in deeds and events does God make himself known — “his speaking is doing, and his doing is speaking” — he makes himself known in creatures and by means of inner revelation through the Holy Spirit, but above all in the proclamation through the Son, who taught so simply (*humilis*), and whose words were at the same time of divine profundity.

Fourthly, the threefold spiritual sense contributes to the goal of the Holy Scriptures: man is to be guided by it “in knowledge and in action, so that he may finally attain his desired goal.” This corresponds to the allegorical, tropological and analogical sense.

In *Brev. Prol.* 6 and 7, Bonaventure unfolds the consequences of what has been said so far, for the interpretation of Scripture.

6. The *Auctoritas* of Holy Scripture

The style of the biblical books is not that of a scientific treatise whose convincing power depends on the plausibility of the particular arguments and conclusions. The persuasive power of Holy Scripture lies in the fact that it speaks “authoritatively (*authentice*)” in all genres: “narrative, commanding, forbidding, exhorting, foretelling, threatening, promising, supplicating and praising.”

One could first paraphrase the meaning of *authentice* as “testifying speech”; the opposite would be “discursive-inferential.” The Holy Scripture testifies to something that cannot be theoretically proven by deductive reasoning, for example, particular events that cannot be “proven” by general principles (*de particularibus non est scientia*). The testimony aims to *move* the addressee, it is not focused on information, but on “the inclination of the will”:

Quia enim haec doctrina est, *ut boni fiamus* et salvemur, et hoc non fit per nudam considerationem, sed potius per inclinationem voluntatis: ideo Scriptura divina eo modo debuit tradi, quo modo magis possemus inclinari. Et quia magis movetur affectus ad exempla quam ad argumenta, magis ad promissiones quam ad ratiocinationes, magis per devotiones quam per definitiones [...] oportuit quod haberet modos proprios, secundum varias inclinationes animorum diversimode animos inclinantes.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ “Since the aim of this doctrine is that we may become good and attain salvation, and this is not done by mere reasoning, but much more by the inclination of the will, the Holy Scriptures had to be given to us in a form which acts more on the inclination of the will. Because our loving striving can be moved more by examples than by arguments, by promises than by conclusions, by devoted prayer than by definitions, [...] the Holy Scriptures used their own ways of speaking and arguing, which, according to the different inclinations of the souls, can also have an effect on them in different ways.”

Secondly, authentic testimony implies “reliability,” which depends on the person who gives the testimony, its author (*auctor*), whom you can trust.⁹⁵ Since this ultimate guarantor is God Himself — notwithstanding the many human authors — “one must not disregard anything in the Holy Scriptures as superfluous, reject anything as false, reject anything as unjust [...]” Rather, starting from the right foundation, one should seek the understanding of such difficult passages, and “bring to light what is hidden” (*Brev. Prol.* 7).

7. Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures

In principle, passages that seem enigmatic, or whose interpretation is not clear, should be illuminated by those whose meaning is clear and without any doubt. This, however, presupposes to know the entire Scripture as well as possible. Bonaventure insists on the *littera*: One must “memorise the text of the Bible by reading it according to the wording. Otherwise, one will never get very far in the interpretation of Scripture.”

One does not have to look for a spiritual meaning in every passage. The Seraphic teacher summarizes, recurring to Augustine (*De doctrina christiana* 3.10),⁹⁶ three rules:

Ubicumque in hac Scriptura prima verborum significatio significat recreationis sive singulares actus humanae conversationis, ibidem res significatae per verba primo significantur, deinde nostrae reparationis mysteria. Ubi vero prima significatio verborum exprimit fidem sive caritatem, ibi nulla est allegoria quaerenda.

Secunda regula est ista: Ubi verba huius Scripturae significant re creationis aut conversationis populi Israelitici, ibi quaerat ex alio Scripturae loco, quid quaelibet res significet, et deinde significationem suam eliciat per verba nude significantia fidei veritatem, vel morem etiam honestatem.⁹⁷

Tertia regula est ista: Quando aliqua Scriptura habe aliquem intellectum litteralem et spiritualem, debet discutere expositor, utrum illa attributio conveniat historico aut spirituali significato, si forte utrique non poterit convenire. Si autem utrique competit, tunc litteraliter et spiritualiter debet affirmari.

Si vero altero modo tantum, tunc spiritualiter solum debet intelligi – sicut sabbatum Legis esse perpetuum, sacerdotium aeternum, possessionem terrae

⁹⁵ The relation between the terms *authenticus* and *auctoritas* is explained by M.-D. Chenu (1960, 142–144).

⁹⁶ Monti (2005, 20, n. 5) identifies as immediate source Robert Grosseteste, *De cessatione legalium* (1.9.4–8).

⁹⁷ For example: *Oves geminas fetus pariunt*; “sheep” is in Holy Scriptures of Old and New Testament very often used for the people, especially for the faithful. Every faithful gives birth to “twins,” love for God and for the neighbor.

aeternam, et pactum circumcissionis esse aeternum; quae omnia ad spirituale significatum referenda sunt.⁹⁸

8. Reception of the *Breviloquium*

Jean Gerson (1363–1428), Chancellor of the University of Paris, warmly recommended Bonaventure as a marvellous master for those interested in theology, and he praised especially the *Breviloquium*:

In the first place among doctors of theology, Bonaventure ought to be recommended, that is my opinion. In my eyes he is — the others may not be offended by this — a uniquely suitable teacher. One is in the best hands with him if one seeks enlightenment of the intellect and inflammation of the heart. Two of his works — I will pass over the others now — are graced expositions of great density: the *Breviloquium* and the *Itinerarium*. (*De libris legendis a monacho* 5f.)

Gerson complained that Bonaventure was nearly forgotten, neglected, studied far too little, that “modern” authors were preferred to him. But by having a look at the rich manuscript tradition we can suggest that the reception of the *Breviloquium* was not quite so miserable: 227 manuscripts are listed in Quaracchi’s edition; Balduin Distelbrink counts 238 codices, some of them dating from the 13th century, the oldest manuscript from 1257. Together with the *Itinerarium*, the *Breviloquium* is Bonaventure’s most frequently printed work; it was first printed in Nuremberg in 1472. Last not least: quite a few medieval authors used the *Breviloquium* for their own works, sometimes without citing the source explicitly.

Apart from its content the style of the *Breviloquium* is perfectly concise and at the same time beautiful in language. The rather elaborated Prologue, which deals with the most important questions of hermeneutics and fundamental theology, comprises no more than eight pages in the folio format of the Quaracchi

⁹⁸ “Where the primary signification of the words denote created realities or individual acts of human behavior, in the first instance they refer to the facts signified by these words but then secondly to the mysteries of our redemption. But where the primary signification of the words expresses some aspect of faith or love, then one has no need to look for any allegorical meaning.

The second rule is this: when the words of Scripture signify created realities or an aspect of the life of the people of Israel, there the interpreter must use some other part of Scripture to find what each thing signifies, and then elicit the meaning of that passage using words which plainly signify some truth of our faith or of some correct principle of morality. For instance, if the text says: *The sheep all bear twins*, the interpreter must show that here ‘sheep’ mean human beings, and ‘twins,’ the two kinds of love.

The third rule is this: When a certain Scriptural passage has a possible literal and spiritual meaning, the interpreter ought to judge whether that passage relates better to the literal or to a spiritual meaning – if, that is, it cannot be accepted in both senses. For if it can be accepted in both senses, then it ought to be given both a literal and a spiritual interpretation.

But if it is capable of only one interpretation, then it must be taken in the spiritual sense alone. Examples of this are the statements that the law of the Sabbath has perpetual force, that the cultic priesthood is eternal, that Israel’s possession of the land is unending, and that the covenant of circumcision is everlasting. All of these statements have to be referred to their spiritual meaning.”

edition. What Matthias J. Scheeben said about the *Breviloquium* — and Martin Grabmann has repeated his words — characterizes especially the Prologue: “It is a true jewel box [...] solving a great question with every word and presenting the development of theological knowledge from the supreme principles of faith in the most succinct and vivid manner” (Scheeben 1959, 460).

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Anton Štrukelj,

Joseph Ratzinger – Papst Benedikt XVI. und seine Bonaventura-Forschungen

Joseph Ratzingers akademische Laufbahn begann mit zwei gründlichen und umfangreichen Studien. Im Jahre 1951 erschien seine Dissertation *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (JRGS 1, 2011). In den Jahren 1953–1955 entstanden seine Studien über »Offenbarungsverständnis und Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras« (Ratzinger 2009). Dieser Band erschien in 2009 in der groß angelegten und fast schon abgeschlossenen Reihe der Gesammelten Schriften in 16 Bänden von Joseph Ratzinger (bis zur Papstwahl). Das über 900 Seiten umfangreiche Buch enthält die gesammelten Bonaventura-Schriften Joseph Ratzingers, sowie einige kleinere Beiträge unterschiedlicher Gattung zu scholastischen Themen und Autoren (vgl. Schlosser 2009, 29).

In den Erinnerungen »Aus meinem Leben« schildert Joseph Ratzinger den eigenen Studienwerdegang, aus dem eine gewisse »Geistesverwandtschaft« und »Freundschaft« mit den Kirchenlehrern erwachsen sind: »Da ich von Augustinus herkam, lag es nahe, über Bonaventura zu arbeiten, mit dem Söhnen sich ziemlich eingehend beschäftigt hatte... So sollte ich versuchen herauszubringen, ob es in irgendeiner Form bei Bonaventura eine Entsprechung zum Begriff der Heilsgeschichte gebe und ob dieses Motiv — wenn erkennbar — in Zusammenhang mit dem Gedanken der Offenbarung stehe« (Ratzinger 1998, 78; vgl. Hofmann 2011, 74).

Die Habilitationsschrift war ein gewaltiges, ein wuchtiges Werk, mit etwa 600 maschinenschriftlichen Seiten das umfangreichste, das Ratzinger je geschrieben hat

— und von dem jedoch gut zwei Drittel Seiten über ein halbes Jahr lang in der Schublade verschwinden sollten. Was ist passiert?

1. Das Drama der Habilitation

Kardinal Joseph Ratzinger erzählt in seinen Lebenserinnerungen, dass seine wissenschaftliche Laufbahn beinahe schon beendet gewesen wäre, noch ehe sie richtig begonnen hatte. Während sein Doktorvater Professor Gottlieb Söhnen (1892–1971) die Studie geradezu hymnisch lobte, hatte der Zweigutachter, Prof. Michael Schmaus (1897–1993), den ersten Abschnitt vernichtend kritisiert. Lediglich im dritten Teil gab es kaum noch Beanstandungen. Das Drama begann, als Prof. Schmaus »sachlich und ohne Emotion« dem Kandidaten eröffnete, er müsse die Habilitationsschrift ablehnen. — »Ich war wie vom Donner getroffen. Eine Welt drohte für mich zusammenzubrechen«, beschrieb der junge Theologe seine Betroffenheit. Vor allem kamen ihm seine Eltern in den Sinn, »die guten Glaubens zu mir nach Freising gekommen waren«. Was sollte aus ihnen werden, »wenn ich nun als Gescheiterter von der Hochschule gehen musste?«

In dieser Not entschied sich der junge Gelehrte für eine kühne, geniale Lösung: in kurzer Zeit bearbeitete er den dritten Teil seiner Studie und legt seinen Text erneut vor. Ein Wagnis. Und eine Überraschung, denn die neue Fassung hätte normalerweise einige Jahre beanspruchen müssen. Doch die Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät nimmt im Februar 1957 die neue Fassung an. Am Schicksalstag (21. Februar) ist der große Hörsaal der Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität in München zum Bersten gefüllt mit zweihundert Studenten, Professoren und Schaulustigen. Es herrscht Totenstille, als der Prüfling seinen halbstündigen Vortrag beginnt. Danach aber entbrennt eine Kontroverse zwischen Habilitations-Vater Gottlieb Söhngen und dessen Kollegen Michael Schmaus, ein heftiges Streitgespräch, wobei beide Kontrahenten in den Hörsaal hineinpredigen. Der Habilitant steht stumm »im Hintergrund, ohne noch gebraucht zu werden«. Nach der offiziellen Kundgabe des Fakultätsrates: »bestanden«, konnte Ratzinger kaum Freude empfinden, denn »so schwer lag der Albtraum des Vergangenen noch auf mir«, erinnert er sich (Ratzinger 1998, 88). Freilich war auch diese Prüfung von der Vorsehung als segensreich gemeint. »Aber die Dämonen, die sich um ihn versammelt hatten, sollten damit nicht verschwunden sein«, bemerkt Peter Seewald (2020, 297–312; vgl. Guerriero 2016, 72–74).

2. Die vollständige Veröffentlichung der Habilitationsarbeit

In der Gesamtausgabe der Werke Joseph Ratzingers — wie bereits erwähnt — ist im Jahr 2009 der Band mit seinen Arbeiten über die Theologie des großen franziskanischen Kirchenlehrers Bonaventura Fidanza veröffentlicht worden. Im Vorwort zu diesem Band erwähnt Papst Benedikt XVI. ausdrücklich, dass darin auch seine Studien über den Offenbarungsbegriff des Heiligen enthalten sein sollten, die schon in den Jahren 1953–1955 zusammen mit der Darstellung seiner Geschichtstheo-

logie entstanden, aber bisher unveröffentlicht geblieben waren. Die Herausgeberin, Prof. Dr. Marianne Schlosser, berichtet, dass der Heilige Vater ihr im Sommer 2007 persönlich eine vollständige Kopie des Typoskripts von 1955 geschickt hatte — eine faszinierende Lektüre! Sie hatte in Zusammenarbeit mit den Wissenschaftlern im Institut Papst Benedikt XVI. in Regensburg die Ausgabe der gesammelten Bonaventura-Studien Joseph Ratzingers besorgt (Schlosser 2009, 29–37) — offensichtlich ein epochales Dokument. Der Pontifex schrieb zur Edition der vollständigen Habilitationsarbeit: »Dankensweise hat Frau Prof. Dr. Marianne Schlosser, Wien, eine ausgewiesene Kennerin der mittelalterlichen Theologie und besonders der Werke des heiligen Bonaventura, sich angeboten, die nötige und gewiss nicht ganz leichte Arbeit zu übernehmen. Dafür kann ich ihr nur von Herzen danken.« (Schlosser 2009, 5)

Der Hauptteil A des genannten Band 2 »Bonaventura-Studien« besteht aus zwei Abschnitten: zuerst die Edition des bislang unveröffentlichten Textes des 1955 eingereichten Manuskripts (Ratzinger 2009, 53–417), dann folgt »Die Geschichtstheologie des heiligen Bonaventura« [= die 1959 veröffentlichte Fassung] seiner Habilitationsarbeit (Ratzinger 2009, 419–659).⁹⁹ Im Teil B des Bandes folgen sechs große Aufsätze zu Bonaventura, im Teil C kommen etliche Rezensionen zu Büchern mit mediävistischen Thematik und zwei Geleitworte (Ratzinger 2009, 797–837). Letztere Beiträge waren, verstreut, bereits im Druck veröffentlicht (vgl. Voderholzer 2011, 50).

Die Bonaventura-Studie von 1955 ist die Leistung eines damals achtundzwanzigjährigen Wissenschaftlers. Inhaltlich sollte er herauszufinden versuchen, wie Bonaventura die Offenbarung verstanden hatte und ob es bei ihm so etwas wie eine Vorstellung von »Heilsgeschichte« gebe. Damit war er vor eine schwierige Aufgabe gestellt. »Für Bonaventura war Offenbarung kein abstraktes Thema mehr, sondern mit der Deutung seiner eigenen franziskanischen Geschichte verbunden«. Im Rückblick fasste Joseph Ratzinger die Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras mit den Worten zusammen: »Wenn christlicher Glaube an eine vor Langem abgeschlossene Offenbarung gebunden ist, ist er dann nicht dazu verurteilt, rückwärtsgewandt zu sein und den Menschen an eine vergangene Zeit zu ketten? [...] Bonaventura hat darauf geantwortet, indem er den Zusammenhang von Christus und Heiligen Geist [...] stark herausgestellt hat: Das historische Offenbarungswort ist endgültig, aber es ist unerschöpflich und gibt immer neue Tiefen frei. Insofern spricht der Heilige Geist als Interpret Christi mit seinem Wort zu jeder Zeit und zeigt ihr, dass dieses Wort immerfort Neues zu sagen hat.« (Ratzinger 2016b, 264f.)

3. Kirche als Trägerin der Offenbarung

⁹⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des heiligen Bonaventura*. München: Schnell und Steiner, 1959 (Neuaufgabe: St. Ottilien: EOS, 1992). Diese Studie wurde bislang in vier Sprachen übersetzt: 1969 ins Amerikanische, 1978 ins Italienische (²1991), 1988 ins Französische und 2004 ins Spanische. Der amerikanischen und der zweiten Auflage der italienischen Ausgabe sowie der dt. Neuaufgabe 1992 wurde ein eigenes Vorwort des Autors vorangestellt (siehe Ratzinger 2009, 421; 426).

Die mittelalterliche Theologie kennt kein Traktat *De revelatione* (Über die Offenbarung) im heutigen Sinn. Es gibt auch kein Wort, das unserem heutigen Begriff von Offenbarung inhaltlich entspräche. So waren also schwierige Wortfelduntersuchungen zu leisten. Erst die Zusammenschau der Begriffe: *revelatio, manifestatio, doctrina, fides* usw. ergibt ein Bild davon, wie Bonaventura »Offenbarung« sieht.

In den eigenen Lebenserinnerungen fasst Joseph Ratzinger seine Bonaventura-Untersuchung zusammen:

Ich hatte festgestellt, dass es bei Bonaventura (und wohl bei den Theologen des 13. Jahrhunderts überhaupt) keine Entsprechung zu unserem Begriff »Offenbarung« gebe, mit dem wir üblicherweise das Ganze der offenbarten Inhalte zu bezeichnen pflegen, so dass sich sogar der Sprachgebrauch eingebürgert hat, die Heilige Schrift einfach »die Offenbarung« zu nennen. In der Sprache des hohen Mittelalters wäre eine solche Identifizierung gar undenkbar. »Offenbarung« ist dort immer ein Aktbegriff: Das Wort bezeichnet den Akt, in dem Gott sich zeigt, nicht das objektivierte Ergebnis dieses Aktes. Und weil es so ist, gehört zum Begriff »Offenbarung« immer auch das empfangende Subjekt: Wo niemand »Offenbarung« wahrnimmt, da ist eben keine Offenbarung geschehen, denn da ist nichts offen geworden. Zur Offenbarung gehört vom Begriff selbst her ein Jemand, der ihrer inne wird. Diese bei der Lektüre Bonaventuras gewonnenen Einsichten sind mir später, beim konziliaren Disput über Offenbarung, Schrift, Überlieferung sehr wichtig geworden. Denn wenn es so ist, dann liegt Offenbarung der Schrift voraus und schlägt sich in ihr nieder, ist aber nicht einfach mit ihr identisch. Das heißt aber dann, dass Offenbarung immer größer ist als das bloß Geschehene. Und das bedeutet wieder, dass es ein reines *Sola scriptura* (»durch die Schrift allein«) nicht geben kann, dass zur Schrift das verstehende Subjekt Kirche gehört, womit auch schon der wesentliche Sinn von Überlieferung gegeben ist. (Ratzinger 1998, 84; vgl. Ratzinger 2012)

Kurz und prägnant gesagt: Die Kirche ist die Adressatin und Trägerin der Offenbarung. Zur Offenbarung gehört der Adressat, ein Jemand, der ihrer inne wird. Dieser »Jemand« ist wohl die Kirche! Dieser Jemand ist nicht der isolierte Einzelne, sondern das Großsubjekt Kirche, in deren Glauben eingebunden auch dem Einzelnen der Zugang zur Begegnung mit dem sich erschließenden Gott und somit Offenbarung möglich ist. Jedem individualistischen und damit willkürlichen Subjektivismus ist somit bei Bonaventura ein Riegel vorgeschoben. Bonaventura vertritt einen kirchlich vermittelten, aber eben doch charismatischen Offenbarungsbegriff. »Offenbarung« als Vorgang ereignet sich überall dort, wo im Heiligen Geist Christus, das lebendige und fleischgewordene Wort Gottes, nicht als toter Buchstabe, sondern als lebendige Wirklichkeit erfahren und geglaubt wird.

