# SOME ANALOGOUS USES OF *CONSTITUERE* IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: FROM NATURAL KNOWLEDGE TO THEOLOGY OF THE TRINITY

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SUMMARY: I. In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio. II. *Some General Uses of* Constituere. III. Esse *and* Constituere. IV. *Christology.* V. *The Constitution of the Divine Persons*: 1. *Scriptum Super Sententiis.* 2. *De Potentia.* 3. *Compendium Theologiae.* 4. *Summa Theologiae.* 5. Theological Context and Implications. VI. *Theological Techniques and Philosophy.*

Trinitarian theology in the post Thomasian period of the 13th century used the constitution of the divine Persons as a point of reference. Due to the highly developed state of Trinitarian theology in this period, *constituere* can be seen as paradigmatic of the manner in which philosophical concepts were used, both directly and through their transformation, in order to better explain theological mysteries.

Other than *consituere*'s metaphysical role to express the concurrence of components or parts that make a reality one or the specific difference, use for creation and inception in general, as well as the constitution of the moral act in its species, are noteworthy. Thomas' use in Christology is important, both to deny the constitution of nature and affirm the constitution of person. Trinitarian theology corresponds to Christological understanding, while demonstrating a specific analysis that is central for constitution, even if one were not focusing on Trinitarian theology.

The history of the term's use is pertinent, as Aquinas, although inheriting the term's usage from Albert the Great, is probably the author who did the most for its popularization in Trinitarian theology itself.

The use of *constituere* in *Christology* began with the first Latin ecclesiastical writers, and continued in a steady if not overwhelming flow into the Middle Ages and beyond. *Philosophical* discussion on nature likewise served of the term. Starting in the early Medieval period, the term's *juridical* and formal content was highly exploited by various Pontiffs, in the sense of "to establish", a custom continuing to this day.[1]

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[1] Thomas' use to speak of the establishment of a law mirrors the trends of the Pontiffs at the beginning of the second Millennium, particularly from Pope Adrian IV (PL 188) on, in using *constituere*

Introduction into *Trinitarian* theology[1] was also quite early, since Tertullian used it in his *Adversus Praxean*, albeit in a non-technical manner.[2] Nevertheless, such a use is isolated, since absent from St. Augustine and the other Latin Fathers. It appears to have been reintroduced in the Trinitarian vocabulary of the early Medieval authors by Peter Abelard.[3] There is a small role for it in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.[4] Albert the Great, who uses the term in his commentaries on Aristotle, does include it in some Trinitarian passages, with a specifically "Aristotelian" tone. Nevertheless, the formula of *differentia constitutiva*, the hallmark of his usage, is absent from *Aristoteles Latinus*, and is instead a transposition from Porphyry, or more precisely, the Boethian translation and commentary on Porphyry.[5] This point is alluded to by Ulric of Strasbourg,[6] one of Albert's pupils along with Thomas at the studium of Cologne, who also employs *constituere* in Trinitarian theology. Thomas himself uses it more freely in Trinitarian theology than any of these precursors or associates, but clearly follows Albert's Aristotelian-Porphyrian inspired use in the *Scriptum*, developing this in later works. In particular, we see that he opts to use *differentia constitutiva* instead of *differentia specifica* a greater percentage of the time than Ulric.

Aquinas' prolific use of *constituere* from the time of his commentary on the *Sentences* remains extraordinary, and it is him, rather than Albert, to whom the extensive use of the term in later Trinitarian theology should be attributed. The proper concept of a divine Person is integral to understanding his predilection

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to refer to the promulgation of a decree or order. Such a use is still prevalent in contemporary magisterial documents and Canon Law (The term *constituere* is used more than 200 times in the present Code, with a variety of senses).

[1] Since there is a lack of current scholarship of the role of constitution in specifically *Trinitarian* theology, the study that follows is primarily based on the source texts of the authors of the 13th century.

[2] Cfr. TERTULLIAN, *Adversus Praxean*, XI, in *Tertuliani Opera pars II*, CCSL, Brepols, Turnholt 1954, 1172: *Sic et cetera quae nunc a Patre de Filio uel ad Filium, nunc a Filio de Patre uel ad Patrem, nunc a Spiritu pronuntiantur, unamquamque personam in sua proprietate constituunt*. Note the application to *proprietas* in this context.

[3] Although other places can be found, the principal texts are PETER ABAELARD, *Theologia Christiana*, in *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica II*, CCCM XII, Brepols, Turnholt 1969, 4.12 (used then implicitly negated), 4.86 (used in an analogy), 4.89 - 90 (analogy), 4.106 (analogy). The analogy used in Chapter 86 and following is a running analogy between the generation of the Son and a seal in wax, constitution being that of the matter by the form. The understanding of Aquinas is far more metaphysical than this.

[4] Cfr. PETER LOMBARD, *Magistri Petri Lombardi Parisiensis Episcopi Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae I*, Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, Grottaferrata 1971, 1S 31.4.3: *Non… constitutam personam genitae ademit essentiae*. This use of constitution is particular. It is referring to the Word, as "caused" by the Father. Since Lombard's use of *constituere* is largely based in passive creation and inception, it is felicitous that he did not use it in this manner often.

[5] Cfr. PORPHYRY, *Isagoge, Porphyrius secundum translationem quam fecit Boethius*, 5-31: 16-17. in *Aristoteles Latinus* I,6-7, ed. L. MINIO-PALUELLO, Desclée de Brouwer, Bruxelles 1966 and ANICIUS MANLIUS SEVERINUS BOETHIUS, *In Porphyrii Isagogen commentorum,* ed. S. BRANDT, CSEL 48, F. Tempsky, Vindobonae; G. Freytag, Lipsiae 1906, 135-348: 258, 260, 262, 316.

[6] Cfr. ULRIC OF STRASBOURG, *De summo bono*, III, 4-5, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 2007, 72 (5.5.5)

for *constituere*, since the use in Trinitarian theology is focused on the divine *Persons*, while use in general writings focuses more on the constitution of a composed *nature*, or the constitution of a *species* through the specific difference, etc. This is not to say that the concept of a constituted created person is absent, but rather that its development is largely in the Trinitarian tractates in order to present an analogy for the constitution of the divine Persons.

Thomas uses *constituere* to show that the perspective of person is to be identified with neither that of essence nor that of personal property. Instead, person is constituted by the "information" of divine essence by the constituting difference, otherwise known as personal property.

Finally, it can be said that the concept of constitution as employed by Thomas in the treatise on the Trinity is part of a paradigm of technical studies that includes the pairing of *res* and *ratio*, the dyad of *quod est*, and *quo est*, and *constituere* itself as fundamental components. This paradigm as a whole owes much to Boethius, through the early scholastic writings of the 12th and 13th centuries. Thus, although Trinitarian *constituere* is not a Boethian concept, its use in Thomas is implicated in an expansion on his fundamental paradigms, developed to present a theocentric cosmology which hinges on participation to explain the perfection of created realities. This theocentric perspective becomes one of the most important keys to Thomas' treatment of Trinity and Unity in God, although it is not central for our understanding of *constituere* in this study.

## 1. *In Duodecim Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*

As the best location for discerning the properly metaphysical perspective of Thomas on *constituere* is in his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, we will focus on it, at times integrating citations of other texts – even from theological *loci* if pertinent – in order to precisely discern the context of his affirmations there.

The metaphysical meaning of constitution is distinct from other more common uses, and refers to intrinsic rather than extrinsic principles. One could present its various elements as follows: It is the form that is most properly understood to constitute, although matter can be said to constitute in a large sense. That which is constituted is generally the nature, essence, or simply the *res*.[1] This is tied to the fact that the ultimate completing aspect is said to constitute. There is thus reference to *esse* in constitution. Another indicator of constitution is its relationship to both unity and causality, particularly in the optic of the convertibility of the one and being, which will include a focus on being as well.

A fundamental aspect in constitution in IM is a diversity of intrinsic causes or components that are presupposed to the existence of something that is one.

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[1] E.g., *Summa Contra Gentiles* I c. 65 [=SCG 1.65]: *Singularis autem essentia constituitur ex materia designata et forma individuata: sicut Socratis essentia ex hoc corpore et hac anima, ut essentia hominis universalis ex anima et corpore, ut patet in VII Metaphysicae.* For *res*, see the following note.

Their subsequent role in inception enters explicitly into the concept of constitution. Thus Thomas speaks of elements and parts.[1] These elements, due to their multiplicity, are not considered the cause, but parts of the cause. This is the equivalent of speaking of a concurrence of multiple causes in one effect, with an emphasis on the unity of causality, itself terminating in unity of being. Unity and causality have a classic harmonizing role as regards an understanding of the interior workings of a given being, as both source and fruit of its primary perfection.[2]

The correlating concept that constitution serves as an intermediary for is that of *the whole*.[3] This can be either an aggregate or simple whole.[4] Obviously the concept of constitution in this second sense is more proper, and signifies a whole that cannot accept of addition – it is complete.[5] Thomas notes however that the components included in the concept of constitution cannot fully explain the causality involved in this case,[6] thus initiating a use of constitution, which although largely related to the causal agent here, includes the virtualities for application to pure spiritual realities, and eventually to Trinitarian theology – where the concept of cause must be either absent or completely reformulated in reference to constitution, as it is inapplicable to God without this transformation.

The level of intrinsic causality that is permitted, serving as the mode of this mediation realized between the multiple and the one by constitution, is primarily that of formal causality.[7] This is specifically substantial formal causality.[8] As constitution regards components that are presupposed to the *res*, and since it

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[1] *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio* XII l. 4 [=IM 12.4]: *Dicit ergo primo, quod quia non solum sunt causae ea quae dicta sunt intrinseca rei* […]. *Elementum autem proprie dicitur causa intrinseca ex qua constituitur res.* See also IM 7.6: *Et quod est ita, scilicet quod est proximum sanitatis factivum est aliqua pars sanitatis, idest intrans in constitutionem sanitatis.*

[2] An analogy is drawn between constitution, activity, and agglomeration, in order to emphasize the limitations to the scope of constitution, IM 5.3: *Est autem alius modus quo causae possunt dici compositae, secundum quod plures causae concurrunt ad unius rei constitutionem; sicut plures homines ad trahendum navem, vel plures lapides, ut sint materia domus. Sed hoc praetermisit, quia nullum illorum est causa, sed pars causae.*                                    [3] Cfr. IM 12.11, see also the next note.

[4] Cfr. IM 5.21: *Partes autem ex quibus constituitur totum dupliciter possunt esse in toto. Uno modo in potentia, alio modo in actu. Partes quidem sunt in potentia in toto continuo; actu vero in toto non continuo, sicut lapides actu sunt in acervo.*

[5] Cfr. IM 8.3: *Cum enim componatur ex multis unitatibus, aut non est unus simpliciter, sed unitates aggregantur in eo per modum coacervationis, quae non facit simpliciter unum, et per consequens nec ens in aliqua specie constituunt.* And SCG 4.35: e *o quod quaelibet natura est quoddam totum, ea vero ex quibus aliquid constituitur, cadunt in rationem partis* […]. *Cum igitur natura humana sit quaedam natura completa, et similiter natura divina, impossibile est quod concurrant in unam naturam, nisi vel utraque vel altera corrumpatur.*

[6] Cfr. IM 8.5: *quod omnia, quae habent plures partes, et totum in eis non est solum coacervatio partium, sed aliquid ex partibus constitutum, quod est praeter ipsas partes, habent aliquid, quod facit in eis unitatem.*

[7] E.g., IM 1.10: *Ponebant enim rerum materiam aerem, vel aquam, aliquid huiusmodi, ex quo diversitatem rerum constituebant per rarum et densum, quae ponebant quasi principia formalia.* Or formulations such as, *ibidem*: *causa formalis, per quam rei quidditas constituitur.*

[8] E.g., IM 11.12: *Dicendum est igitur quod forma substantialis secundum quod in se consideratur, constituit speciem in genere substantiae.*

is the substance or essence that exists *simpliciter*, the concept properly regards substantial being and its components.[1] Even the union of substance to its accidents is not referred to as constitution. In the use of constitution, the secondary meanings play a minor role, and are hardly more than mentioned as existing, while the substantiality of a substantial form is defined by its constituting role, rather than the inverse.[2] The central role of constitution for explaining to the reader "that which is" can only be found in the use of the principal significations. In other uses, it is far less central to Thomas' understanding and exposition of the realities in question, and can be considered a term of convenience that he uses at will, rather than as having specific technical implications.

Formal causality owes its prominence to its relation to that which completes, the ultimate (and thus proximate[3]) principle, based in Aristotle's specific difference "metaphysicized" as constituting, which will return in Trinitarian theology. The emphasis on one principal cause constituting is present already, since there is only one substantial form for Thomas.

