# Divine Ideas in Franciscan Thought (XIII<sup>th</sup>-XIV<sup>th</sup> century)

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# In Augustine's Footsteps

## The Doctrine of Ideas in Franciscan Thought

### Introductory Remarks

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The formulation of the theory of ideas constitutes, according to Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, Plato's highest achievement, that upon which his greatness, and his superiority to Aristotle, is based[1]. However, Plato, although he acknowledged the existence of ideas, held them to be eternally distinct from God and not the divine idea itself. To make this doctrine fully acceptable to Christian thought, Augustine's interpretation was necessary: in the *Quaestio de ideis* – number 46 of the *De diversis quaestionibus 83* – he revises Plato's theory of ideas and says that ideas do not differ in essence from God, but constitute a whole with His essence.

Augustine claims that ideas, understood in the Platonic sense as «the primary forms or permanent reasons of things», are «contained within the divine intelligence»[2]. Their connotation is ontological rather than epistemological and, in the Middle Ages too, they were understood to be ontic principles of objects, until at least the second half of the thirteenth century[3].

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1. Cfr. Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, in PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas (edd.), *Opera omnia*, V, Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Firenze 1891, VI, pp. 360-361.

2. Cfr. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, A. Mutzenbecher (ed.), Brepols, Turnhout 1975 (CCSL, 44a), q. 46, 2, p. 71: «Sunt namque ideae principales quaedam formae uel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae ipsae formatae non sunt ac per hoc aeternae ac semper eodem modo sese habentes, quae diuina intelligentia continentur».

3. Cfr. L. M. de Rijk, *Un tournant important dans l'usage du mot idea chez Henri de Gand*, in M. Fattori, M.L. Bianchi, *Idea. VI Colloquio Internazionale del Lessico*

Ideas are introduced into theological thought in order to explain the rational order which governs creation: since God creates by His free will, the reason which pervades reality is to be attributed to the rationality of God's deliberative act. Creation takes place on the basis of a plan which is not general and abstract, because God possesses the reasons for, or rather, He prefigures, that which He is about to create. For Augustine, therefore, ideas are the examples known by God as eternally existent in his intellect and which He uses to give temporal existence to «all that exists, exists in so far as it participates in Him»[4].

Medieval exemplarism was informed by these Augustinian positions: ideas are the exemplars on the basis of which God creates the world and guarantees the rational order; God knows Himself not only as universal cause, but also as the agent who precognises in Himself all the reasons of things (ideas). This Augustinian doctrine would always be considered an *auctoritas*, even though it was to be interpreted in many different ways during the Middle Ages, and – from the fourteenth century on – was radically questioned and emptied of all meaning. Divine ideas continued to be acknowledged *propter dicta Augustini*[5], to the extent that, in the

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*Intellettuale Europeo (Roma, 5-7 gennaio 1989)*, Edizioni dell'Ateneo, Roma 1990, pp. 89-98: 91.

4. Cfr. Augustinus Hipponensis, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, q. 46, 2, p. 73: «Quarum participatione fit ut sit quidquid est, quoque modo est».

5. Cfr. Falà, *Univocità, statuto delle essenze e scienza divina nelle* Collationes oxonienses. *Un dibattito nell'ordine minorita inglese agli inizi del XIV secolo*, PhD thesis in "Human Sciences", University of Macerata 2017, p. 329, n. 1059 gives the example of Robertus de Cowton, *In I Sententiarum*, d. 35, ms. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Theol. Lat. 2° 114, f. 156ra, in W. Hübener, Idea extra artificem. *Zur Revisionsbedürftigkeit von Erwin Panofskys Deutung der mittelalterlichen Kunsttheorie*, in L. Grisebach - K. Renger (hrsg. v.), *Festschrift für Otto von Simson zum 65. Geburtstag*, Propyläen Verlag, Frankfurt-am-Main 1977, pp. 27-52: 50 and also Franciscus de Mayronis, *Conflatus*, Venetiis 1520, d. 47, q. 1, a. 1, f. 133va I: «Ideo videtur aliquibus quod nulla necessitas sit ponendi illas ideas evidens, nobis tamen propter dicta Augustini ponende sunt formaliter in deo, ut patet ex priori deductione».

thirteenth century, the sentence: «Whoever refutes the existence of divine ideas is a heretic, because he is denying the existence of the Son», was coined, based on the *Quaestio de ideis* and Augustine's description of the divine Word as the locus of Ideas[6].