Seit der Habilitationsschrift über Bonaventura zieht sich die auch für die Schriftauslegung entscheidend wichtige Kernaussage von Ratzingers theologischer

Erkenntnislehre durch sein gesamtes Werk: »Das Subjekt des Credo, des Taufbekenntnisses, ist nicht der isolierte Einzelne, sondern das Subjekt des Glaubens ist die Kirche in ihrer Raum und Zeit überspannenden überindividuellen Einheit.«¹⁰⁰ Die Kirche als ganze ist ein charismatisches Ereignis. Sie ist der Leib Christi. Der lebendige Herr, der durch den Heiligen Geist in seiner Eucharistie gegenwärtig ist, wirkt in der Kirche als *Mysterium salutis* (Ratzinger 2010).

Die Offenbarung überschreitet das Phänomen der Schrift allein auch insofern, als sie das glaubende Subjekt voraussetzt. Im ökumenischen Gespräch, das für Ratzinger immer von zentraler Bedeutung war, ist eine klare Absage dem *Sola scriptura* erteilt. Für eine katholische Theologie kann es niemals ein *Sola scriptura* geben. Die »Subjektivität« der Kirche als Empfängerin der Offenbarung ist nicht nur in der Ursprungssituation konstitutiv, sondern dies gilt auch für ihre gesamte geschichtliche Existenz. »Ratzingers Theologie der Tradition stellt einen der innovativsten und zugleich tiefeschürfundsten und bedenkenswertesten Beiträge zur Theologischen Erkenntnislehre des letzten Jahrhunderts dar und ist in seiner ganzen Tragweite wohl noch nicht erfasst und rezipiert.« (Voderholzer 2011, 67f.)

4. Die Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras

Dem Autor war von Anfang an klar, dass es bei dem mittelalterlichen Lehrer auch keinen Begriff von »Heilsgeschichte« in unserem Sinn gibt. Neben der klassischen Gestalt der Problematik von Geschichte und Wahrheit, die Bonaventura mit der Theologie seiner Zeit gemeinsam hat und auf seine Weise behandelt, kommt bei ihm aber noch das Neue seines historischen Augenblicks zum Tragen:

Joachim von Fiore (†1202) hatte einen trinitarischen Rhythmus der Geschichte gelehrt. Dem Zeitalter des Vaters (Altes Testament) und des Sohnes (Neues Testament, Kirche) sollte ein Zeitalter des Heiligen Geistes folgen, in dem mit der Einhaltung der Bergpredigt der Geist der Armut zum Durchbruch kommen werde, Versöhnung von Griechen und Lateinern, Versöhnung von Christen und Juden und eine Zeit des Friedens kommen würden. Aus einer Kombination symbolischer Zahlen hatte der gelehrte Abt abgeleitet, dass das neue Zeitalter um 1260 beginnen müsse. Die franziskanische Bewegung stieß etwa um 1240 auf diese Schriften, die für viele elektrisierend wirkten: Hatte mit Franz von Assisi wirklich dieses neue Zeitalter begonnen? So entwickelte sich im Innern des Ordens eine dramatische Spannung zwischen Realisten« und »Spiritualen«, die auf das radikale Neue einer neuen Periode der Geschichte setzten. Bonaventura war als Ordensgeneral der ungeheuren Herausforderung dieser Spannung ausgesetzt, die für ihn keine akademische Frage, sondern ein ganz konkretes Problem seines Auftrags als siebter Nachfolger des heiligen

¹⁰⁰ Vgl. »Das Ich des Credo schließt als den Übergang vom privaten Ich zum ekklesialen Ich ein.« (Ratzinger 1982, 23; vgl. Ratzinger 2016b; Štrukelj 2007, 9–36)

Franz darstellte. Insofern war Geschichte plötzlich als Wirklichkeit greifbar und musste als solche in realem Handeln und in theologischer Reflexion bewältigt werden. Wie Bonaventura diese Herausforderung angenommen und damit »Heilsgeschichte« und »Offenbarung« in Zusammenhang gebracht hat, habe ich versucht, in meiner Arbeit darzustellen.

So lautet die Aussage von Papst Benedikt XVI. in seinem Vorwort 2009 (Ratzinger 2009, 8).¹⁰¹

5. Doctor seraphicus und Papst Benedikt XVI.

Dass er seine damaligen Studien und deren Ergebnisse für durchwegs aktuell hält, gab der Verfasser bei verschiedenen Gelegenheiten klar zu erkennen. So bekräftigt er im Vorwort zur amerikanischen Ausgabe der »Geschichtstheologie« (1971): Auch wenn die historische Forschung weitergegangen sei und manche Einzelheiten der damaligen Studie dadurch überholt seien, auch er selbst »viele Akzente anders setzen« würde, so sei er doch überzeugt, dass »die Kernaussage davon unberührt bleibt«. »Ich bin überzeugt, dass die Theologie gut daran tut, mit ihrer eigenen Geschichte in Tuchfühlung zu bleiben. Ohne sie wäre die Theologie nämlich dazu verurteilt, wie ein von den Wurzeln abgeschnittener Baum dahinzuwelken.« (Ratzinger 2009, 424) Im Vorwort zum deutschen Nachdruck (1992) nennt Kardinal Ratzinger präzise einige aktuelle Fragestellungen, deren mögliche Lösungen durch Bonaventuras Theologie angeregt werden könnten: Kann man als Christ eine innerweltliche Vollendung denken, eine »Synthese von Utopie und Eschatologie«? Im 13. Jahrhundert hatten dies joachitische Kreise versucht, in den 80er und 90er Jahren aber sei diese Frage der »theologische Kern der Debatte um die Befreiungstheologie«. Damit verbunden ist die Frage nach einem ausgewogenen Verhältnis von Pneumatologie und Christologie, um »christologisch-sakramental geordnete Kirche und pneumatologisch-prophetische Kirche der Armen«. Bonaventura hat eine ausgesprochen differenzierte Position eingenommen. »Heute wie damals ist dies kein rein akademischer Disput, sondern ein Ringen darum, wie Geschichte recht gestaltet werden kann ...« (Ratzinger 2009, 427) Im Vorwort zur vollständigen Ausgabe 2009 weist Papst Benedikt nachdrücklich darauf hin, »dass die Frage nach dem Wesen der Offenbarung und ihrer Vergegenwärtigung [...] auch heute noch ihre Dringlichkeit hat, vielleicht sogar noch dringlicher geworden ist.« (Ratzinger 2009, 9)

Papst Benedikt XVI. hat dem großen franziskanischen Gelehrten und Kirchenlehrer hl. Bonaventura im Frühjahr 2010 drei Katechesen gewidmet (am 3., 10. und 17. März 2010; Ratzinger 2011). Dazu gehört auch seine Ansprache anlässlich des Pastoralbesuchs in Viterbo und Bagnoregio (6. September 2009). Der Hei-

¹⁰¹ »De Lubac hat den Nachwirkungen Joachims von Fiore umfangreiche Studien gewidmet.« (Ratzinger 2009, 426–428) Er zitiert: De Lubac, Henri. 1979–1981. *La posterité spirituelle de Joachim de Fiore*, 2 Bde. Paris: Lethielleux.

lige war ja sein langjähriger Freund: »Ich bin mit Augustinus, mit Bonaventura, mit Thomas von Aquin befreundet.«¹⁰² Es gibt auch »biographische Parallelen«. Joseph Ratzinger hat seine Dissertation über Augustinus und seine Habilitation über Bonaventura geschrieben. Beide Kirchenlehrer wurden aus der »Beschaulichkeit« des wissenschaftlichen Wirkens in eine verantwortungsvolle Leitungsaufgabe in der Kirche gestellt. Auch Joseph Ratzinger wollte als Professor wirken, aber er wurde zum Erzbischof von München und Freising und fünf Jahre später nach Rom als Präfekt der Glaubenskongregation berufen. Die kenntnisreiche Vertrautheit, ja »Geistesverwandtschaft« mit diesen großen Gestalten bildet »in der Tat den Auftakt für Joseph Ratzingers Mitwirken in allen entscheidenden Phasen der Kirchengeschichte der zurückliegenden Jahre« (Voderholzer 2011, 72f.). Marianne Schlosser konstatiert »eine geistige Verwandtschaft« zwischen dem hl. Bonaventura und Papst Benedikt XVI., und vermutet behutsam darin den Finger Gottes: »Im Nachhinein betrachtet darf man vielleicht sogar sagen, dass der Ratschlag Gottlieb Söhngens an seinen Habilitanden im Jahre 1953, sich Bonaventura zu wählen, providenziell gewesen sei.« (Schlosser 2009, 37)

6. Einige Gemeinsamkeiten

Worin besteht in den Augen von Papst Benedikt XVI. die bleibende Faszination und Fruchtbarkeit des bonaventuranischen Denkens? Welche Eigenschaften faszinieren Papst Benedikt an Bonaventuras Persönlichkeit und welche Parallelen bestehen zwischen den beiden?

6.1 »Aktion und Kontemplation«

Für Papst Benedikt scheint vor allem faszinierend die Verbindung von *intellektueller Bemühung* und *Gebet* zu sein. Also die Einheit von Aktion und Kontemplation. Bonaventura war als General des Franziskanerordens kein »Macher«, sondern einer, der »betet und denkt«. Denn für den hl. Bonaventura war »die Leitung nicht bloßes Tun, sondern vor allem Denken und Beten. An der Basis seiner Leitung finden wir immer das Gebet und das Denken; alle seine Entscheidungen ergeben sich aus der Reflexion, aus dem vom Gebet erleuchteten Denken. Sein inniger Kontakt mit Christus hat seine Arbeit als Generalminister immer begleitet, und daher hat er eine Reihe theologisch-mystischer Schriften verfaßt, die den Geist seiner Führung zum Ausdruck bringen und die Absicht bekunden, den Orden innerlich zu führen, das heißt nicht allein durch Befehle und Strukturen zu regieren, sondern in dem er die Seelen leitete und erleuchtete und sie auf Christus ausrichtete.« (Ratzinger 2011, 312) Vor dem Ungeist des »Machenwollens« in der Kirche

¹⁰² Vgl. »Ich bin mit Augustinus, mit Bonaventura, mit Thomas von Aquin befreundet.« (Ratzinger 2016c, 858) In der 1. Katechese (3. März 2010) heisst es: »Quest'oggi vorrei parlare di san Bonaventura da Bagnoregio. Vi confido che, nel proporvi questo argomento, avverto una certa nostalgia, perché ripenso alle ricerche che, da giovane studioso, ho condotto proprio su questo autore, a me particolarmente caro. La sua conoscenza ha inciso non poco nella mia formazione.« (Ratzinger 2011, 278)

warnte Joseph Ratzinger bereits in den sechziger Jahren, in seiner Stellungnahme zum sogenannten *Schema XIII* und erneut im *Kommentar zu Gaudium et spes 15*. In diesem Zusammenhang zitierte Professor Ratzinger aus dem Bonaventuras *In Hexaemeron* 1.24: Es nütze dem Menschen nichts, wenn er die Welt messen könne, aber verlerne, sich selbst zu messen. Nicht aus politischem Kalkül, sondern aus feinem geistlichem Gespür (*sensibilità spirituale*) und geistiger Wachheit (*grande vivacità intellettuale*) heraus habe Bonaventura klare Entscheidungen getroffen — ein Vorbild für kirchliche Obere (vgl. Schlosser 2018, 189).

In diesem Zusammenhang erwähnt der Papst das Hauptwerk des Heiligen, das *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, das ein »Handbuch« mystischer Kontemplation ist. Dieses Buch wurde an einem Ort tiefer Spiritualität konzipiert: auf dem Berg La Verna, wo der hl. Franziskus die Stigmata empfangen hatte. Die letzten Worte des *Itinerarium* des hl. Bonaventura zeigen, wie diese mystische Gemeinschaft mit Gott erreicht werden kann:

Wenn du dich nun danach sehnst zu wissen, wie dies (nämlich die mystische Gemeinschaft mit Gott) zustande kommen könne, befrage die Gnade, nicht die Wissenschaft; die Sehnsucht, nicht den Verstand; den Seufzer des Gebets, nicht die Wissbegierde des Lesens; den Bräutigam, nicht einen Lehrer; Gott, nicht einen Menschen; den Schleier, nicht die Klarheit; nicht das Licht, sondern das Feuer, das ganz und gar in Brand setzt und durch unaussprechliche Salbung und glühende Herzensbewegung in Gott hinüberträgt ... Treten wir also in die Dunkelheit ein, bringen wir die Sorgen, die Begierden und die Bilder der Phantasie zum Schweigen; *gehen wir mit dem gekreuzigten Christus von dieser Welt zum Vater*, damit wir, nachdem wir ihn gesehen haben, mit Philippus sagen: *Das genügt uns*. (Bonaventura, *Itinerarium* 7.6; vgl. Ratzinger 2011, 313)

Nur aufgrund dieser Verbindung zwischen Aktion und Kontemplation ist auch der wahre Fortschritt zu erwarten. Christus ist die absolute Neuheit, die nie veraltet: *Opera Christi non deficiunt, sed proficiunt*, die Werke Christi gehen nicht zurück, werden nicht weniger, sondern schreiten voran, sagt der Heilige in dem Brief *De tribus quaestionibus*. Für ihn ist Christus nicht mehr, wie es für die Kirchenväter der Fall war, das Ende, sondern der Mittelpunkt der Geschichte: »Die Einzigkeit Christi garantiert die Neuheit und die Erneuerung in alle Epoche der Geschichte« (Ratzinger 2011, 311).

6.2 »Die Botschaft der Hoffnung«

Damit hängt ein weiterer Aspekt zusammen. Kardinal Joseph Ratzinger beendete seine Betrachtung »Über die Hoffnung« mit einem Bild des hl. Bonaventura und mit einem Hinweis des hl. Thomas von Aquin (Ratzinger 2012, 422; vgl. 2014, 449–451). Der seraphische Lehrer vergleicht die Bewegung der Hoffnung mit dem Flug des Vogels, der seine Flügel so weit wie möglich ausspannt und sich mit allen Kräften anstrengt, um zu fliegen. Hoffnung ist Fliegen, sagt Bonaventura: »Hoff-

nung erfordert von uns einen radikalen Einsatz. Die äußeren und die inneren Sinne des Menschen sollen miteinbezogen werden. Wer hofft, »muß das Haupt erheben, indem er seine Gedanken nach oben richtet, zur Höhe unserer Existenz, d.h. zu Gott. Er muß seine Augen erheben, um alle Dimensionen der Wirklichkeit wahrzunehmen. Er muß sein Herz erheben, indem er sein Fühlen öffnet für die höchste Liebe und für all ihre Reflexe in der Welt. Er muß auch seine Hände rühren in der Arbeit...« (Bonaventura, *Sermo XVI: Dominica I Adv.* [*Opera omnia* 9, 40a]; vgl. Ratzinger 1984) Die Hoffnung schließt demnach alle Kräfte unseres Seins ein. Diese Gedanken sind auch in der Enzyklika *Spe salvi* von Papst Benedikt XVI. enthalten.

Der hl. Bonaventura war ein »Bote der Hoffnung« (*un messagero di speranza*), betonte der Papst anlässlich seines Pastoralbesuches in Bagnoregio: Erneut greift er auf das Bild des »Vogel-Fluges« für die Hoffnung zurück, das Bonaventura in einer seiner Adventspredigten entfaltet hatte. Der Vogel wendet seine ganze Kraft auf, um die Flügel zu bewegen. Er macht gewissermaßen sich selbst zur Bewegung, um aufzusteigen und zu fliegen. Er lehrt uns, »die Flügel der Hoffnung auszubreiten«, die uns anspricht, ebenso wie er unermüdlich Gott zu suchen, die Schönheiten der Schöpfung zu loben und Zeugen zu sein jener Liebe und jener Schönheit, die »alles bewegt« (Ratzinger 2010, 184; vgl. Bonaventura, *Sermo XVI: Dominica I Adv.* [*Opera omnia* 9, 40a]).

6.3 Glaube und Vernunft

Noch eine dritte Charakteristik der »Geistesverwandtschaft« kann man nennen. Eine oft konstatierte Gemeinsamkeit zwischen Bonaventura und Joseph Ratzinger ist beider Überzeugung, dass *Vernunft und Glaube* einander zugeordnet sind, dass zwischen ihnen »eine natürliche Freundschaft besteht, die in der Schöpfungsordnung selbst ihren Grund hat«. Der Wahrheit fähig zu sein, und berufen dazu, ihr anzuhängen, gehört zum Wesen des Menschen, zu seiner *Gottebenbildlichkeit*.

Nicht nur Glaube und Vernunft, sondern auch Erkenntnis und Liebe gehören zusammen: »Verstehen« ist eine Weise des Liebens. Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil hat die Kostbarkeit der Lehre Bonaventuras und seiner theologischen Methode den Priesteramtskandidaten warm empfohlen. Der »seraphische Theologe« sagte: »Niemand möge glauben, das Lesen allein sei hinreichend ohne die Salbung des Geistes, das Schauen in den Spiegel der Geschöpfe ohne innige Zuneigung zum Schöpfer, eifriges Forschen ohne Staunen, kluges Erwägen ohne inneren Jubel, eigene Anstrengung ohne Frömmigkeit, Wissen ohne die Liebe, Einsicht ohne Demut, Studium ohne die göttliche Gnade, oder ein Spiegel ohne den Anhauch der Weisheit Gottes.« (*Optatam totius* 16, Anm. 32; vgl. Bonaventura, *Itinerarium* Prol 4; Ratzinger 2009, 787f.)

Der hl. Papst Paul VI. hatte die genannte theologische Methode Bonaventuras in seinem Apostolischen Schreiben *Scientia et virtute praeclarissimus* von 1974 empfohlen, und Joseph Ratzinger greift eben diese konzise Darlegung auf: »Für die

theologische Forschung, der er sich mit Beharrlichkeit und Eifer widmete, legte er diese Ordnung vor: »Sie soll beginnen mit der Festigkeit des Glaubens, fortschreiten mit der Klarheit der Einsicht, um zur Süßigkeit der Kontemplation zu gelangen.« (Ratzinger 2009, 788)¹⁰³

6.4 »Primat der Liebe«

Für Joseph Ratzinger Papst Benedikt XVI. bleibt aus Bonaventura durchgehend als Inspiration gültig: die Erkenntniskraft und die Liebesfähigkeit des Menschen blühen erst auf in der Zuwendung zum »höchsten Wahren und Guten«. Der Glaubende sucht nach tieferer Einsicht *propter amorem eius cui assentit*. Wer liebt, will den Geliebten tiefer kennenlernen — um ihn tiefer zu lieben. Die theologische Einsicht, die aus solcher Liebe herausgesucht und gefunden wird, bringt, Bonaventura zufolge, eine Freude mit sich, die ein Vorgeschmack der ewigen Seligkeit ist (vgl. Schlosser 2011, 289).