Along with this, we see that the form only constitutes as act.[4] Form and act are placed in a particular relationship here. Form constitutes as act, but act as such is rarely stated to enter into the constituting activity. It is thus the meeting of the concept of form with that of act that is invoked – neither one as formulated in analytics is sufficient to articulate the causality expressed here.[5]

Of significance to the mode in which constitution realizes this joining of the multiple and the one are its roots in geometry and in definition, pertaining to genus, species, and specific difference. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and consequently Thomas' commentary of the work, contains a large corpus of reflection on the one, number, and constitution of the one through number, or vice versa. This it coupled with reflection on aggregates. When taken together, these elements create a backdrop for the inclusion of generic causality of that which constitutes (unlike the focus on formal causality), something that could be considered a building block style formalization of constituting elements.[6] As this

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[1] Cfr. *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei* q. 10 a. 5 ad 12 [=DP 10.5.12]: *Nam cum persona sit rationalis naturae individua substantia, id quod est extra substantiam, personam constituere non potest; unde in rebus creatis proprietates et relationes non sunt constituentes, sed magis advenientes constitutis personis.* For elements, see various previous notes.

[2] Cfr. *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* [=DSC] Pro.3: *Manifestum est autem quod quaelibet forma substantialis, quaecumque sit, facit ens actu et constituit; unde sequitur quod sola prima forma quae advenit materiae sit substantialis, omnes vero subsequenter advenientes sint accidentales.*

[3] Cfr. IM 7.6, n. 6.

[4] *Summa theologiae* III q. 2 ad 5 [=ST 3.2.5]: *non enim forma constituit speciem nisi per hoc quod sit actus materiae.* See also QDA 7.14: *ultima differentia est quasi actus respectu omnium praecedentium.*

[5] Another witness can be seen even in the more logical uses of the term, IM 8.2: *Sicut enim in genere substantiae, differentia, quae praedicatur de genere, et advenit ei ad constitutionem speciei, comparatur ad ipsum ut actus et forma, ita etiam in aliis definitionibus.*

[6] See such formulations as: *ex quibus componitur idea hominis* (IM 7.15), this "component-ing" is being used synonymously with constitution here. In fact Thomas often uses *constituere* and *compositio* interchangeably, even in key passages dealing with constitution. This is at once a strength and a weakness of its use in the metaphysics of that which is simply one and distinct only *secundum quid*.

corpus comes before the reflections on causality presented above, it is explicitly presupposed to them. This is based in part in the fact that the constituting elements must be in some sort of *proportion* to that which is constituted.[1] This aspect, with tones of structure and fabrication, makes *constituere* a fitting concept to simultaneously maintain both distinction and unity. One could even say the concepts of artistic proportion, *figura* and the idea of that which completes the cathedral work are present when the later reflections are read in light of these ones. *Constituere* thus has a particular place in the expository process, since it can express neither unity nor multiplicity in what is most proper to them. It pertains to the copulating process, and thus, when dealing with realities that are simply one, necessarily refers to parts or components that are in fact one, and only distinct in either potentiality or reason.

The particular optic permitted here – of not only the whole as such, but the simultaneous pertinence of the whole and its components in the intellectual process – seems to be one key to Thomas' predilection for the term and concept in other works.[2]

Further, this use of constitution places the metaphysical and definitional uses of the term in a specific, necessary, relationship.[3] Thus the other major basis for

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E.g., ST 1.11.1: *Quod autem est compositum, non habet esse quandiu partes eius sunt divisae, sed postquam constituunt et componunt ipsum compositum.* Note the use for inception, and that it is *postquam*, and that the parts here are like principles of that which is constituted, the reference to *esse* is key. Finally, structure and figura can be found explicitly referenced for material realities, as integral to their constitution as a *res*, IM 8.2: *Diversitatem autem rerum constituunt propter differentiam positionis, figurae et ordinis. Et sic videtur ponere, quod corpus, quod est subiectum, quasi materiale principium unum et idem existens secundum naturam, quamvis sit in infinita divisum secundum numerum, differt, idest diversificatur in diversas res propter differentiam figurae, positionis, aut ordinis.*

[1] IM 11.10: *Non enim esset possibile ex partibus numero finitis constitui totum infinitum, nisi vel omnes partes essent infinitae quantitate, quod est impossibile, cum corpus infinitum oporteat ad quamlibet partem infinitum esse, vel saltem quod aliqua pars vel aliquae partes infinitatem habeant.*

[2] Strict theological uses, which refer to elements that must all be considered actual, can greatly benefit from this perspective.

[3] IM 2.4: *unumquodque constituitur in specie per propriam formam. Unde definitio speciei maxime significat formam rei. Oportet ergo accipere processum in formis secundum processum in definitionibus. In definitionibus enim una pars est prior altera, sicut genus est prius differentia, et differentiarum una est prior altera. Idem ergo est quod in infinitum procedatur in formis et quod in infinitum procedatur in partibus definitionis. Et ideo volens ostendere quod non sit procedere in infinitum in causis formalibus, proponit non esse infinitum in partibus definitionis.* Also IM 7.12: *Et quamvis ponantur multae differentiae in definitione, tamen tota definitio dependet et constituitur ex ultima.* It is commonly known that this specific difference is considered as the formal element that renders a definition a definition for Thomas. This is so true that there is no definition for a genus, unless it is also a species at the same time (IM 7.11). This reference to constitution is itself essential to his understanding of what a definition is, IM 7.9: *Unum enim nomen non potest esse definitio, quia definitio oportet quod distincte notificet principia rerum quae concurrunt ad essentiam rei constituendam; alias autem definitio non sufficienter manifestaret essentiam rei. Et propter hoc dicitur in primo physicorum, quod definitio dividit definitum in singulare, idest exprimit distincte singula principia definiti.* There are various passages in *In Aristotelis libros Posteriorum analyticorum expositio* [=IPA] that are pertinent. This relationship is however only a comparison, the two levels remain radically different, IM 7.12: *Unde patet quod multae partes definitionis non significant multas partes essentiae ex quibus essentia constituatur sicut ex diversis; sed omnes significant unum quod determinatur ultima differentia. Patet etiam ex hoc, quod cuiuslibet speciei est una tantum forma substantialis; sicut leonis una est*

constitution, beyond that of an individual reality, is that of genus and species. In this case, something is considered constituted by knowledge of the ultimate component giving man understanding of a reality. Given Thomas' vision of the relationship of the person to the whole, these two aspects of that which is the ultimate noetic key and the co-intellection of the parts and the whole will permit a clean integration in theological developments.

This reification in the intellect does not mean that everything that constitutes or is constituted is a *res* in the strict sense. *Rationes* are constituted at times, as is the definition.[1] Modes and *rationes* can also be included in the constituting "components".[2] *Esse* generally resists reification for Thomas, so the references to constitution and *esse* are rare, but important.[3] *Esse* is ultimate completion, even the completion by form is only fully achieved in "to be".

That which is constituted in nature or species can be considered achieved in the constitution of the singular or individual. Here the aspect of order so prominent due to the inclusion of causality in constitution is unified, in such a way that this is not simply a notional analogy, but rather we are before a single constituting and schematic progress with two distinct components. The first, that of species or nature, is only notionally distinct from the second, of the individual reality, and is considered to be an effective source of being, as nature is real and not simply notional for Thomas. This global role of constitution (including essence and *esse* in light of the singular) helps situate it squarely in the realm of a metaphysical tool rather than a logical one, something that termination at nature would make more difficult to discern, particularly given the importance of *constituere* to explain genus and species.[4]

Constitution in metaphysics can be seen as a holistic affirmation of the role of causality in rendering interdependent components integral elements of a true whole, and not simply juxtaposing pieces of an agglomeration. At this point, the constitution of the person as such is not explicitly introduced, and plays no

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*forma per quam est substantia, et corpus, et animatum corpus, et animal, et leo. Si enim essent plures formae secundum omnia praedicta, non possent omnes una differentia comprehendi, nec ex eis unum constitueretur.*

[1] See IM 1.2: *ens indivisibile rationem unitatis constituit.* And *In librum beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio c. 4 l. 8* [=IDN 4.8]: *divisio autem constituit rationem totius et partis, quia pars est in quam dividitur totum.*

[2] For this notional type of constitution, see IM 7.12: *Unde patet quod multae partes definitionis non significant multas partes essentiae ex quibus essentia constituatur sicut ex diversis; sed omnes significant unum quod determinatur ultima differentia.* Also, after explaining that this interrogation on parts is based on the fact that the whole is constituted from parts, IM 5.21: *Quarto modo dicitur aliquod fieri ex aliquo sicut species ex parte speciei. Pars autem speciei potest accipi dupliciter: aut secundum rationem, aut secundum rem.*

[3] IM 4.2: *esse enim rei quamvis sit aliud ab eius essentia, non tamen est intelligendum quod sit aliquod superadditum ad modum accidentis, sed quasi constituitur per principia essentiae. Et ideo hoc nomen ens quod imponitur ab ipso esse, significat idem cum nomine quod imponitur ab ipsa essentia.*

[4] An indicator: Constitution is used roughly 157 times in IM. In IPA the term appears around 18 times, in *In Aristotelis libros Peri hermeneias* [=PRH], around 15 times. Albert the Great, on the other hand, uses the *constituere* family prolifically (often more than one hundred times per work) in his paraphrases of the *Metaphysics* and Aristotle's various analytical works.

significant role before its use in Christology, itself inseparable from the analogy in theology proper. The metaphysical realism of the concept of constitution as developed here will then serve Thomas in a very concrete manner, as he can affirm the constitution of nature by the union of soul and body in the holy humanity of Christ, while nuancing or negating their role in that of his Person.

The inclusion of proportion and structure as elements pertaining to the exposition of unity and number is indirectly witnessed to by the visible lack of important use of constitution while speaking of *angels*. Although the use of constitution in reference to angels is generally cosmological, referring to their role in creation, we do find a reference to the concept of specific difference.[1] It appears that the concept of constitution as applied to the angels is accurate due to the fact that it is now to be applied due to *modi significandi*, and not any intrinsic composition of parts, as angels are purely spiritual beings.[2] Thus we see an immediate transformation of the concept through the relationships of noetics (*modus significandi*) and higher metaphysical thought, this type of transformation something prevalent in Aquinas' writings, particularly in theology proper.

## II. Some General Uses of *Constituere*

Various contexts do not merit extensive treatment here, but should be mentioned, as they influence the later theological understanding of the term *constituere*.

An important application of constitution has to do with an action causing the inception of something, or alternately the inception itself. This use is found in creation,[3] the institution of a law, the institution of a priest, of a man in power etc.[4] There are other uses that confirm and strengthen this signification, for example the confirmation, establishment, or securing of Paul in divine love is referred to as constitution.[5]

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[1] DSC 8.10: *oppositio differentiarum constituentium angelicas species, accipitur secundum perfectum et imperfectum, vel excedens et excessum; sicut est etiam in numeris, et sicut se habent animatum et inanimatum, et alia huiusmodi.*

[2] In a question on the identification of person and nature in angels, we find Thomas correcting the *sed contra*, which itself refers to suppositum and nature in general, *Quaestiones de duodecim quodlibet* qd. 2 q. 2 a. 2 rc [=QD 2.2.2.rc]: *Ad illud vero quod in contrarium obiicitur, dicendum, quod natura dicitur constituere suppositum etiam in compositis ex materia et forma, non quia natura sit una res et suppositum alia res (hoc enim esset secundum opinionem dicentium quod natura speciei sit forma tantum, quae constituit suppositum sicut totum); sed quia secundum modum significandi natura significatur ut pars, ratione supradicta, suppositum vero ut totum; natura significatur ut constituens, et suppositum ut constitutum.* Although the reference is perhaps not as strong as one would like, the *etiam* does include the angels, and the rest of the description corresponds nicely to Thomas' general understanding of the specific simplicity of angels and the angelic nature.

[3] ST 1.45.4.2: *creatio non dicit constitutionem rei compositae ex principiis praeexistentibus, sed compositum sic dicitur creari, quod simul cum omnibus suis principiis in esse producitur.*

[4] A typical use would be, *Sententia libri Ethicorum lib.* 8 *l.* 6 [=SLE 8.6]: *homines qui sunt in potestatibus constituti.*

[5] Cfr. IDN 4.10: *magnus Paulus constitutus in divino amore sicut in quodam continente et virtute divini amoris faciente ipsum totaliter extra se exire.* Another example of this strong spiritual work can be

This use in action, which is more prolific than the use in explicitly metaphysical context, integrates a concept of powerful or decisive activity in constitution. These uses also give a great force to the formulations in moral studies by which an act is constituted in its species – for better sometimes, or for worse in others. Constitution here is realized primarily by the end of the action. Thus the collocation of species, final completion, and perfection noted in the section on IM is mirrored, in relation to the *ratio boni* which dominates moral reflection. Constitution gives a certain priority to causality in relationship to unity. The role of the good in moral causality gives it a priority in the aspect of constitution tied to inception and activity, both due to the role of the good in creation and the role of activity in Aquinas' moral studies. These elements will remain important to *constituere*, even if the focus shifts to technical application and the concomitant reformulations when used in the following contexts.

