

THE *LECTURA THOMASINA* IN ITS CONTEXT

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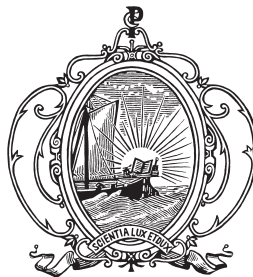
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The Lectura Thomasina in Its Context
Philosophical and Theological Issues

Edited by

Andreas Speer, Andrea Colli,
and Francesca Bonini



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CONTENTS

Preface by Andreas Speer, Andrea Colli, and Francesca Bonini.....	7
List of Contributors	13
I. Text and Sources	
The <i>Lectura Thomasina</i> : an Early Thomistic Sentences Commentary	15
<i>Francesca Bonini</i>	
From the Condemnations to the Schools. The <i>Correctorium</i> Literature in the <i>Lectura Thomasina</i>	35
<i>Andrea Colli</i>	
Le <i>Commentaire de Bruges</i> est-il à proprement parler une <i>Lectura Thomasina</i> ?	67
<i>Maxime Mauriège</i>	
Appendix A: Anonymus Brugensis, <i>Questiones super IV Libros</i> <i>Sententiarum</i> , Lib. II, dist. 12, q. unica	95
<i>(edidit Maxime Mauriège)</i>	
Appendix B: <i>Lectura Thomasina</i> , Lib. II, dist. 12, q. 1	105
<i>(edidit Andrea Colli)</i>	
II. Doctrine	
Angelic Knowledge of Distant Things: From Thomas Aquinas to the <i>Lectura Thomasina</i>	121
<i>Alessandro Palazzo</i>	
William of Peter of Godin on Matter.....	161
<i>Fabrizio Amerini</i>	

III. Context and Influence

Does Unity Entail Distinction? Godinus and Scotus on the Principle of Individuation	191
<i>Wouter Goris</i>	

James of Metz and William of Peter of Godin on the Procession of the Holy Spirit (and the Generation of the Son)	211
<i>Chris Schabel</i>	
Appendix: Iacobi Metensis <i>In primum librum Sententiarum</i> , dd. 6 et 10-12	233
<i>(edidit Chris Schabel)</i>	

Dominican Debates on the Intensification of Qualities at the Beginning of the 14th Century: Hervaeus Natalis against James of Metz and Durand of Saint-Pourçain	293
<i>Jean-Luc Solère</i>	

Index of Names	347
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Index of Manuscripts	353
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ANGELIC KNOWLEDGE OF DISTANT THINGS: FROM THOMAS AQUINAS TO THE *LECTURA THOMASINA*

Alessandro PALAZZO

During the course of the second half of the 13th century, angelic knowledge became a key topic in the field of medieval angelology, attracting growing attention from scholastics.¹ Thomas Aquinas dedicated an increasing number of articles to angelic understanding throughout his scholarly career: five in the *Sentences* commentary, seventeen in the *De veritate*, twenty-three in the *De summa theologiae*. By the last quarter of the century, angelic epistemology became a particularly hot topic in the *Correctoria* literature. Angelic cognition was one of William de la Mare's privileged targets in his *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*.² The so-called *Correctoria Corruptorii* of William's Dominican opponents took great pain to answer the critiques made by the

1. On medieval angelology, see *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry. Their Function and Significance*, I. IRIBARREN – M. LENZ (eds.), Aldershot-Burlington, VT 2008; *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy*, T. HOFFMANN (ed.) (Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition, 35), Leiden-Boston 2012. For a concise overview of the various traditions underlying late medieval angelology, see T. SUAREZ-NANI, "Individualität und Subjektivität der Engel im 13. Jahrhundert. Thomas von Aquin, Heinrich von Gent und Petrus Johannis Olivi," in: *Das Mittelalter* 11 (2006), pp. 29-48: 29-31.

2. GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare."* *Les premières polémiques Thomistes: I. Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"*, éd. par P. GLORIEUX (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 9), Kain 1927, aa. 18-20 (nn.18-20), pp. 79-91: "Quod omnes species per quas angeli cognoscunt sunt eis connaturales"; "Quod intellectus non potest ducere ad esse intelligibile istas formas materiales nisi prius reduceret eas ad esse formarum imaginatarum"; "Quod angelus superior intelligit per species pauciores"; aa. 41-42 (nn.41-42), pp. 180-187: "Quod angeli superiores quidquid a Deo recipiunt subiectis impartuntur"; "Quod distantia localis nullum facit impedimentum in locutione angelorum"; a. 7 (n.93), pp. 378-379: "Quod substantiae spirituales superiores intelligunt per species pauciores." See also the following related issues: aa. 36-38 (nn.36-38), pp. 169-177: "Quod anima separata intelligit per species ex influentia divini luminis participatas"; "Quod anima separata cognoscit seipsam per seipsam"; "Quod distantia localis non impedit cognitionem animae separatae."

Franciscan theologian,³ and introduced new arguments to the debate. Late 13th and 14th-century *Sentences* commentators, while increasingly selective in their choice of topics, continued to pay great attention to angelic knowing, thus keeping these discussions very much alive.⁴ In accordance with this tendency, the *Lectura Thomasina* also devotes considerable space to angelic epistemology.

The *Lectura Thomasina* – a *Sentences* commentary written by the Dominican William of Peter Godin – is one of the most significant

3. On the disputes between the *Correctoria* see e.g. P. GLORIEUX, “Pro et contra Thomam. Un survol de cinquante années,” in: T.W. KÖHLER (ed.), *Sapientiae procerum amore. Mélanges Médiévistes offerts à Dom Jean-Pierre Müller O.S.B. à l’occasion de son 70ème anniversaire* (24 février 1974), Roma 1974, pp. 255-287: 261-270; M.D. JORDAN, “The Controversy of the *Correctoria* and the Limits of Metaphysics,” in: *Speculum* 57 (1982), pp. 292-314; M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “The Literary Reception of Thomas Aquinas’ View on the Provability of the Eternity of the World in de la Mare’s *Correctorium* (1278-9) and the *Correctoria Corruptorii* (1279-ca 1286),” in: J.B.M. WISSINK (ed.), *The Eternity of the World in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas and his Contemporaries* (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 27), Leiden-New York-København-Köln 1990, pp. 39-68; L. HÖDL, “Korrektorienstreit,” in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Bd. 5, München 1991, col. 1448; M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “Being and Thinking in the ‘Correctorium fratris Thomae’ and the ‘Correctorium corruptorii Quare.’ Schools of Thought and Philosophical Methodology,” in: J.A. AERTSEN – K. EMERY – A. SPEER (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277. Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte* (Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 28), Berlin-New York 2001, pp. 417-435, and further bibliographical references listed in these publications. On the so-called “First Thomistic School” and the Dominican cultural strategies on Aquinas’ doctrinal legacy, see F.J. ROENSCH, *Early Thomistic School*, Dubuque, Iowa 1964; C. VIOLA, “L’École thomiste au Moyen Âge,” in: G. FLØISTAD (ed.), *Contemporary Philosophy. A new survey. Vol. 6. Philosophy and Science in the Middle Ages. Part 1*, Dordrecht-Boston-London 1990, pp. 345-377; M.M. MULCHAHEY, “First the Bow is Bent in Study...” *Dominican Education before 1350*, Torono 1998, pp. 141-167; I. IRIBARREN, “*Responsio secundum Thomam* and the Search for an Early Thomistic School,” in: *Vivarium* 39 (2001), pp. 255-296; A.A. ROBIGLIO, “Tommaso d’Aquino tra morte e canonizzazione (1274-1323),” in A. GHISALBERTI – A. PETAGINE, R. RIZZELLO (eds.), *Lecture e interpretazioni di Tommaso d’Aquino oggi: cantieri aperti. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio* (Milano, 12-13 settembre 2005), Torino 2006, pp. 197-216; ID., *La sopravvivenza e la gloria. Appunti sulla formazione della prima scuola tomista (sec. XIV)* (Sacra Dottrina. Bibliotheca, 53), Bologna 2008, pp. 24-25; G. KORIDZE, “The Formation of the First Thomistic School,” in: F. AMERINI (ed.), *Dal convento alla città. Filosofia e teologia in Francesco da Prato O.P. (XIV secolo)*, Firenze 2008, pp. 133-160; M.J.F.M. HOENEN, “Thomas von Aquin und der Dominikanerorden. Lehrtraditionen bei den Mendikanten des späten Mittelalters,” in: M.J.F.M. HOENEN – R. IMBACH – C. KÖNIG-PRALONG (eds.), *Deutsche Thomisten des 14. Jahrhunderts: Lektüren, Aneignungsstrategien, Divergenzen / Thomistes allemands du XIV siècle: lectures, stratégies d’appropriation, divergences* (Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie 57 [2010]), pp. 260-285; P. PORRO, *Tommaso d’Aquino. Un profilo storico-filosofico*, Roma 2012, pp. 464-476.