In seinem Vergleich zwischen Thomas von Aquin und Bonaventura hinsichtlich ihrer Auffassung vom letzten Ziel des Menschen, spricht Benedikt XVI. dem hl. Bonaventura den »Primat der Liebe« zu. Dieser Primat sei keineswegs eine Abwertung des Verstehens bzw., des Intellekts, der Gott zu schauen verlangt; doch hier auf Erden hat die Liebe eine größere Reichweite, und auch in der Vollendung des Erkennens kommt die Freude daran aus der Liebe, die auf das Geliebt-Sein antwortet. Diesen ausgewogenen »Primat der Liebe«, wie er als spezifisches Kennzeichen Bonaventuras in der 3. Katechese beschrieben wird, kann man auch bei Papst Benedikt feststellen (siehe seine Enzyklika *Deus caritas est*). Gott ist Liebe, er hat uns zuerst geliebt. Indem der Mensch auf seine Liebe antwortet, findet er das Leben und somit das Ziel des Lebens: das Glück. Die letzte Bestimmung des Menschen besteht darin, Gott zu lieben, in der Begegnung und Vereinigung seiner und unserer Liebe. Das ist für ihn die angemessenste Definition unseres Glücks. (Ratzinger 2011, 342)

Es fällt auf, dass Joseph Ratzinger oft die Trias von »Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe« behandelte — aber immer in christologischer Perspektive: »Auf Christus schauen. Einübung in Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe« (Ratzinger 2014, 403–490). Als Papst Benedikt XVI. hat er drei Enzykliken eben diesen Tugenden gewidmet.¹⁰⁴ Für Bonaventura besteht in diesen drei Tugenden die Schönheit der Seele: ihre von der Schöpfung her gegebene Gottebenbildlichkeit (in den Kräften *memoria, intelligentia, voluntas*) kommt durch die Beziehung eben dieser Kräfte auf Gottes Heiligkeit, Wahrheit und Güte zur Erfüllung. Ihre Fähigkeiten werden »überkleidet«, wie es im *Itinerarium* 4.3 heißt, d.h. auf Christus ausgerichtet (*Itinerarium*

¹⁰³ Der Drei-Schritt (*fides – ratio – contemplatio*) findet sich mehrfach in Bonaventuras Werken, besonders klar entfaltet in der Universitätspredigt *Christus unus omnium magister*.

¹⁰⁴ Bekanntlich hat Papst Benedikt XVI. seine Enzyklika seinem Nachfolger Franziskus geschenkt, vgl. *Lumen fidei* 7.

4.3).¹⁰⁵ Diese Tugenden sind die Art und Weise, wie der Mensch seinem Erlöser begegnen kann und ihm so an Treue, Erkenntnis und Liebe immer ähnlicher werden kann. Bereits in der Habilitationsschrift hatte der junge Joseph Ratzinger herausgearbeitet, dass Bonaventuras Verständnis der *imago Dei* nicht statisch, sondern »dynamisch« sei: Ein geistiges »Bild« muss, weil es geistig ist, lebendiges Bild sein, das heißt: sich auf sein Urbild ausrichten, die Beziehung zu ihm verwirklichen (Ratzinger 2009, 318–349). *Das Bild Gottes schlechthin aber, »auf das hin« der Mensch erschaffen ist, ist Christus* (Ratzinger 2009, 62f.).

6.5 Die Schönheit der Sprache

Dazu schließlich noch eine wichtige Parallele zwischen Bonaventura und Joseph Ratzinger: für beide ist die Sprache von höchster Bedeutung. Gemeint ist der sprachliche Stil in der Theologie: »Das Reden ist da, wo es um Gott geht, ein heiliges Geschäft, und es ist der christlichen Theologie Würde genug, Rede von Gott sein zu dürfen« (Ratzinger 2009, 208f.). Es geht um zwei Aspekte: 1. der klare und schöne *Stil* Bonaventuras und Joseph Ratzingers, und 2. das inhaltliche *Thema* der Schönheit bei hl. Bonaventura und Joseph Ratzinger. Diese »theologisch-ästhetische« Gemeinsamkeit tritt überall zu Tage. Wenn *Breviloquium* Bonaventuras als ein »Juwelenkästlein« bezeichnet wird von Matthias Josef Scheeben (Schlosser 2006, 16), und Martin Grabmann Bonaventura den »besten Stilisten der Hochscholastik« nannte (1980, 68), kann man gern Kardinal Joachim Meisner beipflichten, der einmal Joseph Ratzinger den »Mozart der Theologie« nannte (vgl. Štrukelj 2018, 119–126).

6.6 Der theologische Stil Bonaventuras

An dieser Stelle muss ein Wort zu Bonaventuras Stil gesagt werden. Die ausgewiesene Kennerin Prof. Marianne Schlosser schreibt dazu:

Der Seraphische Lehrer sieht die Wahrheit als Kosmos, als geordnetes Ganzes. Jede einzelne Erkenntnis steht in Zusammenhang mit anderen; und dieser Zusammenhang kann und soll in der sprachlichen Darstellung sichtbar werden. Ob theologischer Traktat, ob Predigt oder geistliche Betrachtung: Die sprachliche Gestaltung spiegelt diese Ordnung. Daher werden die Gedanken oft in Dreier-, Vierer- oder Siebener-Reihen vorgelegt, die sich zuweilen noch mehrfach verästeln. Selbstverständlich spielen die in der Heiligen Schrift genannten Zahlen eine besondere Rolle: »Drei« steht für die Wirklichkeit des dreifaltig-einen Gottes und für alles, was mit dem Himmel direkt zu tun hat, wie die theologischen Tugenden, welche die Seele des Menschen mit Gott verbinden. »Vier« steht für die irdische Wirklichkeit mit den vier Elementen und den vier Himmelsrichtungen, auf die sich aber auch die vier Enden des Kreuzes

¹⁰⁵ Die Seele wird durch diese drei Tugenden »hierarchisch«, d.h. sie kommt wieder in die »heilige Ordnung«. Ähnlich argumentiert Bonaventura auch im *Breviloquium* und vor allem in *De triplici via*.

erstrecken. Die Siebenzahl hat ihre erste Wurzel in den Tagen der Schöpfung, denen als »achter« Tag die endgültige Vollendung der Auferstehung folgen wird. Dazu kommen weitere symbolträchtige Zahlen: zwölf, vierzig, zweiundsiebzig etc. Diese Ordnung, die sämtliche Werke Bonaventuras durchgestaltet, ist weit mehr als ein geschicktes sprachliches Kunstwerk. Sie ist kein Selbstzweck, sondern soll die innere Ordnung und Schönheit, die Intelligibilität des Inhalts, sichtbar machen: In der sprachlichen Gestalt spiegelt sich der Gehalt. Zugleich dient sie der pädagogischen Vermittlung; die Gliederung erleichtert es dem Hörer oder Leser, sich den Inhalt einzuprägen und sich daran aktiv zu erinnern. Bonaventuras sprachliche Meisterschaft — eine Herausforderung für alle Übersetzer — bezieht sich aber nicht nur auf den architektonischen Bau der Abschnitte. Seine Sprache ist ebenso schwungvoll in den einzelnen Sätzen, er beherrscht die lateinischen Satzschlüsse; die Wortwahl ist farbig, lebhaft und zuweilen bilderreich, jedoch niemals rhetorisch maniert, sondern stets auf Klarheit und Durchsichtigkeit bedacht. (Schlosser 2017, 34f.)

Hans Urs von Balthasar präsentiert den hl. Bonaventura ausführlich auch als einen Theologen der Schönheit. Im ersten Flügel seiner Trilogie *Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik* setzt er als Motto die Aussage Bonaventuras: »Qui tantis rerum creaturarum splendoribus non illustratur caecus est; qui tantis clamoribus non evigilat surdus est; qui ex omnibus his effectibus Deum non laudat mutus est; qui ex tantis indiciis primum principium non advertit stultus est.« (von Balthasar 1984, 267–361)

7. Originalität und bleibende Bedeutung Ratzingers Bonaventura-Studien

Die Habilitationsschrift hinterließ nachhaltige Spuren im Werk Joseph Ratzingers — Papst Benedikts XVI. Mehrmals hat der Autor später direkt auf seine damalige Arbeit Bezug genommen und sie in den Kontext aktueller Fragen gestellt: in Interviews, in seiner Autobiographie, sowie auch in Vorworten zu fremdsprachlichen Ausgaben (vgl. Schlosser 2018, 188f.), und in seinen zahlreichen Schriften und hervorragenden Predigten (Ratzinger 2019). Sämtliche Studien Joseph Ratzingers über Bonaventura verstehen sich als die Verbindung von Theologiegeschichte und systematischer Theologie. Seine Abhandlungen sind nicht in erster Linie historisch-mediävistische Untersuchungen. Es sind vielmehr die Arbeiten von höchster Aktualität, wie es die Dokumente des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils beweisen, an deren Entstehung der junge Peritus Joseph Ratzinger entscheidend mitwirkte. Die bei der Beschäftigung mit Bonaventura gewonnenen Einsichten seien ihm, so Ratzinger in der Autobiographie, in den Debatten um die Offenbarungskonstitution *Dei Verbum* des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils sehr hilfreich geworden (Ratzinger 1998, 84). Seine Bonaventura-Forschung »bereichert nicht nur unsere Kenntnis des Mittelalters, sondern dient mit der Erhellung des Vergangenen zugleich dem Verständnis des Gegenwärtigen« (Ratzinger 2009, 55).

Bonaventuras geschichtliches Verdienst besteht in den Augen Ratzingers darin, dass »Bonaventura erkannte, dass die endzeitliche Lebensform Franzens in dieser Welt nicht als Institution, sondern nur als Durchbruch der Gnade im Einzelnen existieren kann, bis einmal die allein von Gott zu wirkende Stunde kommen wird, in der die Welt umgewandelt wird in ihre endzeitliche Daseinsform«. (Ratzinger 2009, 499; vgl. Heim 2011, 104–115)

Der Regensburger Bischof und Direktor des Instituts Papst Benedikt XVI., Dr. Rudolf Vorderholzer, der seit vielen Jahren mit dem Werk Ratzingers wie kaum ein zweiter vertraut ist, sieht die »Originalität und das wirklich Neue von Ratzingers Bonaventura-Studien« darin, dass dieser »die Bedeutung herausgearbeitet hat, die das Eindringen joachitischen Gedankengutes in den Franziskanerorden hatte und wie es sich auch auf die Theologie Bonaventuras auswirkte... Die kirchenpolitische Leistung Bonaventuras, aufgrund der transformierenden Aneignung joachitischen Gedankenguts die Einheit des Ordens gerettet zu haben, findet Ratzingers ungeteilte Anerkennung.« (Vorderholzer 2011, 63f.)

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Miran Špelič OFM,

Corpus Christi* and *caro Christi*: Bonaventure's Understanding of the Eucharist in the *Breviloquium

1. Introduction

In the Prologue to the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure makes clear the purpose of his writings: to acquaint the brethren, in a simple, brief, and comprehensible way, with all the fundamental questions of theology which a brother needs to be *litteratus* enough to receive Holy Orders.¹⁰⁶ We can only speculate why history, or the providence of God, did not canonize Bonaventure's work as a classic textbook of theology, even though it possesses all the merits required for this, as the *Sentences* of Peter of Lombardy showed in their time. *Breviloquium* covers the entire dogmatic theology with sacraments: it is clear and concise, it is profound, while at the same time simple enough, it is rooted in the Scripture as well as in tradition, and it addresses unobtrusively the current problems of its time.

¹⁰⁶ "Since this doctrine [...] is so scatteredly handed down, [...] the brethren asked me to say something brief and concise on the truths of theology out of my meagre knowledge. I was overcome by their entreaties, and I agreed to prepare a sort of 'Breviloquium' in which [...] I shall touch only on what is more convenient to treat briefly [...]" (*Brev. Prolog.* 6.5); "Orders [...] are not to be conferred on anyone [...] but on the learned, [...]" (*Brev. Prolog.* 6.12.6)

One of these is the Eucharist which, thanks to Ratramnus¹⁰⁷ and Paschasius Radbertus¹⁰⁸ in the 9th century, and thanks to Lanfranc¹⁰⁹ and Berengar¹¹⁰ in the 11th century, was an important topic of discussion at the 4th Lateran Council in the 13th century (1215). This council commanded the reception of Communion at least once a year and canonized the notion of transubstantiation, affirming the real presence of Jesus Christ under the Eucharistic images.¹¹¹ However, a number of sub-questions remained unanswered, as was evident at the Reformation and the Council of Trent (1545–1563), which, in a way, brought the reflection on the Eucharist to completion. One of the phases, or rather a good description of the situation in his time, is offered to us by St. Bonaventure in his textbook. (Macy 1984; 1986; 1990; 1992; Colish 2020)

Bonaventure does employ the verb *transsubstantiatur* once in the *Breviloquium* (6.9.1), but nonetheless, he prefers the expression *continetur sub duplici specie* (Hellmann and Giltner 2017, 262–263).

In the reflection this chapter provides, we will in particular insist on the designation of the Eucharistic reality that is characterized by two terms, *corpus* and *caro*. Translators of those two terms in many languages are faced with present a considerable problem due to of the multiple meanings of the two terms, which do not overlap in all their segments with the Greek terms *sárx* and *sôma* and the Latin terms *caro* and *corpus*. We would like to investigate whether these terms are synonymous, used exclusively or complementary — or perhaps even interchangeable.

Already in the Gospel itself we encounter this duality from the very lips of Jesus. In John's Gospel, which begins with the Word made flesh (cf. Jn 1:14), he speaks of eating his flesh, which is the true food, in order to have eternal life (cf. Jn 6:51.53–56). A little further on however, he says that the flesh is of no use whatsoever (cf. Jn 6:63). The Synoptics state, conversely, that at the Last Supper, over the bread, he said that it was his body (cf. Mt 26:26; Mc 14:22; Lc 22:19). John did not leave these words of institution for us in his writings. In the liturgy, the term *corpus* has come to be used in the central Eucharistic sacramental formula; the same is also part of the dialogue between the celebrant and the recipient in the moment of distribution of communion itself.

¹⁰⁷ A monk in Corbie, France, author of a work entitled *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, addressed to Charles the Bald, in which he explains the symbolic identity between the Eucharist and the historical Jesus.

¹⁰⁸ Abbot of the former, author of the work of the same name, defender of the true identity between the Eucharistic and the carnal body. From these two texts and from other sources, it is not clear, whether there is any controversy between them.

¹⁰⁹ Monk of Bec in Normandy, last Bishop of Canterbury, advocate of Eucharistic realism and transubstantiation, author of *De corpore et sanguine Domini*.

¹¹⁰ Monk of Tours, opponent of realism and a persistent and repeatedly condemned advocate of symbolism in the Eucharist. No works of his have survived except the Creeds, which he had to sign.

¹¹¹ *Omnis: Ad minus semel in anno unusquisque debet confiteri peccata sua et sumere Eucharistiam, nisi a sacerdote prohibeatur.* (Const. Conc. IV Lat. 486)

2. General Observations on *corpus* and *caro* in the *Breviloquium*

An objective of this study is to, first, through a simple quantitative analysis examine the use of these two terms in Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*, leaving aside his other works (cf. Kattum 1920; Schlette 1959; Kinn 1960; Hellmann 2013, 349–353; Johnson 2017; Colish 2020). A quick investigation of the text immediately shows that the root *corp-* is more than twice as extensive as the root *car-*. There are more than 200 words from the root *corp-*, but not even 100 from the root *car-*. This is confirmed by a quantitative semantic analysis, which shows a much greater breadth and richness of meanings under *corp-* than under *car-*.

The first mention of the term *corpus* in the context of creation already establishes a dissociation between corporeal and non-corporeal beings, with absolute preference given to non-corporeal beings.¹¹² In this context, of course, God is presented as a spirit who has no body at all.¹¹³

The word *corpus* is further frequent in the creation discourse, when God creates bodies and acts upon them. Here, a distinction is immediately drawn between the heavenly bodies which are somewhat homogeneous (the planets with the sun) and the earthly bodies which, according to the ancient and medieval view, are composed of four elements (earth, water, air and fire), mixed in different proportions; hence the diversity in nature. One and the other *corpora* are the objects of God's action, which leaves traces in the spiritual and physical, although he is spirit itself.

In the *Breviloquium*, composed of seven extensive parts, man is presented as a composite creation, having a physical and a spiritual component.¹¹⁴ The whole of the second chapter of the second part is devoted to physical nature under the aspect of generation, the third chapter under the aspect of existence, and the fourth chapter under the aspect of action. Among bodies, the human body, which is ready to receive the rational soul, is described here as the most sublime. This very chapter ends with a wonderful conclusion that the soul is on earth for the sake of the body (even with a slight whiff of the punishment it deserved), but that the body may be in heaven for the sake of the soul (of course, for the sake of the reward of salvation).¹¹⁵

Bonaventure also connects the disembodied angelic nature with corporeality, but the latter is temporary and *ad hoc*, only by God's permission, not permanent and essential. In this manner, Bonaventure explains demonic apparitions that deceive people into worshipping them as gods (cf. *Brev.* 2.7). Even good angels can show their power with or without a vested body (cf. *Brev.* 2.8).

When the Seraphic doctor speaks of the creation of man, he establishes a very close connection between the concepts of *corpus* and *caro*, which he uses here prac-

¹¹² *Conditor [...] nobis mentem rationemque naturalem dedit qua [...] incorporalia corporalibus [...] praeferenda iudicamus.* (*Brev.* 1.2.5) The Latin text of the *Breviloquium* is cited according to the Quaracchi edition (*Opera Omnia* 5, 199–292).

¹¹³ *Creatorem [...] oportet ut eum [...] corrumpi mutarique non posse nec corpus esse [...]* (*Brev.* 1.2.5)

¹¹⁴ [...] *omni creatura sive corporea sive incorporea sive ex utrisque composita sicut est natura humana.* (*Brev.* 2.1)

¹¹⁵ *Sicut anima modo ratione corporis et status meriti nunc est in terris, sic aliquando corpus ratione animae et status praemii sit in caelis.* (*Brev.* 2.4)

tically synonymously. In the case of man, his corporeality (*natura corporea*) corresponds to *caro*, and his incorporeality (*natura incorporea*) to *mens*. The whole of man, therefore, contains a component of spirit and flesh.¹¹⁶ The first man was created by the addition of a soul to a body, or a body to a soul. The regularity of the body corresponds, according to Bonaventure, to the regularity of the spirit (cf. *Brev.* 2.10). The body of the first-created one was, because of the soul, imperishable and immortal, but capable of becoming sufferable and mortal. The sensation of the flesh has as its opposite the sensation of the spirit (*spiritus*).

For Bonaventure, the summit of the sensible is the eye, which, in one of its three forms (*carnis, rationis, contemplationis*), belongs to the flesh and serves to perceive the external world. The last sentence of the second part, however, already foreshadows the problem to be dealt with in the third part, namely man's transgression, which is connected with the flesh.