### iii. *Esse and Constituere*

Perhaps the most common formulation regarding *esse* and constitution is that realities or hypostases are constituted *in esse*.[1] *Esse* itself is constituted.[2] Formulations can become as complex as «*forma faciens esse constituit essentiam rei*».[3] Whatever comes after perfect *esse* is not constituting of the reality in question.[4]

These affirmations can be found pertaining to virtually every domain individuated as significant for an understanding of constitution. The difference in relation to genus,[5] the caused reality,[6] creation,[7] grace,[8] Christ[9] and the Trinity[10] are all loci where formulas of constitution and *esse* are to be found.

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found in formulations like, *hominis sub gratia constituti* (*Super Epistolam ad Romanos lectura lib. 7 l. 3*[=SR 7.3]), which is the way that Thomas quotes Ro 6.14.

[1] Cfr. *Compendium Theologiae* I *c.* 13 [=CT 1.13]: *Ex genere enim habetur quid est res, non autem rem esse: nam per differentias specificas constituitur res in proprio esse; sed hoc quod Deus est, est ipsum esse. Impossibile est ergo quod sit genus.*; SCG 4.49: *Hypostasis enim est minus simplex, vel re vel intellectu, quam natura per quam constituitur in esse*; etc.

[2] Cfr. *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* I d. 33 q. 1 a. 3 [=1S 33.1.3]: *sicut illud quod advenit post esse constitutum, sicut albedo est in Socrate* [...] etc.                [3] IBH 2.

[4] 1S 28.1.2: *quidquid consequitur ad esse perfectum, non est constitutivum illius rei.*

[5] Cited above.

[6] Cfr. 1S 29.1.1: *omnis causa habet ordinem principii ad esse sui causati quod per ipsam constituitur.*

[7] Cfr. 1S 17.pro: *in prima determinat constitutionem hominis; in secunda determinat locum qui sibi constituto in esse assignatus est.*

[8] Cfr. ST 1-2.110.2.3: *Et secundum hoc etiam gratia dicitur creari, ex eo quod homines secundum ipsam creantur, idest in novo esse constituuntur, ex nihilo, idest non ex meritis; secundum illud ad Ephes. II, creati in Christo Iesu in operibus bonis.*

[9] Cfr. *Quaestio disputata de unione Verbi incarnati* [=DUV] 4: *Aliquae autem formae sunt quibus res subsistens simpliciter habet esse; quia videlicet constituunt esse substantiae rei subsistentis. In christo autem suppositum subsistens est persona Filii Dei, quae simpliciter substantificatur per naturam divinam, non autem simpliciter substantificatur per naturam humanam.*

[10] Cfr. 1S 28.1.2: *quidquid consequitur ad esse perfectum, non est constitutivum illius rei, ita etiam in divinis quidquid secundum intellectum praesupponit aliquid quo persona constituitur, non potest esse constitutivum personae; et inde est quod communis spiratio non potest esse proprietas personalis, quia praesupponit in patre et filio generationem activam et passivam, quibus illae personae constituuntur.*

In particular, the relationship of *esse* to constituted reality is altered, as we will see, in Christology, something that will require a concomitant reflection on *esse* itself. Thomas must determine whether *esse* is capable of the paradigm he wishes to place it in, which necessitates imbuing *esse* with intrinsic effective virtualities as a principle of being. This could be called a theological understanding of *esse*, and thus of unity and constitution, in which any direct relationship to *perfect esse* is considered constituting in some manner, whether considered as source or fruit of it. That which most properly constitutes in being must be formal cause of everything else in the reality,[1] while the second mode mentioned, as fruit of being, permits other manners of envisioning the relationship of the constituting elements due to the various relationships to *esse*. Thus, Thomas' understanding of the relationship between matter and form here is directly related to their roles in relationship to *esse* itself. Matter receives *esse* from form, while the formal cause is defined as that which gives being to that which is material cause. This is however not the relationship of nature to hypostasis, which is thus intentionally placed outside of this paradigm and into one that could be more accurately approximated to first and second act.[2]

These various perspectives are all inadequate for God, who is *ipsum esse subsistens*. Nevertheless, his being is such that these paradigms are useful in reflection on his relationship to created reality in the hypostatic union, in such a way that these paradigms must express something objective of the being of God insofar as it is engaged in Unity and Trinity, as they are used as sufficient reasons to distinguish the active and receptive roles of the Trinity and the Word respectively in the Incarnation. Although references to *esse* and constitution in Trinitarian theology itself can be found, they are quite rare.

## IV. CHRISTOLOGY

Christology is focused around the concept of unity of being of Christ, in reference to one Person and two natures. Constitution accordingly has a unique focus here – on the role of nature in constitution, on the *esse* that establishes person in the perfection of being, and on existing as one substantial reality without the human nature participating as cause in this constitution. Constitution is used infrequently, with a predilection for the use of union instead. This latter is of course outside the scope of this study, but must be referred to for certain points. The divinity of the Person of the Word is highly present in this effort, so

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[1] Cfr. SCG 4.49: *Neque etiam hypostasis verbi dicitur esse suppositum humanae naturae quasi subiiciatur ei ut formaliori, sicut duodecima ratio proponebat. Hoc enim esset necessarium si hypostasis verbi per naturam humanam simpliciter constitueretur in esse.*

[2] Cfr. DUV 1.11: *non eodem modo se habet natura ad suppositum, sicut se habet forma ad materiam. Materia enim non constituitur in esse nisi per formam; et ideo forma requirit determinatam materiam, quam faciat esse in actu. Sed suppositum non solum constituitur per naturam speciei, sed etiam alia quaedam potest habere. Et ideo nihil prohibet naturam aliquam attribui supposito alterius naturae.*

that Thomas' Christological optic, quite different from the problems posed in the treatise on the Trinity, is complimentary to his work there.

For brevity's sake, we will concentrate our work here, non-exclusively, around ST, which contains most of the developments of *constituere* pertinent to this study.[1]

Christology develops in continuity with the uses previously outlined. *Constituere* is concentrated around the question on the hypostatic union, while later uses are less pertinent here, for example, in reference to that which constitutes Christ as priest.[2] In the pertinent passages, the global (or holistic) perspective is immediately apparent in that *constituere* is highly concentrated in speaking of the hypostatic union in itself,[3] as compared to the later questions on one of the terms of union or the other.[4] There are uses that accentuate the causal role included in the signification of constitution, and others that relegate this to a secondary role.[5] The concept of final completing form as that most properly designated as constituting plays no more than a minor role in Christology. Instead, reflections on body and soul together as constituting comprise the backdrop for constitution of human nature or for the question on whether there is a third essence constituted by the hypostatic union. Two major types of constitution, of nature and of person, are formally presented and at least briefly explained.

Three fundamental types of constitution of one from many are presented in ST 3.2.1, the negation of which leads Thomas to conclude that Christ could not have united to become one natural reality. Thus, with the negation of unity of the agglomerate, of mixture, and of parts (either quantitative or as form and act), Thomas has exhausted the modes of constitution he considers possible, and can negate any constitution of nature whatsoever. Since he will then proceed to use constitution to speak of person, he is clearly using the term in a manner that is different from, yet analogous to, any constitution that he recognizes in created realities as such. The divine status of Christ is that which permits constitution in Christology.

As noted, there is no constitution of a nature that would be a *tertia* – a third essence or simple unity. Further, while the union of soul and body in Christ constitute a complete nature, they do not constitute a person, since it is only through the most perfect form that person is constituted.[6] There is however another type of constitution that terminates in unity of person, a composed person.[7] Thomas does seem to maintain a certain causality of all the elements

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[1] See my *St. Thomas Aquinas on Theologizing Metaphysics and Spirit for Study of the Trinity,* in *Itself and through the Hypostatic Union*, Rome, 2010 for a longer study of the role of the *ratio unius* in Christology and Trinitarian theology.      [2] Cfr. ST 3.22.      [3] Cfr. ST 3.2.

[4] Cfr. ST 3.3, 3.4 There is no mention of it in the question on the role of his human nature.

[5] Constitution of nature implies causality, while the constitution of the composed person of Christ is certainly not emphasizing any sort of causal role given the implication of his immutable Divinity.      [6] Cfr. ST 3.2.5.1.

[7] Cfr. ST 3.1.3: *natura humana non constituit personam divinam simpliciter, sed constituit eam secundum quod denominatur a tali natura.* See also QD 9.2.2.3: *generatio temporalis terminatur non ad esse suppositi*

involved in this constitution, in that the fruit of the union of soul and body is said to terminate at this personal union.[1] Such a use is not accentuated, and is even avoided in the corpus of the articles that deal with composition, nature and person. The accentuation here, as before, is on the relationship between unity and causality.[2] But this unity of Christ cannot be at the price of a personalistic pantheism or a becoming in the Godhead, so the concept of constitution is used in a new way to express a causality and unity that we do not understand and cannot fully express.

*Esse* is affirmed in an intractable manner to pertain to the constitution of person, as it requires unity and completeness, similar to the manner in which *esse* characterizes the concept of constitution in various contexts:

*Ad quartum dicendum quod esse et operari est personae a natura, aliter tamen et aliter. Nam esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae, et sic quantum ad hoc se habet in ratione termini. Et ideo unitas personae requirit unitatem ipsius esse completi et personalis. Sed operatio est quidam effectus personae secundum aliquam formam vel naturam. Unde pluralitas operationum non praeiudicat unitati personali.*[3]

This must be correlated to the affirmation that Christ's human nature has some secondary role in the constitution of the composed person of the incarnated Word. It would appear that the double understanding of person (Word and Word Incarnate) here entails a double concept of constitution. The *principle* signification of *esse* is primarily collated to one of these understandings, so much so that Thomas will consistently affirm the unity of *esse* in Christ, glossing over the *esse secundarium* that he nevertheless maintains.[4]

This concept of constitution includes an understanding of a causal role of nature (*personae a natura*) in the constitution process, itself achieved in the *esse* of the constituted person. It is fair to say that there is a priority of one concept

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*aeterni, ut simpliciter per eam esse incipiat; sed quod incipiat esse suppositum, habens illud esse suppositi humanae naturae,* and QD 9.2.2: *Quia ergo in Christo ponimus unam rem subsistentem tantum, ad cuius integritatem concurrit etiam humanitas, quia unum suppositum est utriusque naturae; ideo oportet dicere quod esse substantiale, quod proprie attribuitur supposito, in christo est unum tantum; habet autem unitatem ex ipso supposito, et non ex naturis.*

[1] Cfr. ST 3.1.3: *natura humana non constituit personam divinam simpliciter, sed constituit eam secundum quod denominatur a tali natura. Non enim ex natura humana habet filius dei quod sit simpliciter, cum fuerit ab aeterno, sed solum quod sit homo. Sed secundum naturam divinam constituitur persona divina simpliciter.*

[2] Historically, the reason for the development of the concept of *esse personalis* in the 13th century was to correct some of the imprecision of the widely adopted 2nd opinion on the hypostatic union as presented in Lombard's *Sentences*. Bonaventure makes this point explicit (3S 6.1.2). In this context, it is used as a means of affirming, even more than the unity of causality in constitution, the causality of unity in constitution of person, insofar as unity and being are one. This understanding of the relationship of *esse* and constitution is based in a Trinitarian understanding of the identity of that which constitutes and that which is constituted in God. See my *St. Thomas Aquinas on.*

[3] ST 3.19.1.4

[4] For a detailed analysis, see my *St. Thomas Aquinas on.* A classic text is DUV Pro.4, which can be clarified through CT 1.212 for example. References or allusions can be found in many works, beginning with the *Scriptum* and continuing through the ST itself.

of constitution over the other, manifested through this explicative trend pertaining to one *esse*. The priority is clearly on the constitution that *terminates* at something that is simply one in such a way that it permits no division into really distinct elements that are in themselves complete. More important is the inclusion of the *esse principale* in constitution properly speaking, which terminates at the simplicity of Person of the divine Word.

Obviously one cannot say that the concept of person in reference to Christ, when including the second concept of composition that does not include this completion in *esse*, refers to a juxtaposed aggregate, however the holy humanity is a certain thing with a self explanatory unity.[1] It is a substance in a more proper sense than a hand is. This alters the use of constitution as found in more general or philosophical contexts, which implies a concurrence of interdependent components whose intrinsic natural interdependence and concurrence is expressed in the concept of causality. The general concept is not based in the possibility of designating some type of "substance" as constituting element at all, except, perhaps, in the most rudimentary form of constitution related to quantitative parts. This is certainly not the sense of substance being engaged here. Interdependence is much more strongly altered through the inclusion of the non-dependent Word of God. This explanation is regulated by the dogma and habitual language of the Church professing the duality of natures and unity of person. Thomas' specific accentuation in the development of the concept of Christological constitution is a particular unity between *esse* and person, one that does not, unlike the unity of person to the actuality of vital operation, require a mediation of natural form.[2]

If *esse* is considered to be intrinsic to that which is constituted and to the concept of constitution itself, this is due to the obvious requirement of a substantial being to have a real existence, to which alone constitution is properly applied. Thus, the role of *esse personalis* is intrinsic to the understanding of constitution as applied to the Person of the Word, and even to the concept of constitution as applied to his holy humanity in reference to the *"persona composita"*. The two manners of constitution, the first of which refers to the most proper one, in the constitution of the divine Person *simpliciter*, the second of which allows for a certain role of the holy humanity in constituting the *"persona composita"*,

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[1] The parts of an aggregate depend on each other in order to constitute the aggregate, but not in order to be what they are. The case of Christ is unique, since his human nature has its own proper realism, which is not pure potentiality, but this same nature as requiring subsistence (since substantial) is not independent of the actuality of the Word. That this is a problem for Thomas, and a continual one, is a consequence of his understanding of the real distinction between a particular essence and *esse* – any vague notion of the concrete relationship between these two in created reality would leave this an unimportant and probably unsolvable issue.