All medieval philosophers – particularly the Franciscans, due to the pervasive influence of Augustine in this Order – were zealous in their dedication to the sistematising and refining of the Augustinian theory of divine exemplarism. In their efforts, they became increasingly aware of the limits of this doctrine and the threat that some of its aspects posed to the content of the Revelation.

We thought it would be interesting to dedicate a volume to the history of the doctrine of exemplarism as a way of trying to throw new light on two critical issues in medieval theology: «God's knowledge of the world and its creation»[7]. The decision to confine ourselves to the investigation of Franciscan theories is based not only on our intention to approach this doctrine from a fresh perspective –numerous studies have been dedicated to the medieval theories of divine science, of which these ideas are a central part[8] – but also on the conviction that such an approach would result in interesting historiographical effects[9]. In fact, the articles collected

6. Cfr. Falà, *Univocità, statuto delle essenze e scienza divina nelle* Collationes oxonienses, p. 329, n. 1060 in which the passages by William of Auxerre, *Summa Halensis*, Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas are given.

7. As Alessandro Conti puts it in the conclusion of his contribution to this volume, see p. 482.

8. Cfr. Fattori, Bianchi, *Idea. VI Colloquio Internazionale del Lessico Intellettuale Europeo (Roma, 5-7 gennaio 1989)*; J.-C. Bardout, O. Boulnois (éd. par), *Sur la science divine*, PUF, Paris 2002; O. Boulnois, J. Schmutz, J.-L. Solère (éd. par), *Le contemplateur et les idées. Modèles de la science divine du néoplatonisme au XVIIIᵉ siècle*, Vrin, Paris 2002; L. Sileo, De rerum ideis. *Dio e le cose nel dibattito universitario del tredicesimo secolo*, Urbaniana University Press, Roma 2011.

9. I am indebted to Andrea Nannini and Davide Riserbato for this conviction, they were the first to suggest that we investigate the doctrine of divine ideas in Franciscan thought, showing me novel aspects of the fourteenth century theories. This volume has gradually taken shape, originating in a seminar which took place on 27 October 2016, at the Humanities Department of the University of Trento:

in this volume demonstrate the ways in which Franciscan thought gradually constructed a Platonic tradition, influenced by Augustine, and how the dialogue on this subject between Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent profoundly changed the thinking of the Franciscan school and finally led to the dismantling of these doctrines in the fourteenth century[10].

Historiography traditionally associates the work of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, the tireless defender and supporter of exemplarism, with the doctrine of divine ideas. However, the construction and development of the Seraphic doctor's thought is underpinned by a highly sophisticated doctrinal elaboration, contained in the writings of the early Franciscan masters active in Paris, in particular Alexander of Hales (1185-1245) and John of La Rochelle (1200-1245). Riccardo Saccenti's paper «*Sic bonum cognoscitur et similiter lux. Divine Ideas in the First Franciscan Masters (Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle)*» (pp. 1-24) deals with these two men, focusing on an analysis of their commentary on Distinction 36 of Book I of the *Sentences* by Pietro Lombardo in which the key points of their conception of divine ideas are revealed. Alexander of Hales recovered the theme of divine ideas as an explanation for the dependence of the multiplicity of substances which make up the world on the unity of God. He claimed that the divine ideas, in their multiplicity within the mind of God, are the cause of the multiplicity of

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"La dottrina delle idee nel pensiero francescano del XIII-XIV secolo". My thanks also to Jacopo F. Falà for his generous, and invaluable, help in bringing this book to fruition.