The consequences of sin were immediately perceived by the forefathers in the flesh. For sin consisted in turning away from the goodness of the spirit at the expense of the goodness of the flesh. This turn towards the flesh was then also perceived by the body, which no longer allowed itself to be led by the soul. In this discourse, the concept of *caro* predominates, but the *corpus* is not exempt. Each of these concepts, however, retains a certain specificity. The term *caro* is present in the discourse on sin, and the term *concupiscentia* appears alongside it. *Caro*, once infected (*infecta*), then transmits the infection. It transmits the infection to the *corpus*. Moreover, *corpus* — obedient to the *caro* — now begins to resist the spirit. *Caro* is the bearer and indicator of sin, *corpus* its consequence, but both are designated as rebels. (cf. *Brev.* 3.4–6)

While Bonaventure places the core and essence of sin in the will, the flesh is the place where this sinful decision of the will is expressed. The *caro* is therefore the primary place where sin lives and, because of its lust, sustains itself through surrender. It is the syntagm *concupiscentia carnis* that is quite frequent in Bonaventure when he quotes it from the First epistle of John along with the lust of the eyes and the pride of the world (cf. 1 Jn 2:16).

In the fourth part of the *Breviloquium*, the adjective *carnalis* is used to denote the fall of man, when he loses the attribute of being spiritual.¹¹⁷ And into this state of man the Word of God descends, who also assumes the same attributes, that is to say, the attribute of flesh, in order that man, who is flesh, may love flesh, for only what is alike is perceptible and can become the object of love. The motive of the incarnation is therefore not merely the fall of man, but the mercy of God, which wants to give man the possibility of loving God even in the flesh. The flesh,

¹¹⁶ *Post naturam corpoream et incorpoream dicenda sunt aliqua de natura ex utrisque composita 1 ex parte mentis, 2 ex parte carnis, 3 ex parte totius hominis.* (*Brev.* 9.1) Emphasis added. Also in *Brev.* 2.11 we find a synonymy where the exchange is only parallel: it mentions the senses of the flesh and the movement of the body. In the sequel, too, Bonaventure associates the senses or sensation with the flesh.

¹¹⁷ *Homo cadens in culpam [...] de spirituali effectus est carnalis, animalis et sensualis.* (*Brev.* 4.1)

which is the place of sin, is therefore to become the place of love of God.¹¹⁸ In this context, Bonaventure does not forget to point out that the assumption of the flesh also implies the assumption of all other components of man, including the soul. He also explains the Evangelist's choice of this provocative term rather than a milder one: for *caro* is the reality furthest from God, and so "inanimation" would not be sufficiently clear and meaningful. It is the use of the term flesh, however, that points to God's greatness and his humiliation.¹¹⁹ The Word is therefore united with flesh, which is animated by the soul (*caro animata*). In this, Christ imposed on Himself the punishments of the flesh, but He did not accept lust and sinfulness, ignorance and rebellion in the flesh, since in Gethsemane He placed the will of the Father before the desires of the flesh (*appetitus carnis*), which would have wanted to avoid suffering.

But when Bonaventure comes to describing the reward and merit in salvation and glorification, these touch both *caro* and *corpus*. The *caro* is seen as the garment (*stola*), and the *corpus* is the glory-bearer (cf. *Brev.* 4.7).

Both terms, *corpus* and *caro*, are also used in describing the passion of Jesus. He suffers in all the limbs or parts of the body. Since lust afflicts the human soul and flesh, Jesus suffers in the flesh and no less in the soul. Death is described once as the separation of the soul from the body and once as the separation of the soul from the flesh. In this case we have a complete synonymy of the terms, since they even occur in one and the same sentence.¹²⁰

The positive connotation of the term *corpus* is detected in the mention that one kind of prophetic vision is corporeal (in addition to the imaginary and the intellectual), that the resurrection of Jesus is assumption of the body, and above all that the body, along with God and our spirit, is the object of our love, since it is the body that is the bearer of future blessedness (cf. *Brev.* 5.8).

Caro, on the other hand, in the *Breviloquium* generally takes on predominantly negative connotations, since it occurs when one speaks of man's illness, that is, sin. The person who falls ill (*aegrotans*) is defined as *spiritus in carne* (*caro animata*). The spirit (*mens*) is the first to become infected, and through lust it also infects the flesh, where temptations enter into man through the senses. Here the sacraments act as a remedy (cf. *Brev.* 6.1).

In the seventh part of the *Breviloquium*, which deals with the resurrection, *corpus* is the most predominant of the terms discussed. *Caro* appears only four times, and twice from the long final quotation of Anselm, wherein it refers to the

¹¹⁸ *Verbum caro factum est, ut ab homine, qui caro erat, et cognosci posset et amari et imitari.* (*Brev.* 4.1)

¹¹⁹ Interestingly, practically all modern languages have a problem with this when it comes to the use of the term meat. Either they adopt the foreign word "incarnation" (so all the Romance languages with English) or they operate with approximations (Slavic and Germanic, but also Modern Greek): sl. učlovečenje/utelešenje, hr. utjelovljenje/ovaploćenje, pl. wcielenie, sr. Боговоплощение, de. Menschwerdung, el. ενανθρώπηση.

¹²⁰ *Et quia unio animae cum corpore facit hominem et facit vivum hinc est quod Christus non fuit homo in illo triduo licet anima et caro essent unitae cum verbo.* (*Brev.* 4.9) Emphasis added.

concreteness of the writer/reader. The *resurrectio carnis* of the Apostles' Creed does not find its echo here.

To sum up, then, the characteristics of the body (*corpus*) are being created — but this is broader and embraces non-corporeal beings as well —, limited size, unity in the case of heavenly bodies or composition in the case of earthly bodies, mutability involving generation and decay, activity, and sensuality or sensibility. The characteristic of the flesh (*caro*), on the other hand, is its confinement to the animal and human worlds, its sensuality, and its being marked by sin. In general, the concept of *caro* is narrower and rarer in meaning than that of *corpus*, and there is only occasional overlap.

This may seem to be a simplification, but we can imagine the semantic field of the terms *corpus* and *caro* as partially overlapping circles, where the intersecting part is a place for man, whose *corpus* may also bear the title *caro*. In terms of heavenly bodies, however, *corpus* remains in its own sphere without *caro*; but *caro* remains in its own sphere without *corpus* when it comes to the union with the Word described by the central notion of Christian theology, *incarnatio* (gr. ἐνσάρκωσις), which is never *incorporatio*.

3. *Corpus* in *caro* in the Eucharistic Context

Both concepts appear when Bonaventure speaks of the Eucharist in the sixth part — *De medicina sacramentali* — of the *Breviloquium*. After a basic overview of sacramental theology in general, he proceeds to look at the so-called integrity of each of the individual sacraments. He treats the Eucharist in third place after Baptism and Confirmation.

Here again the term *corpus* is strongly predominant, since the Eucharist is regularly presented as a sacrament of body and blood (e. g. *Brev.* 6.4). In this context we never encounter a pair of “flesh and blood,” with the *sanguis* always paired with the *corpus*, even though by some natural logic the flesh would belong to the blood more than the soul belongs to the body. This is the fate of liturgical language.

In order to emphasize the perfection of the Eucharistic body, he uses both terms in one place, with the body here and in many other places having the attribute “true (*verum*)” beside it, and the flesh being “immaculate (*immaculata*).”¹²¹ Both the *corpus* of Christ and the *caro* are contained in the Eucharist.

The constant syntagm *verbum incarnatum* is to some extent explained by Bonaventure in his discourse on the Eucharist as *caro verbi*, which describes the Eucharist as a common and redemptive food. Between the two concepts, *verbum incarnatum* and *caro verbi*, however, he placed the equalizing distributive conjunction *seu*, which in English, along with “or,” is most appropriately rendered by “respectively.” If the Incarnation is the defining moment of human history, every Eucharist points to it precisely as such.

¹²¹ *In hoc sacramento continetur verum Christi corpus et caro immaculata.* (*Brev.* 6.9)

The difference between our two concepts is finally shown by the sentence in which Bonaventure gives the reason for the reality hidden by symbols: it is not appropriate to chew the flesh of Christ with the teeth, so his body is given under the image.¹²² The *caro*, then, is the concrete body of Jesus, while the Eucharistic body is also fully his, but it is not limited to a concrete historical being, but points to his true presence in the sacrament.

Corpus can be *verum* or *mysticum*. The first attribute is applied to the Eucharist, the second to the Church. And the latter is the aim of the former. The Eucharist leads and involves man in the Church. The key phrase in which Bonaventure describes this is:

Finally, our capacity to receive Christ is not in the flesh but in the spirit, not in the belly but in the soul, and the soul can only come into contact with Christ through knowledge and love, through faith and unselfish charity, so that faith enlightens to contemplation, and charity inflames to devotion. Therefore, for one to worthily approach (the sacrament), it is necessary that he consume it in a spiritual way, by contemplating it with faith and receiving it with devout love; in this way he will not transform Christ into himself, but will himself be received into his mystical body.¹²³ (*Brev.* 6.9)

At the very beginning of the thought is the notion of flesh, which this time does not point to Christ, but to us. It is not our flesh that receives Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist; it is the soul. There is a meaningful and telling metaphor here, which we can see from the parallelism, and that is the belly; its opposite is the soul and the spirit (*spiritus, mens*). The transformation that took place in the origin of the Eucharist has as its goal our transformation into the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, the Church. This is the transformative power of the sacrament of the Eucharist: to bring man, through a concrete corporeality, that is, the flesh, to the mystery of the body of Christ.

Interestingly, for Bonaventure, it is not only the defilement of the spirit but also of the body that incapacitates a person for receiving the Eucharist, and Bonaventure advises against or postpones the reception of the Eucharist by such a person.¹²⁴

4. Conclusion

As expected, also in the Eucharist the concepts of *corpus* and *caro* are, on the one hand, overlapped as synonyms, and on the other hand, a dissociation is es-

¹²² [...] *nec convenit Christi carnem dentibus attrahere [...] ideo necesse fuit corpus et sanguinem Christi tradi velatum sacratissimis symbolis et similitudinibus congruis et expressis.* (*Brev.* 6.9) Emphasis added.

¹²³ *Postremo quoniam capacitas nostra ad Christum efficaciter suscipiendum non est in carne sed in spiritu non in ventre sed in mente et mens Christum non attingit nisi per cognitionem et amorem per fidem et caritatem ita quod fides illuminat ad recogitationem et caritas inflammat ad devotionem ideo ad hoc quod aliquis digne accedat oportet quod spiritualiter comedat ut sic per recogitationem fidei masticeat per devotionem amoris suscipiat per quae non in se transformet Christum sed ipse potius traiciatur in eius mysticum corpus.* Emphasis added.

¹²⁴ *Et ideo consilium est his qui se sentiunt minus mundos mente vel carne vel etiam indevotos ut differant quousque parati ad esum veri agni mundi devoti et circumspecti accedant.* (*Brev.* 6.9)

established between them, with Bonaventure being strictly careful not to fall into a Manichaean rejection of the flesh. For the sake of liturgical usage, the reference to the body of Christ predominates when speaking of the Eucharist, but Bonaventure at least sometimes shows that it is the body which may also be designated by the term flesh, even though it has no outward appearance of flesh. This would make it impossible to receive the Eucharist. Hence the Aristotelian transubstantiation of bread, which retains the accidents of bread but acquires the substance of that body or flesh which belongs to Christ. In this regard, there is also the intent of the Eucharist: the incorporation of man into the Mystical Body of Christ, the community of the redeemed and risen in glory. Another striking observation of Bonaventure is about the two-fold manner of partaking in the Eucharist: sacramentally and spiritually (Hellmann and Giltner 2017, 263). Both concepts, *caro* and *corpus*, have to be understood in the logic of communion and love.

This reflection has not, however, resolved the question of how to translate the concept of *caro* (and consequently *incarnatio*) properly into modern languages. But we have at least indicated that it is necessary to be aware of this problem and to try to understand the reasons for Bonaventure's distinction between these two concepts and his occasional equation of them.

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Thomas Piolata,

Unitas caritatis: Explicating an Implicit Reference to the Spirit in Bonaventure's Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis

According to Peter Fehlner, Bonaventure's "genial treatise [...] on the Blessed Trinity [the *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis*] [...] is one of the greatest studies about this central mystery of our faith [...] on the same level as St. Augustine's *De Trinitate*" (2015, 311).¹²⁵ Indeed, not only does it constitute a critical source of Bonaventure's theology of the intrinsic life of the Holy Trinity, but its structure alone accentuates a key insight — and innovation — of the Seraphic Doctor. That is to say, Bonaventure does not separate God as one from God as three. Mediated by the text's unique two-article structure,¹²⁶ he effectively artic-

This article is a revised version of an excerpt of my licentiate thesis written at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome under the guidance of Amaury Begasse de Dhaem, SJ in 2021. I extend my utmost gratitude to Fr. Begasse for encouraging me to write on the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, as well as for all of his guidance and feedback throughout the process. Special thanks also to Jared Goff who, over the course of multiple conversations, helped me to enter more profoundly into the *De mysterio Trinitatis*.

¹²⁵ See Zachary Hayes' similar appraisal of the *De mysterio Trinitatis* in his classic introduction to the English translation of the text (1979, 27).

¹²⁶ Regarding this two-article structure, see Goff 2015, 191–197; 204–205. Significant about this approach is that it effectively "sets Bonaventure apart from the more common approach to the study of the Trinity, which is to divide it into two treatises: the first, *de Deo uno*; the second, *de Deo trino*" (Goff 2015, 204). Christopher Cullen writes similarly: "One of the chief accusations made by other Christians against Scholastic Trinitarian theology is that it separated out the doctrine about the Trinity (*de deo trino*) from that concerning the nature of God (*de deo uno*), thereby subordinating the Trinity to the unity of God. However, the reader will search in vain for such a separation in Bonaventure" (2006, 118).

ulates a theology of the divine attributes that find their fullest resolution not in a theoretical abstraction of the divine essence, but in the essential communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For the Seraphic Doctor, God is thoroughly personal because God is thoroughly three-personed. As Sergio Bonanni avers, the theological project of the *De mysterio Trinitatis* lies in grasping “unity and trinity in their inalienable co-originality” (Bonanni 2018, 579).¹²⁷

Unfortunately, the remarkable achievement of the *De mysterio Trinitatis* has yet to be fully appreciated in the secondary literature.¹²⁸ To be sure, Bonaventure’s masterful use of his scholastic education to explicate the divine attributes — unity (q.2), simplicity (q.3), infinity (q.4), eternity (q.5), immutability (q.6), necessity (q.7), and primacy (p.8) — does not make for easy reading.¹²⁹ Nonetheless, the text forms an extraordinarily rich synthesis of Bonaventure’s theology of the Trinity, which constitutes “the foundation of the whole Christian faith” (*Myst. Trin.* q.1, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 54b]).¹³⁰ Furthermore, Bonaventure’s treatment of the various attributes is nuanced and multilayered: by treating the various attributes in light of the New Testament’s revelation that God is triune,¹³¹ the topics engaged are vast in number. For example, the reader will encounter within the text Bonaventure’s theology of order, of the emanation of the second and third person, of act, of the interplay between will and intellect in God, of fontal fullness, and even of the human person’s epistemic access to God and creation’s semiotic constitution. And this list is by no means exhaustive of the text’s content.

The broad goal of this paper is thereby to shed light on the richness of a remarkable, yet understudied, text — the *De mysterio Trinitatis*. To do this, I focus on and interpret a specific passage from question 2 of the text — on unity. In particular, I argue that the term *unitas caritatis*, which emerges therein, constitutes an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit — *qui caritas est* as Bonaventure says explicitly

¹²⁷ “[I] *De mysterio* non potrà fare altro che configurarsi come progetto teologico inteso a cogliere unità e trinità nella loro irrinunciabile cooriginarietà.” Or as Pier Botte puts it: “L’essenza divina [...] non sussiste in sé e poi nelle persone, ma sussiste necessariamente nelle persone, così che la sua esistenza attuale non può essere intesa se non nelle tre ipostasi relative” (Bonanni 1969, 99).

¹²⁸ Thus Fehlner continues: “Despite its importance and influence it remains little known today except to professional historians of theology” (2015, 311; see also Goff 2015, 13–14). For the most recent in-depth study of *De mysterio Trinitatis*, see Goff 2015.

¹²⁹ The text, however, is far from a mere exercise of logic for the sake of conveying in an intelligible and coherent manner a theology of the Trinity’s intrinsic life. As Goff (2015, 183) rightly observes: “In this text Bonaventure seeks to both deepen our understanding of God as he is in himself, and also how we come to know God in order to worship him and find our rest in him.” Indeed, the interplay between faith and our right knowledge of God as Triune and worship (*cultus*) is a key feature of q.1, a.2. Furthermore, taken as a whole, the text finds its very culmination in a mystical and contemplative return: the text’s initial objective — *indagare mysterium Trinitatis* (*Opera omnia* 5, 45a) — manifests itself, in the final passage of q.8, as *redire in beatissimam Trinitatem* (q.8, a.2, ad7 [*Opera omnia* 5, 115b]).

¹³⁰ *Ad cuius intelligentiam notandum, quod cum illud verum credibile sit fundamentum totius fidei christianae. Shortly thereafter, Bonaventure concludes similarly: Et ex hoc apparet, quomodo fides Trinitatis et fundamentum et radix est divini cultus et totius christianae religionis. (Myst. Trin. q.1, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 56a])*

¹³¹ *Hic autem liber [Scripturae] testatur dupliciter, Trinitatem esse, secundum duplicem sui partem: in veteri quidem testamento testatur implicite, sed in novo testamento testatur explicite. (Myst. Trin. q.1, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 55a])*

elsewhere (*Brev.* 5.10.8 [*Opera omnia* 5, 252a]). Consequently, this paper also aims to develop Bonaventure's pneumatology.

The term *unitas caritatis* appears in an argument of the second article of question two that argues that intrinsic plurality in God does not jeopardize divine unity. Indeed, divine unity without the trinity of persons would lack perfection. In Bonaventure's own words: *Perfectior est unitas in qua cum unitate naturae manet unitas caritatis* (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, fund.9 [*Opera omnia* 5, 65a]). What, or who, is this *unitas caritatis*?

I divide this paper into two parts. Part One is propaedeutic in nature. I turn to question 2 of the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, and offer an overview of Bonaventure's treatment of divine unity as it emerges therein. Part Two, then, turns to the passage in which *unitas caritatis* surfaces; the objective is to unveil its meaning. In order to show that *unitas caritatis* refers to the Holy Spirit, I will draw from other texts of Bonaventure.

1. An Overview of Question 2: Trinitarian Unity

As just mentioned, I begin with question two of the *De mysterio Trinitatis*. The question asks about unity, the first divine attribute to which Bonaventure turns his attention.

I divide my investigation of question two into two subsections. In the first subsection, I offer a panoramic overview of Bonaventure's basic insight that the highest unity — divine unity — is too rich to be singularly or monadically *just* one. In the second subsection, I engage with a selection of arguments that Bonaventure makes in the second article of question 2; this second subsection further highlights how Bonaventure thinks of *summa unitas* in terms of plurality.

1.1 Unity: Deeper than Singularity

Because the first divine attribute which Bonaventure explicates is unity, the whole text, in light of its linear development, is not unlike a commentary on the unity of God who is Trinity — *unitas trium* (*Myst. Trin.* q.3, a.2, ad 7 [*Opera omnia* 5, 77b]). With each new attribute, that is, the *De mysterio Trinitatis* inevitably continues to unveil the meaning of unity that grounds the text as a whole. This unveiling plumbs so deep so as to arrive at the fecundity of *primitas* (q.8). Properly understood, then, divine unity is inseparable from the mystery of divine alterity. In other words, it is not the case for Bonaventure that divine unity is merely compatible with a plurality of persons. Rather, it is such that *if* we are to ascribe to the *esse divinum* the highest degree of unity, then there must be intrinsic plurality. For the Seraphic Doctor, divine unity manifests itself ultimately as the perichoretic life that infinitely bursts forth from the primordial fecundity of the *primitas* of the Father. The Father's fecundity finds its infinite, eternal and perfect actualization in the generative and generous

communication of the divine nature that finds complete expression and mediation in the Son and its ultimate *status* in the mutual love of the Holy Spirit.