4. T. SUAREZ-NANI, “L’innato e l’acquisito: Pietro Aureolo e la conoscenza degli angeli,” in: L. BIANCHI – C. CRISCIANI (eds.), *Forme e oggetti della conoscenza nel XIV secolo. Studi in ricordo di Maria Elena Reina* (Micrologus’ Library, 61), Firenze 2014, pp. 135-194: 138.

witnesses to the disputes over Aquinas' intellectual legacy.⁵ William was twice Bachelor of the *Sentences*, first in Toulouse between 1296 and 1298 and then in Paris between 1299 and 1300;⁶ the composition of the *Lectura* should therefore, it has been suggested, be placed between 1296 and 1300-1301.⁷ It is not clear whether the work is a simple *reportatio*, as the concise form of several quaestions seems to indicate, or an *ordinatio*, as the reworking of some of the sources quoted suggests. Godin quotes mainly, but not exclusively, from Thomas' works (the *Sentences* commentary and the *Summa theologiae* especially, but also the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, *De spiritualibus creaturis*, the commentaries on *Physics*, *Metaphysics* and *Posterior analytics*). This heavy reliance on Aquinas' works led, in one manuscript, to the *Lectura* being called *Thomasina*. Godin also has frequent recourse to the *Sentences* commentary of John Quidort, whose lectures on the *Sentences* date to the period between 1292 and 1296 and provide a useful *terminus post quem*. Another source is the *Sentences* commentary contained in the Brügge, Stadtbibliothek, ms. 491 and long ascribed to

5. On the *Lectura Thomasina*, see M. GRABMANN, "Kardinal Guilelmus Petri de Godino († 1336) und seine *Lectura Thomasina*," in: *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, Bd. 2, München 1936, pp. 559-576; L. ULLRICH, *Fragen der Schöpfungslehre nach Jakob von Metz O.P. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung von Sentenzenkommentaren aus der Dominikanerschule um 1300* (Erfurter theologische Studien, 20), Leipzig 1966; B. DECKER, *Die Gotteslehre des Jakob von Metz. Untersuchungen zur Dominikanertheologie zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 42,1), Münster 1967, pp. 24-31; W. GORIS – M. PICKAVÉ, "Die *Lectura Thomasina* des Guilelmus Petri de Godino (ca. 1260-1336). Ein Beitrag zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte," in: J. HAMESSE (ed.), *Roma, magistra mundi. Itineraria culturae medievalis. Parvi flores. Mélanges offerts au Père L.E. Boyle à l'occasion de son 75e anniversaire* (Textes et Études du Moyen Âge, 10,3), Louvain-la-Neuve 1998, pp. 83-109; W. GORIS – M. PICKAVÉ, "Von der Erkenntnis der Engel. Der Streit um die *species intelligibilis* und eine *quaestio* aus dem anonymen Sentenzenkommentar in ms. Brügge, Stadtbibliothek 491," in: J.A. AERTSEN – K. EMERY – A. SPEER (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*, pp. 125-177; J.W. PECK SJ – C. SCHABEL, "James of Metz and the Dominican Tradition on the Eternity of the World, ca. 1300," in: *Medioevo* 40 (2015), pp. 265-330: 265-297; F. BONINI, *Edizione critica della Lectura Thomasina di Guglielmo di Pietro di Godino (libro I, Prol.-dist. 27)*, tesi di dottorato, Dottorato internazionale in filosofia: forme e storia dei saperi filosofici, Università del Salento-Universität zu Köln.

6. On William of Peter Godin's life, see P. FOURNIER, "Le cardinal Guillaume de Peyre Godin," in: *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 86 (1925), pp. 100-121; ID., "Guillaume de Peyre de Godin, cardinal," in: *Histoire littéraire de la France*, 37 (1938), pp. 146-153; M.-H. LAURENT, "Le testament et la succession du Cardinal Dominicain Guillaume de Pierre Godin," in: *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 2 (1932), pp. 84-231; R. DARRICAU, "Le cardinal Guillaume de Peyre Godin, des Frères Prêcheurs (1260-1336)," in: *Société des sciences, lettres et arts de Bayonne* 129 (1973), pp. 125-141. The most up-to-date biographical profile is to be found in F. BONINI, *Edizione critica della Lectura Thomasina*, pp. IX-XXVII.

7. B. DECKER, *Die Gotteslehre des Jakob von Metz*, pp. 28-29.

Eckhart, an attribution no longer accepted by scholars. Whereas Martin Grabmann asserted that Godin subscribed slavishly to all of Aquinas' teachings, and described the *Lectura Thomasina* as merely "eine getreue und klare Darstellung und Zusammenfassung der thomistischen Theologie,"⁸ later studies have revised this evaluation: today the thesis that the *Lectura Thomasina* simply summarizes Aquinas' writings is, for several reasons, no longer accepted. Above all, the polemical nature of the *Lectura*, which defends Aquinas' thought against the criticisms of Henry of Ghent, Giles of Rome, Richard of Middleton, and William de la Mare, has been pointed out.⁹ As Decker remarks,¹⁰ the *Lectura* is sometimes quoted instead of Aquinas' original writings. This is due to the fact that Godin succeeded in presenting Aquinas' points of view on all the main theological issues and resolving the doctrinal contradictions that emerge in the latter's works, particularly the *Sentences* commentary and the *Summa theologiae*. The *Lectura Thomasina*, in other words, promotes a coherent image of Aquinas' thought, avoiding any inconsistencies between Aquinas' early positions in the *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum* and the doctrinal developments in later works.¹¹

As stated above, the *Lectura Thomasina* is particularly concerned with angelic knowledge. In Book 2, at least seven questions are explicitly dedicated to issues related to how angels cognize:¹²

- d. 3, q. 15: "Utrum angeli intelligant per essentiam";
- d. 4, q. 19: "Utrum casum suum presciverint et quid appetierint";
- d. 4, q. 20: "Utrum intelligant per species innatas vel acquisitas";
- d. 6, q. 23: "Utrum superiores intelligant per species magis universales";

8. M. GRABMANN, "Kardinal Guilelmus Petri de Godino († 1336)," p. 575.

9. See W. GORIS – M. PICKAVÉ, "Die *Lectura Thomasina* des Guilelmus Petri de Godino (ca. 1260-1336)," p. 85; P. PORRO, "Guglielmo di Pietro di Godino," in: *Enciclopedia filosofica*, VII, Foer-Hatt, Milano 2010 (Ediz. spec.), p. 5070; F. BONINI, *Edizione critica della Lectura Thomasina*, pp. IX-XXVII.

10. B. DECKER, *Die Gotteslehre des Jakob von Metz*, pp. 30-31.

11. The *Lectura Thomasina* was not the only work intended to eliminate the contradictions within Thomas' corpus: the collections of *Concordantiae* had the same purpose: see P. GLORIEUX, "Pro et contra Thomam. Un survol de cinquante années," pp. 267-268, 275, 285-286. Instead, the *Articuli in quibus Frater Thomas melius in Summa quam in Scriptis* listed the points of divergence between the *Sentences* commentary and the later *Summa theologiae*: see R.A. GAUTHIER, "Les *Articuli in quibus frater Thomas melius in Summa quam in Scriptis*," in: *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 19 (1952), pp. 271-326.

12. Godin also deals with issues of angelological epistemology elsewhere in the *Lectura* (e.g., III, d. 14, qu. 1): see W. GORIS – M. PICKAVÉ, "Von der Erkenntnis der Engel," pp. 163-177.

- d. 7, q. 30: "Quod propter peccatum [*scil.* daemones] non sunt obtenebrati in cognitione";
- d. 10, q. 38: "Utrum angeli secundum suas species cognoscant futura vel non entia";
- d. 11, q. 40: "Quod unus angelus alium intelligit."

Two others deal with angelic locution:

- d. 11, q. 39: "Utrum distantia localis impediat locutionem unius angeli cum alio";
- d. 11, q. 41: "Que sit locutio unius angeli cum alio."

All these questions are among the longest and most elaborate of Book 2 and must therefore be considered to be particularly significant.

This paper raises a specific – and apparently marginal – issue concerning angelic cognition: *the question of whether local distance represents an impediment to angelic knowledge*. I will focus on q. 20, d. 4 of Book 2: Whether angels know by innate or acquired species ("Utrum intelligant per species innatas vel acquisitas").¹³ This is the context in which Godin deals with the topic of local distance as a possible obstacle to the act of knowledge of spiritual substances. This issue is closely related to other questions regarding angelic cognition: can they know individual things? all natural things? non-existents? future events? Godin develops the argument concerning local distance as an impediment as it relates to all these questions.

Moreover, this topic provides an epistemological framework in which besides the functioning of the angelic mind, Godin and his sources explore the mechanism of human cognition. Indeed, in the Middle Ages angelic knowledge was often used as an explanatory model for understanding human cognitive processes. Standing midway between God and the human soul in the hierarchy of being, angels share features

13. I am grateful to Andrea Colli for letting me use the provisional text of Book 2 of Godin's *Sentences* commentary, which he is currently editing. For the medieval debate on the species theory with regard to angelic cognition, see W. GORIS – M. PICKAVÉ, "Von der Erkenntnis der Engel," pp. 125-153; T. SUAREZ-NANI, "Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique," in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 70 (2003), pp. 233-316; 284-297; A. BOUREAU, "Un débat sur l'inné et l'acquis dans l'intellect des anges. La question disputée 12 de Richard de Mediavilla," in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 77 (2010), pp. 157-191; 161-164; T. SUAREZ-NANI, "L'innato e l'acquisito," pp. 135-194.

with both: like the human souls they understand through species; like God, their knowledge is independent of sensible things. Debates about angelic epistemology thus not only elucidate the modes, acts, and objects of the cognition of spiritual substances, but also provides a conceptual tool with which to clarify the characters of human and divine knowledge and the differences between the two. As has already been pointed out, angelic epistemology often underlies medieval discussions about speculative psychology, theory of knowledge, the philosophy of language, anthropology and theory of time.¹⁴ The explanatory function of angelology is also clear with regard to the subject of this paper, for the question of whether local distance affects angelic cognition sheds fresh light on how sense perception and intellectual knowledge combine in the human mind, giving rise to cognitive acts.

This paper is divided into two main sections: I will first reconstruct the doctrinal background to Godin's analysis by exploring Thomas Aquinas' seminal text and the reactions to it within the *Correctoria* lit-

14. See e.g. T. SUAREZ-NANI, "Conoscenza e tempo: la simultaneità del conoscere angelico in Egidio Romano," in: G. ALLINEY – L. COVA (eds.), *Tempus, aevum aeternitas. La concettualizzazione del tempo nel pensiero tardomedievale*. Atti del colloquio internazionale. Trieste, 4-6 marzo 1999, Firenze 2000, pp. 67-87: 87; EAD., *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome*, Paris 2002; EAD., "Il parlare degli angeli: un segreto di Pulcinella," in: *Micrologus. Natura, Scienze e Società Medievali* 14 (2006), pp. 79-100: 79-80; T.B. NOONE, "Saint Bonaventure and Angelic Natural Knowledge of Singulars: A Source for the Doctrine of Intuitive Cognition?," in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 85,1 (2011), pp. 143-159; ID., *Of Angels and Men. Sketches from High Medieval Epistemology* (The Etienne Gilson Series, 34), Toronto 2011. C. PANACCIO, "Angel's Talk, Mental Language, and the Transparency of the Mind," in: C. MARMO (ed.), *Vestigia, Imagines, Verba. Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts (XIIth-XIVth Century)*, Turnhout 1997, pp. 323-335. According to D. PERLER, "Thought Experiments: The Methodological Function of Angels in Late Medieval Epistemology," in: I. IRIBARREN – M. LENZ (eds.), *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, pp. 143-153: 144: "Medieval discussions about angels often had the status of thought experiments in which basic problems were posed and discussed under idealized conditions. When asking how angels can have cognition or how they are able to communicate with each other, medieval philosophers intended to analyze how cognition and communication work in general." Yet, angels were considered within these thought experiments not as fictitious entities, but "as real creatures that transcend the material world and therefore enable us to examine cognitive activities in its purest and most ideal form." On a critical assessment of the conception of medieval angelological analyses as thought experiments, see B. ROLING, *Locutio angelica. Die Diskussion der Engelsprache als Antizipation einer Sprechakttheorie im Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Leiden-Boston 2008, p. 8. In this context it is important to emphasize Bazán's attempt to expel angels from the philosophical discourse: see B.C. BAZÁN, "On Angels and Human Beings: Did Thomas Aquinas Succeed in Demonstrating the Existence of Angels," in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 77 (2010), pp. 47-85: 80: "since there are no valid philosophical demonstrations of their existence, separate substances should no longer be a subject of philosophical consideration."

erature. The *Lectura Thomasina* is directly indebted to this debate, as we shall see. I will then examine the arguments that Godin adopts in his demonstration that local distance does not affect angelic cognition, and trace them back to their respective sources.