10. This pattern should not be seen as fixed, since even in the fourteenth century – infrequent and isolated as they may have been – some exemplarists, such as Richard of Conington, could still be found. They were usually followers of Henry of Ghent, as J.F. Falà demonstrates in his contribution to this volume (pp. 370-391), with reference to some English Franciscan contemporaries of Scotus. See, too, A. Nannini's paper on Johannes de Ripa, who rebuilt a spacious metaphysical framework within which he tried not only to reestablish a kind of exemplarism between the divine ideas and created species, but also a kind of exemplarism which linked all created perfections to a primordial, divine perfection, with which they had a relationship of similarity.

*res* which constitutes the abundance of Creation. The creative act of God coincides with the thought of the ideas in the mind of God, ideas which correspond to the created realities. John of La Rochelle went a step further, and ceased to limit the range of things thinkable by God to ideas which corresponded with actually existent realities. According to John, the term *ydea* stands for the eternal forms of that which is possible, so that the divine ideas introduce in God the conceivability both of what will exist, and of what will not exist, and make the creation of the *res* a step beyond the thinking of ideas which takes place solely in the mind of God. John thus introduces the notion of *scientia Dei* as God's unlimited cognition.

Massimiliano Lenzi's paper «La negazione delle idee e l'"oscurantismo" dei filosofi. Bonaventura critico di Aristotele» (pp. 25-49) deals with Bonaventura's elaboration of a clearly anti-Aristotlean doctrine of divine ideas. Lenzi begins by describing the famous genealogy of error formulated by Bonaventura of Bagnoregio (1217-1274) in the *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* which claims that the main anti-Christian theses of the "philosophers" (the eternal nature of the world, the negation of providence and of divine prescience and ultramundane life, the unity of the intellect, necessitarianism, the mortality of the soul) grew out of the Aristotelian negation of Platonic exemplarism, based on the clearly irreducible relation between Aristotelianism and Christianity. Contextualising this formulation, Lenzi demonstrates the theoretical and textual bases upon which Bonaventura – while aware of certain basic philosophical objections – elaborates a non-anthropomorphic theory of the divine ideas which allows him to restore to God a conscience and an absolute control over the world, while defending His simplicity and metaphysical perfection. After a brief reference to the various appropriation strategies used by Thomas Aquinas – who made Aristotle his main theological tool – Lenzi can then conclude by underlining how Bonaventura reestablishes the image of an Aristotle profoundly different to Aquinas', and perhaps in some ways more historically authentic.

While Bonaventura's anti-Aristotelianism was consonant with the Augustinian structure of Franciscan thought, the criticism of the doctrine of illumination formulated by Peter John Olivi (1248-1298) was not, and, indeed, constituted a rift within it. Stève Bobillier, in «Divine Ideas and Beatific Vision by Peter John Olivi» (pp. 51-73), emphasises that according to Olivi the theory of illumination cannot account for either the absolute liberty of man or the perfect transcendence of God. Nevertheless, divine ideas are real in God and some of the cases of beatific vision analysed by Bobillier allow us to understand how they can be apprehended by the human intellect. In particular, Olivi claims, in Question I,6 of the *Summa*, that the divine ideas are actually present in God, while differing from Him, although not from their unique and simple essence. Through the notion of *ratio realis*, Olivi shows that the ideas can be understood in two ways: according to divine knowledge, in their quiddity; according to the divine will, as actually existent. Fortified by this doctrine, Olivi maintains that the blessed perceive the essence of God directly in its simplicity and in the plurality of its ideas.  However, in defence of God's transcendence, he explains that the blessed cannot comprehend the entirety of God's infinity in a single, simple act and that their perception varies, not in intensity but according to the number of ideas perceived. Finally, in order to account for the absolute freedom of man – says Olivi – it must be understood that the blessed, thanks to the reflexive nature of their liberty and consciences, remain absolutely free to choose whether or not they want to cleave to God.