[2] As cited, ST 3.19.1.4: *Et ideo unitas personae requirit unitatem ipsius* esse *completi et* personalis. Sed *operatio est quidam effectus personae secundum aliquam* formam *vel naturam*. Obviously this is form in the sense of essence, since the Person of the Word as constituted by the personal property of relation is the personal form, and is understood as form even when understood as distinct from essence.

both include a relationship of *esse* properly speaking to that which constitutes. It is this relationship, rather than the implication of *esse personalis* in constitution, which can vary with the different uses of *constituere* here. The participation in *esse*, which is normally considered as caused by that which constitutes, is here considered sufficient to attribute, analogically, the concept of constitution to Christ's human nature in relation to *persona composita*. Thus, constitution is redefined in terms of components that exist substantially due to their unmediated union with the *actus essendi*. Despite the importance of completing formal cause in the concept of constitution, the specific contribution of *esse* as *actus essendi* to the being of the whole maintains a structural role in its conceptualization as well. Nevertheless, the connection of *esse* and constitution as developed in Christology cannot be said to focus on the specific causality of *esse*, but this relationship is simply stated to exist, and is instead analyzed insofar as an indicator of the identity of the Person of Christ and the divine Person of the Word.

There is another, more subtle point being made here as well. That which is *substantia*, *hypostasis* or *res naturae*, that which is in the most proper and complete sense of the term, includes intrinsically, by the very fact, the capacity to accept, *accipere*. Clearly this can be termed receptivity. Receptivity, even if an intrinsic characteristic of hypostasis as such, is not a transcendental in the common sense of the term, for, if it applies to all concrete realities that exist, it does not necessarily apply to all categories of being, and, in line with Thomas' use of the transcendentals, it cannot be applied to the divisions of *ens commune* either. Thus, hypostasis as such is receptive, but nature as such, due to its universality and formality, contains only the intrinsic order to the singular, as it is singularity that is source of this receptivity. Since constitution regards the complete and perfect being of a reality, the being that establishes it in existence, and in particular, the final actuality or formal perfection that terminates this reality in its completion, constitution intrinsically implicates this receptivity alongside the actuality of the *actus essendi*.

Constitution of the person renders *esse* proper an *"esse completus et personalis"*.[1] Constitution as concluding in the whole concludes in the being of the subject of attribution.[2]

For Thomas relation as personal property subsists in God because it is really identical with divine essence, but one can argue that it is subject of attribution due to its identification as the formal principle of the person as such, since per-

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[1] Cfr. ST 3.19.1.4

[2] Cfr. M. GORMAN, *Uses of the Person-Nature Distinction in Thomas' Christology*, «Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales» 67 (2000) 58-79, 59: «It is important to emphasize that, for Thomas, a suppositum is a whole. […] A suppositum bears its properties in the sense that it contains them as a part of itself». One can add that this use of whole and subject is found more prominently in the distinction of *quod est* and *quo est*, and is thus a common point between these two analytical approaches. J. L.West has done extensive work in this field, e.g., J.L. WEST, *The Real Distinction Between Supposit and Nature*, in P. KWASNIEWSKI (ed.), *Wisdom's apprentice : Thomistic essays in honor of Lawrence Dewan, O.P.,* Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC 2007, 85-106

son intrinsically includes the concept of supposition, while essence does not. The place in Thomas' discussion of the role of relation in reference to person as *suppositum* and person as that which is constituted reveals this thought process:

*Ad quartum dicendum quod relatio praesupponit distinctionem suppositorum, quando est accidens, sed si relatio sit subsistens, non praesupponit, sed secum fert distinctionem. Cum enim dicitur quod relativi esse est ad aliud se habere, per ly aliud intelligitur correlativum, quod non est prius, sed simul natura.*[1]

Since, as we will see, constitution signifies nothing other than this distinguishing in God, the role of relation as divine relation constitutes, since unity with essence is included in this affirmation. So there is a distinction here between subject and that by which the subject is subject – the principle of supposition, which is identified with the *differentia constitutiva* understood in its application to the real singular. This distinction is key to understanding the constitution of a divine Person, as well as that of the composed person of Christ. It is the more precise concept of principle of constitution viewed in the optic of principle of supposition (or that which is understood according to the concept of suppositum) that unifies these two perspectives, even if this concept, for obvious reasons, has a greater priority in Christology than in Trinitarian theology.

The use of constitution in Christology is more than simply analogous to, but is largely an overlap with, that in Trinitarian theology. It is developed to manifest the roles of *esse* and person (in God and in human nature), in continuity with the common uses pointed out in the previous sections. Its role is to properly identify the subject of attribution in theology of the hypostatic union, more than as a tool to analyze the better known dyad of nature and person.

It should be noted that use of constitution in Christology is at times firmly placed in a different realm than that of theology, in that the constitution of (a) son is denied of the Divinity while being affirmed of the human nature of Christ.[2] This distinction is largely tied to the concept of inception noted above, and must be read in its immediate context, but remains an interesting delimitation to be recalled when interpreting the analogy of constitution in Thomas.

### v. The Constitution of the Divine Persons

Although there is some discussion of the difference in metaphysics, or the role of the soul and body in the constitution of human nature in Christology, it remains true that Trinitarian theology remains the only locus where Thomas

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[1]  ST 1.40.2.4
[2]  *Super Epistolam ad Hebraeos lectura c. 1 l. 1* [=SH 1.1]: *Sciendum est autem, quod in Christo sunt duae naturae, divina scilicet et humana; sed secundum divinam naturam, sicut non est constitutus filius cum sit filius naturalis ab aeterno; ita nec est constitutus haeres, sed ab aeterno est haeres naturalis. Secundum vero naturam humanam, sicut est factus filius dei Rom. I, 3: qui factus est ei ex semine David secundum carnem ita et factus est haeres universorum. Et quantum ad hoc dicit quem constituit haeredem, id est, dominum, universorum.*

analyzes the source or cause of constitution for itself, rather than simply referring to it when speaking of constitution. This shift in attention can be in part related to the role of divine simplicity in theology proper. Insofar as simplicity, rather than other factors, explains constitution here, it permits Thomas to focus on other aspects.

## 1. Scriptum Super Sententiis

Constitution in the Trinitarian section of the *Scriptum* is not fully explained, although much of value is established. A distinction between the distinguishing and constituting roles of the relation in Trinitarian theology can be noted. The inclusion of the property as that which constitutes is obviously unique, as in created realities the property is said to be *adveniens*, while the use of the formula *proprietas personalis* refers precisely to the implication of property in constitution.[1] This role of constitution is nuanced however, as it is attributed to the relation as a divine relation, without fully elucidating the affirmation.[2] This partial account includes the concept that constitution adds a mode of dignity to the distinction.[3]

Constitution here is fairly different than uses in other areas of analysis, in that there does not appear to be a multiplicity of concurring elements immediately implicated in constitution as such. There is simply reference to the content of an affirmation; that which establishes the criteria of person in God is that which constitutes, even though it is identical to the Person himself, so that constitution becomes largely a synonym for distinction, when understood as specifying a particular metaphysical role. There is not an explicit reflection here on the role of essence in the constitution of the divine Persons.

This seems in part due to the fact that Thomas maintains that the divinity is self-sufficient in the manner that a hypostasis is generally considered self-sufficient, although not a distinct hypostasis as such. Thus the issue in constitution here is what renders this substantial reality a specific singular. Such a reflection is not yet fully formulated, but determines for the most part the scope of the interrogative process.

Another reason for the simplicity of elements to which constitution is attributed has to do with the particular aspect of constitution being invoked in 1S to respond to this concept of that which instantiates the divinity. In order

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[1] Cfr. 1S 9.2.ex: *paternitas autem realiter est in ipso Deo, quia est proprietas constitutiva personae* [...] and, speaking of *innascibilitas*, 1S 28.1.2.1: *ex hoc quod convenit soli patri, potest probari quod sit proprietas patris, non autem quod sit proprietas personalis, nisi constitueret personam patris ad similitudinem differentiae constitutivae.*

[2] 1S 27.1.2.3: *haec relatio quae est paternitas* [...] *cum sit divina, constituit personam, et est ipsa persona constituta, ratione cujus praecedit secundum intellectum operationem.*

[3] 1S 10.1.5: *Si autem accipiamus aliud, scilicet, qui est ab alio, quamvis importet relationem originis, tamen non sufficit ad constituendam personam: tum quia commune est, tum quia nihil dignitatis importat. Esse enim ab alio potest aliquid vel nobili vel ignobili modo.*

to express constitution, Thomas often has recourse here to expressions such as *differentia constitutiva*, or more explicitly, *actus differentiae constitutivae*, which express the necessarily positive content of the differentiator.[1] These uses can be traced back to Albert the Great, under whom Thomas studied some time before his redaction of the work in question. Albert himself employs, although infrequently, the *actus differentiae constitutivae* in his Trinitarian theology as a reference to Aristotle – both his *Categories* and his *Metaphysics*.[2] The reference has two different meanings as mentioned above, both based upon the sense of the difference as it constitutes species, as distinguished from the difference as it divides genus.[3] Further, both of these meanings implicate a formal role of that which constitutes, as the form is that which completes a being in *esse*. The first of these is simply in the establishment of the definition of species through the specific difference. The second, more metaphysical sense is in the constitution of the individual reality through the difference that establishes species – that is – through that which is proper to the reality in its species as included in its substantial form.[4] Thomas himself will add to this, in stating that constituting difference encapsulates that in quality which can be attributed to God, although this sense cannot be considered to play any prominent role in his theology of the divine Persons.[5]

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[1] Similarly, that which constitutes, in line with the concept of property, must be something positive, as it is considered a principle because of its constituting role.

[2] A good example of Albert's perspective is ALBERT THE GREAT, *De Praedicabilibus*, Borgnet, Paris 1890, 5.3: *Haec autem divisio differentiarum per se non nisi modi divisio est: qui modus sumitur a proprio differentiae effectu. Si enim differentia in oppositione actuali accipitur ad id a quo facit differre, pro certo hoc modo divisiva est et separativa. Oppositio enim dividit et separat, nec potest esse una et eadem potestas oppositorum secundum actum acceptorum. Si autem accipiatur differentia ut actus completivus actu potentiae generis et determinativus, sic differentia generi et potentiae adveniens, in speciem genus determinat, et constituit speciem. Si autem forma a qua sumitur differentia, in se secundum id quod est consideratur, eadem differentia est quae genus dividit, et speciem constituit. Sed tamen secundum rationem prius est differentia dividens quam differentia constituens: quia oportet quod differentia prius per divisionem quam facit a genere exeat, antequam adveniens generi speciem constituat.* He employs this type of conception in Trinitarian theology, e.g., ALBERT THE GREAT, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, Monasterii Westfalorum, Aschendorff 1978, 60 (2.26): *Paternitas quidem, inquantum est proprietas personalis, sic habet actum differentiae constitutivae; facit enim personam formaliter loquendo secundum modum intelligendi et distinguit eam ab aliis; sicut enim Deus deitate Deus est, ita pater paternitate pater est, et secundum hoc per modum intelligendi paternitas est ante patrem, et ad actum patris per ipsam sic constituti consequitur eadem secundum aliam considerationem, inquantum scilicet est relatio secundum modum intelligendi.* The entirety of this argument can be found in Thomas Aquinas as well. In Thomas' application to Trinitarian theology, he accentuates this constituting role of the difference, far more in line with his IM than his own IPA, manifesting the intentionally metaphysical meaning he gives to the term.