1. THOMAS AQUINAS

Aquinas holds that angels acquire knowledge by three distinct means: through innate species they know creatures;¹⁵ by their own essence they acquire self-knowledge;¹⁶ the Divine Word, or essence, is the supernatural knowledge given with beatific vision.¹⁷ Thanks to a direct infusion from God, they are born with an intellect already equipped with species.¹⁸ These species are, in fact, similitudes of God's essence.¹⁹ Therefore, angelic cognition works differently to that of humans: whereas the human intellect abstracts species from sensory information, the species through which the angelic intellect knows are formal cognitive principles which preexist external objects.²⁰ This account, given in the *Summa* within the section devoted to angelic knowledge (Part 1 questions 54-58), remains substantially unchanged in all Thomas' discussions of the subject.²¹ The question of whether local distance affects angelic cognition must be

15. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theologiae*, Ia, q. 55, a. 2, Cinisello Balsamo 1988, p. 265.

16. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 56, a. 1, sol., p. 267. By their own essence, angels can also have natural knowledge of God, insofar as the image of God is impressed on their own nature: *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 56, a. 3, sol., p. 269: "Quia enim imago Dei est in ipsa natura angeli impressa, per suam essentiam angelus Deum cognoscit, inquantum est similitudo Dei."

17. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 57, a. 5, sol., p. 273: "Est autem alia angelorum cognitio, quae eos beatos facit, qua vident Verbum et res in Verbo."

18. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 55, a. 2, sol., p. 265: "Substantiae vero superiores, idest angeli [...] suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequuntur per intelligibilem effluxum, quo a Deo species rerum cognitarum acceperunt simul cum intellectuali natura."

19. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 57, a. 2, sol., p. 271: "[...] species a Deo inditas [...] inquantum sunt quaedam repraesentationes multiplicatae illius unice et simplicis essentiae"; ad 2, p. 271: "[...] species intellectus angeli, quae sunt quaedam derivatae similitudines a divina essentia [...]."

20. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 55, a. 3, ad 1, p. 266; q. 57, a. 1, ad 3, p. 270.

21. See e.g. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, t. II, II, dist. 3, qu. 3, aa. 1-3, ed. P. MANDONNET, Paris 1929, p. 112: "Deinde quaeritur de cognitione angelorum, et circa hoc quatuor quaeruntur: 1° utrum angelus cognoscat per species; 2° utrum in superioribus sint species magis universales; 3° utrum per species istas, singularium cognitionem habere possint [...];" ID., *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 8 a. 8, cura et studio Fratrum Praedicatorum (Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera omnia, 22,2.1), Roma 1970, pp. 245-248: "Octavo quaeritur utrum angelus res materiales cognoscat per formas aliquas an per essentiam sui cognoscentis"; a. 9, pp. 248-251: "Nono quaeritur utrum formae per quas Angeli cognoscunt res materiales, sint innatae, vel a rebus acceptae."

considered within this context. In particular, Thomas introduces the problem in qu. 55 art. 2, which addresses the issue of whether angels know by acquired or innate species. Thomas' solution is that angelic understanding takes place by means of connatural species ("species per quas Angeli intelligunt, non sunt a rebus acceptae, sed eis connaturales") which angels received, together with their intellectual nature, from God's intelligible infusion ("et ideo suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequuntur per intelligibilem effluxum, quo a Deo species rerum cognitarum acceperunt simul cum intellectuali natura").²²

In the third argument contra, however, Thomas argues for angelic knowledge by sense perception.

Praeterea, species quae sunt in intellectu, indifferenter se habent ad praesens et distans, nisi quatenus a rebus sensibilibus accipiuntur. Si ergo angelus non intelligit per species a rebus acceptas, eius cognitio indifferenter se haberet ad propinqua et distantia: et ita frustra secundum locum moveretur.²³

The intelligible species are not affected by place-related accidents except insofar as they are received from sensible things. Therefore, if angels did not understand by the species received from things, they would have knowledge indifferent to the local position of the things to be known and they would move in vain. The argument is based on the assumption that angelic motion is ordered to collect sensory information. Upon careful scrutiny, one realizes that angelic motion is the very core of this argument: since angels move, their motion cannot be without purpose, but must serve knowledge, which means that angelic knowledge, at least initially, must be by experience and thus conditioned by the local distance of its objects.

Ad tertium dicendum quod cognitio angeli indifferenter se habet ad distans et propinquum secundum locum. Non tamen propter hoc mo-

22. On Thomas' views concerning angelic knowing, see T. SUAREZ-NANI, *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome*, Paris 2002, pp. 17-76; EAD., "Tommaso d'Aquino e l'angelologia: ipotesi sul suo significato storico e la sua rilevanza filosofica," in: *Lecture e interpretazioni di Tommaso d'Aquino oggi*, pp. 11-29: 14-20. By commenting on the article 2 of qu. 55 (pp. 27-32), Suarez-Nani describes the intellectual emanation from God (*per intelligibilem influxum*) as one of the most salient points of Thomas' conception.

23. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 55, a. 2, 3, p. 265.

tus eius localis est frustra: non enim movetur localiter ad cognitionem accipiendam, sed ad operandum aliquid in loco.²⁴

In the reply, Thomas resolutely declares that angelic understanding is not influenced by local distance (“indifferenter [...] ad distans et propinquum”) – this is the logical consequence of his magisterial solution (angels know by connatural species). Nevertheless, he says, angels do not move locally in vain, for the purpose of their motion is not knowledge, but operation in place.

Even though both argument and counter-argument are brief and cannot be compared with the longer, more detailed, treatments of later theologians, Thomas’ analysis contains a few key points which will mark the later debate. First, he specifies that if the species are already actualized (“quae sunt in intellectu”), they are unaffected by local extension. They are, however, affected by local distance only insofar as they are abstracted from sensory data.²⁵ Secondly, by reading both argument and counter-argument one can hardly distinguish between the species of angelic cognition and the ones acquired by the human intellect. Elsewhere, by contrast, Thomas makes it clear that the former are cognitive principles that stem from the divine exemplars in God’s mind and preexist created things, they are thus structurally different from the species obtained by abstraction from experience and caused by extramental realities.²⁶ Ne-

24. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 55, a. 2, ad 3, p. 265. Thomas understands angelic local motion as the succession of different contacts of an angel’s power in different places: see THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 53, a. 1, sol., p. 257: “Quia enim angelus non est in loco nisi secundum contactum virtutis [...] necesse est quod motus angeli in loco nihil aliud sit quam diversi contactus diversorum locorum successive et non simul.” For an account of the debate on angelic motion, see T. SUAREZ-NANI, “De la théologie à la physique: l’ange, le lieu et le mouvement,” in: A. PARAVICINI-BAGLIANI (ed.), *L’Angelos*, (*Micrologus* 23 [2015]), pp. 427-443; R. CROSS, “Angelic Time and Motion: Bonaventure to Duns Scotus,” in: T. HOFFMANN (ed.), *A Companion to Angels*, pp. 117-147.

25. On Aquinas’ species theory, see L. SPRUIT, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge I. Classical Roots and Medieval Discussions*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1994, pp. 156-174.

26. For this difference, see T. SUAREZ-NANI, *Connaissance et langage*, p. 29. H. GORIS, “Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure,” in: T. HOFFMANN (ed.), *A Companion to Angels*, pp. 159-161, adds another difference, pointing out that human abstracted species represent external objects only in their universality, while angelic innate species represent extramental beings in their particular and individual features too. On Thomas’ doctrine of divine ideas, see at least J.F. WIPPEL, *Thomas Aquinas on the Divine Ideas*, Toronto 1993; V. BOLAND, *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Sources and Synthesis*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1996; G.T. DOOLAN, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes*, Washington DC 2008. Unfortunately the fine volume *Divine Ideas in Franciscan Thought (XIIIth-XIVth Century)*, ed. by J.F. FALÀ – I. ZAVATTERO, Roma 2018, came to my attention only when this contribution was already ended.

glecting this difference leads to ambiguity in relation to the nature of angels' species which affects the subsequent development of the debate in the *Correctoria*. Finally, by saying that angels move in order to execute operations in place rather than to acquire sense knowledge, Thomas completely dissociates angelic motion from the question of the impact of local distance on angelic understanding. It is not by chance that both the *Correctoria* and the *Lectura Thomasina* subsequently avoid the issue of angelic motion with regard to the topic under discussion.

The question of whether local distance interferes with angelic knowledge is thus revealed to be a marginal issue for Thomas, addressed within the article of the *Summa* dedicated to angelic knowledge by inborn species. Thomas does not use this issue of angelic epistemology as a key to explaining the processes of human knowing. The attitude of the *Correctoria* is radically different, they accord much more significance to the issue of angelic knowledge of distant things and devote considerably more space to the topic. Furthermore, their analysis of the impact of distance on angelic cognition gives them the opportunity to explore key aspects and problems of knowledge acquisition.