Mary Melone expresses well this rich understanding of unity in Bonaventure:

The unity of God is not static, numerical, quantitative, but rather communicative and therefore it is a plural unity, communal, dynamic. One can understand more precisely what “plural unity” means in the second *quaestio* of the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, where Bonaventure affirms that *excellentiore est unitas, quae in pluribus manet una*. (2014, 12–13)¹³²

The Latin text is a reference to one of the 10 *fundamenta* from *De mysterio Trinitatis*, q.2, a.2, granting a unity of nature with a plurality of persons. Here is the text of the argument:

More excellent is that unity, which *in pluribus* remains *una*, than that unity which is not able to conserve its unity except in one person; but the divine unity is most excellent: it is necessary therefore that there be a plurality of persons. (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, fund.6 [*Opera omnia* 5, 64b])¹³³

The perfection of unity lies in relationality, in its *co-essere*. Furthermore, Bonaventure’s language in this passage is indicative of what he is aiming to articulate: a precise understanding of unity. In effect, he shows that revelation of the Holy Trinity revolutionizes the very meaning of unity itself. Christian revelation, as Bonaventure interprets it, unearths the very heterological depths of the mystery of unity that reason applies to the Divine. “God,” writes C. Pandolfi, “is One, not despite, but *per* the Trinity” (2016, 119).¹³⁴

Accordingly, the pagan philosophical conception of God falls utterly short. It falls short, in large part, because its grasp of unity remains fundamentally inchoate; it cannot penetrate the mystery of *vera unitas*. Luigi Iammarone, in his reflection on the structure of Trinitarian life as love in Bonaventure, thus highlights the radicalness of Christian revelation. In contrast to the impersonal Absolute of pagan philosophy and to Aristotle’s “cold unmoved mover” (Iammarone 1989, 317),¹³⁵ the Christian God is pure act and therefore pure love.¹³⁶

¹³² “L’unità di Dio non è statica, numerica, quantitativa ma comunicativa e perciò è un’unità plurale, comunionale, dinamica. Cosa intendere più precisamente per ‘unità plurale’ lo si può capire dalla seconda *quaestio* del *De mysterio Trinitatis*, lì dove Bonaventura afferma che *excellentiore est unitas, quae in pluribus manet una*.”

¹³³ *Item, excellentiore est unitas, quae in pluribus manet una, quam quae non potest sui unitatem servare nisi in una persona; sed divina unitas est excellentissima: necesse est igitur stare cum personarum pluralitate.*

¹³⁴ “Dio è Uno non nonostante, ma *per* la Trinità.”

¹³⁵ “L’Assoluto greco non è pienamente personale, è incapace di amare gli enti e di comunicarsi ad essi, che da lui dipendono non nel loro essere primo sostanziale, ma solo nel campo del divenire. [...] Anche il dio aristotelico è un freddo motore immobile che non ama gli uomini e il mondo, pur tenendo questi verso di Lui come realtà amabile.”

¹³⁶ “Il Dio cristiano non è soltanto pienezza di essere in senso statico, ma è pienezza di Atto in quanto è Vita e Azione pura” (Iammarone 1989, 318). In the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, Bonaventure describes *actus* precisely in terms of trinitarian relationality: *Amplius, quoniam actualis immutabilitas cum summa simplicitate et aeternitate potuit summam actualitatem, et actualitas summa est per plenam conversionem eiusdem supra se intelligendo et amando, et intellectus includit verbum, et amor includit nexum; sicut immutabilitati primi principii non solum non repugnat se ipsum intelligere et amare, quin potius est consonans, sic non repugnat, immo consonat generare Verbum et spirare Amorem.* (*Myst. Trin.* q.6, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 104b])

Herein lies a Copernican revolution in terms of metaphysics, one that requires ever renewed attention, lest we fail to appreciate and learn from it. Bonaventure's approach to unity is simultaneously an approach to what is meant by pure act. After all, Bonaventure had already identified *Deus* as pure act in question one.¹³⁷ The Copernican revolution lies in the deepening — ultimately the transformation — of what *unitas* would have meant for someone like the Stagirite. God as Pure Act is Pure Love: the unity of God is a plurality of persons that finds its completion in the mutual love that is the Holy Spirit. The full actuality of being is interpersonal, heterological. Unity is deeper than singularity. The *De mysterio Trinitatis* articulates precisely this; anything less is fundamentally inchoate.

1.2 Engaging the Text: q.2, a.2

I now take a brief look at select arguments in article two of question two: *Utrum unitas naturae possit simul stare cum trinitate personarum* (*Opera omnia* 5, 63). Doing so will further highlight that Bonaventure thinks of — *summa* — unity in terms of plurality.¹³⁸

The first opposing argument in article two states that unity is greater if there is a unity of form and of supposit. But if the *divinum esse* is one in form only, and not in hypostasis, then it is not *summe unum* (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, contr.1 [*Opera omnia* 5, 63a]).¹³⁹ At issue is what is meant by “highest unity,” a term that saturates Bonaventure's treatment in article 2. To be sure, the term appears in almost every contrary argument.

In order to respond to this argument, Bonaventure affirms that form can be understood in two ways. In one way, form is multiplied into a plurality of suppositis. This understanding does not befit the *divinum esse*, since a *perfecta unitas* cannot obtain when form is multiplied in a plurality of suppositis. Bonaventure is here making reference to, for example, the way in which form is multiplied in a multitude of different individuals: the form of squirrel-ness, for example, is multiplied by a great number of squirrel suppositis. Obviously, something different takes place *in divinis*.

In another way, however, form is not numerically multiplied in a plurality of suppositis. This understanding befits the *divinum esse*, wherein the multiplicity of suppositis does not multiply the form.¹⁴⁰ There is thus simultaneously *vera pluralitas et summa unitas* (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, ad 1 [*Opera omnia* 5, 66a]).¹⁴¹ Thus, true

¹³⁷ See *Myst. Trin.* q.1, a.1, especially fund.18 (*Opera omnia* 5, 47a) and fund.29 (ibid., 48a).

¹³⁸ For discussions on Bonaventure's treatment of unity see Goff 2015, 228–229 and Hayes 1979, 80–84.

¹³⁹ *Magis est unum quod est unum forma et supposito, quam altero tantum: ergo si divinum esse est unum forma et non hypostasi, videtur, quod non sit summe unum.*

¹⁴⁰ As will soon be made explicit (see n. 143 below), this kind of harmony between unity and plurality in God applies to God alone.

¹⁴¹ *Ad illud quod obiicitur, dicendum, quod duplex est forma: una, quae multiplicatur in pluribus suppositis, et in tali forma non potest simul stare perfecta unitas et suppositorum pluralitas. Alia est forma, quae non habet in pluribus suppositis numerari, cuiusmodi est forma deitatis; et quia talis forma nullo modo numeratur per pluralitatem suppositorum: ideo simul stat cum illa vera pluralitas et summa unitas, quod insinuat nomen trinitatis, in quo clauditur unitas naturae cum pluralitate.*

plurality goes together with the highest unity. Indeed, the thrust of Bonaventure's responses to the contrary arguments aims to show that a plurality of persons does not diminish highest unity.

Hence in response to the final contrary argument — which says that plurality indicates diversity, and thus cannot entail the highest unity — Bonaventure reiterates that plurality in God does not touch form or substance or nature: “and therefore it takes away nothing from the highest unity and identity, which consists in this, that three persons have the highest unity of essence and nature” (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, ad 20 [*Opera omnia* 5, 68b]).¹⁴² For the Seraphic Doctor, *summa unitas* includes within it plurality, otherness, alterity: loving intimacy. To borrow a fitting phrase from Sergio Bonnani regarding Bonaventure's vision: “Dio è uno solo, ma non è solo” (2018, 579).

Thus does Bonaventure argue in his response to this question that *trinitas* and *summa unitas* in God are not repugnant to one another. Instead, there is “a marvelous concurrence and harmony” (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 65a]).¹⁴³ This highest concurrence (*summa concordia*) is the singular privilege of the *divinum esse*: plurality of persons and unity of nature.

Since therefore neither plurality divides the unity, nor unity confounds the plurality, it is clear that the Divine Being is singularly admirable and marvelously singular. And this befits it alone on behalf of *summam simplicitatem* [...] And the *primum et summum unum* should have this privilege. (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 65b])¹⁴⁴

In addition to preparing the reader for simplicity (q.3), this passage captures Bonaventure's vision of unity: the highest unity is such that it is *not* restricted to one supposit, but that it includes *witness*. The highest unity, the unity of the *esse divinum*, is a common-unity, a unity of persons. It thus manifests itself as communicative mystery.

To conclude, I cite a most fitting passage from Joseph Ratzinger's *Introduction to Christianity*. His words correspond well to the synthesis developed thus far:

To him who believes in God as tri-une, the highest unity is not the unity of inflexible monotony. The model of unity or oneness toward which one should strive is consequently not the indivisibility of the atom, the smallest unity, which cannot be divided up any further; the authentic acme of unity is the unity created by love. The multi-unity that grows in love is a more radical, truer unity than the unity of the “atom.” (Ratzinger 2004, 179)

¹⁴² *Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod ubi pluralitas, ibi diversitas; dicendum, quod, sicut patet ex praedictis, pluralitas illa proprie non inducit diversitatem, quae attenditur secundum formam, substantiam et naturam; et ideo nihil diminuit de summa unitate et identitate, quae consistit in hoc, quod tres personae summam habent unitatem essentiae ac naturae.*

¹⁴³ *Dicendum, quod in divinis trinitas et summa unitas non habent repugnantiam, sed miram concordiam et harmoniam.*

¹⁴⁴ *Cum igitur nec pluralitas dividit unitatem, nec unitas confundit pluralitatem, apparet divinum esse singulariter admirabile, et mirabiliter singulare. Hoc enim sibi soli competit propter summam simplicitatem [...] Et hoc privilegium debet habere primum et summum unum.* The reference to simplicity is significant: it anticipates question 3 of the text, wherein Bonaventure emphasizes that the divine essence is communicable precisely because it is supremely simple. As Bonanni remarks: “L'essenza divina, proprio per la sua semplicità, è comunicabile più di ogni altra, ed è di fatto comunicata in forza di ciò che in essa moltiplica i suppositi” (2018, 576).

2. *Unitas caritatis*: Reference to the Holy Spirit

Having offered a basic overview of Bonaventure's theology and treatment of unity in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, I now turn to his use of the term *unitas caritatis*. This term appears only once in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*. Nonetheless, the term can shed a great deal of light on Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology and pneumatology in particular. The goal of this second part of the present study is to unveil the theology imbedded within the term *unitas caritatis*, so as to demonstrate that it refers to the Holy Spirit.

I divide what follows into five subsections. The first subsection offers a brief introduction to the passage wherein *unitas caritatis* emerges. Then, in order to reveal the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the *unitas caritatis*, I leave the *De mysterio Trinitatis* and draw from other works of Bonaventure. Accordingly, subsections two through four will consider relevant passages from his *Commentary on the Sentences*, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, and his *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*. Of these three, I focus most substantially on a distinction from the *Commentary on the Sentences*. The fifth subsection offers a concluding synthesis. My modest objective in turning to these various texts is to individuate certain passages and attend to elements of the theology therein, in order to draw conclusions about the meaning behind the term *unitas caritatis* in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*.

2.1 Introducing the Passage

As alluded to already, the term *unitas caritatis* surfaces in one of the *fundamenta*, which grants divine unity together with a plurality of persons:

Again, more perfect is the unity, in which with a unity of nature there remains (*manet*) a unity of charity (*unitas caritatis*); but "charity stretches forth toward the other (*caritas ad alium tendit*)"¹⁴⁵; therefore, it includes the distinction between the one loving and the beloved (*diligentis et dilecti*); therefore if the divine unity is most perfect, it is necessary that it have an intrinsic plurality; for outside of itself, it has nothing that is supremely lovable. (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, fund.9 [*Opera omnia* 5, 65a])¹⁴⁶

In this passage, Bonaventure understands the perfect unity of God as a mystery of love. It is not just a unity of nature that occupies this scholastic thinker's mind, but also the unity of charity.¹⁴⁷ His strategy, in effect, brings together unity and plurali-

¹⁴⁵ The Quaracchi editors note that this is a quotation from St. Gregory the Great.

¹⁴⁶ *Item, perfectior est unitas, in qua cum unitate naturae manet unitas caritatis; sed 'caritas ad alium tendit': ergo includit distinctionem diligentis et dilecti: ergo si divina unitas est perfectissima, necesse est, quod habeat pluralitatem intrinsicam; nam extra se nihil habet, quod sit summe amabile.*

¹⁴⁷ It would form too great a digression to pursue here, but one can note at this point the way in which Bonaventure's strategy distinguishes him from someone like Aquinas. Bonaventure sees unity and plurality as equally foundational in his theology of the Divine Being, whereas, at least strategically, that is not obviously the case for Aquinas. Perfect unity is not just about being supremely undivided (see, e.g., ST I, q.11), but about love and thus intrinsic plurality as Bonaventure stresses.

ty. In other words, there is no primitive Divine Unity that is in any way prior to the Trinity.¹⁴⁸ An apt phrase from St. Basil the Great, whose teaching here foreshadows that of the Seraphic Doctor, comes to mind: “the unity is in the communion of the Godhead” (*On the Holy Spirit* 18.45).¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, as it appears in the text, *unitas caritatis* does not constitute a synonym for *unitas naturae*. Accordingly, the implication is that *unitas naturae* does not per se necessarily presuppose or entail *unitas caritatis*. The *unitas caritatis* has something to do with the mystery of *caritas* — the mystery of love that stretches forth toward the other. This mystery includes distinction between the one loving and the one loved; this mystery renders the *unitas naturae* more perfect.

Also significant is the reference to the lover and the beloved: *diligentis et dilecti* (= the Father and the Son).¹⁵⁰ Interestingly, however, there is no explicit reference to the *condilectus* — which would be the obvious reference to the Holy Spirit.¹⁵¹ Perhaps, however, the *condilectus* need not be stated explicitly, because there is already an implicit reference to the Spirit. This implicit reference is the *unitas caritatis*.

2.2 *In I Sent.* d.10, a.1–2: The Spirit as Unitive Love

2.2.1 Article 1 of *In I Sent.*, d. 10

Both the term *unio caritatis* and the quotation *amor caritatis semper in alium tendit* appear in *In I Sent.* d.10, a.1, q.2, which asks *Utrum in divinis ponenda sit persona procedens per modum amoris sive caritatis*. There is thus an obvious lexical connection to the passage quoted above from the *De mysterio Trinitatis* wherein the term *unitas caritatis* surfaces. How then does Bonaventure’s treatment of this distinction in his earlier *Commentary on the Sentences* shed light on the *unitas caritatis* of the *De mysterio Trinitatis*?

Similar to his teaching in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, Bonaventure affirms in d.10, a.1, q.2 that the highest perfection of plurality lies in unity, therefore also in the union of distinction; but among all unions, which are between distant things

¹⁴⁸ To this degree, Bonaventure’s intuition finds a similar contemporary articulation by Luis Ladaria: “Unity and distinction are not then contradictory. The unique divine essence should not be seen in opposition to the plurality of persons, nor as prior to them, but can be considered as the same unity and communion between them, which does not mean that this unity is a consequence of the union of the three. Unity and trinity are both absolutely primary and original, none is ‘previous’ to the other” (Ladaria 2010, 413).

¹⁴⁹ Luis Ladaria made a similar implicit connection between Basil and Bonaventure: “La unidad más perfecta, decía Buenaventura, es aquella en la que, junto a la unidad de la naturaleza, se da la unidad de la caridad. Por ello, si la unidad divina posee la máxima perfección, es necesario que tenga una pluralidad intrínseca” (2014, 44). He then footnotes Bonaventure’s reference to the *unitas caritatis* in the *De mysterio*, as well as the quotation of St. Basil to which I have also referred.

¹⁵⁰ This reference recalls the trinitarian theology of Richard of St. Victor. For a brief introduction to his trinitarian theology, see Marmion and Van Nieuwenhove 2011, 97–105; for a fuller account, see Melone 2001.

¹⁵¹ See, e.g., *Myst. Trin.* q.1, a.2, resp. (*Opera omnia* 5, 56a).

(*inter distantes*), the highest and most agreeable is the *unio caritatis*; if therefore there is distinction, there is union; and if union, there is emanation of charity. (fund.3 [*Opera omnia* 1, 197a])¹⁵²

Once again, Bonaventure draws a tight connection between plurality and unity. In order that plurality and unity come together, he here refers to a union of distinction. The highest union *inter distantes* is the *unio caritatis*. In the Trinity, there is the highest union and a distinction of persons; and so there must be a *unio caritatis*. The *unio caritatis* — which emerges forth from the *emanatio caritatis*, and thus from the procession of the Holy Spirit — refers to the union of the Father and Son who are at the same time distinct from one another. Understood in terms of charity, union comes to light as that which follows from distinction. Like the passage from the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, union of charity is a union of distinction. In *I Sent.* d.10, a.1 accentuates the pneumatological color of this union.

Also relevant in Bonaventure's treatment of this question is one of his responses to a contrary argument. The contrary argument states that love stretches forth toward another (*in alium tendens*); but the persons of the Trinity are distinct and perfect in themselves: "therefore, no person proceeds through the mode of love (*per modum amoris*)" (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.1, q.2, contr.2 [*Opera omnia* 1, 197a])¹⁵³.

To respond, while Bonaventure has no problem understanding *amor caritatis* as that which stretches forth into another (*amor caritatis semper in alium tendit*), he puts forth a distinction. To proceed *in alium* can be understood in two ways. One way "regards the other as object" and the second way "stretches forth toward the other and is received." The first way maps onto Trinitarian life. Bonaventure explains that the procession *per modum amoris* befits a divine person — the Spirit — because "it is fitting to have a gaze toward another person; whence the Holy Spirit is the love, by which the Father loves the Son" (*I Sent.*, d.10, a.1, q.2, ad 2 [*Opera omnia* 1, 198a]).¹⁵⁴ In the final question of this first article, then, Bonaventure asserts that the Spirit proceeds *per modum mutuae caritatis* (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.1, q.3, resp. [*Opera omnia* 1, 199b]).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Item, omnis et summa perfectio pluralitatis est in unitate, ergo et distinctionis in unione; sed inter omnes uniones, quae sunt inter distantes, summa et iucundissima est unio caritatis; si ergo est ibi distinctio, est unio; et si unio, est caritatis emanatio.*

¹⁵³ *Item, amor est eius in quo requiescit affectus: ergo semper accipitur ut in alium tendens; sed omnis persona est in se perfecte ens et distincta: ergo nulla persona procedit per modum amoris.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod amor caritatis semper in alium tendit, et ita procedit in alium et non stat in se; dicendum, quod procedere in alium est dupliciter: aut quia aliud respicit ut obiectum, aut quia in aliud tendit et recipitur. Primo modo bene convenit personae in divinis, quia bene convenit habere respectum ad aliam personam; unde Spiritus sanctus est amor, quo Pater amat Filium.*

¹⁵⁵ See also *In I Sent.* d.10, a.1, q.3, fund.2 (*Opera omnia* 1, 199a), where Bonaventure, appealing to St. Jerome, identifies the Spirit as *amor mutuus*.