Timothy Noone and Carl A. Vater's chapter «The Sources of Scotus's Theory of Divine Ideas» (pp. 75-99) brings us to the section of the book devoted to the thought of Duns Scotus. This study precedes those by Jacopo Francesco Falà and Garrett Smith because of its focus on the sources of Scotus' analysis, a focus which is clearly demonstrated in the critical edition, given in appendix, of two questions by Olivi and Petrus de Trabibus.  Scotus bases his criticism of the notion of imitability – which was, at the time when he was begin-

ning his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in Oxford, the theory underpinning the then dominant conception of divine ideas - on the work of Olivi and de Trabibus. According to this theory God knows possible creatures by knowing the ways in which his essence can be imitated. Knowledge of the creature is logically posterior to his knowledge of the relation of imitability. Compared to this dominant theory, the theory of divine ideas that Scotus articulates is both traditional and innovative. It is traditional in that it insists that a relation of imitability is characteristic of a divine idea. It is innovative in that it insists that the relation of imitability is logically posterior to God's direct knowledge of the creature. He offers a series of arguments insisting that it is impossible and unacceptable to hold that God knows possible creatures by means of a relation of imitability. In this chapter, they contend that Scotus's criticisms of the imitability account of divine ideas are influenced by similar criticisms given by Peter John Olivi and Olivi's student Petrus de Trabibus. They show that such influence must be affirmed on the basis of similar arguments, borrowed terms, and Scotus's insistence that his criticisms avoid certain of Olivi's extremes.

Jacopo Francesco Falà's chapter, «Divine Ideas in the *Collationes oxonienses*» (pp. 101-133) also deals with Scotus' doctrine, and particularly the *Collationes oxonienses*, the collection of twenty-six questions on teleological-metaphysical matters that probably dates from the spring of 1301, while Scotus was still studying at Oxford, before he moved to Paris. Falà focuses on Questions 8 and 9 which reveal Henry of Ghent's profound influence on the Franciscan doctrine of divine ideas, at the turn of the thirteenth century. This influence was particularly marked on the function of the *rationes cognoscendi* of the divine ideas, and the latter's ontological status. In the *Collationes oxonienses* – a collection of the oral debates used as teaching exercises in the Franciscan Convent in Oxford – we can identify the currents of a debate within the order, in England, at least. Henry's supporters (probably the majority) opposed those who were trying

to establish a new direction, which diverged from Henry's position, although  it remained in constant dialogue with it. Scotus was one of the (probable) minority – during his years at Oxford – he was broadly at odds with the positions adopted by Henry's Franciscan followers; the abovementioned dialogue was to serve as an effetive incubator for the gestation of his own opinion on divine ideas. Key to this new position was the criticism of Henry's doctrine of divine ideas as *rationes cognoscendi*, and of the theory of *esse essentiae*, in which divine ideas are held to be an *esse deminutum*, ontologically weaker and thus better able to protect, at least for the *Doctor Subtilis'* purposes, the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*.

Based on Scotus' later works, the chapter by Ernesto Dezza, «Giovanni Duns Scoto e gli *instantia naturae*» (pp. 135-159), illustrates the importance of a conceptual tool, which John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) discovered in the works of earlier authors, but then put to original use: the "instants of nature". This doctrine, elaborated in 1300-1301, when Scotus was writing the first book of the *Lectura*, later taken up again and reelaborated in both the *Ordinatio* and in his mature works, sets out the different metaphysical conditions which can occur either in exactly the same instant of time or in the eternity of the divine. In the first case, these instants are used to explain Scotus' novel idea of synchronous contingency, according to which in an instant of time, and actually during that instant, both a thing and the possibility of its opposite are valid. In the second case, the instants of nature are used by Scotus to systematically define the unfolding of the deliberation whereby God chooses to create some among an infinite number of intelligible items, which He himself has produced. The real world thus appears as one among an infinite number of possible worlds, the existence of which is a genuine alternative to the world in which we live. Therefore, with regard to both temporal beings – whose being and activity is contingent – and God – whose being is necessary, and activity contingent – the conceptual tool of the *instantia naturae* can be used to give a full explanation of con-

tingency, the mark of both God's, and man's, liberty. The notion of instants of nature thus allowed Scotus to articulate the divine unity and multiplicitous ideas and to distance himself from the solution of the coeternity of divine ideas that had prevailed until then.