Local distance as an impediment to the act of knowledge of separate substances is also mentioned in a passage of Thomas' *Summa contra Gentiles*.

Item manifestum est in eisdem quod localis distantia cognitionem substantiae separatae impedire non potest. Localis enim distantia per se comparatur ad sensum: non autem ad intellectum, nisi per accidens, inquantum a sensu accipit; nam sensibilia secundum determinatam distantiam movent sensum. Intelligibilia autem actu, secundum quod movent intellectum, non sunt in loco, cum sint a materia corporali separata. Cum igitur substantiae separatae non accipiant intellectivam cognitionem a sensibilibus, in eorum cognitionem distantia localis nihil operatur.²⁷

Since the *Summa contra Gentiles* was not among the sources of the Franciscan William de la Mare's *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, this quotation was not included in his compilation of errors;²⁸ the passage therefore

27. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa contra Gentiles Libri III*, II, 96, n. 9 (Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia, 13), Romae 1918, p. 527.

28. On the presence of the *Summa contra Gentiles* in the *Correctoria*, see M.J.F.M. HOENEN, "The Literary Reception," pp. 43-44.

went unnoticed during the debate on the relationship between local distance and angelic intellection. Godin, too, makes no mention of it in his discussion of the issue.

2. *CORRECTORIUM FRATRIS THOMAE*

William de la Mare's *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, composed between 1277 and 1279, inaugurates the *Correctoria* controversy on Thomas Aquinas' doctrinal heritage.²⁹ Local distance in relation to angelic cognition first becomes a relevant issue in this text by William, and his Dominican opponents, in their subsequent *Correctoria*, pay increasing attention to the topic.

In article 18, William de la Mare criticizes Aquinas' view that the species by which angels know are connatural (*Quod omnes species per quas angeli cognoscunt sunt eis connaturales*). This is the main thesis, quoted from the First Part of the *Summa*, qu. 55, art. 2, solution – “all the species by which angels intellectually understand are connatural, and not received from things”³⁰ –, of a doctrine which includes two other theses, as derived consequences: “angelic cognition is indifferent to whether a thing is locally distant or close,” from the First Part of the *Summa*, qu. 55, art. 2, reply to the third argument, and “angels do not acquire knowledge from things,” from the First Part of the *Summa*, qu. 58, art. 1, solution.³¹ William declares all three theses to be

29. M.D. JORDAN, “The Controversy of the *Correctoria* and the Limits of Metaphysics,” in: *Speculum*, 57 (1982), pp. 292-314: 292-293. The *Correctorium* is edited in *Les premières polémiques Thomistes: I. – Le Correctorium Corruptorii* “Quare”, éd. P. GLORIEUX. On the *Correctorium*, see also R. HISSETTE, “L'implication de Thomas d'Aquin dans les censures Parisiennes de 1277,” in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 64 (1997), pp. 3-31: 6, n. 21. Few years after completing the first version, William substantially revised the *Correctorium*. The second revised and enlarged version, however, neither took into account the rejoinders of the *Correctoria* which had already been written, nor had any impact on the subsequent development of the debate: see M.D. JORDAN, “The Controversy of the *Correctoria*,” p. 295; R. HISSETTE, “Trois articles de la second rédaction du ‘Correctorium’ de Guillaume de la Mare,” in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 51 (1984), pp. 230-241. For a doctrinal profile of William the la Mare, based on an examination of his *Sentences* commentary, see F. CALDERA, “Guglielmo de la Mare tra Bonaventura, Tommaso d'Aquino e Pietro di Tarantasia: dipendenze testuali e originalità del *Commento alle Sentenze*,” in: *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 98 (2005), pp. 465-508.

30. GUILLELMUS DE LA MARE, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, a. 18, p. 79: “omnes species per quas angeli intelligunt sunt eis connaturales, non a rebus acceptae.”

31. *Ibid.*: “cognitio angeli indifferenter se habet ad distans et propinquum secundum locum. [...] angeli non accipiunt cognitionem a rebus.”

false.³² I will now examine his analysis of the second error (concerning the relationship between angelic knowledge and local distance) and then consider the counter-arguments put forward by the *Correctoria* and Godin's *Lectura Thomasina*. The other two theses will only be dealt with as they relate to the question of knowledge and distance.

William's criticism is of fundamental importance because the arguments and concepts that it introduces set the stage for the debate that is then pursued in greater depth in the other *Correctoria* and the *Lectura*.

Item secundus articulus qui dicit quod cognitio angeli indifferenter se habet ad distans et propinquum secundum locum sequitur ex praecedenti. Si enim angeli intelligunt per species connaturales, cum in speciebus connaturalibus non fiat variatio propter distantiam rerum et propinquitatem, sequitur quod non fiat per eas diversa cognitio, sive res sint distantes sive propinquae. Sed contra, *videtur nobis falsum. Manifeste enim experimur* quod non aliter cognoscimus distantia quam simpliciter non entia; et voco distantia, sicut ipse vocat ut existimo, ea quae *extra prospectum nostrum* sunt; si enim aliquid corrumpatur talium in penitus nihil non magis ipsum scimus non esse quam prius, nec aliam habemus notitiam de eius esse vel non esse magis nunc quam prius. Unde manifestum est quod distantia et non existentia eodem modo se habent ad notitiam. Si ergo angeli per species connaturales possunt cognoscere distantia sequitur quod per easdem possunt cognoscere futura et non entia, quod est contra Damascenum qui dicit, libro II, capitulo 3: Futura quidem angeli neque daemones noverunt. Praetera si diabolus praescivisset quod superandus fuisset a Christo et a beato Iob nunquam petivisset tentare eos.³³

According to William, we manifestly perceive (*manifeste enim experimur*) that our knowledge of distant things is not different from that of non-existents. Distant things may be called – and this is a crucial step in William's reasoning – those entities which are “out of our sight” (*extra prospectum nostrum*), for if one of these things perishes, we do not know now more than earlier that it does not exist nor do we have now more than earlier any cognition of its existence or non-existence. Therefore,

32. *Ibid.*: “Primum non credo esse verum licet multi illud dixerunt”; *ibid.*, p. 80: “[...] videtur nobis falsum”; *ibid.* p. 81: “Tertium quod dicit, scilicet quod angeli non accipiunt cognitionem a rebus, quod similiter falsum reputamus [...]”.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81. My italics here and in the other texts quoted.

with regard to knowledge (*ad notitiam*) distant things are equivalent to non-existents. In other words, William implies that things beyond the reach of our sense powers and non-existents are equally (*eodem modo se habent*) unknown to us. At the very end of his argument, William demonstrates the implications of these remarks on human epistemology for angelic knowledge: if angels are able to know distant things by innate species – as Thomas holds –, it follows that they are also able to obtain knowledge of future contingents and non-existents (*possunt cognoscere futura et non entia*), an absurd conclusion, which contradicts Damascene's authority (*angels and demons do not foreknow the future*)³⁴ and the Bible (William is referring to Job and Christ, both unsuccessfully tempted by Satan). Thomas' doctrine is therefore untenable, both on a rational basis, for what does not exist or does not yet exist cannot be known, and because it does not accord with the theological tradition.³⁵ As Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen points out, William's polemical strategy is to describe Thomas' views as conflicting with, on the one hand, Christian faith and the teachings of the Saints, and, on the other, philosophical reasoning.³⁶

34. See IOHANNES DAMASCENUS, *De fide orthodoxa, translatio Burgundionis*, cap. 18, 3 [Migne II, 4, 877], ed. E.M. BUYTAERT (Franciscan Institute Publications. Text serie, 8), St. Bonaventure 1955, p. 76,25.

35. William does not elaborate any further on future contingents, which, as we shall see, will be done by the authors of the other *Correctoria*, especially the *Correctorium* "Quaestione". On future contingents in the late Middle Ages, see at least C. NORMORE, "Future Contingents," in: N. KRETZMANN – A. KENNY – J. PINBORG (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge 1982, pp. 358-381; M.J.F.M. HOENEN, *Marsilius of Inghen. Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1993, esp. pp. 157-193 for the debate between 1250-1330; W.L. CRAIG, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suarez*, Leiden 1988; J. SÖDER, *Kontingenz und Wissen. Die Lehre von den futura contingentia bei Johannes Duns Scotus* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge, 49), Münster 1999; C. SCHABEL, *Theology at Paris, 1316-1345: Peter Auriol and the problem of divine foreknowledge and future contingents*, Aldershot-Burlington-Singapore-Sidney 2000, esp. pp. 17-63 for the late medieval debate and its roots; ID., "Parisian Secular Masters on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents in the Early Fourteenth Century, Part I: John of Pouilly's *Quaestio ordinaria* 1," in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 78 (2011), pp. 161-219; ID., "Parisian Secular Masters on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents in the Early Fourteenth Century, Part II: Thomas Wylton's *Quaestio ordinaria* 'utrum praedestinatus possit damnari,'" in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 78 (2011), pp. 417-479, esp. pp. 418-437 (for a study of the edited texts); S. KNUUTTILA, "Medieval Theories of Futures Contingents," in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, substantive revision Thu Oct 22, 2015 <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medieval-futcont/>; J. BORNHOLDT, *Walter Chatton on Future Contingents. Between Formalism and Ontology*, Leiden-Boston 2017.

36. M.J.F.M. HOENEN, "Being and Thinking in the 'Correctorium fratris Thomae'," p. 420.

William's argument centres on the concept of "out of our sight" (*extra prospectum nostrum*): only when distant things are understood as entities beyond the reach of sense perception can they be equated with non-existents. Clearly, this conception of distant things is only meaningful in relation to human processes of knowledge acquisition, which begin with sense perception. Thomas maintains that angels lack sensory access to things, for they know by innate species and, consequently, can always know distant things. Unsurprisingly, William's critics were to insist – in a way or another – that his reasoning was based on the wrong assumption that the angelic intellect knows by a process of abstraction that does not differ from the human.

3. *CORRECTORIUM CORRUPTORII QUARE*

According to Mark D. Jordan, the *Correctorium* "Quare" was compiled in England "after 1280, perhaps in 1283."³⁷ Its authorship has long been debated, but it is now generally attributed to Richard Knapwell.³⁸

Knapwell vigourosly counters William's critique of Aquinas, expanding on the issue at hand and confirming and amplifying a tendency already evident in William's treatment of the question: with regard to the relationship between local distance and angelic knowledge, Knapwell's analysis focuses more on the general mechanics and problems of intellectual understanding than on specific issues of angelic epistemology.