[3] Cfr. 1S 4.1.1: *Dicitur autem nomen imponi ab eo quod est quasi differentia constitutiva et non ex ratione generis; et ideo quandocumque aliquid secundum suum genus dicit imperfectionem, et secundum differentiam, perfectionem, invenitur in Deo quantum ad rationem differentiae, et non quantum ad rationem generis.* [...] *Si autem consideretur secundum differentiam suam, per quam completur ratio generationis, sic dicit aliquam perfectionem.* [...] *et ideo communicatio pertinet ad nobilitatem.*

[4] E.g., 1S 13.2.rc1: *relatio in divinis non tantum habet quod sit relatio, sed etiam quod sit personalis, idest constituens personam; et ex hoc habet quasi actum differentiae constitutivae et formae propriae ipsius personae.*

[5] Cfr. 1S 19.1: *Quamvis autem in divinis non sit qualitas vel quantitas secundum communem rationem generis, sunt tamen ibi aliquae species qualitatis secundum proprias rationes suas, quantum ad differentias*

This reduction of principles down to a (necessarily) unique one is aided by the use of the opposition of relation, since:

*oppositio secundum originem per prius secundum intellectum est in relationibus originis quam in ipsis personis quae ab invicem oriuntur: quia personae non opponuntur nisi secundum quod hujusmodi relationes habent; et ideo relationes oppositae seipsis distinguuntur, sicut differentiae constitutivae; sed personae relationibus, sicut species differentiis.*[1]

Clearly this analogy from *species differentiis* is a manner of elucidating the second sense of *differentia constitutiva* that can be found in texts that do not include both elements. This second sense is obviously the more important one for Thomas, here in 1S already. The constituting difference of opposites is founded upon the opposition itself,[2] so that the constituted relation can, insofar as one with the divine essence, lead to an understanding of self-founding Persons. At this point, the concept of self-founding Person is still held to be at a different level that that of origin, and is considered to be simply prior to the concept of origin, and thus of relation insofar as constituted through origin.[3] This will be nuanced in later works, but does not in itself imply any contradiction for Thomas, as the levels of analysis engaged in each aspect of the affirmation are different. The reasons for this will be clearer in our synthesis of his Trinitarian studies, but are to be based for now in the perseity of the divinity.

The vocabulary of *differentia constitutiva* will not be adopted as a principle means of speaking of constitution in later works, although it can be found in some objections and responses of the DP. Nevertheless, this concept of that which permits to definitively establish the being of a reality, as its final perfection for which it exists, continues to be used and is fundamental to the Trinitarian signification of *constituere* in Aquinas. This can be synthesized in saying that the divine relations of paternity, filiation and passive spiration are in themselves like various species of relation, and, as establishing species of a divine sort, they

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*constitutivas; et similiter aliquae species quantitatis secundum id quod est proprium eis, ut magnitudo et duratio: et ideo ratione eorum dicitur in divinis aequalitas et similitudo.*

[1] 1S 1.1.1.1

[2] This is conceptually implicit in the concept of *differentia constitutiva*, as a *differentia* that changes species is not any change to a form, but one of formal opposition alone. Cfr. IM 10.11

[3] Cfr. 1S 27.1.2: *relatio, inquantum est constituens personam, praecedit secundum intellectum operationem. Secundum hoc ergo dico, quod ipsa relatio potest tripliciter considerari. Vel inquantum est relatio absolute, et ex hoc non habet quod praecedat operationem, immo magis quod sequatur, sicut patet in creaturis. Vel inquantum est relatio divina, quae est constituens personam et ipsa persona subsistens; et sic praecedit secundum intellectum operationem. Vel inquantum est ipsa operatio personalis; et sic sunt simul secundum intellectum, et idem.* Some of the reason for this unilateral priority is that Thomas in this passage is explicitly refuting those who wish to found the constitution of divine Persons in origin instead of relation, so that his primary goal is to affirm constitution through relation, rather than to define its relationships to origin. Another reason is that Thomas wishes to avoid any sense of one person constituting the *esse* of another, so that each be understood as self founding as divine, a key to his understanding of constitution in theology, 1S 29.1.1: *omnis causa habet ordinem principii ad esse sui causati quod per ipsam constituitur. Pater autem non habet aliquem ordinem principii ad esse filii.*

have a constituting role as regards the Person, who is the reality (*res*) that this form that instantiates species constitutes in being (*esse*).[1]

## 2. De Potentia

The development of constitution for Trinitarian theology appears to be in a state of full maturity in the *De Potentia Dei*. In fact, the presentation of DP 8.3 contains almost every nuance of Thomas' use of *constituere* in Trinitarian theology, as well as specific developments found only in it. Further, its structure is of unparalleled utility in the analysis of the reasoning process through which Thomas applies the term and concept of *constituere* in Trinitarian theology.

DP 8.3 is structured by two opinions on that which constitutes the divine Persons, in such a way that Thomas can move from the introduction of the problem, through the inclusion of the pertinent analytical elements, to his final position, which is then nuanced by a reflection on why it is that we say things such as God from God, etc. This final paragraph is certainly his most advanced written reflection on *constituere,* and is an attempt at penetrating into the Nicene Creed.

Thomas begins, stating that what is constituted is hypostasis, individual substance. God's essence is undivided in itself and divided from others. Thus, from either a philosophical or Judaic perspective (*"Iudaei et Pagani"*) the interrogation on constitution is useless, as it is the divine essence itself that constitutes.

Instead, it is the Catholic faith that imposes the question as to the constituting component in God, as it proposes a Trinity of Persons for man to believe in.

Numerous arguments that depend solely on philosophical understanding of the implicated aspects, seeking an answer to a question engendered through faith, begin from the aspects implicated in the affirmation of faith itself.

Since all of what is common to the three Persons is the divine essence, nothing common can be considered to distinguish and constitute the Persons.[2] Thus, that which is *first* understood as proper to only one is that which constitutes. We see here that Thomas' argument corresponds to this same characteristic of his use of *differentia constitutiva,* without explicit invocation of the phrase. It would seem probable, since the context of DP 8.3 is that of distinction and constitution, that this is what Aquinas intends to refer to.

The two opinions differ as to what they maintain this "first" is. The first opinion maintains that origin precedes the relation that depends upon it, so that the relations show (*ostendatur*) the distinct and constituted hypostases, constituted by origin. Thomas is unhappy with this explanation, since it confuses that which distinguishes as [efficient] cause of something, and the intrinsic compo-

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[1] Cfr. 1S 28.1.2: *quidquid consequitur ad esse perfectum, non est constitutivum illius rei* [...]. etc.

[2] Cfr. DP 8.3: *Oportet ergo ponere distinctivum et constitutivum hypostasis in divinis id quod primo invenitur non de pluribus dici, sed uni soli convenire.* My comments here remain extremely close to the text, so that the multiplication of citations is superfluous, as the text is at hand.

nent that distinguishes. He turns to species and substantial form as his examples of intrinsic causality – humanity for man, or *Socrateitas* for Socrates. This is that which *"formaliter constituit"*. Thus, relation, or *filiatio*, is that which constitutes. Thomas wishes to accentuate this to manifest the importance of distinguishing between the analogies from being and change: Not even relation as understood *in origine* can be considered to constitute, as it is still understood in the paradigm of change. This accentuation of relation is the second opinion, which he makes his own.

He develops immediately:

*Quod hoc modo potest intelligi: paternitas enim est ipsa divina essentia ut probatum est; et pari ratione Pater est idem quod Deus. Paternitas ergo, constituendo Patrem, constituit Deum. Et sicut paternitas, licet sit essentia divina, tamen non est communis sicut essentia, ita Pater licet sit idipsum quod Deus, non tamen est commune ut Deus, sed proprium. Pater ergo Deus, in quantum est Deus, est commune habens naturam divinam, et in quantum est Pater, est proprium ab aliis distinctum. Unde est hypostasis, quae significat subsistens in natura aliqua, distincta ab aliis. Et per hunc modum paternitas constituendo Patrem, constituit hypostasim.* [1]

Since the understanding of constitution engaged in that of Person is one of the substance, and as such includes nature as a component of the singular, God, as implicating the singular, is constituted as intrinsic to the Person of the Father (*Paternitas ergo, constituendo Patrem, constituit Deum*). The Father is hypostasis insofar as distinct from others, but also as of a certain nature, so that the constitution through paternity cannot be separated from the unity in the divinity. Thus the concept of Person is attributed to the Father, but the elements of this definition are neither attributed at once nor in the same way. Because *differentia constitutiva* is implicated in the concept of constitution, it is relation that is understood to constitute, simply because of the intrinsic understanding of what constitution means, and not because it contains anything more intrinsic to the concept of Person than the divinity does. The problem here is one of definition of terms, and not of that which most fully encapsulates the being of the Father as such. Thomas insists upon relation due to the metaphysical priority of intrinsic form, and because constitution regards the final form more properly than the common. It regards *Socrateitas* more than humanity.[2] The body of the article concludes with this reflection.

Clearly, constitution in God is not by means of informing, but by mode of identity. Nevertheless, Thomas says, God generates God because suppositum is understood, due to the divine infinity, as integrating the abstraction of essence and the singularity of the specifying relation or personal property.[3] Further,

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[1] DP 8.3.  [2] Compare this to the Scottist understanding of *haecceitas*.
[3] DP 8.3.4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod relatio etsi de essentia divina non dicatur per modum informationis, dicitur tamen per modum identitatis: si enim non dicamus, quod essentia sit generans vel relata, dicimus tamen, quod ipsa est generatio et relatio. Sed tamen de nominibus essentialibus in concreto significatis relativa dicuntur, etiam per modum informationis: dicimus enim quod Deus generat Deum et quod Deus refertur ad Deum, eo quod idem suppositum intelligitur et relationis et essentiae.*

the concepts of distinction and constitution have become in some way inter-
changeable for Thomas, as can be seen in the way that he is fairly free with the
terminology of his responses, using terms independently from those found in
the objections.[1] This can be correlated with the manner that he refers to other
opinions on the constitution of the divine Persons in the body of the article, al-
though he is the first author to systematically integrate the term into theology
proper, and the authors he refers to certainly did not use the term in this man-
ner.[2] We can clarify this trend through the end of the body of DP 8.3, cited in
the paragraph above. In that text, Thomas argues that understanding of consti-
tution should refer to both "Father" and "God". In order to do this, he explains
what he means by constitution and what he means by person, and then states
that, since he is speaking of constitution of person, of course this includes na-
ture, so that it is appropriate to speak of the constitution of "God". There are
two steps in his expression of constitution. In the first he presents the concept
of distinction, and in the second, he inserts this into the substantial realm. In
this manner, his explanation of constitution is as a type of distinction, one that
is metaphysical rather than logical, and regards, in this case, hypostasis. This
is highly reminiscent of his explanations of *differentia constitutiva* in Trinitar-

[1] Three objections use only constitution (1, 5, 7), four use only distinction (11-14), five use both
constitution and distinction (6, 8-10, 15), and three use neither term (2-4). In the responses, two refer
only to constitution (8, 10), six to only distinction (4-6, 12-14), two to both constitution and distinc-
tion (7, 9), and five refer to neither of them (1-3, 11, 14). This means that of the objections that refer
only to constitution, one response uses both constitution and distinction, one uses only distinction,
and one uses neither; of the objections that refer only to distinction, two responses use distinction,
and two use neither term; of the objections that use constitution and distinction, tow responses use
only constitution, two use only distinction, and one uses both terms; of the objections that use nei-
ther term, one response uses distinction, while two use neither term. It is fairly clear that Thomas is
somewhat free with his vocabulary, and attention to the way the terms are grouped in the responses
show that, although there is some correlation between the objections and the terminology of the
responses, this is weaker than a simple literary continuity, since nine of the fifteen uses are contigu-
ous (e.g., all the uses of only distinction follow in groups, cfr. 1-6, 12-14), while only five of the fifteen
responses correlate to the terminology of the corresponding objections (2-3, 9, 12-13).

[2] This is clear due to the role of the Albertian paraphrases of Aristotle in the introduction of
the terminology into Trinitarian theology, although it is somewhat difficult to determine the exact
insertion of the themes in question into the schools. There is a certain precedent in the *Summa Au-
rea* of Willam of Auxerre, 1.6.5, although the problem is largely absent from the commentaries on
Lombard's *Sentences* of Alexander of Hales and Hugh of St. Cher (Ms. Basel B II 20, made available
for consultation thanks to Dr. Riccardo Quinto, Padova). However, in the *Quaestiones antequam esset
frater* of Alexander of Hales, 4.5, we do find a similar argument, which is traced by him, indirectly,
back to Augustine and Anselm. By the time of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio and Albert the Great,
the two positions are formally presented in the comment on 1S d26 despite the lack of reference in
Lombard himself, although neither author refers by name to those who hold said opinions. Robert
Kilwardby, writing in England after having taught in the faculty of arts in Paris during Albert's time
there, only briefly alludes to the problem, without formalizing it into opposing opinions (*Quaestiones
in Sententiarum* 1.34.6). It thus appears that these two opinions of constitution were formalized into
"straw man" arguments in the theological circles of Paris sometime around 1245 (the date of Albert's
1S commentary), in dependence on the work of Hales. Although one could speculate that Albert
was the source of this, it seems to be a slower development of the type common in any teaching
circle, including both Franciscans and Dominicans at Paris.

ian theology, as we find them in other texts, explained throughout this article. Since he is referring to this specific case of distinction and this specific case of constitution, one understands how he can be fairly flexible in his terminological choices. There is a greater continuity between the two concepts than simply the same foundation in personal property, which is true only in reference to a strictly logical understanding of distinction, something that the history of how it is that he inserts the term into Trinitarian theology, in light of Albert's "Porphyrization" of Aristotle, tends to limit.[1]

Thomas nuances his perspective on origin and relation in constitution in DP, where he makes clear that the proceeding Person's relation, even understood as constituting, is posterior to origin, because it is understood as the term of procession.[2] He will then interrogate as to the respective roles of relation and property. In order to do this, he will determine the order among various elements in his theology of Person. Constitution is integrated into the discussion on the relationship between notional acts, relations, origins, and essence or nature.[3]

The understanding of constitution here has only to do with the type of constitution which regards a person. The problem is precisely the ability to constitute in *esse simpliciter*, that is, to be the proximate source of subsistence.[4]

If relation cannot personally constitute in virtue of itself, yet can distinguish, it is its notional relationship to *esse* through subsistence that explains its capacity to constitute in the manner expressed. Thus the perspective here is the inverse of that of *rationes*, since *ratio* expresses that in person which is understood as distinct from essence, while constitution as expressed here depends on an aspect of its unity with essence.