We now move on to a consideration of one of the *Scotizantes*, in the chapter by Marina Fedeli, «Le idee divine e la relazione di imitabilità dell'essenza in Giacomo d'Ascoli» (pp. 161-176). The paper investigates the role of divine ideas as relations of imitability with the divine essence in James of Ascoli. Fedeli begins by outlining the differing opinions of John Duns Scotus and Henry of Ghent: according to the former, ideas are the objects known by the divine intellect, while for the second, ideas are the *respectus imitabilitatis* present in the divine essence and therefore the relation to the intellect of God is the formal cause of creatural existence. The doctrinal differences between the two authors derive from the different ontological status attributed to relations: for Scotus, the relation is limited to making – and recognising - the connection between an idea and the divine intellect, Henry believes that the *respectus imitabilitatis* give creatural beings their existence. James of Ascoli supported Scotus' doctrine – he conceived divine ideas as the stable, immutable forms of all things. Contained within the divine intelligence, they are eternal and all things that arise and pass away in the world are formed in imitation of them. Therefore, the divine ideas exist as objects of the divine intellect, as that which God thinks, and not by virtue of their relation with God. Imitability, that is the *respectus* of reason which connects the divine ideas with the intellect of God, 'accompanies', but does not constitute, the divine idea. According to James, everything that God does He does in imitation of His (absolute) being; only secondarily does He works on the basis of similarity to known creatures, to whom the *essentia dei* is connected through a *respectus rationis*. This is why the *respectus* is a concomitant, but not a part, of the formal definition of an idea.

Countering James of Ascoli, and above all, Scotus, William of Alnwick (1275-1333) formulated his theory of the salvific ontology of ide-

as, as Davide Riserbato explains in his paper «*Ut induit rationem ideae. L'essenza divina e l'essere intelligibile: identità (e differenza) secondo Guglielmo di Alnwick*» (pp. 177-201). In the six questions debated *de esse intelligibili*, William of Alnwick's ultimate goal is to determine the ontological status of divine ideas, demonstrating the thesis according to which the eternal intelligible being which belongs to the creature by virtue of the divine essence (*esse intelligibile ab aeterno*) is neither caused nor produced. Riserbato, analysing the first two questions (the second, in particular) which are the theoretical basis of all the subsequent argumentation, defines the notion of *esse intelligible* as understood by William. The first *quaestio* examines the identity between representative form (*forma repraesentans*) and the represented being (*esse repraesentatum*) of the represented object and, in parallel, the identity of knowledge (*cognitio*) and the known being (*esse cognitum*) of the known object. William maintains that the represented being and the known being of an object cannot involve an entity distinct from both the representative species (or form) and from knowledge. From this theoretical premise, William claims – in the second *quaestio* – that if the eternal intelligible being were based on the creature and did not coincide with the divine being, the creature would exist from eternity not only according to its own existence (*secundum quidditatem*) but also according to the existence of the effects themselves (*sed etiam secundum existentiam*), which clearly cannot be the case. Alnwick therefore maintains that the eternal intelligible being of the creature coincides with God.

The Franciscan Peter Auriol (1280-1322), too, disputes Duns Scotus' (and Aquinas') doctrine of divine ideas, as Chiara Paladini shows in her «Exemplar Causality as *similitudo aequivoca* in Peter Auriol» (pp. 203-238). Auriol claims that to admit the existence of divine ideas is equivalent to admiting the existence of multiplicity in God and therefore compromises the principle of His absolute unity and simplicity. To overcome this problem, Auriol develops a new system which could, on the one hand, guarantee the divine knowledge of