Ad tertium dicendum quod *nulli habenti intellectum sanum* vertitur in dubium quod propinquitas localis ad actum cognitionis intellectivae nullatenus requiritur. *Quando ergo dicunt ipsi quod experiuntur quod non aliter cognoscantur distantia quam omnino non entia, manifestum est omni experto quod mentiuntur. Quod enim non est nullo modo est cognoscibile; quod vero distans est et extra prospectum visus nostri qui in videndo iuvatur propinquitate proportionata sui obiecti et nimia ipsius impeditur distantia, non minus est intelligibile quam prius dummodo eius species intelligibilis quae a situ non dependet, habeatur perfecte ab intellectu; quoniam nec praesentia nec etiam actualis existentia requiritur ad hoc quod res ipsa intelligatur, alioquin*

37. M.D. JORDAN, "The Controversy of the *Correctoria*," p. 293, n. 6.

38. See M.D. JORDAN, "The Controversy of the *Correctoria*," pp. 293-294; F.E. KELLY, "Introduction" to RICHARDUS KNAPWELL, *Quaestio disputata de unitate formae*, ed. F.E. KELLY (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 44), Paris 1982, pp. 18-23.

non intelligeremus cum vellemus, quod est contra Philosophum. Et hoc certe si attendissent, auctoritatem II *de Anima* pro se non adduxissent cum sit manifeste contra eos *sicut patet omni intelligenti*. Si autem ponatur quod aliquid talium omnino annihiletur, quod nec habeat esse in anima nec extra animam ut obiciunt, tunc planum est quod non est amplius intelligibile. Quod vero subdunt: si angeli cognoscunt per species innatas distantia, ergo eadem ratione possunt cognoscere futura per easdem, manifestum est cui-libet quod consequentia non valet. *Quod enim futurum est, nec est nec habet similitudinem; per consequens, nec aliquam speciem in intellectu per quam cognoscatur*; licet autem aliquid sit distans, nihilominus species in intellectu existens est similitudo quidditatis seu entitatis eiusdem, ut patet ex dictis. Unde quod adducunt de Damasceno quod angeli non cognoscunt futura nisi per revelationem, futura dico contingentia, concedendum est.³⁹

The starting point of Knapwell's reasoning is not, as is William's, sense perception, but intellectual cognition: nobody having a sound intellect (*nulli habenti intellectum sanum*), Knapwell maintains, can seriously think that intellection requires its object to be located close by. From this intellectual perspective Knapwell rejects William's proposed empirical identification of distant things with non-existents (*Quando ergo dicunt ipsi quod experiuntur quod non aliter cognoscantur distantia quam omnino non entia, manifestum est omni experto quod mentiuntur [...] sicut patet omni intelligenti*). Whereas what has no being is completely unknowable (*Quod enim non est nullo modo est cognoscibile*), an entity that is out of our sight can be known by the intellect, insofar as the intellect perfectly grasps its intelligible species (*species intelligibilis [...] habeatur perfecte ab intellectu*), which is independent of place.

By pointing out that distant things do not equal non-existents, Knapwell thus draws a sharp distinction between sense perception, which is enhanced or impeded by the nearness or distance of the things to be known, and intellectual knowledge, which is not affected by their location: while a non-existent is per se unknowable, a distant thing can be grasped by the intellect, even though it eludes sense perception.

Knapwell goes on to link the problem of the understanding of distant things with a passage from Aristotle's *De anima* Book 2 (5, 417b24) – which is destined to become a standard reference in this context and

39. *Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"*, ed. P. GLORIEUX in: *Les premières polémiques Thomistes: I. – Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"*, a. 18, pp. 83-84.

will later be cited also by Godin – according to which we cognize intellectually whenever we want (*intelligimus, quando volumus*).⁴⁰ Thanks to the quotation Knapwell makes it clear that angelic understanding of distant things involves the analysis of the process of intellection. For an act of intellection to take place, neither the presence nor the actual existence of the things to be known is required, otherwise it would be impossible for us to cognize intellectually whenever we want. For instance, a winter rose does not have to have actual existence in order to be known by our intellect, provided that the species of the rose which is actually in the intellect is perfectly understood. If a human intellect can understand a winter rose although it does not exist, an angelic intellect is assuredly even more capable of such knowledge.⁴¹ Only if a distant object is completely annihilated, with the result that it has neither mental nor extramental being, will it be a non-existent and therefore unknowable.

Knapwell's primary concern appears to be the accurate description of the act of intellectual cognition. Intellectual knowledge requires the presence in the intellect of the intelligible species that represents the cognized object. This is the basis upon which distant things can be clearly distinguished from non-existents, for the former always have corresponding intelligible species, while the latter are not knowable because they have no intelligible representations in the mind of the knower.

Future contingents have the same epistemological status as non-existents, they neither exist, nor have any similitude (*Quod enim futurum est, nec est nec habet similitudinem*). Accordingly, there is no species in the intellect by which a future event can be known, because the species is the structural and intelligible representation (*similitudo*) either of its

40. The passage was first quoted by William within a larger objection to angelic knowledge through innate species: see GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, a. 18, p. 80: "Item si cognoscerent per species connaturales, tunc non indigerent existentia rerum ad cognoscendum; sed indigent; ergo, etc. Probo maiorem, secundum Philosophum III° de Anima dicentem: Intelligimus cum volumus quia intelligibilia, scilicet species intelligibiles sunt praesentes intellectui: non autem sentimus quando volumus quia sensibilia non semper praesentia sunt sensui; sic patet maior. Minor patet per Augustinum IV super Genesim, capitulo 35: Minor, inquit, notitia vespertina est dicta quam notitia matutina quam sane praecedebant quae fiebant, quia praecedit cognitionem quidquid potest cognosci."

41. *Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"*, a. 18, p. 82: "Istud in intellectu humano, qui longe inferior est per naturam, manifestum est: non enim ad hoc quod intelligat rosam in hieme vel aliam rem quamcumque, existentia eius in actu requiritur sed per speciem actu in intellectu existentem perfecte intelligitur."

quiddity or its existence.⁴² Lastly, Knapwell cites – and accepts – the Damascene authority which states that angels cannot know the future except through revelation. However, while William had taken the quotation as proof that Thomas’ theory was false, Knapwell interprets it differently. If according to Thomas’ theory angels know distant things by innate species, William had argued, and distant things and future contingents are epistemologically identical, the absurd consequence follows that angels know future events, a conclusion which runs counter to both Damascene’s words and several Biblical passages. Knapwell, in contrast, holds that Thomas’ theory is perfectly compatible with the theological view that the future is known only to God and to those who receive a divine revelation.

4. *CORRECTORIUM CORRUPTORII SCIENDUM*

The *Correctorium* “Sciendum” is also believed to have been written in England, possibly in Oxford, around 1283, by Robert Orford.⁴³

Ad hoc quod opponunt contra secundum principale, dicendum quod nos sic non cognoscimus distantia secundum locum, quae scilicet sunt extra prospectum nostrum, sicut nec non entia; *et hoc est quia intelligimus per species abstractas, in qua abstractione sensibilia aliquo modo agunt in animam et anima in sensibilia. Quia ergo operatio ista egreditur a virtute finita, requiritur determinata distantia. Non sic autem intelligit angelus, sed per species innatas quae aequaliter repraesentant rem in quacumque distantia fuerit; et ideo non est simile de angelo et nobis. [...]* Sed, sicut species innata aequaliter repraesentat rem ubicumque sit, ita species abstracta; igitur, sicut distantia non impedit cognitionem per speciem innatam, sic nec per acquisitam. Ad hoc dicendum quod in acquirendo scientiam, distantia localis impedit acquisitam; et hoc est propter hoc quod sensibilia agunt in sensum, et intellectus abstrahit a speciebus sensibilibus; actiones autem sensibilibus non aequaliter se habent ad distans et propinquum; sed *in utendo scientia acquisita* non plus impedit distantia localis in speciebus abstractis quam in innatis, quia ex hoc actu intelligimus quod species in intellectu repraesentat

42. The *species intelligibilis* is not simply a pictorial image, but an instrumental representation of the essence in its features: on this point, see L. SPRUIT, *Species intelligibilis*, pp. 156-160.

43. M.D. JORDAN, “The Controversy of the *Correctoria*,” p. 295.

intelligibile; hoc facit aequaliter species sive res propinqua sit sive distans, sicut imago Herculis aequaliter repraesentat Herculem ubicumque fuerit; et aequaliter intellectus cognoscit solem qui plus distat, sicut lunam quae minus distat, quia species eius aequaliter repraesentatur: similiter imaginatio aequaliter imaginatur hominem propinquum et distantem. Unde ipsa verba solvunt: abstrahere contingit intellectum in acquirendo scientiam.⁴⁴

Sciendum agrees with William's view that human intellect knows neither distant – out of our sight – things nor non-existents. According to *Sciendum*, the abstractive nature of our knowledge, which is based on sense perception, implies the mutual interaction between the sensible things and the soul: since the senses are limited cognitive powers, they can only act until a certain distance. This limitation pertains however only to human understanding, because the angelic intellect knows by innate species, which represent objects in the same way (*aequaliter*) however far they are.

Sciendum's most relevant contribution to the debate is that it shifts the focus to the concept of an intelligible species considered independently of its origin. An abstracted species, like an innate species, can represent an object in the same way regardless of the object's location (*sicut species innata aequaliter repraesentat rem ubicumque sit, ita species abstracta*). This means that knowledge by species acquired from experience – like cognition by innate species – is not impeded by local distance.⁴⁵ In order to clarify this point, which seems to contradict something he says just a few lines before, *Sciendum* makes a subtle distinction between the acquisition (*in acquirendo scientiam*) and the use of science (*in utendo scientia acquisita*). Whereas distance plays an important role in the former, due to the sensible character of perception, once science has been acquired the use of the intelligible species, whether innate or obtained through sense perception, is no longer affected by the location of the object of

44. *Correctorium Corruptorii "Sciendum,"* ed. P. GLORIEUX, in: *Les premières polémiques thomistes: II. Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Sciendum,"* Paris 1956 (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 31), a. 18, p. 89.