The constituting component is nevertheless most properly relation, as the general analogy remains that of "genus" (essence) and the completing difference that constitutes species, which, while negated of God, serves as a structure

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[1] One finds an example of this in DP 8.3 itself, cfr. DP 8.3.7.

[2] DP 8.3.7: *Relinquitur ergo quod ipsa paternitatis relatio, in quantum est constituens hypostasim patris, quod habet in quantum est idem substantiae divinae, praeintelligatur generationi; secundum vero quod distinguit, sic generatio paternitati praeintelligitur. Ex parte vero filii nulla remanet difficultas, nam nativitas secundum intellectum praecedit hypostasim nati, cum intelligatur ut via ad ipsam: est enim generatio via in substantiam.*

[3] DP 10.5.12: *neque proprietas neque relatio, secundum quod huiusmodi, habent rationem constituendi personam. Nam cum persona sit rationalis naturae individua substantia, id quod est extra substantiam, personam constituere non potest [...]. In divinis autem ipsa relatio, quae est etiam proprietas, est divina essentia; et ex hoc habet quod id quod per eam constitutum est, sit persona: nisi enim paternitas esset divina essentia, nullatenus hoc nomen pater significaret personam, sed solum accidens relativum personae, sicut patet in personis humanis. Paternitas ergo, in quantum est divina essentia, constituit hypostasim subsistentem in divina natura; in quantum vero est relatio, distinguit; in quantum vero est proprietas, convenit uni personae, et non alii; in quantum vero est notio, est principium innotescendi personam. [...] Sic ergo secundum ordinem intellectus, primum est quod sit personam constituens; secundum quod sit distinguens; tertium quod sit proprietas; quartum quod sit notio.*

[4] E.g., DP 8.3.7: *Relationes autem in divinis etsi constituant hypostases, et sic faciant eas subsistentes, hoc tamen faciunt in quantum sunt essentia divina: relatio enim, in quantum est relatio, non habet quod subsistat vel subsistere faciat; hoc enim solius substantiae est.*

in which our understanding of the divine Persons can be given some level of precision. A correct understanding of this unity of relation and essence is important. Thomas will go so far as to state that the *essence* itself *is* relation, although not related,[1] in order to show that it is because the relation is a substantial form that it is constituting of *Person*, and not only of relation, as its inherent formality would normally entail. It is also understood as a property, in that the unity of divine being is sufficient in its substantial unity, but is in fact superabundant, with the Trinity of Persons being the very reality of God. Thus the relations can be thought of as properties and constituting at once. Thomas never explicitly debates the reasons for which one can consider the personal properties as properties despite their constituting role. The only answer lies in the response to an objection elsewhere: Because the relation is thought of in different manners in reference to the Trinity, it can play multiple roles in our thought.

It is quite clear that Thomas is not proposing a rigorous proof of the structure of the divine being, but is instead attempting to provide a rigorous intellectual framework in which to think about a mystery in which the interplay of the various aspects of Aristotelian metaphysics is in fact totally unhinged: If any of this is to be true, one must understand a self founding origin that causes the alterity that permits its own existence. The paradigm of causality is undoubtedly the primary inadequacy of Aristotelian metaphysics upon its application to the revelation of the Trinity. Although it remains an important tool for deriving a framework in which to speak of God, the weakness of its attribution makes the technicalities of the paradigm of Person and nature cause the derived framework's importance as a manner of thinking, a *modus significandi*, to be more fundamental than its role as a strict conceptualization of that which is. He presents a paradigm, but it is an interdependent whole, and is presented as a manner of thinking about a mystery and not a demonstration of how it is.[2] In this sense, his reflection on Person and nature differs from his affirmations as to the existence of a Trinity of Persons in God, which, in themselves, do seem to be a proof of the existence of three, and only three, eternal and divine Persons in the simplicity of divine unity. This "proof" is based upon faith in Scriptural affirmations pertaining to Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the context of affirmations of general procession, a precise understanding of divine simplicity that requires substantiality of all that is affirmed of God, and the spiritual nature of God (cfr., *imago Dei*). Thus, the relationship between origin and relation is sufficient to affirm the existence of the three divine Persons, and is intended to insert a certain level of necessity into the Church's reflection on and presentation of the mystery of the Trinity. In the manner in which Thomas presents it however, this

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[1]  DP 8.3.4, quoted above.

[2]  Of course, whether or not this manner of thinking of the Trinity is necessary for rectified faith in the Trinity for Aquinas is another, inseparable question. The answer, although too long to recount here, is certainly in the affirmative for the major elements of it, such as the use of relation to speak of the divine Persons.

is considered insufficient to make even a minor attempt at explaining how this may be in light of the simplicity of the divinity. Instead, the paradigm moves from one of metaphysical affirmation to that of metaphysical explanation. The analogies remain proper, but the manner in which they pertain to the divinity remains the object of largely impenetrable mystery, since their affirmation and their interrelationship are inseparable. Their divine interrelationship is itself too perfect for any adequate metaphysical example, and must be piecemealed together from a variety of interposed paradigms that, when integrated into one matrix, permit to speak of operation, accident and substance as if on the same level of being. The *analogia entis* can help to designate a First Mover, however, due to the radically natural roots of our knowledge of being *qua* being, it also marks the limits of our capacity to penetrate into the heart of his Mystery.

## 3. Compendium Theologiae

Although Thomas introduces the concept of constitution of Person in CT 55 by means of the subsistence of relation, the bulk of his work is presented in CT 1.60, which is on whether there are only three Persons in God.

The most salient point of the chapter is identification of that which constitutes and the principle of individuation. This explicit use of the vocabulary can cause preliminary problems if one recalls that it is not the form but the *materia signata* which is considered the principle of individuation for material creatures.[1] It is however an interesting formalization of Thomas' perspective in Trinitarian theology: *Id enim quod personam constituit, oportet soli illi personae convenire, principia enim individuationis non possunt pluribus convenire.*[2]

Continuing this analogy, Thomas chooses to indicate the role of the further properties as *inhaerentes*, rather than his usual silence on the analogy for the role of the properties that are *non personales:*[3] *Oportet igitur intelligi, quod plurium proprietatum seu notionum uni personae convenientium illa quae procedit secundum ordinem naturae, personam constituit; aliae vero intelliguntur ut personae iam constitutae inhaerentes.*[4]

Both of these elements are introduced in order to respond to the problem of more properties than persons, thus facilitating the distinction of personal property as such. It is this context, rather than the role of CT as an introductory text, that explains the unusual accentuation of individuation and inherence, which would otherwise be avoided in a shorter work, in order to avoid any sort of confusion for those without significant formation. Although an unusual formulation, it is perfectly in line with the common use of the Boethian definition of person as *rationalis naturae individua substantia*.

In other texts, that which stands out here can be correlated to the concept of incommunicability, which, once individuation has been abstracted from mat-

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[1]  ST 1.74.4 etc.          [2]  CT 1.60.          [3]  ST 1.40.3.          [4]  CT 1.60.

ter, is that part of the concept that can be applied to spiritual realities.[1] This is clearly accomplished by the distinguishing form, but implicates a slightly different perspective than that of *differentia constitutiva*, since this latter formula comes to the domain of the singular through the optic of the species. In other works, divine paternity fundamentally implies subsistence, indivision in self (unity), and distinction from others.[2] Incommunicability, accentuated through the model of the CT but present elsewhere, adds a nuance of the concept of the proper to this – that is, the nuance of the inability to be in another, and so to be imparticipable.[3] It is thus not surprising to find the vocabulary here in an optic of properties and constitution. The integration of inherence can also be seen in this light. For, if the properties are to be strictly interpreted, it is clearly necessary that they be irreducible, and thus, that the various properties attributed to any one person be kept distinct even in relation to each other in their proper understanding (even though they are really one).

Perhaps the most important point to be taken here is the manner in which the concept of the singularity of the divine Person is being placed in precisely the same optic as the singularity of a human person, so that our understanding of person and nature in man is an accurate analogy for our understanding of Person and nature in light of the revelation of the Trinity. Beyond the heavy use of definitions to speak of dogma, there is also an analogy that is to be understood in light of our proper philosophical understanding of the unique individuality of each man. The use of inherence here is at the service of this analogy, which is fully manifest due to the perspective of the proper as constituting.

This use of inherence in reference to constitution sheds an important light on how Thomas understands the active and passive roles of a divine Person in the Incarnation. As he can implicate the proper insofar as proper in the concept of constitution, and directly infer from the constituting role the application of inherence – that is, the role of subject in the most general sense of the term; so too can he, from the inclusion of subsistence in the proper of a divine Person, establish a relationship of Person and subsistence, through constitution understood in light of the *differentia constitutiva* and its direct unmediated termination in *esse*, even if it references essence. Thus, the Son can accept his holy humanity

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[1] Cfr. 1S 25.1.1.6: *Ad sextum dicendum, quod in individuatione, secundum quod est in rebus compositis, est duo considerare; id est individuationis causam quae est materia, et secundum hoc in divina non transfertur; et secundum, scilicet rationem individuationis quae est ratio incommunicabilitatis, prout scilicet aliquid unum et idem in pluribus non dividitur, nec de pluribus praedicatur, nec divisibile est, et sic convenit Deo: unde etiam Richardus, loco individui posuit incommunicabile.*

[2] Cfr. DP 10.5.12: *Paternitas ergo, in quantum est divina essentia, constituit hypostasim subsistentem in divina natura; in quantum vero est relatio, distinguit; in quantum vero est proprietas, convenit uni personae, et non alii; in quantum vero est notio, est principium innotescendi personam.* There are various texts, e.g., DP 8.3, that do mention incommunicability in reference to the hypostases. CT however exhibits a model that is oriented by this perspective, something not found elsewhere.

[3] Cfr. DUI 5: *Individuae ergo sunt substantiae separatae et singulares; non autem individuantur ex materia, sed ex hoc ipso quod non sunt natae in alio esse, et per consequens nec participari a multis.* This distinguishes the individual from the form that gives species in material realities for example.

in that which is proper to Him, that which cannot be in another – and this with-out the mediation of nature, which would entail the incarnation of all three divine Persons, just as all Three act as One in all that they do.

## 4. Summa Theologiae

We find Thomas integrating the concept of *esse* into constitution at least twice in the treatise on God in the ST, both times, it would appear, as included in what is constituted (rather than as a constituting principle).[1] The relationship of con-stitution to unity is accentuated, as is the fact that the constituting principle(s) is/are considered to be actual, or positive realities.[2] The concept of formal con-stitution is differentiated from the concept of *esse*, insofar as, in creation, the role of communicating in being is differentiated from the distinguishing role of form.[3] Constitution in this optic plays the role of distinction, without an effort to accentuate this role of distinguishing in the establishment of being, that is, outside of the use of the term *constituere*. These preliminary uses, along with reference to genus and species and the concomitant understanding of perfect-ing, as act to potentiality,[4] manifest that the ST is largely in line with the other works we have seen in terms of the fundamental understanding of *constituere*.

Thomas will speak of *relatio personalis*, *proprietas personalis* and *notio personalis* – all of which, beyond their obvious signification of being that which consti-tutes, are directly referred to constitution, making this obvious meaning explic-it.[5] The accentuation however is often on relation, since the understanding of the opposition implicated in relation as constituting that we saw in the *Scriptum* can be integrated in this manner. It is clearer in the ST that this constitution, which occurs through relation *qua* relation, is that which constitutes the divine Person, the fact that this is due to unity with the divine essence goes unstated.