his creatures, thus protecting the theological principle of providence; and, on the other, refute the notion of the existence of divine ideas as intermediaries for Creation. In Auriol's theory of exemplar causality, the divine essence becomes the only true object of divine knowledge and therefore also the only exemplar for Creation. The cognitive act of God is turned solely upon His own essence. Nevertheless, He knows creatures through multiple connotations, i.e. through the multiple ways in which the divine essence is connoted during the process of divine self-knowledge. The connotations, however, play no part in the creative process, since they are not the forms on the basis of which God creates the world, given that the character of imitability is unique to the divine essence. In order to explain how an object can function as the only exemplar for the creation of a multiplicity of different creatures, Auriol has to rethink the very concept of imitability, and elaborate a new mode of exemplary causality which can explain the relation between God and his creatures. Auriol turns to the concept of "equivocity" – rather than to the concept of analogy – to refute the traditional model of creation: the *aequivocatio* does not provide for any conformity between *idea* and *ideatum*, so there is no contradiction in claiming that a single object (the divine essence) is, in an equivocal manner (*aequivoce*), the exemplary cause of a multitude of varied objects. In this way, Auriol develops a new theory of divine exemplarism: the theory of *similitudo aequivoca*.

In the paper «From Scotus to the Platonists: Hugh of Novocastro, Landulph Caracciolo and Francis of Meyronnes» (pp. 239-282) William Duba examines the debate within the Scotist school about the Master's doctrine of divine ideas. Duba discusses some works by these authors (the relevant texts are found in appendix A, B, C of this volume, taken from the critical edition edited by Duba in collaboration with Roberta Padlina and Christopher Schabel). The *dictinctio* 36, qq. 4-6 of the Commentary by Hugh of Novocastro (died 1322) on Book I of the *Sentences* (ed. Duba and Padlina, pp. 283-300), in particular, defends Scotus' theory against the criticisms made by ex-

ponents of the competing Franciscan doctrine, according to which divine ideas are simply the divine essence considered as the basis for the knowledge of creatures. Hugh adopts Scotus' characterisation of ideas as objects of knowledge. Analysing the Master's claim that the divine intellect produces divine ideas in the intelligible being, Hugh states that the ideas, as beings of reason, are contained – not produced – in the divine essence, without being identical to it. The divine essence, in fact, contains (eminently, potentially) all of Creation. Landulph Caracciolo (ca. 1280/1285–1351), in the *distinctiones* 35-36 of the Commentary on Book I of the *Sentences* – published in appendix B by Duba and Schabel (pp. 301-341) – defended Duns Scotus by refuting the positions of Peter Auriol. In the questions on divine ideas, Landulph systematically attacked Auriol's position identifying the divine ideas with oblique denomination through the divine essence. The divine ideas are the objects of creation as present to the divine mind, logically posterior to God's understanding of the divine essence and prior to God's creation of those objects. Like Hugh, Landulph insists that the ideas are the secondary objects of God's understanding of the divine essence; Landulph takes a step further and explicitly states that the ideas are secondary objects because the divine essence – eminently – contains them. Landulph's criticisms assume the formal distinction, just as Auriol's arguments rely on the connotative distinction. Landulph presents divine ideas as almost exclusively an epistemological problem, and only in an oblique way, through a discussion of modality at the end, does he consider ideas as serving as the exemplars of creatables. The Franciscan master Francis of Meyronnes (ca. 1280–1328), having initially affirmed Scotus' doctrine, then, in the course of his Parisian lectures, found himself rejecting it as too far from Augustine's position (that the divine ideas are exemplars). Meyronnes' revised position is expressed in the *distinctio* 48 of his Commentary on Book I of the *Sentences*, in the critical edition *Summa simplicitas* or *Reportatio*, edited by Duba, in appendix C of the paper (pp. 343-369).  Rather than trying to reconcile

the affirmations of Augustine with the positions of the philosophers, Meyronnes distinguishes between the theological and metaphysical meanings of the divine ideas: the "theological ideas" are the divine ideas, i.e. the exemplars that Augustine describes, while the "metaphysical ideas" are universals. In the *Conflatus*, a reelaborated and simplified version of his commentary on Book I of the *Sentences*, Francis becomes something of a double Platonist on ideas: in the theological sense, he subscribes to Augustine's doctrine, which itself is based on Plato, "speaking as a theologian"; for the metaphysical sense, he holds a position on universals as prior to real or mental existence, and credits this view to Plato, as positively presented by Avicenna, and negatively by Averroes and Aristotle. Francis, therefore, is an example of the consequences of the Scotist inheritance: returning to Augustine and defending Platonism without having read Plato.