2.2.2 Article 2 of *In I Sent.*, d. 10

Identifying the Holy Spirit as *amor* or *caritas* is then taken up immediately in the first question of the subsequent article: *Utrum amor sive caritas sit proprium Spiritus sancti* (d.10, a.2, q.1 [*Opera omnia* 1, 200]). In his response, Bonaventure clarifies that love (*dilectio*) in God can be understood either essentially, notionally, or personally:

Essentially, because each loves himself; notionally, because the Father and the Son harmonize (*concordant*) in spirating the Holy Spirit, and this harmony (*concordia*) is *amor* or *dilectio*; personally, because he who is produced through the mode of perfect liberality is not able to be anything save *amor* or *dilectio*. (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.2, q.1, resp. [*Opera omnia* 1, 201a])¹⁵⁶

A response to a contrary argument sheds some light on the way in which love is proper to the Spirit. Bonaventure needs to counter the commonplace argument, which holds that love correlates to the Spirit as wisdom correlates to the Son; wisdom, however, is only appropriated to the Son. To respond, Bonaventure argues that the case “is not similar.” It is not similar because wisdom does not designate a relation. Wisdom is rather an essential term that can be appropriated. Love, however, designates a relation “to those, by which love are joined together (*nectuntur*).” Love is proper to the Holy Spirit because by the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son are joined together. The Father speaks, and generated is the Word — a term proper to the Second Person. The Father and the Son spirate, and proceeds forth is Love — a term proper to the Third Person. “Love or charity is not only appropriated, but is proper to the Holy Spirit” (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.2, q.1, ad 3 [*Opera omnia* 1, 201b]).¹⁵⁷ In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure thus succinctly calls the Spirit the *nexus seu caritatem amborum* (*Brev.* 1.3.9 [*Opera omnia* 5, 212a]).

The term *nectuntur* anticipates the second and final question of *In I Sent.* d.10, a.2 (*Opera omnia* 1, 202): *Utrum Spiritus sanctus sit nexus sive unitas Patris et Filii*. As *amor sive caritas*, the Spirit is *nexus sive unitas*. In his treatment here, Bonaventure states explicitly in the third *fundamentum* that the Father and Son are united *in Spiritu*, who is the *nexus amborum* (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.2, q.2, fund.3 [*Opera omnia*

¹⁵⁶ *Dicendum, quod dilectio in divinis potest accipi et accipitur necessario essentialiter, notionaliter et personaliter: essentialiter, quia quilibet diligit se; notionaliter vero, quia Pater et Filius concordant in spirando Spiritum sanctum, quae concordia amor sive dilectio est; personaliter vero, quia ille qui producitur per modum perfectae liberalitatis, non potest esse nisi amor sive dilectio.* See also Melone 2008, 762; Hayes 1979, 40.55–56; Principe 1974, 254–255. The essential, notional, and personal distinction of love is not unique to Bonaventure.

¹⁵⁷ [*D*]icendum, quod non est simile; quia sapientia non dicit respectum ad alium, et ideo semper de se dicitur ad se et est essentialiter, nisi approprietur; sed amor respectum dicit ad eos, qui amore nectuntur [...] [*A*]mor sive caritas non tantum est appropriatum, verum etiam proprium Spiritus sancti. The theology of the Holy Spirit as the love by which the Father and Son love each other belongs to an important pneumatological debate, to which Bonaventure will give a clear response in distinction 32. I do not go into that here, but I refer the reader to Principe 1974 — a most helpful study from which I drew heavily upon in the writing of the present section.

1, 202a)].¹⁵⁸ Is this not precisely how the *unitas caritatis* functions in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*? The Spirit is the *nexus*, the unity — *unitas caritatis* — of the loving Father and the beloved Son.

Important to Bonaventure's treatment here is the idea of things distinct being united. This situation is the condition that calls for a *nexus*. Accordingly, because the Father and Son are distinct — *secundum differentiam proprietatis relativae* — then there is reason to posit a *nexus* (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.2, q.2, ad 1 [*Opera omnia* 1, 202b]).¹⁵⁹ Indeed, "*nexus* is the union that follows after distinction." Bonaventure says this because, while it is possible to speak of a certain unity of origin in the Father, that is not properly what is meant by *nexus*. Unlike *nexus*, unity of origin precedes distinction. If, however, there is union subsequent to distinction, then it is most proper that there be a *nexus*: "and thus is the case in the Father and the Son with respect to the Holy Spirit" (*In I Sent.* d.10, a.2, q.2, ad 3 [*Opera omnia* 1, 203a]).¹⁶⁰ The Spirit as *nexus* brings the distinction of the Father and Son into a unity of charity.

Nexus is properly said of the Spirit, therefore, because the Spirit is the *unitas amborum*. This term *nexus* in effect deciphers the term *unitas caritatis* in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*. There is distinction between the Father and the Son — the *diligens* and *dilectum* — and there is unity *in Spiritu*. As Bonaventure puts it in the response to this question:

The reason for this is because the Father and Son communicate in one Spirit, and therefore [the Spirit] is the unity of them both (*unitas amborum*). Furthermore, that Spirit is *amor*, and they thus communicate in him as in one love. And because love is most properly a *nexus*, it follows that the Holy Spirit is properly *nexus* because he is *amor mutuus*, *amor unicus* and *substantificus*. (d.10, a.2, q.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 1, 202b])¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ *Item, Spiritus sanctus secundum Graecos procedit a Patre in Filium, secundum Latino a Patre et Filio. Sed quocumque istorum modorum procedit, uniuntur in Spiritu Pater et Filius; sed ille, in quo uniuntur, est nexus amborum: ergo Spiritus sanctus est nexus.* See also Freyer 2005, 47–49.

¹⁵⁹ *Ad illud ergo quod obiicitur in contrarium, quod non est nexus nisi separatorum; dicendum, quod separatio dicitur tripliciter: secundum distantiam, et sic dicitur separatio localis; et secundum differentiam per essentiam, et sic dicitur separatio substantialis; et secundum differentiam proprietatis relativae, et sic non dicitur separatio proprie, sed distinctio. Et quolibet istorum modorum contingit esse nexus. Quia ergo Pater et Filius sunt distincti, ideo recte dicuntur connecti.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod Filius et Spiritus sanctus conveniunt in Patre; dicendum, quod convenientia originis dicitur dupliciter: aut quia oriuntur ab uno, aut quia ab eis oritur unus. Si quia ab uno, sic non dicitur nexus, quia nexus est unio consequens distinctionem, sed unitas in origine antecedit distinctionem. Si vero quia unius origo, sic, cum ibi sit distinctio et consequens unio, propriissime est nexus; et sic est in Patre et Filio respectu Spiritus sancti. Indeed, the ratio nexus, claims Bonaventure in the following distinction, incipit a distinctione et tendit sive perducit in unitatem (*In I Sent.* d.11, a.1, q.2, ad 2 [*Opera omnia* 1, 216a]). See also Hellmann 2001, 78–80.*

¹⁶¹ *Dicendum, quod nexus proprie dicitur de Spiritu sancto sive unitas amborum. Ratio autem huius est, quia Pater et Filius communicat in uno Spiritu, et ideo amborum est unitas. Et rursus, ille Spiritus est amor, et ideo communicant in eo ut in uno amore; et quia amor propriissime nexus est, ideo Spiritus sanctus proprie nexus est, quia est amor mutuus, est amor unicus et substantificus.* See also W. Principe 1974, 257.

To echo Peter Fehlner's concise way of putting it: "The Spirit is the hypostatic *nexus* between Father and Son, the unity which arises from their mutual love being shared" (1965, 107).¹⁶²

2.3 Jesus' Prayer for the *Unitas caritatis*

I now turn, briefly, to Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, where the theology hitherto explored also emerges — specifically in his commentary on Jesus' prayer in John 17. In fact, in his commentary on Jesus' prayer, Bonaventure makes an explicit reference to *unitas caritatis*. At John 17:23 — when Jesus prays "I in them, and you in me, that they may be consummated into one" — Bonaventure comments: "that is, perfected in the unity of charity (*unitate caritatis*)" (*In Ioannem* 17, n.39 [*Opera omnia* 6, 475a]).¹⁶³ The Seraphic Doctor thus unveils Christ's prayer as a petition for the *unitas caritatis*. In what way does *unitas caritatis* here, however, refer to the Spirit?

To answer this question, his interpretation of verse 21 is significant. Christ prays: "That they may be one [...] as you Father in me, and I in you." Bonaventure first clarifies that Christ is praying that they may be one "as we are one." Christ is thereby praying for the unity he shares with the Father. Bonaventure then specifies: "This unity is *per adhaerentiam caritatis*." Herein lies an almost explicit reference to the Spirit, especially in light of the pneumatology explored above. To corroborate his interpretation, Bonaventure quotes 1 Cor 6:17: "He who adheres to the Lord is one spirit" (*In Ioannem* 17, n.36 [*Opera omnia* 6, 474b]).¹⁶⁴ Ultimately, Bonaventure concludes that Christ is praying for the *unitas caritatis* (*In Ioannem* 17, n.37 [*Opera omnia* 6, 474b]).¹⁶⁵ This *unitas caritatis* is the unity of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father: "as we are one." It is the mutual love — the Spirit — of the Father and the Son.

Also relevant is his commentary on verse 26: "And I have made known to them your name." Bonaventure comments:

And I have made known to them your name [...] Not only does he make it known through himself, but even more so he will make it known through the Holy Spirit; therefore he says: *And I have made known*, and this through the Holy Spirit, who is the love (*amor*) of the Father and the Son; therefore he says: *So that the love, by which you have loved me, may be in them*, through the gift of the Holy Spirit. According to Romans 5: "The love (*caritas*) of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit." *And I in them*, because, according to 1 John 4: "whoever abides in love (*caritate*), abides in God, and

¹⁶² Similarly, Antonio Poppi calls the Spirit "il nesso profondissimo della loro [Padre e Figlio] intimità divina" (2008, 328).

¹⁶³ *Ego in eis, et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum, id est perfecti in unitate caritatis.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ut sint unum, per conformitatem dilectionis, sicut tu Pater in me, et ego in te, id est, sicut nos unum sumus [...]* *Ista unitas est per adhaerentiam caritatis; primae ad Corinthios sexto: Qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est.*

¹⁶⁵ *Sic petit eis unitatem caritatis.*

God [abides] in him”; and therefore it is also said there: “In this we have come to know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he has given to us of his Spirit.” And whoever has the Spirit, has also the Son, and can rest assured that he shall have the Father. (*In Ioannem* 17, n.45 [*Opera omnia* 6, 476b–477a])¹⁶⁶ The Spirit — the Love of the Father and Son — is given to us, and in this gift, we enter into the personal union of the Father and Son. In a word, we enter into the unity of charity for which Christ himself prayed.

2.4 *Unitas caritatis*: An Ecclesiological Nuance

I now turn to Bonaventure’s *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, written more or less contemporaneously as the *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*. In this text, I draw attention to but one passage, where the term *unitas caritatis* emerges. In this particular passage, Bonaventure’s use of the term concerns the unity of the Mystical Body of Christ: “And therefore the *unitas caritatis* does not exclude a multitude of charisms and separation (*discretionem*) of ranks and offices [...]” (*Perf. Evan.* q.4, a.1, ad6 [*Opera omnia* 5, 182b]).¹⁶⁷

There is no need here to engage with Bonaventure’s theology as it unfolds therein. I simply want to point out that, for the Seraphic Doctor, the principle of charity in the Church is the principle of ecclesial unity. And this principle is inseparable from the mission of the Holy Spirit. In his pioneering study on the role of charity in Bonaventure’s ecclesiology, Fehlner states:

St. Bonaventure’s view of charity is primarily centered around the uncreated gift of charity, or the person of the Holy Spirit, who is given by Christ to unite the Church [...] For St. Bonaventure to affirm that charity is the essence of Church unity is for him to affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit, wherever, whenever, and whatever degree and state the Church or mystical body of Christ is actualized. (1965, 41)

In this passage, Fehlner footnotes a relevant passage from *In I Sent.* d.14, a.2, q.1, fund.4 (*Opera omnia* 1, 249a):

The Holy Spirit is given for the sake of uniting and binding together the members of the mystical body; but the members of the mystical body are members

¹⁶⁶ *Nec tantum fecit notum per se, sed amplius faciet notum per Spiritum sanctum; ideo dicit:* Et notum faciam, et hoc per Spiritum sanctum, qui est amor Patris et Filii; *ideo dicit:* Ut dilectio, qua dilexisti me, sit in ipsis, per Spiritus sancti donationem; *ad Romanos quinto:* Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis. *Et ego in ipsis, quia, primae Ioannis quarto:* qui manet in caritate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo; *et ideo dicitur ibidem:* In hoc cognovimus, quoniam in ipso manemus, et ipse in nobis, quoniam de Spiritu suo dedit nobis. *Et qui hunc Spiritum habet et Filium securus est, ut habeat Patrem.* In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure writes similarly: *Rursus, quoniam qui fruatur Deo Deum habet; ideo cum gratia, quae sua deiformitate disponit ad Dei fruitionem, datur donum increatum, quod est Spiritus sanctus, quod qui habet habet et Deum* (*Brev.* 5.1.4 [*Opera omnia* 5, 253a]).

¹⁶⁷ *Et ideo unitas caritatis non excludit multiformitatem charismatum et discretionem dignitatum et officiorum, secundum quae unum membrum alteri habet subiici et secundum legem praelationis et subiectionis ab altero gubernari.*

united together, as the Lord himself petitions in John 17: “that they may be consummated as one.”¹⁶⁸

In sum, then, *unitas caritatis* can refer also to the unity of the Mystical Body,¹⁶⁹ a unity that is inseparable from the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, *unitas caritatis* is a thoroughly pneumatological term. For Bonaventure, the term speaks to the heart of the identity of who the Spirit is: the unitive breath coming forth from and uniting together the Father and the Son — Love as person.

2.5 Concluding Synthesis: Returning to the *De mysterio Trinitatis*

Let us return to the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, where we read: “more perfect is the unity, in which with a unity of nature there remains a *unitas caritatis*.” This *unitas caritatis* is the nexus of love that unites the Father and Son, the lover and beloved *in Spiritu*. It is perfective of the *unitas naturae*: without the *unitas caritatis*, unity in the Divine Being would not be perfect because it would not be trinitarian. The unity of charity renders divine unity most perfect because it unites the Loving Father and the Beloved Son in a mystery of mutual love.

Indeed, the metaphysical mystery of Uncreated Being — pure act, the ground and end of all that exists, the *esse divinum* — culminates in the theological mystery of the unitive and perfective breath of Love spirated by Father and Son: the *unitas caritatis* of the *esse divinum et trinum*.

Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to show that the term *unitas caritatis*, which emerges in the second question — on unity — of Bonaventure’s *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis*, constitutes an implicit reference to the Holy Spirit.

In order to make explicit this implicit reference, I began in the first part with a broad overview of Bonaventure’s theology of divine unity, especially as articulated in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*. For Bonaventure, highest unity, deeper than singularity, involves intrinsic plurality. The unity of the divine being does not obfuscate the trinity of persons, but rather there is “a marvelous concurrence and harmony” (*Myst. Trin.* q.2, a.2, resp. [*Opera omnia* 5, 65a]).¹⁷⁰ Trinitarian relationality manifests the highest unity.

¹⁶⁸ *Item, Spiritus sanctus datur ad uniendum et colligandum membra corporis mystici; sed membra corporis mystici sunt membra invicem unita, sicut ipse Dominus petit, Ioannis decimo septimo: Ut sint consummati in unum; sed perfecta unio non est nisi in uno simplici: ergo membra uniuntur per aliquid, quod est unum et idem in omnibus; hoc autem non potest esse donum creatum, sed increatum: ergo necesse est cum dono creato dari increatum.* See also *In I Sent.* d.10, a.1, q.2, fund.4 (*Opera omnia* 1, 197a): *Item, Spiritus sanctus, in nobis existens et habitans, facit nos similes illi summae Trinitate, sicut dicit Dominus, Ioannis decimo septimo: Ut sint unum, sicut et nos; sed Spiritus sanctus, in nobis existens, producit primo amorem caritatis, ad Romanos quinto: Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris etc.*

¹⁶⁹ Vatican II stressed the intrinsic relationship between the unity of the Triune God and the unity of the Church. See, for example, *Unitatis redintegratio* 2 and *Lumen gentium* 2–4.

¹⁷⁰ See n. 142 above.

Then, in the second part of this paper, I turned specifically to the term *unitas caritatis*, which emerges in q.2, a.2 of the *De mysterio trinitatis*. To unpack the implicit theology of this term, in order to identify it as a reference to the Holy Spirit, I drew from Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, and his *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*. To recapitulate, albeit briefly: the Spirit, who emanates *per modum amoris*, is the love by which the Father and the Son love one another; the Spirit joins together the Father and the Son because the Spirit is love, the *nexus amorum*. Accordingly, when the Lord prays *ut sint unum*, he prays for the *unitas caritatis* — the Holy Spirit! — so that the very union of divine life is itself constitutive of the union of the Mystical Body, the Church.

The term *unitas caritatis*, as it appears in the *De mysterio Trinitatis*, thus contains within itself the basic contours of Bonaventure's pneumatology. Indeed, for the Seraphic Doctor, the theology of the Holy Spirit is a theology of charity. Bonaventure accentuates that the love of the Father and the Son is personal and that unity in the divine being is inseparable from trinitarian plurality. Divine unity finds its perfect realization in the *unitas caritatis* — in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the *lovenexus* of divine life, comes to light as divine intimacy, the intimate embrace of the Father and the Son. Ultimately, Bonaventure's theology entails a tightly interconnected relationship between the generation of the Son and spiration of the Spirit.

All of these aspects of the pneumatology developed here could be studied further — especially in light of other works of Bonaventure and his sources. To be sure, much of the theology explored here has really only scratched the surface.

To conclude, I refer to a beautiful passage in the writings of St. Francis of Assisi, for whom the Spirit, as Optatus van Asseldonk has argued, is “the direct and active author or agent of the indwelling [of the Trinity]” (1991, 137). This intuition of St. Francis corresponds to the intuition of his follower, St. Bonaventure, in that the Spirit is about divine intimacy. The Spirit — intimate love of the Holy Trinity — brings about intimacy with the Holy Trinity.

All those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength and love their neighbors as themselves, who hate their bodies with their vices and sins, who receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who produce worthy fruits of penance. O how happy and blessed are these men and women while they do such things and persevere in doing them, because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them and make Its home and dwelling place among them (*Earlier Exhortation*, FA:ED: I, 41)

What is this home and dwelling place? Intimacy with the Holy Trinity. The text continues:

And they are children of the heavenly Father Whose works they do, and they are spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined by the Holy Spirit to our Lord Jesus Christ. We

are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. We are mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body through a divine love and a pure and sincere conscience and give birth to Him through a holy activity which must shine as an example before others. (*Earlier Exhortation*, FA:ED I, 41–42)¹⁷¹

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¹⁷¹ Or as he puts it in his *Letter to the Entire Order*: “Inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son [...] and, by Your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity.” (FA:ED I, 120–121)

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William Short OFM,

Bonaventure as Mediator of the Life of Saint Francis

A significant area of interest in the study of St. Bonaventure concerns his role as a mediator of the life of Saint Francis. To set the context briefly, we should recall the *status quaestionis* regarding the Life of Saint Francis before Bonaventure began his work. Thomas of Celano had already composed five hagiographical texts about Saint Francis, from the time of his canonization in 1228 (*Vita beati Francisci*), and the resulting development of liturgical texts for his feast on October 4, including his brief summary of the Life in the *Legenda ad usum chori* of 1230. During the time when Brother Elias was Minister General for a second time (1232–1239), he wrote the *Vita beati patri nostri Francisci* or *Vita brevior* recently rediscovered and published by Jacques Dalarun in 2015. After receiving a large amount of material from early companions of the saint, by 1247 Thomas had written for his fellow Lesser Brothers another Life of the saint, or rather a thematic collection of stories about him: *Memoriale in desiderio animae*. After repeated requests, in 1252 he finally completed an account of the miracles of the saint, more detailed than those in his earlier works, the *Tractatus de miraculis sancti Francisci*. Thomas died in 1260 at 70 years of age, having spent nearly 25 years of his life writing texts about a man he had known as his brother and Minister General, Francis of Assisi.