Due to the extensive *ex professo* treatment of the concept of person in the ST that marks a radical shift in Thomas' Trinitarian theology, which up to this point had contented itself to end on the distinction according to relation through op-eration, the issues we saw present in the other works at this now classic locus of constitution or distinction are treated elsewhere, in ST 1.29.4, on whether

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[1] Cfr. ST 1.6.3: *Perfectio autem alicuius rei triplex est.* **Prima quidem, secundum quod in suo esse con-**stituitur. And ST 1.11.1: *Quod autem est compositum, non habet esse quandiu partes eius sunt divisae, sed postquam constituunt et componunt ipsum compositum. Unde manifestum est quod esse cuiuslibet rei consistit in indivisione. Et inde est quod unumquodque, sicut custodit suum esse, ita custodit suam unitatem.*

[2] Cfr. ST 1.11.1 (see above), ST 1.11.2.2: *non quod unitates constituant multitudinem secundum id quod habent de ratione indivisionis, prout opponuntur multitudini; sed secundum hoc quod habent de entitate, sicut et partes domus constituunt domum per hoc quod sunt quaedam corpora, non per hoc quod sunt non domus.* Etc. This last example is certainly applicable also to the parts of man, which only exist in him in po-tentiality, as the context of the affirmation makes clear.

[3] Cfr. ST 1.14.6: *Non solum autem id in quo creaturae communicant, scilicet ipsum esse, ad perfectionem pertinet.*
*Et omnis forma, per quam quaelibet res in propria specie constituitur, perfectio quaedam est.*

[4] Cfr. ST 1.3.5.                                    [5] Cfr. ST 1.30.2.1 and ST 1.32.3

person signifies relation in God. There, he states that Person signifies relation, as subsisting, and thus as one with the divine nature, although, he specifies, of course Person is not other than nature in God. Thus, when Thomas treats of constitution later on, instead of continuing in the same tone as his other works, he shifts to focus almost exclusively on the concept of distinction. In this more restricted optic, the opposition of relation is his preferred response. He is clear that the reason he seeks this foundation is due to the need for an intrinsic differentiator.[1] Further, the simplicity of the divine being requires a simplicity in our understanding of constitution,[2] as has been seen in other works.

Even with this accentuation, Thomas is more than lucid on the analogical role of his affirmations and on their status as metaphysical explanations, and will confirm that, in God, origin too constitutes, but, insofar as our understanding is concerned, it is relation that constitutes *prius et principaliter*.[3] Thus, that which constitutes, rather than how it constitutes, is the focus of questions on constitution in the ST.

Finally, the understanding of the priority of the relation of the Father as constituting to operation, and the posteriority of that of the Son (or the Spirit), as we saw in DP, is presented here as well.[4]

## 5. *Theological Context and Implications*

In order to give the scientific content of the revelation of the names of the divine Persons, particularly those of Father and Son, a significant role in the explanation of Trinitarian being, as well as maintain the concept of relation in regards to person and personal property, Thomas will explore the realm of constitution. His use of constitution presupposes an identification of Person and nature. Constitution is not a tool for discerning the mechanism by which personal property and essence are actually one, unlike what later authors, of his century and beyond, present in various forms.[5] Instead, he presupposes this to his discussion on constitution, attributing that role to the simplicity of the divine being, to God as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*.

However, due to the specific epistemological status of constitution outlined in IM, one that can only function as an intermediary and part of a compli-

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[1] Cfr. ST 1.40.2: *ad hoc quod aliqua duo distincta intelligantur, necesse est eorum distinctionem intelligi per aliquid intrinsecum utrique; sicut in rebus creatis vel per materiam, vel per formam. [...] In persona autem divina non est aliud intelligere nisi essentiam et relationem sive proprietatem. Unde, cum in essentia conveniant, relinquitur quod per relationes personae ab invicem distinguantur.*

[2] Cfr. ST 1.40.2: *Secundo, quia distinctio in divinis personis non est sic intelligenda, quasi aliquid commune dividatur, quia essentia communis remanet indivisa, sed oportet quod ipsa distinguentia constituant res distinctas.*

[3] Cfr. ST 1.40.2: *Unde melius dicitur quod personae seu hypostases distinguantur relationibus, quam per originem. Licet enim distinguantur utroque modo, tamen prius et principalius per relationes, secundum modum intelligendi.*      [4] ST 1.40.4.

[5] See R. CROSS, *A Trinitarian Debate In Early Fourteenth-Century Christology*, «Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales» 70 (2003) 233-274.

mentary model of understanding, as well as the role of inception and action it integrates, *constituere*, in itself, is an *event paradigm*, one that is transposed and rethought for application to the unchanging realm of Trinity and Unity. Consequently, perhaps more than other concepts, constitution cannot be understood only in its proximate context, but this context must be re-situated in the larger whole of Trinitarian theology in order to guarantee its utility. This is primarily realized through four fundamental tools: relation, property, *esse*, and the dyad of person and nature.

<div align="center">a) Relation</div>

The first impression would be that the concepts of concurrence of causes, completion and inception play the major role in constitution, even in the Trinitarian realm. Indeed their roles are not small.[1] This conditioning of *constituere* has significant consequences. The dependence of a multiplicity of divine Persons on the reality of procession is taken as a given. Such a perspective is clear from Thomas' discussions of the *Filioque* concept, and the dependence of the Spirit on the Son. Nevertheless this is based on a philosophical understanding of relation, one that Thomas himself does not always see fit to adhere to unwaveringly.

In Christology one finds already that the relation of union in the holy humanity of Christ is neither one of action nor one of passion. There is no action on a divine Person by a created reality in Thomas' perspective, and if it were understood as a relation of passion, it would be the three divine Persons in their unity of nature to be incarnate, and not the Person of the Word. He also remoulds other aspects of a philosophical understanding of relation with little to no discussion. There are references to quality and substance as foundations for relation, without any explanation of the manner in which they are foundations. These are just simple affirmations.[2]

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[1]  For inception see ST 1.32.3, where the distinction of personal concepts and concepts of Persons is based on this. The continual references to distinction as related to the kind realized in the passage from genus to species includes the concept of that which completes, and thus also a perspective which lends to think of personal property as a "quasi" addition to the general unity of essence, a constructive view. One can say that the massive presence of *constituere* in other uses cannot but form the signification to the extent that an explanation of the technical sense is necessary to make it understood.

[2]  A. Krempel has attempted to present a distinction of formal and material foundation to explain this diversity in Thomas. He has no textual support for this affirmation, his only citations being not of Thomas, but of Javelli and other commentators. I have found no texts that would support this interpretation. Although not necessarily false, it appears better to interpret these texts as simple statements, since Thomas' explanations are more often than not restricted to the immediate context. Thus when explaining the foundation and limiting to three (action, passion, quantity), he is not attempting to present more than his position inasmuch as in continuity with that of Aristotle. This is collaborated by the numerous references to the work of the Stagarite when presenting these foundations (*De ente et essentia* 6, 3S 5.1.1.1, ST 1.28.4, *Commentaria in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis* 3.1 – to list texts among those Krempel himself uses for his argument – I have excluded one that he cites from an objection – DP 10.3.ob2). Much of the effort of my analysis throughout this work

The very idea of relation as accident is done away with in order to use it in Trinitarian theology, despite the firmness with which Thomas maintains that a relation is only accidental when speaking of the relation of creation, something which is outside the perspective of Aristotle's *Categories*, and as such could permit a reworking of his fundamental affirmations. Furthermore, the distinction of categories itself is done away with when one maintains that the category of relation can be united in a real identity with that of substance. All this of course in a domain where the very concept of category is inapplicable even analogically (since category includes circumscription).

With this reworking of relation, it is not only the concept of constitution, but also that of constituting component that must be understood in a properly theological sense. Since substantial relation informs divine essence, the concept of constituting difference is even further from logic than normal metaphysical use.

### b) Property

In the ST, the detailed order of the DP is also present, although not in such a formal manner. Relation is more often than not affirmed to both distinguish and constitute person, simply presupposing the difference in meaning of the two terms.

There is a continuity between this optic and that of the CT, where that which individuates and that which constitutes is identified. This, rather than the lack of explication as was the case in the *Scriptum,* can be delimited as the reason for the simplicity in presentation. The issue is not so much constitution of Person, but its role in understanding *relation* and *Person* in the Godhead.[1] Thus it is found directly opposed to relation as such, without invocation of unity with the divine nature, as a rapid means of stating the personal aspect as distinct from the strictly formal one to which the category of relation belongs.[2]

Such a use manifests an underlying current in Thomas' use of *constituere*, which changes in order to accentuate the role of property as such. What is expressed is personal property as a *quod*, one that in its specific concept has a structuring effect on divine being. *Constituere* in its relation to personal property is the clearest parallel in Thomas to the Greek ἰδιότης as a principle of Trinitarian theology. This concept of ἰδιότης is situated in a matrix with a high degree of explication.

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confirms the principle that Thomas' terminological use exceeds, and sometimes greatly, the formal statements "defining" the terms under discussion. Furthermore it is based on the acknowledgment of what in many cases would be a necessary incoherence if one would attempt to apply such a limitation. Cfr. A. KREMPEL, *La doctrine de la relation chez Saint Thomas: exposé historique et systématique*, J. Vrin, Paris 1952, 180-225.

[1] See ST 1.40.Pro, where this optic is presented.

[2] Cfr. ST 1.40.4 : *Uno modo, ut est relatio,* [...] *Alio modo, secundum quod est constitutiva personae.* Worth noting here is that relation is said to be founded on act, so again, an accentuation of the relationship between form and act is present in God. For relation and constitution, see also ST 1.40.4.2

Thus ἰδιότης as paralleled in Thomas is used in the reflection on Person and nature to express that something one is also source of distinction – personal property is reflected on from the perspective of the actual unity of the divine being, and is understood as constituting as a consequence of its formality, a formality that is one with that of the divine essence. If the reflection is placed in the context of the formality of the divine Person, it is the actual unity with the divine essence through the role of subsistence that renders the relation ἰδιότης – or self-founding proper – on the substantial level.

The use of *constituere* here underscores something important: If there could not be three properties in the Godhead in its unity, than reference to relation would be vain. The use of ἰδιότης and personal property is closer to the first principles of the human intellect as embodied in the concepts of *ens*, alterity, and the one and multiple, and is thus a bold use that confronts what could be seen as an apparent contradiction head on, at the root of its foundation in the human mind.

The solution lies in an understanding of both form and *esse* as actualities that are not contradictory, and in their mutual attribution in some manner do not need to be thought of as two acts, as they are like first and second acts.[1] They are also both fully applicable to the Divinity. Thus the distinction between the two, and the necessary correlation inherent in that distinction, are exploited at a fundamental level to express (in a first approach) the unexplainable Unity of God in Trinity of Persons.

This use of *constituere* does not in itself develop *how* it is that this is understood. The use of *quod est* and *quo est*, as well as the seminal use of *ratio* will fill in this gap with a noetic metaphysics related to Person, *esse* and nature. One notes however that constitution becomes more fundamental in Trinitarian studies with this emphasis.

## c) Esse and Constitution of the Divine Persons

Trinitarian use of *constituere* is fairly distant from the building block style uses that were prevalent in simple metaphysics and its constitution of nature. Since God's nature is "To Be", *esse* can be identified as the mode of unity expressed in the concluding unity of constitution. The manner in which the constitution involving *esse* was understood in simple metaphysics instead included the unity of *esse* and essence as the focus of this second understanding of constitution. Christology and its reflection on *esse* in such a way that it becomes an effective cause in constitution, rather than the commonly formulated *in esse* (seen above in the section on *esse* and constitution) that in some way avoids the issue, is then expanded on in light of the affirmation of God as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. The

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[1] When reflecting on form and *esse*, form is considered as potency to act, despite the many affirmations of its own role as act in other contexts. The importance comes from the necessary unicity of act in that which is to be considered properly constituted, and not an agglomerate. For form and act, e.g, ST 1.50.2.3

surpassing of the distinction of essence and *esse* as implicated in constitution is a metaphysical originality in theology that permits such a thing as three constituted wholes that are one in their wholeness, or, one substantial being with three constituting differences, each of which implicates a totality of being on the substantial level, without a division of this substantiality. This helps explain the focus on personal property as well, as it plays a surrogate role to that usually occupied by essence itself.

*Esse* is by itself that which unites the being of any reality.[1] Thus if that which is constituted is identical to *esse*, it is one by this very identification, and the constitution is ipso facto a proper one. Such a characteristic is based on the relationship of form (either essence or relation) and act. This can explain a significant portion of Thomas' continual dedication to an expression in Christology that accentuates the unity of *esse* in Christ, since it is not only his Person as such, but the specific status of his divine Person in relationship to divinity and divine actuality, that is at stake.[2] Since *esse* is also the nexus of divine unity, so that it is understood as the act of the essence, but also includes the concept of final achievement of the *ratio relationis*, it is the intrinsic achievement of the Persons as specific singulars and implicates them in the unity of natural actuality at the same time. This unique case of divine actuality manifests that in God, Trinity is through Unity, as Unity is through Trinity.

If one wishes to then turn to the philosophy of Aquinas in order to discern to what extent this reified or causal concept of *esse* has been adopted as philosophically useful in other domains, the study remains legitimate. Nevertheless, this perspective was developed in theological works for theological reasons, and remains the primary focus of the use of *esse* in these contexts. Whatever the use of this understanding of *esse* in Thomas' philosophy, it does not appear to be his fundamental understanding of *esse* in metaphysics, as the texts themselves have shown us, and must then be considered at best as a complimentary vision in that domain. Its insertion can certainly never be divorced from an understanding of his highly theocentric understanding of being, which is only fully realized in God himself. *Actus essendi*, when presented as a principle and not only a fruit or fact of being, is thus indebted to both Christology and Trinitarian theology, in light of participation metaphysics.