Although he largely accepts Scotus' doctrine of ideas, Petrus Thomae (1305-1366) introduces some important changes, as Garrett Smith demonstrates in «Petrus Thomae on Divine Ideas and Intelligible Being» (pp. 371-399). He followed Scotus in defining a divine idea as a creature that is taken qua known by the divine intellect (*creatura intellecta*), but departed from Scotus' account of the origin of these ideas. Scotus had claimed both that the intelligible being or essences of creatures is produced by the divine intellect and that they are contained in the divine essence. Peter rejects the former claim and embraces the latter, and develops a special mode of containment to account for the presence of creatable essences in the divine essence. A consequence of Scotus' theory of containment that Peter fully embraces is that creatable essences are real and eternal, given that for Scotists the 'real' is what does not depend on an intellect. Peter reconciles this position with the Christian doctrine of creation by developing a complex theory of the relation between objective and subjective being.

William of Ockham (1285-1347) was to mark a real turning point in the history of the doctrine of exemplarism, as Alessandro Ghisal-

berti's contribution, «Le idee divine in Guglielmo di Ockham» (pp. 401-426) shows. As well as examining the Franciscan's criticism of Scotus' doctrine of instants of nature, Ghisalberti also explains Ockham's solution, which arose out of a novel and original perspective: the creature itself is the idea. God looks at the producible creature, and, through this act of looking, produces it. Therefore, true idea and exemplar are understood to mean that which, once precognised, the knower can produce in a rational way, while that which is not precognised, cannot be produced in a rational way. This conclusion thus testifies to the overthrow of the model of exemplarism (understood as the occurence of ideas as ideal archetypes present in God, looking at which God forms reality), since it reveals the doctrine to contradict the simplicity of the divine essence. Moreover, exemplary ideas risk sacrificing the radical contingency of nature, the uniqueness of individual beings, and even the unlimited freedom of the divine will. This is the *novitas* that Ockham introduced in the doctrines of the Franciscan school during the period from the late thirteenth to mid fourteenth century, emphasising the value of the absolute freedom of God and the importance of every individual, each created by God the Creator's acts of love.

Although Ockham appeared to have dismantled exemplarism, some authors continued to try to find ways to reestablish it – Johannes de Ripa was one such thinker. In his paper «*Immensa exemplaritas*. La dottrina delle idee nella metafisica di Giovanni da Ripa. I Sent., d. 35» (pp. 427-459), Andrea Nannini demonstrates how Johannes de Ripa's very complex neo-Platonic metaphysics, already developed in the prologue and the unpublished distinctions at the beginning of Book I of the Commentary on the *Sentences*, led the Franciscan to reconsider the very system of divine ideas. Each idea is considered to be an immense, primordial perfection of the divine being, an immense perfection which means, in the case of the divine essence, an immense distinction of form, but a perfect, real, unity. The exemplary function of the divine ideas was thus guaranteed within

a frame in which divine immensity, in itself not fully communicable to creatures, was initially weakened in its infinite form (infinity, for Ripa, can be, and is, wholly a created being). This means that a divine idea is nothing other than a primordially immense divine perfection which has already been given an infinite form. At this point, the idea can serve as an exemplar for the realities created which, to varying degrees, then go on to express each divine perfection in a way proportionate to creatural beings. Moreover, the fact that Johannes de Ripa was influenced by Acardus of Saint Victor (whom he confused with Anselm of Canterbury), an important source for the distinction 35 of his commentary on the *Sentences*, is of undoubted significance.