But Thomas was not the only one who was writing about the Life of Saint Francis during those years. Brother Julian of Speyer was busy in Paris, as a litur-

gist responsible for correcting the brothers' table reading, the *corrector mensae*, for a large, international community of brothers in formation from all the Provinces of the Order. Probably with their formation in mind he modified the earliest work of Thomas to produce his own *Vita sancti Francisci* in 1235. Around 1240, following the death of Brother Bernard of Quintavalle, a collection of stories from Brother Giles and other companions was assembled by Brother John of Perugia in a text known as the *Anonymus Perusinus*. The early companions of Francis, including Brothers Leo, Angelo and Rufino, responded to a request in 1245 for new materials about the life of the saint. Their memories are contained, perhaps in edited form, in the *Legenda trium sociorum* and in sections of the *Compilatio Assisensis*, a miscellany of Franciscan texts from the 1240s through the early 1300s. There were clearly also collections of miracles attributed to St. Francis assembled at the Basilica of the saint in Assisi and in other churches of the Order. Thomas of Celano worked very hard to make a single text out of all this material, but became somewhat exasperated by the end of the project in 1252. Here is his complaint:

We cannot forge something new every day, nor square circles, nor bring to agreement the innumerable variety of times and wishes that we received in a single block. We did not set out to write these things to satisfy our vanity. Nor have we plunged into this set of such differing reports of our own will. The insistence of our brothers' requests extorted it, and the authority of our prelates ordered it. We expect our reward from Christ the Lord; from you, brothers and fathers, we ask grace and love. So let it be! Amen. (*Tractatus de miraculis* 14 [FA:ED II, 468])

Bonaventure Enters the Scene

The young Giovanni di Fidanza, whom we know as Saint Bonaventure, entered the University of Paris, where he later joined the Franciscan Order, became a Master of Arts and Master of Theology and would be elected Minister General in Rome in 1257. He had already been engaged in the heated debates with members of the secular clergy at the University over the validity of the new Mendicant Orders, Franciscans and Dominicans. The various and sometimes conflicting reports about the Life of Saint Francis and the founding of his Order presented a challenge in these debates at Paris and beyond.

Around the time of the Feast of Saint Francis in 1259 Bonaventure spent a time of retreat on Mount La Verna in Tuscany. Here he was inspired to write the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, and he had some experience there that had a deep effect on him. It should not surprise us then that this inspiration shaped Bonaventure's later writings, including the *Life of Saint Francis* which he would begin writing soon after that retreat. We will return to this experience at the end of this examination of Bonaventure's hagiographical text about St. Francis.

Legenda maior¹⁷²

In 1260 at Narbonne in France, the General Chapter of the Order requested that Bonaventure compose a single, reliable *legenda* of the life of St. Francis, drawing on the earlier *legendae* already in circulation. He complied, and in 1263 presented the text known generally as the *Legenda maior*, the chief document of his “mediation” of the Life of Saint Francis.

Structure: Three Movements

Bonaventure adds little that is new to the story of the Poverello of Assisi: his great contribution was to recast the earlier materials in a way that eliminated some of the problems they had caused. In order to do this Bonaventure structured the material in a coherent way: two chronological sections at beginning and end, describing the early years and the final days of the saint. Between these are three thematic sections, roughly corresponding to the classic movements of growth in the spiritual life (described in the newly popular works of Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite). These three movements are purgation or purification, that is, a life of penance and conversion; illumination or enlightenment, an increasing understanding of God’s word and action in his life; and union, the transformation of the Lover into the Beloved (a theme developed in the Victorine school of Paris).

Six Steps and a Seventh State

Furthermore, the road to union is marked by six visions of the Cross in the journey of Francis, and, at the end of the journey, the transforming experience of the Seraph on the Cross and the impression of the Stigmata on the saint’s body. The whole *legenda* concludes with an edited account of miracles drawn almost entirely from Thomas of Celano.

Bonaventure is thus rightly regarded as a mediator of the Life of Saint Francis. He reshaped the literary, hagiographical tradition that preceded him into a coherent and inspiring account of the Christian’s journey into God, while eliminating those elements that would provoke criticism of Francis himself, or the Order he founded.¹⁷³

The choices made to achieve this purpose are described lucidly by Giovanni Miccoli:

It is clear that Bonaventure’s strategy is not limited to shading, weakening, eliminating certain facts and episodes for merely irenic purposes. It is the basic strategy used to present, interpret and judge the life of Francis, the foundation of the

¹⁷² Latin text in Menestò, Brufani et al. 1995, 777–961. For the sources used by Bonaventure in the *Legenda maior*: all English texts can be found in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, Vol. II, “The Founder” and Vol III, “The Prophet” (FA:ED II, III). Latin and English and texts on facing pages can be found at www.franciscantradition.org. Here we will refer primarily to these texts: Bonaventure, *Legenda maior* = *Major Life of St. Francis* (FA:ED II); Thomas of Celano, *Memoriale* = *The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul* (FA:ED II); Anonymous, *Compilatio Assisiensis* = *Assisi Compilation* (FA:ED II); Bernard of Besse, *Liber de laudibus* = Bernard of Besse, *A Book of Praises of Blessed Francis* (FA:ED III).

¹⁷³ An excellent overview of these issues, and one to which I am much indebted, is that of Jacques Dalarun (1996). All citations from the English version (Hagman 2002).

Order, its history and its development. It enables him to erase the doubts, perplexities and comparisons that were pitting the zealots for the rule, supporters of a faithful and literal imitation of the first days, against the brothers of the community. And this strategy was such that it essentially removed every *raison d'être*, every bit of support from those who believed the Order must remain strictly faithful to its beginnings, and who lamented its progressive departure from them. (Miccoli 1970, 394–395; 1991, 276–277; cf. Dalarun 1996, 242–243)

Until his death in 1274, and for the next seven centuries, this image of Francis shaped by Bonaventure would remain predominant, though not without its critics. To these we now turn.

A Correction of Bonaventure? *Compilatio Assisiensis* and Bernard of Besse

The *Compilatio Assisiensis* is an important collection of early Franciscan texts that was assembled at various times by various brothers in the mid-13th century. It includes memories of the early companions of Francis that were used by Thomas of Celano in composing his Second Life of St. Francis, *Memoriale in desiderio animae*. But at some time after that text was completed, and after Bonaventure had composed his *Legenda maior* (1263), some friar copied from the *Memoriale* those sections of Thomas of Celano's text that had been excluded from Bonaventure's *Legenda maior*.

In 1276 the General Chapter of Pisa issued another call for any materials relating to the Life of Saint Francis, to be sent to the Minister General. Bonaventure's former secretary, Bernard of Besse, obeyed by composing his *Liber de laudibus beati Francisci* in the years between 1277 and his death in 1283. Like the *Compilatio Assisiensis* Bernard's book also restored texts of Thomas of Celano excluded from the *Legenda maior*.

We can see on a list the texts of the *Memoriale* of Thomas of Celano that were excluded from Bonaventure's *Legenda maior* but later restored by the *Compilatio Assisiensis*. Marked by an asterisk (*) on this list are those passages from the *Memoriale* also restored by Bernard of Besse in his *Liber de laudibus* after Bonaventure's death.

Texts of Thomas of Celano's *Memoriale* excluded from the *Legenda maior* and recovered by the *Compilatio Assisiensis*, and those also recovered in Bernard of Besse (*Liber de laudibus*)

<i>Compilatio</i>		<i>Memoriale</i>
23	56	On poor buildings of wood
23	59	The owner of a house has property rights
24	60	On poor furnishings
25	62	Warning against eagerness for books*
26	63	On poverty in beds and coverings
27	65	On punishment of a brother who touched money

28	69	He is warmed by fire within, not clothes
29	69	He detests three layers of clothing
30	69	He tolerates necessity
31	86	He gives a mantle to a woman in Celano
32	87	A mantle to a man near Siena
33	88	A mantle to a man near Le Celle
34	89	A mantle to a man near Colle
35–36	103	He explains the prophet (Ez.) to a Dominican friar*
37	113	A parable about looking at women
37	114	At lunch with women, he does not look at them
38	127	He sings in French when excited
39	143	He resigns office at Chapter
40	144	He gives up companions, blind man dog
49	148	Humility to St. Dominic*
1	153	Do not use the arms of obedience easily
41	155	Brothers are sent in last times for good example
2	157	Future Brothers will be ashamed of the Order
3	159	“I want to be shamed if not a good example”
48	161	All Brothers should work with their hands*
45	175	He goes to town to beg meat for a sick brother*
42	184	Who can be the next Minister General?
43	185	Qualities of a Minister General
	186	A Minister General should have his needs filled
44	188	“They snatched the Order from me!”
47	195	On dangers of study and books
46	208	The Rule is the marrow of the Gospel

Jacques Dalarun gives a general overview of the kinds of omissions that characterize the work of Bonaventure as editor-mediator of the *Life of Francis*:

Francis's body and relationships with women are deliberately hidden. This once led me (following Carlo Ginzburg) to call the Major Legend a “castrated history.” But this is not really satisfactory, and we will need to come back to it. By eliminating the woman with the head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly of glass, feet and legs of iron, covered with a wretched cloak, we do avoid a feminine metaphor for Francis. But we also, as Miccoli recalls, avoid a metaphor for the poverty of the Order. Still clearer is the elimination of the black hen, which brings together all the themes listed thus far, as well as those yet to come. Indeed, the most numerous omissions — some thirty — concern the tribulations promised the Order, internal conflicts, ambitious brothers, the simplicity that characterizes a good minister. Eliminated again are passages that recall Francis's distrust of books, study and knowledge, and those that describe his preaching, which is the opposite of that of the scholastics.

Also left out are the parts that have to do with strictest respect for poverty and that teach hatred of money. (Dalarun 1996, 250; cf. 1994, 131)¹⁷⁴

In order to give some idea of the editing process that Bonaventure used in selecting and rejecting materials, we give some examples here of sections from the work of Thomas of Celano that were omitted from the *Legenda maior* and restored by the *Compilatio*.

Poverty

Several passages about poverty from the *Memoriale* of Thomas are missing in Bonaventure's *Legenda maior*. These include instructions about the brothers having poor buildings made of wood (2C 56 [=AC 23] in FA:ED II, 285), and the poor furnishings to be used in them (2C 60 [=AC 24] in FA:ED II, 287; 2C 63 [=AC 26] poverty in beds and coverings in FA:ED II, 288). A passage concerning the rights over property remaining with the owner of a house where friars live is also omitted (2C 59 [=AC 23] in FA:ED II, 286). Two passages concerning the poverty of the brothers' clothing are similarly passed over in silence: (2C 69 [=AC 28] he is warmed by fire within not by clothes, in FA:ED II, 293; 2C 69 [=AC 29] detests those who wear three layers of clothing, in FA:ED II, 293). Four examples of Francis giving away a mantle he had received in order to clothe a poor person are missing as well: (2C 86 [=AC 31] to a woman in Celano, in FA:ED II, 293; 2C 87 [=AC 32] to a man near Siena, in FA:ED II, 304; 2C 88 [=AC 33] to a man near Le Celle, in FA:ED II, 304; 2C 89 [=AC 34] to a man near Colle, in FA:ED II, 305). The harsh punishment of a friar who touched money is omitted (2C 65 [=AC 27] in FA:ED II, 290). A story about the ability to endure harsh necessity is also left out (2C 69 [=AC 30] in FA:ED II, 293). Francis's begging meat for a sick brother must also have seemed unsuitable (2C 175 [=AC 45] in FA:ED II, 359). Like the author of the *Compilatio*, Bernard of Besse is glad to restore it in the *Liber de laudibus*.

The Order of Preachers

Two accounts concerning Dominicans are left out of the *Legenda maior*: one, in which Francis explains a text of Ezechiel to a Friar Preacher, and the other extolling the humility of Francis toward St. Dominic (2C 103 [=AC 35–36] he explains words of the prophet Ezechiel to a Friar Preacher, in FA:ED II, 315; 2C 148 [=AC 49] his humility toward St. Dominic, in FA:ED II, 342). Bernard of Besse rescued both of these accounts in his *Liber*.

Good and Bad Example

Somewhat inexplicably, Francis's custom of singing in French is omitted by Bonaventure, though a resident of Paris for most of his adult life (2C 127 [=AC

¹⁷⁴ Dalarun (1994, 131) quotes Ginsburg.

38] in FA:ED II, 331). Two stories about Francis and women are excluded from Bonaventure's text, though their content is intended as exemplary: (2C 113 [=AC 37] a parable about looking at women, in FA:ED II, 322; 2C 114 [=AC 37] while dining with women, he does not look at them, in FA:ED II, 323). That the friars are sent "in the last times" to give good example may be considered controversial as a prophecy in the wake of disputes at Paris (2C 155 [=AC 41] in FA:ED II, 347). Two accounts of the shame of Francis if he does not give good example, or the friars of the future being ashamed about the Order are excluded from the *Legenda* (2C 157 [=AC 2] future Brothers will be ashamed of Order, in FA:ED II, 118, 349; 2C 159 [=AC 3] he says he wants to be shamed if not a good example, in FA:ED II, 350). Even a cursory reading of the following passage will give some idea of the problem it might have presented to Bonaventure as he mediated the Life of Saint Francis:

He also said: "A *time will come* when the religion loved by God will have such a bad reputation because of bad examples that it will be embarrassing to go out in public. Whoever comes to enter the Order at that time will be led only by the working of the Holy Spirit; *flesh and blood* will put no *blot* on them; they will be truly *blessed by the Lord*. Although they will not do works of merit, the *love* which makes saints work fervently *will have grown cold*, still they will undergo temptations; and whoever passes the tests of that time will be better than those who came before. But woe to those who congratulate themselves over the appearance of a religious way of living, those numbed by idleness, those who do not firmly resist the temptations which are permitted to test the chosen! Only those who are *tested will receive the crown of life*, those who, in the meantime, are disturbed by the malice of the wicked." (*Memoriale* 157, *Compilatio* 2, in FA:ED II 118, 349)

The Office of Minister General

The circumstances in which Francis gave up companions, comparing himself to a blind man led by a dog, and his resignation from office at a Chapter are passed over in silence (2C 143 [=AC 39] Francis's resigns office at Chapter, in FA:ED II, 340; 2C 144 [=AC 40] he gives up companions, like a blind man with dog, in FA:ED II, 340). The abject figure and the isolation implied in this analogy may have seemed unfitting as a detail to be included in an official *legenda*.

Francis's description of the qualities needed in a Minister General of the Order are not mentioned by his seventh successor in that office (2C 184 [=AC 42] in FA:ED II, 364; 2C 185 [=AC 43] in FA:ED II, 364–365; 2C 186 [=AC 43] in FA:ED II, 365). This could be a sign of modesty on Bonaventure's part, perhaps considering himself unworthy of the high ideal described here. Francis states that the needs of the Minister General should be provided for, yet this detail is also deleted: it could seem self-serving if Bonaventure were about to present the text to the Order's General Chapter for its approval. A warning about a minister not using obedience as a weapon is similarly passed over (2C 153 [=AC 1] in FA:ED II, 346).

The praise of the Rule as “the marrow of the Gospel,” does not find a place in the *Legenda* (2C 208 [=AC 46] in FA:ED II, 380). Could it be that the controversy about the Rule of the brothers as directly inspired by Christ, so hotly debated at Paris, had made Bonaventure cautious about such claims?

And the heartfelt cry of Francis that the Ministers of the Order had stolen the Order from him is consigned to oblivion (2C 188 [=AC 44] in FA:ED II, 366). It would certainly be unseemly to portray the saintly founder as angrily accusing friars in positions of authority of distorting the purpose for which the Order existed.

Once a brother asked him why he had renounced the care of all the brothers and turned them over into the hands of others as if they did not belong to him. He replied: “Son, I love the brothers as I can, but if they would *follow my footsteps* (1 Pt 2:21) I would surely love them more, and would not make myself a stranger to them. For there are some among the prelates who draw them in a different direction, placing before them the examples of the ancients and paying little attention to my warnings. But what they are doing will be seen in the end.”

A short time later, when he was suffering a serious illness, he raised himself up in bed in *an angry spirit*: “Who are these people? They *have snatched out of my hands* my religion and that of the brothers. If I go to the general chapter, then I’ll show them what my will is!” And that brother asked him: “Won’t you also change those provincial ministers who for a long time have abused their freedom?” And our father answered, sobbing, with this terrible word: “Let them live any way they want, for there is less harm in the damnation of a few than in the damnation of many!” (*Memoriale* 188, *Compilatio* 44 44, in FA:ED II 145-6, 367)

Books and Study

We should not be surprised that Bonaventure does not include two strong messages of Francis: one warning against eagerness for having books, and another about the dangers of study (2C 62 [=AC 25] against eagerness for books, in FA:ED II, 288; 2C 195 [=AC 47] dangers of study and books, in FA:ED II, 372). The first is restored in the *Liber* of Bernard of Besse.

It grieved him when brothers sought learning while neglecting virtue, especially if they did not *remain in that calling in which they were first called*. He said: “Those brothers of mine who are led by curiosity for knowledge will find themselves *empty-handed* (Sir 35:4) on the *day of reckoning* (Hos 9:7). I wish they would grow stronger in virtue, so that when the *times of tribulation* arrive they may have the Lord with them *in their distress*. For,” he said, “a *tribulation is approaching*, when books, useful for nothing, shall be thrown into cupboards and into closets!” He did not say these things out of dislike for the study of the Scriptures, but to draw all of them back from excessive concern for learning, because he preferred that they be good through charity, than dilettantes through curiosity.

Besides, he could smell in the air that a time was coming, and not too far away, when he knew learning would be an occasion of ruin, while dedication to spiritual things would serve as a support to the spirit. (*Memoriale* 195, *Compilatio* 47, in FA:ED II 372, 147)

Work

Passages emphasizing the need for the friars to work with their hands are left out (2C 161 [=AC 48] in FA:ED II, 350). By the time the *Legenda maior* was written, the mostly clerical Order hired domestic servants to do the bulk of the manual labor required in many of its large houses, like that in Paris, where Bonaventure lived for many years.