### d) Understanding Person and Nature

Thomas' use of *differentia constitutiva* serves to differentiate the perspective of Person from that of essence and that of personal property, since person is that which is constituted, the personal property is the constituting difference, and essence is that which is specified by this difference to conclude in the constitution of Person.

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[1] QD 9.2.2.2: *esse est id in quo fundatur unitas suppositi: unde esse multiplex praeiudicat unitati essendi.*
[2] Once again, see my *St. Thomas Aquinas on.*

Nevertheless, an implicit question remains, the answer to which helps clarify the roles of Person and nature in Thomas' Trinitarian theology: Why is relation an ultimate constitutor of a Person, while essence is not?, How does this understanding of constitution justify that we say three Persons in one nature, and not three Persons in one Person? The answer lies in the different type of form that is specified, one that is encapsulated in the reflections surrounding *differentia constitutiva*. The divine essence is a *quo*, not a *quod*. Relation is being treated as an *actus differentiae constitutivae*, that is, as establishing a species – but in a concrete being. Relation as form is also understood like the difference of a species (without reference to a concrete reality), but this is not the precise understanding at play in *constituere* here. Thus, *constituere* is tied into the concept of *quod est* and *quo est*,[1] and the manner in which relation is more directly assimilated to substantial form through subsistence than to essence as such. Thus, one turns to substantial form to understand constitution here. Divinity does not have the role of substantial form here, but instead, in the paradigm of constitution, Paternity, Filiation and Passive Spiration do. The use of *differentia constitutiva* here helps to make this distinction, and will eventually lead, along with other trends, to nothing less than a radically new development of personalism in the ST.

To avoid a conception of the Trinity in which the Persons as such would be considered as less founding of divine being than divine nature, a balancing discussion of the manner in which the divine nature is a *quo est*, rendered real in its unity through identification with the *quod est* of the divine Persons must be continually at its side.

If our conception of person is to be understood in the light of the divine Persons as they are, the very concept of constitution must be understood in light of the proper priority of the divine Persons, as they are, founding their own existence. One should understand nature and person as interdependent and contemporary principles, as the two readings of *differentia constitutiva*, as founding of either the singular or of species, manifest.

Further, since *differentia constitutiva* is understood as an actuation and not an addition to genus, there is no understanding of composition involved in the theological use of *constituere*. Instead, composition is simply not present in theology proper, while inception is integrated, not as implicating inception of the

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[1] Historically, this understanding of the issue was the case in the 13th century, as can be seen for example in the manner in which the *Glossa Alexandri* introduces the problems of 1S d26, which will later be the common locus of development of this issue, ALEXANDER OF HALES, *Glossa in quatuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi I*, Collegium S. Bonaventurae, Firenze 1951, 1S 26.III.g: *"persona divina est essentia"*, per illam regulam Boethii: *"In omni simplici non differt quod est et quo est"*, sive *"quis es"* et *"quod est"*. Propter quod, cum persona dicat*"quis est"*, essentia*"quo est"*, Deus autem *"quod est"*, non differt persona ab essentia. Ergo, supposita persona, supponitur Deus et essentia*. The point being made here is that, although Thomas does not refer to this issue as much as other authors, it is nevertheless presupposed to the technicalities of his responses, which cannot be interpreted if one abstracts from this context.

reality,[1] but instead, inception of our understanding. The use of inherence of supervening properties after the constituting relation manifests this, and also demonstrates another equally important point.

This level of exposition is not seeking to establish the reality of the Godhead in itself, but is seeking to establish that from which, in our natural science, we can base the analogies that refer to Person and nature in God, analogies which remain quite imperfect. Thus, when Thomas speaks of constitution in God, he both purifies it before considering it applicable to the divinity, and uses it, not as an affirmation pertaining to the divine being in itself, unlike other analogies such as unity, goodness or truth, but instead, as that from which an analogy can be established, the proper analogate itself completely surpassing our *modus significandi* in such a way as to require an independent development of the various aspects of the *ratio* to be applied.

Said in another way, both relation and truth exist properly in God, but in different manners. Truth exists in God most perfectly, while it exists in creatures less perfectly. Relation, although really and properly existing in God, cannot be understood by us in a manner that permits to affirm that the concept of relation that we have managed to derive from created reality properly corresponds to the manner in which it exists in God – the analogy is not independent from the manner in which it is applied. The reason for this is clear. With truth, in order to affirm that God is the highest truth, Thomas needs only to identify all of the complex elements that make up the *ratio veri* as existing as one in God. When treating relation, he must necessarily integrate elements outside of the concept of relation as understood in light of the *ens commune*. In particular, the dependence of relation on action, passion or quantity is not completely preserved, even if this foundation is what permits to confirm the existence of relation as that which serves as the constituting form of person in God. This is quite clear from the manner in which he uses the priority of relation as divine on that of the relation as relation in order to speak of the relationship of relation to operation or procession.

This use means that the understanding of relation and operation, which, if proper in the same manner that goodness or truth are understood of the divine being, would be a vicious circle, is in fact not attempting to specify the divine being in itself so much as to specify that which, in our metaphysics of created reality, can serve as a beginning for a more complex analogy in reference to the Trinitarian being of God. This would not be the case if action, passion and/or quantity were identified as part of the *ratio relationis*, as the object is specified as part of the *ratio veri*. At that point Thomas could simply affirm that relation was most perfect in God, because all of the elements of the *ratio relationis* are one in Him. The elements here are not irreducible, and must be united in order to speak of divine simplicity, but, in fact, in the manner that we know them, this is

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[1]  This is relegated to discussions on constitution and operation rather than constitution in itself.

an impossible operation. Instead, as we have seen, he must admit of the weakness of the analogy, even if proper, and integrate other elements, in particular through reference to the analogy of divinity as such, which, he specifies, is important due to the identification of *quod est* and *quo est* in God that renders the relation substantial or subsisting, and thus capable of personally constituting in a metaphysical sense of the term. Once we move from the simple affirmation of relation or of operation, when we seek to compare them to each other, the analogy becomes at once weaker and more enigmatic. It is weaker because we cannot understand a self-distinguishing procession, which it is proper to the divine being as such, based upon the perseity and infinity of the divinity. It becomes more enigmatic, because any time we are comparing analogies in God, this is a derived understanding, and as such is more obscure for us than the simpler affirmations that are foundations for the elements being compared.

These formulations thus remain fundamentally apophatic, yet resolutely accentuate the apophatism of divine eminence over the *via negationis*, in order to fully develop the virtualities of the philosophical concepts that serve as fine points in a theological matrix, itself developed in faith and based upon the specificities of the dogmatic formulations which remain inseparable from it, despite Thomas' clear preference for Sacred Scripture as rule of faith.[1]

### VI. THEOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES AND PHILOSOPHY

In order to understand the steps involved in the use of *constituere* in theology, it is useful to summarize a certain number of points from philosophy in their use in Christology and Trinitarian theology.

The use of *constituere* in Christology includes elements of *constituere* as employed in IM as well from the manner of speaking of angels, where the *modus significandi* becomes important. The use of IM including the concept of elements or parts is highly altered, while the use of *modi significandi* is not. This latter aspect is largely present insofar as a reference to the analysis of Trinity in itself. The manner in which specific difference is present, but not preponderantly, remains fairly similar in Christology and IM.

The primary originality of *constituere* in the Christological domain is the restructuring or specification of the relationship between *esse* and constitution, one that requires a development of the role of *esse* at the interior of substantial being. Because Thomas must specify a new relationship, he is required to develop a new concept of *esse*. This concept can then be employed to express the relationship in question in a coherent manner. This relationship is thus at once known through faith, as received from Scripture through the dogmatic formulations of the early Councils and the writings of the Fathers, as well as a theological one, insofar as it is expressed in a new manner in light of the specificities of the philosophy he brings to bear upon it. This philosophy itself is developed for

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[1]  E.g., *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura* 21.6: *sola canonica Scriptura est regula fidei.*

this application, which is so important that he does not seem particularly interested in developing the philosophical underpinnings outside of this context. We do not find Thomas attempting to systematically employ this understanding of *esse* in other aspects of analysis, nor do we find him detailing all of its consequences. He does not appear to be primarily interested in it for itself. This can be correlated to the manner in which he tends to neglect speaking of the role of *esse* in constitution when referring to divine Persons in theology proper.

In the manner that constitution is employed, Trinitarian theology does not remain nearly as close to IM as Christology does. The improper use with intrinsic reference to components or parts is fully done away with, and this perspective is assimilated to that of *modi significandi* in a more unified and more metaphysically pertinent vision that corresponds with the concept of the divine simplicity. Thomas will accentuate *differentia constitutiva* and the concomitant concepts of ultimate completing form that gives both species and being to the individual. This was present in IM, but remained only one theme among many, and was not the predominant one. It can accordingly be said that Trinitarian focus is more precise and technical than IM, or even than Christology itself. Because of the manner in which constitution is founded in divine simplicity and the concept of personal property, Thomas' use of *constituere* manifests a tendency to bring together metaphysics and ("metaphysication" of) logic in a manner that he does not normally explicate to this extent. It is perhaps inspired by Albert's general vision of metaphysics, but in the restricted domain of the simplicity of divine being. This is in part due to the fact that Thomas considers this aspect of the model of Trinitarian analogy as more of an explanation than an affirmation, although it is both. Thus, the more logical reading of metaphysics aids in establishing the principal noetic keys of a theology of the Persons.

Another salient point is Thomas' use of individual and inherence to speak of the personal properties in God. A basic anthropological realism, itself a specifically philosophical one, is introduced into what will rapidly become his personalistic focus in Trinitarian theology. When this is compared to the manner in which person and whole are correlated in his study of the Person of the Word in Christology, a strong case can be made for a Christologically inspired structure to his metaphysics of the Trinity. The Christological paradigm is itself directly founded in the terminology of Tradition and the concomitant explanations of this language from within the world view and structure of philosophy as Thomas had developed it, one that is largely (although not exclusively) the fruit of a rethinking of Aristotelian philosophical theory in light and in view of explanations of the realities known to him in faith, and in the Church.

If constitution in Christology fundamentally regards an understanding of person, while the concept as employed in Trinitarian theology is used more technically, to distinguish rather than to express the whole as such, it remains true that use in Trinitarian theology presupposes an understanding of the Christological role of person, as can be seen through the constant reference to

subsistence in order to open legitimate discussion on *constituere* itself, as well as the concomitant references to unity, which certainly accentuates this holism. Subsistence itself designates the immediate relationship between *esse* and anything considered to be substantial, this relationship of mutual interdependence itself establishing a self-sufficient structure of being. Thus, personalism and accentuation of *esse* in Trinitarian theology develop together, for reasons intrinsic to their fundamental philosophical relationship. Due to explanations of God as *esse* elsewhere, the lack of mention of *esse* in constitution in the Trinitarian tractate should be viewed as presupposing its role, since the clearly Trinitarian use in Christology does nothing but manifest this role of subsistence in another manner. Even more than the necessary development of new content, it is the mode of interaction with philosophy that is consistently refined, with the higher mysteries requiring the greatest precision and most ingenious employment of philosophical principles and concepts. A restructuring of basic content into new relationships rather than an abrogation of any content can be said to occur. The requisite understanding of being as divine that helps render this new structure understandable for the theologian points, in faith, to the mystery he seeks to express.

The Christian thinker, for Thomas, does not then simply use philosophy, he cannot be content with the work of those who have gone before him. Instead, his thought in and of faith must both guide and motivate his natural reason; guide it through the ever present finality of penetration into and presentation of the deepest mysteries of faith, and motivate it, as these fruits are greater than anything the philosopher as such could ever desire. Finally, he must move beyond the use of philosophy to the development of properly theological intellectual paradigms. These paradigms make his use of philosophy to express revealed mystery fructuous, through the contemplation of the Most Holy Trinity with a more precise and explicit faith.

ABSTRACT

Aquinas uses *constituere* as a means of establishing that which can first properly designate each of the divine Persons in Trinitarian theology. His work in this domain is preceded by Albert the Great's use of the Aristotelian-Porphyrian inspired *differentia constitutiva* for a similar purpose. We thus compare Thomas' use of *constituere* in metaphysics and Trinitarian theology, using, among other references, the role of *constituere* in Christology and its ties to *persona composita* and *esse personalis* as a guide. This provides a clearer understanding that in God essence is notionally distinct from personal property as well as from person – understood according to the *ratio personae*, that is, as the whole constituted through the specification of the divinity by personal property, otherwise known as constituting difference. Comparison to some of the most pertinent tools in Trinitarian theology – relation, property, *esse* and the dyad of person and nature – permits contextualization of the analysis.