The book ends with Alessandro Conti's paper, «Late Medieval Exemplarism: a Philosophical Assessment» (pp. 461-487), a concise presentation of the theses discussed which also systematises them from a wider historiographical and philosophical perspective. Highlighting the "knotty problems" of medieval exemplarism, such as its irreconcilability with the image of God as pure and absolutely simple actuality, or with divine omniscience and providence, Conti notes that these questions required a new conception of the individual and a new image of knowledge. Many of the medieval thinkers discussed in this book were involved, in accordance with their own particular visions of the theory of ideas and metaphysical beliefs, in the development of a new notion of singular (or primary) substance and a new image of knowledge. The late Middle Ages, claims Conti, «represents a major turning point in the long path leading from the primary substance in Aristotle's Categories to Leibniz' individual substance» (p. 465). Moving on to examine the formal aspects of the theory of exemplarism, Conti presents the tools of logic adopted, or developed, by late Medieval authors in their pursuit of this discussion. Notions of identity and distinction (or difference) – used to determine accurately the relation between divine ideas and the divine essence, and between two ideas – played a key role in their arguments. In his outline of the history of exemplarism, Conti also

sets out the positions of some non-Franciscan theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome  (whose presences can, in fact, be sensed all through this volume). Indeed, Aquinas was the first to tackle sistematically the aforementioned "knotty problems" – ignored by Augustine – around the theory of divine ideas. He is therefore an excellent starting point for any attempt to better understand the theories elaborated during the fourteenth century, since his writings were both the source of many subsequent theoretical elaborations and the polemical target of Duns Scotus' doctrine. Scotus took a completely different approach to that of Aquinas: «he believed that the traditional interpretation of Augustine's doctrine was misleading, since it assumes that God thinks of the possibles as they (qua ideas) are present in His mind from eternity. According to Scotus, it is just the opposite: the possibles are present (qua ideas) in God's mind because He thinks of them» (p. 476). Among the Franciscans who came after Scotus, some apparently sought to identify divine ideas, as objects of divine cognition, more closely with the divine essence itself, others insisted on their role of exemplars in creation. Apart from James of Ascoli, Petrus Thomae and Landulph Caracciolo, who defended Scotus' position, and Francis of Meyronnes, who returned to Augustine's original formulation, all the other theologians discussed in this volume attacked Scotus: William of Alnwick, Peter Auriol, William of Ockham and Johannes de Ripa. According to Conti, «the real end of the story that this book tells us is Ockham's theory of divine ideas, since it is the pendant of his rejection of the extra-mental existence of universals and of the mental existence of intelligible species, for in his view both divine ideas and common natures (or natural species) are unnecessary for explaining individual realities, just as (human) intelligible species are unnecessary for explaining (our) knowledge» (p. 479).

As Conti concludes his own paper, he manages also to synthesise the results of the various contributions that make up this volume, identifying three different approaches adopted by the Franciscans un-

der consideration: some (Alexander of Hales, John of La Rochelle, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, and Peter John Olivi) defend and elucidate Augustine's exemplarism – and present a somewhat distorted interpretation of it; others (James of Ascoli, Peter Auriol and Petrus Thomae) force it – emptied of any real meaning – into a precise philosophical system; lastly, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham develop a new philosophical paradigm within which they explain the contents of faith.

Overall, it emerges that the question of divine ideas is linked to the fundamental problem of the intelligibility of the world, and that the entire Franciscan tradition tried to pursue exemplarism as the solution to this problem – up until the rupture caused by Duns Scotus' interpretation, itself a prelude to the collapse of the doctrine formalized by Ockham. Within this context, the doctrine of Johannes de Ripa constitutes a sort of attempted "restoration" of a metaphysical dimension which had been losing credence for some decades; Ripa gave the doctrine of exemplarism a renewed centrality above and beyond the notion of divine ideas, since each divine perfection becomes – analogously – formally communicable *ad extra*.