He used to say that the *lukewarm*, who do not apply themselves constantly to some work, would be quickly *vomited out of the Lord's mouth*. No idler could appear in his presence without feeling the sharp bite of his criticism. This exemplar of every perfection always worked, and *worked with his hands* (1 Cor 4:12), not allowing the great gift of time to go to waste. And so he would often say: "I want all my brothers to work and keep busy, and those who have no skills to learn some." And he gave this reason: "That we may be less of a burden to people, and that in idleness the heart and tongue may not stray into what is forbidden." But he would not have profit or payment for work left to the whim of the worker, but entrusted it to the guardian or the family. (*Memoriale* 161, *Compilatio* 48, in FA:ED II 351, 147-8)

Temptations

To picture the canonized founder of the Order as suffering from a "temptation of spirit" would likely have seemed inappropriate to Bonaventure, and perhaps useful to the opponents of the Order. It was omitted from the *Legenda maior*, but significantly included by Bonaventure's secretary, Bernard of Besse, in his *Liber de laudibus*.

At another time a very serious temptation of spirit came upon him, surely to embellish his crown. Because of it he was filled with anguish and sorrow; he afflicted and chastised his body, he prayed and wept bitterly. He was under attack in this way for several years, until one day while praying at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, he heard in spirit a voice: "Francis, if you had faith like a mustard seed, you would tell the mountain to move from here, and it would move." The saint replied: "Lord, what is the mountain that I could move?" And again he heard: "The mountain is your temptation." And he said, sobbing: "Lord, be it done to me as you have said!" At once, after the whole temptation was driven away, he was set free. (2C115 [=AC 63] in FA:ED II, 324, 165–166; BPr 3 in FA:ED III, 43–44)

Jacques Dalarun has commented with insight on such omissions in the *Legenda maior*: “The saint’s severity and weakness disappear, as well as everything that shows his fantasies, his irresponsibility, but also his real simplicity.” (Dalarun 1996, 249–250)

Ecclesiastical Offices

By the time the *Legenda maior* was composed, several popes had raised friars of the Order to important ecclesiastical offices, notably that of bishop. Bonaventure himself would decline the office of Archbishop of York in England, but was later named Cardinal Bishop of Albano. The following selection from Thomas of Celano simply did not fit the new reality of the Order in the 1260s, though it was preserved by Bernard of Besse:

With the greatest zeal he cultivated poverty’s companion, the virtue of humility. Because of this he wanted the brothers to be clothed in a humble habit, girt with a rope, to be called Lesser Brothers, and never to be exalted in this world. When he was asked by the Lord of Ostia about promoting his brothers to ecclesiastical dignities, he would in no way consent, but replied they should be kept in humility. (2C 148 in FA:ED II, 342; BPr 5 in FA:ED III, 47)

The Miracles of Saint Francis

As with other parts of Celano’s *Memoriale* Bonaventure’s editing is also apparent with regard to the *Treatise on the Miracles*. Though he adds a few additional miracles that occurred after the saint’s death, he also deletes many for various reasons.¹⁷⁵ Jacques Dalarun has explained the general criteria evident in Bonaventure’s choices:

Bonaventure eliminates thirty-five episodes found in the *Treatise*. Since they are episodes from Francis’s lifetime, they are already incorporated into the biographical part of the Major Legend. The other seventy episodes, present in the *Treatise on the Miracles* but omitted by Bonaventure, are mostly miracles that were less persuasive, or more precisely, given the developments already analyzed, miracles that were no longer in fashion. The latter include incidents that are less convincing, all cripples, some cases of unbelievers who are punished, mutes and blind. The only omissions with deeper significance are those of Jacoba and Prassede. This is in accord with the minister general’s desire to eliminate Francis’s relationships with all women except Clare, in other words, all relationships except between the two Orders. (Dalarun 1996, 244)

In other words, Bonaventure adjusts, deletes, edits and (rarely) adds to the earlier descriptions of Francis, not only in life but also after his death. And that editorial work mediated the figure of the Little Poor Man to the brothers of the Order he founded, the Church and society generally for the next seven centuries.

¹⁷⁵ See my listing of these miracles in Short 2010, esp. 2221–2222.

Bonaventure: Mediator of the Life of Saint Francis or Mediated by that Life?

As we have seen, Bonaventure began his great project of the *Legenda maior* during the year following his time of retreat on Mount La Verna in the Autumn of 1259. During that retreat, he tells us, a significant insight came to him:

I had been breathlessly searching for this peace
 after the example of our most blessed father Francis
 —I, a sinner who succeeded, unworthy in every way,
 as the seventh in line after his passing
 in that most blessed father's general ministry to the brothers.
 When, near the time of the thirty-third anniversary of that blessed man's passing,
 as if by divine prodding, I turned aside for the mountain, La Verna,
 as if to a place of rest seeking in love peace of spirit.
 While I was staying there,
 I was mulling over certain ascents of the mind into God,
 in particular the miracle experienced in that very place
 by blessed Francis himself :
 the vision of a winged Seraph in the likeness of the Crucified.
 As I was sitting with this,
 it suddenly seemed this vision displayed
 the rapture of that father while he was contemplating
 and the path through which he reached it. (*Itin.* Prol. 2; tr. Armstrong 2020, 5)

Bonaventure himself was inspired by his experience on La Verna. After his time of retreat on the mountain his writings focus more clearly on the figure of Saint Francis as a guide and model of Christian perfection. That is also the underlying message of his *Legenda maior sancti Francisci*: Francis offers the example of a specific, historical individual who reached the summit of Christian perfection in his union with Christ Crucified. As Bonaventure noted in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*: in faith we move “from the visible to the invisible (*quia ergo per visibilia venit ad invisibilia*)” (*Prooemium Commentarii in Ioannem* 9, q. 3 [*Opera omnia* 6, 243]), and Francis himself offers just such a visible example to show that such union is possible for others.

Yes, we may say that Bonaventure is a Mediator of the Life of Saint Francis. But I believe we can also say that Bonaventure himself was changed, perhaps transformed, or even mediated by that same Life of Saint Francis.

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Notes on the Editors and Contributors

Nena Bobovnik (KU Leuven)

After obtaining her BA in Philosophy and Latin philology at the University of Ljubljana, Bobovnik finished an MA program in philosophy at KU Leuven. Currently, she is a doctoral researcher at the Institute of Philosophy (KU Leuven) acting within the international project *Aristoteles Latinus*. Bobovnik is preparing a critical edition of the medieval Latin translation of pseudo-Aristotle's *Magna Moralia*.

Jan Dominik Bogataj OFM

(University of Ljubljana – Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis)

Bogataj is a Research Associate at the Institute of Patristic Studies *Victorinianum* at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Ljubljana. After completing his Diploma in Biblical Studies at the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* in Jerusalem (2018), his Master's degree at the Faculty of Theology of the UL (2019) and his Licentiate in Patristic Theology and Sciences at the *Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum* (Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, 2021), he is now completing his PhD at the same institution. His research and translation interests focus mainly on early Christian literature. Among other he translated Bonaventure's work *Lignum vitae* (2020) and *Breviloquium* (2021) into Slovenian.

Franziska van Buren (KU Leuven)

Van Buren is a post-doctoral researcher on the ERC project: *Not Another History of Platonism* at KU Leuven. She received her PhD from Ludwig-Maximilians-Uni-

versität (2021), after having completed her BA and MA at Fordham University, NY. Her research interests include Aristotle and his late ancient and medieval reception, particularly in Bonaventure, in the areas of metaphysics and cosmology. Currently, she is working on Aristotle's fragments and their late ancient reception, as well as a book on Bonaventure's interpretation of Aristotelian ontology.

Leonardo Fedriga (Scuola Alti Studi-FSC, Modena)

Fedriga is a PhD student at the Scuola Alti Studi-FSC (Modena) currently working on a thesis on the relationship between psychological doctrines and the ideal of poverty among Franciscan theologians in the 13th century. His research interests lie broadly around medieval philosophy.

Ingrid Kodelja (independent researcher)

Kodelja is a Slovenian researcher who received her PhD at the Postgraduate School of ZRC (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Art) in Ljubljana. Her research interests include history of science in the Middle Ages, the scholastics, and, most particularly, the philosophy of Robert Grosseteste.

Robert Kralj (independent researcher)

After obtaining his MA at the University of Ljubljana, Kralj studied the mystical thought of Therese of Ávila at the university of Salamanca where he obtained his PhD. He is the translator of Edith Stein's and Romano Guardini's works into Slovenian.

Thomas Piolata OFM Cap. (Pontificia Universitas Antonianum – Durham University – Quaracchi Collegium)

Thomas Piolata is currently pursuing a doctorate in cotutelle at Durham University (UK) and the Pontifical Antonianum University (Rome) in theology. The focus of his project is the finality of the Holy Spirit in Bonaventure's theology. Before beginning his doctorate, he completed a BA at Saint Louis University, an MA in Theology and an MA in Philosophy at The Catholic University of America (Washington, DC), as well as an STB and STL at the Pontifical Gregorian University. In 2021, he was named a doctoral fellow of the Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae.

Lydia Schumacher (King's College London)

Lydia Schumacher is a Reader in Historical and Philosophical Theology at King's College in London since 2017. She was the Principal Investigator on a European Research Council Grant project *Authority and Innovation in Early Franciscan Thought* which contributed immensely to our knowledge of early Franciscan philosophical and theological background.

Notes on the Editors and Contributors

Marianne Schlosser (Universität Wien)

Marianne Schlosser is head of the department for theology of spirituality at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna. Schlosser's academic focus is on theology and spirituality of Patristics and the High Middle Ages, centred around Bonaventure and Catherine of Siena especially. Schlosser is also a proponent of the initiative to make the treasures of the history of Christian spirituality accessible to the academic as well as to the lay public. In 2018 she was awarded a Joseph Ratzinger Prize.

William Short OFM (Collegium S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi Editions)

Short is a Professor of Christian Spirituality at The Franciscan School of Theology (University of San Diego) and the director of the renowned *Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae* responsible for the seminal critical editions of the entire Bonaventuran *opus*. Brother Short's research focuses on the intellectual and textual history of the Franciscan Order, with a special emphasis on Francis of Assisi, his work and the early biographical sources of his life.

Alen Širca (University of Ljubljana)

Širca is a professor at the Department of the Comparative Literature and Literary Theory (Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana). He is a Slovenian scholar with a penchant for Philosophy of Literature with a special interest in mystical literature of the medieval and early modern period.

Miran Špelič OFM (University of Ljubljana)

Špelič is a professor of Patristics at the Faculty of Theology (University of Ljubljana). After obtaining a Master's degree in Latin, French, and Theology, he received his doctorate at the Patristic Institute Augustinianum in Rome. Špelič founded a publishing house specialized in Franciscan studies Brat Frančišek.

Anton Štrukelj (University of Ljubljana)

Štrukelj is a renowned Slovenian theologian, professor emeritus of the Faculty of Theology (University of Ljubljana), a member of Mariological Society of America, and a former member of the International Theological Commission. He has written a number of monographs translated in many contemporary languages. Štrukelj is also the general editor of the Slovenian edition of the international *Communio* journal.

Povzetek

Pričujoča monografija je sad dela različnih avtorjev, ki so jih v letu 2021, v znak obeležitve 800-letnice Bonaventurovega rojstva, pripravili slovenski in tujih avtorji.

Knjiga se odpre se z zgodovino filozofije: v prvih dveh poglavjih je predstavljeno zgodovinsko ozadje glavnih potez Bonaventurove filozofske misli. Najprej se Lydia Schumacher osredotoči na Bonaventurov nauk o transcendentalijah, Božjih idejah in analogiji, v kolikor ga lahko razumemo kot temeljno zasidranega v teologiji in filozofiji predhodnih frančiškanov. Prav Bonaventurovi učitelji so namreč bili tisti, ki so sestavili vplivno frančiškansko sumo srednjega veka – *Summa Halensis* –, na katere nauk je močno vplivala tudi Avicennova metafizika. Z odkrivanjem značilno Avicennove filozofije v *Summa Halensis*, iz katere je črpala Bonaventura filozofija, Schumacherjeva tako osvetli Avicennov vpliv v Bonaventurovem najbolj znanem delu, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.

V drugem poglavju Franziska van Buren seže še dlje v zgodovino, saj poudari potrebo po prevetritvi splošno uveljavljenega mnenja o temeljni zakoreninjenosti Bonaventurove filozofije v svetem Avguštinu. Najpomembnejša teza tega poglavja se tako umešča v pomembno razpravo, ki so jo načeli že ugledni medievalisti prejšnjega stoletja. Na eni strani sta Étienne Gilson in Maurice de Wulf zagovarjala Bonaventurov avguštinizem, na drugi strani pa je Fernand van Steenberghe trdil, da je bil Bonaventura, če kaj, pravzaprav izredno zvest bralec Aristotela. Avtorica soglaša s tezo, da je Aristotel na Bonaventura vplival v veliko večji meri, kot je bilo doslej priznано. V svojem prispevku tako pokaže, kako močno je na Bonaventurova stališča o možnosti spoznanja univerzalnih pojmov in zakonov, ki delujejo v naravi, vplival Aristotel.

Preučevanju zgodovinskega ozadju Bonaventurove filozofije sledita dve poglavji osredotočeni na Bonaventurovo epistemologijo. Najprej Leonardo Fedriga analizira Bonaventurov nauk o čutnem zaznavanju, kot je izražen v *De reductione artium ad theologiam* 8. Fedriga poudarja, da pojem *generatio speciei*, ki ga uvede Bonaventura, pravzaprav ni tako nov in idiosinkratičen, kot se zdi na prvi pogled. Po njegovem mnenju je idiosinkratična prej Bonaventurova uskladitev Avgušтина z Aristotelom. Fedriga trdi, da Bonaventurov opis čutnega zaznavanja izhaja iz njegove inovativne sinteze tako avguštinske kot aristotelske epistemologije.

V nadaljevanju se Ingrid Kodelja osredotoči na nauk o Božjem razsvetljenju – Avguštinova dediščina, ki jo je Bonaventura nedvomno sprejel, vendar jo je nekoliko prilagodil svoji filozofiji. Kodelja osvetli Bonaventurov pogled na razsvetljenje tako, da njegova stališča primerja s stališči Roberta Grossetesta, čigar konceptualizacija svetlobe je vplivala tudi na poznejšo frančiškansko šolo. Avtorica zaključuje, da je Grosseteste temo svetlobe uporabil v bolj matematično-kozmološkem smislu, medtem ima Bonaventurov motiv svetlobe bolj estetsko-metafizično konotacijo.

Poleg filozofskih tem se monografija loti raziskovanja bogate dediščine Bonaventurove duhovnosti in afektivne teologije. Alen Širca najprej obravnava Bonaventurov *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* predvsem skozi prizmo tem ljubezni in smrti. Širca trdi, da se Bonaventurova mistična teologija po eni strani zgolj umešča v klasično tradicijo – nanjo so vplivali predvsem Avguštín, Dionizij Areopagit, Gregor Veliki, cistercijanci in viktorinci – a, po drugi strani, predstavlja nekaj večjega kot zgolj zmes ali nadaljevanje predhodnega krščanskega mističnega izročila. Širca tako v njej preiskuje Bonaventurovo pretanjeno preoblikovanje predhodnega izročila in njegovo inovativno sintezo.

Robert Kralj nato odpira vrata k povsem novi temi: k preučevanju odnosa med Bonaventurovo duhovnostjo in duhovno izkušnjo Terezije Avilske. Kljub navidezni oddaljenosti med obema osebnostma, Kralj razkriva nekatere presenetljive stične točke med njunimi teološkimi konceptualizacijami duhovnih čutov. Kraljeva analiza tako vodi k boljšemu razumevanju obeh velikih duhovnih učiteljev.

Zadnji del konferenčnega zbornika se osredotoča na Bonaventurovo teologijo. Najprej Marianne Schlosser razlaga Bonaventurov *Breviloquium* in vrednoti Bonaventurovo teologijo, kot jo sam opiše v Prologu omenjenega besedila. Prolog se, med drugim, ukvarja s temeljnim vprašanjem razmerja med razodetjem in vero, med Svetim pismom in teologijo. Po natančni analizi strukture in vsebine Prologa se Schlosserjeva posveti tudi recepciji tega traktata.

Anton Štrukelj v svojem prispevku pripoveduje o vznemirljivi epizodi »prijateljstva« med Bonaventurom in Josephom Ratzingerjem, ki je presehalo zgolj akademsko zanimanje za serafinskega učitelja. Štrukelj v prispevku predstavi Ratzingerjevo teološko ukvarjanje z Bonaventurom, zlasti v luči njegovega razumevanja razodetja in teologije zgodovine: na inovativen način pokaže na tesen preplet njunih življenj in del.

Prispevek Mirana Špeliča prinaša izvirno raziskavo o Bonaventurovi zakramentalni teologiji, natančneje, o vprašanju evharistije. Članek se teme ne loteva na splošnejši interpretativni ali sistematičen način, temveč uporablja leksikografsko analizo izrazov *caro Christi* in *corpus Christi* v Bonaventurovem *Brevilokviju*. Špelič tako opazuje in razkriva različne nianse evharistične teologije serafinskega doktorja.

Naposled, Thomas Piolata sklene del monografije, ki je posvečen Bonaventurovi teologiji, ko pod drobnogled vzame Bonaventurovo delo *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio Trinitatis* in poudari bogastvo tega izjemnega, a premalo raziskanega besedila. Piolata v prvi vrsti dokazuje, da izraz *unitas caritatis*, ki ga Bonaventura uporablja glede vprašanja o trinitarčni edinosti, pravzaprav pomeni implicitno sklicevanje na Svetega Duha. Ta trditev Piolati omogoča, da razkrije doslej premalo obravnavano prisotnost Bonaventurove pnevmatologije v spisu *De mysterio Trinitatis*.

Monografija se zaključi s poglavjem o Bonaventuru kot posredniku življenja svetega Frančiška. William Short opredeljuje vlogo, ki jo je imel Bonaventura pri prenašanju legend o življenju sv. Frančiška, ki so za časa njegovega življenja že bile v

obtoku. Generalni minister iz Bagnoregia je bil namreč bil tisti, ki je sestavil enotno in od takrat naprej uradno legendo o življenju sv. Frančiška. Poleg tega Short ustrezno poudarja, da Bonaventurovo posredovanje zgodbe o Frančiškovem življenju ni pripeljalo do »malaventure«, temveč je bilo prav pisanje te legende za avtorja navdihujoča izkušnja: na koncu je imela legenda večji vpliv na Bonaventura, kot Bonaventura na legendo.

“In this volume, the authors shed light on philosophical, theological, and other aspects of the contemporary understanding of Bonaventure’s thought. It will be interesting for scholarly and non-scholarly readers, especially those in Franciscan studies and in the broader field of medieval philosophy and European cultural history.”

*Asst. Prof. Simon Malmenvall
Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana;
Faculty of Law and Business Studies at the Catholic Institute, Ljubljana*

“Chacune des onze contributions publiées, œuvre de quelques spécialistes de Bonaventure et de jeunes chercheurs ou doctorants, soutient une thèse particulière sur le thème considéré, offerte au débat scientifique. C’est l’intérêt principal de ce volume.”

*Assoc. Prof. Amaury Begasse De Dhaem SJ
Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome*

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“In this volume, the authors shed light on philosophical, theological, and other aspects of the contemporary understanding of Bonaventure’s thought. It will be interesting for scholarly and non-scholarly readers, especially those in Franciscan studies and in the broader field of medieval philosophy and European cultural history.”

*Asst. Prof. Simon Malmenvall
Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana;
Faculty of Law and Business Studies at the Catholic Institute, Ljubljana*

“Chacune des onze contributions publiées, œuvre de quelques spécialistes de Bonaventure et de jeunes chercheurs ou doctorants, soutient une thèse particulière sur le thème considéré, offerte au débat scientifique. C’est l’intérêt principal de ce volume.”

*Assoc. Prof. Amaury Begasse De Dhaem SJ
Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome*