45. The fact that whatever its origin – whether nature or experience –, intelligible species always works in the same way is confirmed in a previous passage where, with regard to *De anima* Book 2 (5, 417b24), it is argued that it is also found within the angelic intellect *in absentia rei*, whether angels know through innate species or by means of acquired ones: *Correctorium Corruptorii "Sciendum,"* a. 18, p. 88: "Ad hoc quod dicunt de Philosopho, dicendum quod hoc concludit indifferenter sive ponatur angelus cognoscere per speciem innatam sive abstractam, quia utrobique species intelligibilis praesens est intellectui in absentia rei."

knowledge. At this point, the intelligible species represents the object in the same way – no matter how close or distant that object is.

Interestingly, in another passage of *Sciendum*, which Godin later quotes verbatim, the distinction between the acquisition of science and its use is recast as a distinction between the potency to receive species and the potency to use species. Here, *Sciendum* argues that angels stand midway between the absolute actuality of God and the twofold potentiality of the human souls, which, before learning, have the potency to receive the species, and once the species have been acquired, have the potency to use them. Angels only have the latter kind of potency, for the first was actualized at their creation (*ab initio angeli*), when they were endowed with innate species.⁴⁶

5. *CORRECTORIUM CORRUPTORII CIRCA*

John of Quidort (John of Paris) began to write the *Correctorium Circa* late in 1283 or in 1284, but never completed it; interpolations – based on *Quare* and *Sciendum* – were later introduced, in another hand, but *Circa* still only goes as far as article 60 of the *Quare* numeration.⁴⁷

Quidort advances original arguments in his treatment of the impact of local distance on angelic cognition; he considers some major implications for human understanding and makes explicit references to philosophical sources. Not surprisingly, the *Lectura Thomasina*, as we will see, quotes extensively from Quidort's discussion. Note that no trace of the question of whether local distance affects angelic knowledge is found in the *Reportationes* of Quidort's *Sentences* commentary.⁴⁸

46. *Correctorium Corruptorii "Sciendum,"* a. 18, pp. 86-87: "quanto aliqua creatura est Domino propinquior qui est actus purus, tanto plus participat de actualitate et minus de potentialitate; angeli autem ordine naturae sunt Deo propinquiores quam humanae animae; cum igitur in anima sit duplex potentia in intelligendo, una quae est ante addiscere et invenire, quae est potentia ad recipiendum speciem intelligibilem, alia est potentia ad utendum specie iam habita, in angelo non erit nisi una illarum. Sed non solum prima, quia prima includit secundam; igitur solum secunda. Prima ergo potentia oportet quod ab initio angeli in actum fuerit reducta, hoc non est nisi quia habuit species sibi concreatas."

47. M.D. JORDAN, "The Controversy of the *Correctoria*," pp. 295-296. J.-P. MÜLLER, "Introduction" to: IOHANNES PARISIENSIS (QUIDORT), *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Circa,"* ed. J.-P. MÜLLER, Roma 1941, pp. XXXIV-XXXVII: XXXVI, argues for a slightly earlier dating: 1282-1284.

48. IOHANNES PARISIENSIS (QUIDORT), *Commentaire sur les Sentences. Reportation. Livre II*, éd. par J.-P. MÜLLER, Roma 1964 (Studia Anselmiana, 52), d. 4 q. 4, pp. 76-81: "Utrum intelligant materialia per species abstractas ab ipsis materialibus vel acceptas."

Ad aliud cum dicitur, quod iam non indigeret angelus existentia rerum, dicendum, quod indiget existentia rerum non ut a rebus existentibus accipiat speciem, sicut est in nobis, sed ut res ipsae speciei angelo concreatae assimilentur, facto motu in rebus non in angelico intellectu. Vel dici potest quod *duplex est cognitio de re: Quaedam est simplicis intelligentiae, quae est cognitio quid res est absolute. Alia, qua cognoscitur quia res est*, quae in nobis est per comparisonem intellectus componentis hoc cum illo. In angelo autem non est cognitio per comparisonem, sed cognitio compositionis. *Angelus ergo per solam speciem intelligit de re quid sit per essentiam, etiam de re non existente*, sicut in nobis contingit, quod scimus quid sit rosa vel eclipsis vel cometa, nullo istorum existente, per speciem horum. *Sed hoc quod sciat angelus rem esse, indiget existentia rei*, non autem ut speciem a rebus existentibus accipiat, ut dictum est, sed *ut ipsa res speciei illi assimiletur non solum per essentiam, sed per existentiam actuaalem. Essentiae enim, ut essentia est, accidit esse et non esse, ut probat Avicenna et Algazel in Metaphysicis suis.*⁴⁹

Circa illustrates two modalities of apprehension: the first is a purely intellectual grasp of what a thing is (*quid res est*) absolutely; the second – knowledge that an object is (*quia res est*) – is of another kind, possible to us because our intellect composes quiddity with existence.

The first modality allows the angelic intellect to comprehend the *quid est* of a thing essentially (*per essentiam*) through the sole species regardless of its existence *in re*, just as we happen to know a rose or an eclipse or a comet through their own species, even though they do not actually exist. The ways in which human beings and angels know the *quia est* of something, however, differ. The human intellect needs external reality from which to receive intelligible species. The angelic intellect, already endowed with innate species, needs the existence of a thing not in order to receive a species from it, but in order for the thing to be assimilated to the corresponding innate species in accordance with both its essence and its actual existence. Interestingly, Quidort ends his argument with an appeal to Avicenna's (*Metaphysics*, Book VI ch. 1)⁵⁰ and Algazel's (*Metaphysics*, Part 1, tr. 1, 2, 3)⁵¹ distinction be-

49. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Circa" de Jean de Quidort de Paris*, ed. J.-P. MÜLLER, Roma 1941, a. 18, pp. 97,19-98,34.

50. AVICENNA, *Liber de philosophia prima sive de scientia divina V-X*, VI, 1, ed. S. VAN RIET, Louvain-Leiden 1980, pp. 291-300.

51. ALGAZEL, *Metaphysica*, pars I, tr. 1, 2, 3, ed. J.T. MUCKLE, Toronto 1933, p. 29.

tween essence as essence and existence or non-existence as accidents of the essence; acceptance of this metaphysical essence-existence distinction ultimately guarantees both levels of angelic knowledge – that of the *quid est* and that of the *quia est*.

Quod ipsi calumniantur contra id quod dicit, quod angeli cognitio indifferenter se habet ad distantia secundum locum et praesentia, patet quod valde improbe et irrationabiliter istud infirmare nituntur, quia hoc etiam verum est de intellectu nostro. *Aequaliter enim scit aliquis per speciem leonis vel cometae quidditatem et naturam utriusque, si non sint praesentes, quia similitudo istorum in anima aequaliter repraesentat absentia sicut praesentia [...]* Hoc enim est proprium *sensitivae potentiae exterioris, quod non cognoscit rem nisi praesentem secundum locum, eo quod non cognoscit nisi prout movetur a re ipsa immediate*. Unde dicere quod angelus non cognoscit aequaliter absentia secundum locum sicut praesentia, est favere, *immo necessario ponere cum Apuleio Platonico daemones et angelos animalia esse cum sensibus corporeis*, quorum est moveri a rerum praesentia secundum locum.⁵²

Quidort goes on to address the issue of angelic cognition as it relates to local distance. He dismisses the attempt to deny that the angelic intellect is unaffected by the location of its object as rude and irrational, for even the inferior human intellect is unimpeded by local distance. Even if a lion or a comet are not present, we can know their quiddity through their corresponding species in the same way (*aequaliter*), because the species, as formal representations (*similitudo*) of the objects in the soul, represent these objects in the same way, whether they are close or distant. This is not the case with sense perception: the external sense power only knows nearby objects because, as passive faculty, it requires the impact of the sensibles. Quidort believed that it was absurd to claim that angels did not know close and distant things in the same way, since such a belief would entail adherence to Apuleius' view that angels and demons have natural sensible bodies and are thus affected by things present in place.⁵³ In other words, according to Quidort, William de la Mare's attack on Thomas' theory that angels know by innate species

52. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii* "Circa," a. 18, p. 98,36-49.

53. The reference is to APULEIUS, *De deo Socratis*, 13, ed. C. MORESCHINI, Stuttgart-Leipzig 1991, p. 23,10-11.

and that their intellectual cognition is not subject to local conditions leads to the absurd denial of the incorporeity of spiritual substances.⁵⁴

Quod opponunt, quod non entia simpliciter et distantia secundum locum, illa scilicet, quae sunt extra conspectum nostrum, eodem modo se habent ad notitiam nostram, dicendum quod falsum est omnino. *Unumquodque enim quantum habet de entitate, tantum habet de cognoscibilitate. Nam eodem modo se habet unumquodque ad entitatem et veritatem, ut dicitur III Metaphysicae.* Non entia ergo, quae nec sunt in suis essentiis, nec sunt in suis causis, ut futura contingencia, illa sunt omnino extra genus cognoscibilitatis quia et entitatis, nisi soli Deo, cui determinata sunt ut praesentia. *Sed distantia secundum locum, cum non sic cedant extra genus entitatis et cognoscibilitatis, ideo de ipsis distantibus secundum locum habet angelus cognitionem ad minus quid sunt, etiam forte quia sunt, non obstante distantia, quia imitantur speciem angelo concreatam, quantum essentiam et existentiam, licet localiter distent.* In nobis autem species intelligibilis accepta a rebus propter sui imperfectionem repraesentativa est rei essentiae solum et non rei existentiae. Ideo per ipsam de re absolute cognoscitur quid sit, non quia sit.⁵⁵

Finally, Quidort rejects William's thesis that our knowledge of distant things and non-existents is the same; his rebuttal is based on the contention that everything possesses being (*de entitate*) to the same extent as it possesses knowability (*de cognoscibilitate*). To support his claim, Quidort refers to the principle from *Metaphysics* Book 2 (1, 993b30-31) that everything stands in the same relation to being as to truth. Non-existents, like future contingents, neither exist in their essences nor in their causes, thus they fall outside the genera of both knowability and entity, being only in God as present beings. Distant things, however, fall within the genera of both entity and knowability, and angels can therefore know their *quid est* and possibly (*forte*) their *quia est*, distance notwithstanding. Indeed – in both their essence and their existence – distant objects imitate the innate species in the angelic mind. The human

54. Analogously, in the *De veritate*, Thomas argues that knowledge by abstracted species implies that spiritual substances have natural bodies: see THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 8, a. 9, resp., pp. 249, 133-250, 137: "Unde si angeli intellectus a rebus materialibus formas aliquas acciperet, oporteret habere angelum potentias sensitivas, et ita habere corpus naturaliter sibi unitum."

55. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii* "Circa," a. 18, pp. 98, 50-99, 65.

intellect, in contrast, knows through the intelligible species abstracted from the extramental object. Therefore, human cognition is limited to the *quid est* of distant things, and cannot reach their *quia est*.

Quidort's analysis thus shifts from merely an epistemological perspective to a metaphysical approach. Thomas' theory that angelic intellection occurs through the innate species is based on the distinction between quidditative understanding (*quid est*) and existential comprehension (*quia est*), and this distinction is underpinned by the Avicennian concept of the indifference of essence.

6. CORRECTORIUM CORRUPTORII QUAESTIONE

The *Correctorium* "Quaestione" – attributed to William Macclesfield – is dependent on *Circa*, to which it seems to be chronologically very close, having probably been completed already in 1284.⁵⁶

*Localis enim distantia per se comparatur ad sensum, non autem ad intellectum, nisi per accidens, in quantum a sensu accipit. Et hoc ideo, quia sensibilia secundum determinatam distantiam movent sensum. Intelligibilia autem actu, secundum quod movent intellectum, non sunt in loco, cum sint a conditionibus materialibus separata. Cum igitur substantiae separatae non accipiant cognitionem a sensibilibus, in eorum cognitione distantia localis nihil operatur.*⁵⁷

Insisting on the difference between human and angelic understanding, *Quaestione* maintains that local distance is related to the sense power in itself, and to the intellect only accidentally (*nisi per accidens*), insofar as the intellect obtains its intelligibles from the senses. The sensibles have an impact on a sense power only within a certain range, beyond it they are ineffective and cannot be perceived. This does not happen with the intelligibles when they are actually understood (*intelligibilia [...] actu secundum quod movent intellectum*): indeed, they are not located in place and are free from material conditions. Since separate substances do not know by experience, their knowledge is not affected by local distance.

56. M.D. JORDAN, "The Controversy of the *Correctoria*," p. 296; J.-P. MÜLLER, "Introduction" to: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione."* Texte anonyme du ms. Merton 267, éd. par J.-P. MÜLLER, Roma 1954, pp. xxiii, xxvi.

57. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione."* Texte anonyme du ms. Merton 267, ed. J.-P. MÜLLER, Roma 1954, c. 18, p. 94.

Quaestione succeeds in explaining very clearly that William's mistake is rooted in his confusion of sense perception with intellectual understanding: only the latter is proper to separate substances, for they do not acquire knowledge from sensory data, but know by species impressed directly upon them by God.⁵⁸ Sense knowledge is only possible for beings with natural bodies endowed with sense organs. Like Quidort before him, also *Quaestione* makes an explicit connection between the incorporeity of angels and the theory of their cognition by innate species.⁵⁹

The original contribution of *Quaestione* to the question of local distance and angelic knowledge mainly appears in its careful analysis of the attitude of angels to future contingents and non-existents. *Quaestione* quotes from Thomas' *De veritate*, where it is argued that knowledge can be acquired in two ways.

Similiter et aliquis incipit de novo cognoscere dupliciter: uno modo per hoc <quod> cognoscens accipit de novo formam cogniti, et sic nos de novo cognoscimus quae prius omnino nescivimus; alio modo per hoc quod cognitum de novo pervenit ad formam quae est in cognoscente, et hoc modo angelus cognoscit de novo actualiter existentia quae prius tantum cognovit ut possibilia esse vel ut futura, sicut etiam nos aliter cognoscimus praesentia et aliter absentia. Sic ergo patet quod, species in mente angelica sine aliqua sui immutatione vel variatione potest repraesentare rem, non tantum sub una dispositione, sed etiam sub quacumque, in quantum est imago quaedam et derivata similitudo divinae essentiae quae perfecte omnia repraesentat, ut dictum est.⁶⁰

Either the knower receives the form of the object known for the first time (*de novo*) – this is the pattern of human understanding, which is based on the perception of external things, and this is how we for the first time come to know that which we were previously completely ignorant of –; or the object known for the first time (*de novo*) comes to the form which is already in the knower. The angelic intellect func-

58. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione,"* c. 18, p. 92: "[...] ita angeli per species a Deo sibi inditas cognoscunt perfecte naturas omnium rerum, inquantum illae species sunt repraesentationes quaedam imitantes divinam essentiam."

59. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione,"* c. 18, p. 91: "Cognitio autem sensitiva solum illis convenire potest, quae habent corpus naturaliter unitum. Hoc autem angeli non habent. Impossibile est ergo quod ex rebus sensibilibus cognitionem accipiant."

60. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione,"* c. 18, p. 93. See THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 8, a. 9, ad 3, p. 251, 217-236.

tions in the latter way, for an angel for the first time comes to know those things as having actual existence which it previously knew only as possible or future.⁶¹ The cognitive ability of an angel depends on the representational power of the innate species in its mind. Without change or variation, the innate species can represent a thing whatever its disposition, regardless of its temporal condition. Indeed, the innate species is an image and resemblance drawn from the divine essence, which represents everything perfectly (*Quaestione* here draws heavily upon the First Part of Thomas' *Summa*, q. 57, a. 2, ad 2); angels are thus credited with a certain kind of knowledge of future events. As we shall see, this is not real foreknowledge, which is a prerogative of God.

Quaestione elaborates on the connection between angelic knowledge of future events and Augustine's traditional doctrine of morning and evening knowledge.⁶² There are three sorts of angelic cognition. In the Word (*Verbum*), angels know what has to be done before it is done according to the species bestowed upon them by God: this is *cognitio matutina*. Then, by the same species, an angel cognizes a thing actually existing under a disposition that it previously did not have, with no change occurring in the species: this is *cognitio vespertina*. The third kind of knowledge allows angels to see things in the exemplars in the Word, whether these things are actually present, or future, or possible.⁶³

61. A divergence between the *De veritate* and *Quaestione* is noteworthy on this point. Thomas affirms that angels, for the first time, know as present things *that before were future*: THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 8, a. 9, ad 3, p. 251,229-230: "Et hoc modo angeli de novo cognoscunt praesentia quae prius fuerunt futura." For its part, *Quaestione* insists that those things were *known by angels as future*, also mentioning possible things: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione,"* c. 18, p. 93: "et hoc modo angelus cognoscit de novo actualiter existentia quae prius tantum cognovit ut possibilia esse vel ut futura [...]." The fact that angels have two different levels of knowledge of objects – one when the object is present and the other when it is still to be present – is crucial to the argument of *Quaestione*. Thomas' sentence, leaving the reference to knowledge of future things implicit, seems to *Quaestione* to be inadequate.

62. On the reception of Augustine's theory in Thomas, see B. FAES DE MOTTONI, "Tommaso d'Aquino e la conoscenza mattutina e vespertina degli angeli," in: *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della filosofia medievale* 18 (1992), pp. 169-202.

63. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione,"* c. 18, pp. 93-94: "Sciendum est enim, quod triplex est cognitio in angelis: una, qua per species sibi a Deo influxas prius cognoscant aliqua esse facienda quam facta sint [...] Alia cognitio est, qua per eandem speciem cognoscit rem iam actu existentem sub dispositione quam prius non habuit, nulla facta mutatione vel variatione circa speciem quae est principium cognoscendi, ut dictum est. Tertia cognitio est, qua angeli boni vident res, sive actu existentes, sive futuras, sive fieri possibiles, in rationibus quae sunt in Verbo. [...] Et secundum hanc cognitionem dicit ibi Augustinus, quod angeli cognoverunt res in Verbo a principio conditionis creaturae. Quia videlicet *matutina cognitione* cognoverunt Verbum in natura sua relucere, et per species in eadem natura impressas, quae etiam sunt quaedam similitudines Verbi divini, cognoverunt res fiendas per Verbum, quae

Ad primum ergo quod obiciunt, dicendum quod quicquid isti experti sint, solus Deus eodem modo cognoscit entia et non entia, praesentia et futura, apud quem nulla est transmutatio nec vicissitudo. *Angeli autem etsi cognoscant quaedam quae nondum sunt, tamen aliter cognoscunt ea quando sunt, et aliter quando non sunt*, sicut supra dictum est. Quia tamen actualis existentia non est de essentia rei, *potest essentia alicuius speciei eodem modo cognosci, sive sit actu existens sive non*. Individuum autem quod subsistit in illa specie, quia addit supra rationem speciei materiam signatam, cui impressa est forma speciei, aliter cognoscitur antequam sit, et aliter quando iam actu est. [4] *Aliter enim cognoscitur aliquid ut in se ipso est, et aliter in sua causa*. Eorum etiam quae non sunt nisi in suis causis, differentia quaedam attendenda est: quaedam enim *ex necessitate* ex suis causis proveniunt, et talia *certitudinaliter* praecognosci possunt, sicut solem oriturum cras; quaedam vero eveniunt ut *in pluribus*, et haec *coniecturaliter* solum praesciuntur, sicut medicus praecognoscit sanitatem infirmi; quaedam vero proveniunt ut *in paucioribus, sicut casualia et fortuita*, et talia *solus Deus praenoscit cuius intuitus fertur in cuncta futura sicut in praesentia*, ut supra dictum est. Et sic intelligendum est quod Damascenus dicit, quod nec angelus nec homines noverunt futurum, scilicet contingens, vel futurum ut est in se ipso. Hoc enim soli Deo convenit, ut supra dictum est.⁶⁴

Quaestione argues that the distinction between actually existing things and future or possible events rests on the Avicennian essence-existence distinction. Indeed, any creature can be understood even though it does not actually exist. So it is possible to understand things which do not really exist such as a phoenix or a winter rose.⁶⁵

The distinction between essence and actual existence explains why angelic cognition falls short of the divine knowledge of all of reality. Only God, being changeless, knows existing and non-existing realities, present and future events in the same way (*eodem modo*). Angels cannot

antequam fierent causaliter praeegebant in Verbo. In secunda autem cognitione res cognita est prius secundum naturam in sua propria natura existens quam sit cognita. Et de hac cognitione ibi subiungit, quod *notitiam vespertinam*, quae scilicet est rerum in propria natura [...].” See AUGUSTINUS, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IV, 32, ed. J. ZYCHA (CSEL, 28), Prag-Wien-Leipzig 1894, pp. 129,19-131,22.

64. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii “Quaestione,”* c. 18, pp. 94-95.

65. *Le Correctorium Corruptorii “Quaestione,”* c. 18, p. 93: “[...] in rebus creatis nullius rei essentia est suum esse. Et ideo quaelibet res creata potest intelligi absque hoc, quod actu sit. Sicut possum intelligere phoenicem, quamvis nulla sit, et rosam in hieme, sicut Avicenna dicit.” It must be noted that, as has already been said, the other *Correctoria* also had recourse to the Avicennian essence-existence distinction, and the example of the rose; however in *Quaestione* this concept was reinterpreted in connection with Augustine’s theory of angels’ morning and evening knowledge.

do this. Even though angels know things that do not yet exist, they know them in one way as existing, in another as not existing. This is because, while the essence of a species can be known in the same way whether a thing exists or not, the individual belonging to that species is known in one way before it comes to exist, in another while it actually exists. Similarly, something future is known differently in its causes and in itself. Here, *Quaestione* adopts the pattern devised by Thomas in the First Part of the *Summa theologiae* (q. 57 a. 3).⁶⁶ Knowledge of things in their causes is subdivided into three categories according to the modal intensity of the effects (“necessarily”, “mostly”, and “rarely”). So, effects that necessarily (*ex necessitate*) follow from their causes (a sunrise, for instance) can be known with certainty (*certitudinaliter*); effects which mostly (*in pluribus*) manifest (i.e. the recovery of a patient predicted by a doctor) are only known conjecturally (*coniecturaliter solum praesciuntur*). Neither the human nor the angelic intellect is permitted to grasp the third kind of effects, which occur only rarely (*in paucioribus*), like casual and fortuitous events. Only God foreknows such events, for He intuitively knows all future occurrences as if they were present. Indeed, God’s eternal mode of being means that His knowledge is outside the temporal order. His nature gives Him the prerogative of seeing future events in themselves, namely events which may or may not occur before they actually occur.⁶⁷ Damascene’s statement that neither angels nor men came to know future contingents is based upon such reasoning.⁶⁸

In conclusion, what were, in the previous *Correctoria*, interesting remarks – prompted mainly by Damascene quotation – on the nature of future events and their relationship with non-existents and distant things have now become, in *Quaestione*, a far deeper and more complex reflection on the question of whether and to what extent angels can cognize future contingents.

66. On this text, see T. SUAREZ-NANI, *Connaissance et langage des anges*, pp. 54-58. On angelic knowledge of future contingents, see H. GORIS, “Angelic Knowledge in Aquinas and Bonaventure,” pp. 178-182.

67. THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 14, a. 13, sol., p. 83, holds that future contingents, while remaining indeterminate in relation to their causes, are the object of the infallible knowledge of God, inasmuch as they are subject to His timeless intuition in their presentiality. On Thomas’ views on divine foreknowledge and future contingents, see W.L. CRAIG, “Aquinas on God’s Knowledge of Future Contingents,” in: *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 54 (1990), pp. 33-79.

68. The *Lectura Thomasina* quotes this text verbatim and appropriately within the question entitled “whether angels by their species know future events or non-existents” (*Utrum angeli secundum suas species cognoscant futura vel non entia*): GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 10, q. 38 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, ff. 36rb-va).

7. *LECTURA THOMASINA*

In Book 2 dist. 4 question 20 of the *Lectura Thomasina*⁶⁹ Godin deals with the question of whether local distance impacts on angelic cognition; the question is one of the longest dedicated to angels and, unlike several other questions, which are limited to the presentation of the thesis and a solution, has an articulated structure, containing the main solution and three supporting arguments, four counterarguments, and four replies to the *contra*.

- “Iuxta hoc quaeritur sine argumentis utrum angeli intelligant per species innatas vel acquisitas”
- Solution: “Dicendum quod intelligunt per species innatas”
- Three arguments for the solution: “Quod patet dupliciter (*recte tripliciter*)”
- Consequence concerning the impact of local distance on angelic cognition by species innate: “Ex hoc apparet quod localis distantia non impedit cognitionem substantiae separatae”
- Four objections to the solution: “Modo contra illa arguitur multipliciter”
- Four replies to the objections: “Ad omnia illa dico (...)”

For the most part, Godin borrows his arguments for and against the solution from Aquinas’ *Summa* and the *Correctoria*, so at first sight the question seems to be a mere compilation of quotations. On closer examination, however, the text proves to be an original rearrangement and reinterpretation of the sources quoted.

Godin starts the question by giving the solution without preamble: angels understand through inborn species (*Iuxta hoc quaeritur sine argumentis utrum angeli intelligant per species innatas vel acquisitas. Dicendum quod intelligunt per species innatas*).⁷⁰

Then, he supports the solution with three arguments. The first, quoted verbatim from *Sciendum*, points to the *ordo rerum*. It is argued that angels owe their cognitive acts to their privileged position within Creation. Within the hierarchy of intellectual beings, they are closer to God – pure act – than to the human mind. Consequently, angels and

69. Rambert de’ Primadizzi’s *Apologeticum veritatis*, the fifth and last *Correctorium*, which was composed between 1286 and 1287, is not taken into consideration here because it only goes as far as article 16 of William’s list, so it does not address the issue at hand.

70. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va).

human minds share the potency to use the species when it is already possessed in act, but angels do not have the potency to receive it.⁷¹

The second argument stems directly from Thomas' *Summa* and is grounded on the principle that going from one extreme to the other is impossible without passing through the middle. The being of the form in the imaginative faculty – form without matter, but not without material conditions – stands midway between the being of the form incorporated in matter and the being of the form in the intellect, abstracted from matter and material conditions. Therefore, the angelic mind cannot give its material forms an intelligible being, unless it first reduces them to the condition of imagined forms. But angels are devoid of an imaginative faculty. As a result, they can only cognize through connatural species, and not through species abstracted from external things.⁷²

71. *Ibid.* (see f. 33va): “Quod patet dupliciter (*recte* tripliciter?), quia quanto aliqua creatura Deo est propinquior, qui est actus purus, tanto plus participat de actualitate et minus de potentia. Angeli autem ordine naturae sunt Deo propinquiores quam animae humanae. Cum igitur in anima humana sit duplex potentia intelligendi: una quae est ante addiscere et invenire, quae est potentia ad recipiendum speciem intelligibilem; alia est potentia ad utendum specie habita. Ideo iam in angelo, qui est actualior tanquam Deo propinquior, non est nisi una potentia tantum. Non potest autem poni prima tantum quae est ad recipiendum, quia illa includit aliam. Qui enim non habet speciem, non potest uti specie; ergo oportet quod solum sit in potentia secunda, scilicet ad utendum specie cum actu habeat species. Et sic non recipiunt species a rebus, sed sunt eis concreatae.” For *Sciendum*, see above, n. 46. The same conception of a universal order underlies several arguments of Thomas' *Summa*. See THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 57, a. 1, sol., pp. 269-270: “Respondeo dicendum quod talis est ordo in rebus, quod superiora in entibus sunt perfectiora inferioribus: et quod in inferioribus continetur deficienter et partialiter et multipliciter, in superioribus continetur eminenter et per quandam totalitatem et simplicitatem. Et ideo in Deo, sicut in summo rerum vertice, omnia supersubstantialiter praeexistunt secundum ipsum suum simplex esse, ut Dionysius dicit, in libro *de Div. Nom.* – Angeli autem inter ceteras creaturas sunt Deo propinquiores et similiores: unde et plura participant ex bonitate divina, et perfectius, ut Dionysius dicit, 4 cap. *Cael. Hier.* Sic igitur omnia materialia in ipsis angelis praeexistunt, simplicius quidem et immaterialius quam in ipsis rebus; multiplicius autem et imperfectius quam in Deo. Omne autem quod est in aliquo, est in eo per modum eius in quo est. Angeli autem secundum suam naturam sunt intellectuales. Et ideo, sicut Deus per suam essentiam materialia cognoscit, ita angeli ea cognoscunt per hoc quod sunt in eis per suas intelligibiles species.” It must be noted, however, that here Aquinas does not emphasize the difference between angelic knowledge and human understanding as much as the concept of essential causality, in particular the principle that the inferior is pre-contained in the superior in a more perfect way. On the concept of hierarchical order, see also THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 55, a. 2, sol., p. 265, the beginning of which is also quoted by *Correctorium Corruptorii “Sciendum”*, a. 18, p. 86: “sicut est ordo in corporibus ita et in spiritibus quia quae a Deo sunt, ordinata sunt sic igitur oportet intelligere distinctionem et ordinem spirituum sicut est ordo et distinctio, etc.”

72. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va): “Secundo hoc idem patet sic, quia non potest deveniri ab extremo ad extremum nisi per medium. Esse autem formae in imaginatione, quod est quid sine materia, non tamen sine condicionibus materiae, medium est inter esse formae in materia, et esse formae in intellectu per abstractionem a materia et a condicionibus materiae. Unde

For the third argument Godin turns again to *Sciendum* in an attempt to demonstrate that abstracted species are useless when it comes to knowing particular things. Since abstracted species are general, they must be applied to particular things. Then, there are two possibilities. Either a particular thing is already known to an angel, in which case the application is superfluous; or the thing to be known is still unknown, and the application thus occurs by chance.⁷³ The conclusion of the reasoning is that in no way can angels know by acquired species; on the contrary, they know by means of inborn species (*ergo angeli nullo modo possunt intelligere per species acquisitas, sed innatas*).

Finally, Godin explains – borrowing from *Sciendum* – why innate species can be said to be natural: they are properly given to the angelic nature and angels therefore know all natural things. He clarifies that it is not because they are caused by natural principles.⁷⁴ Note that, for

quamquam sit potens intellectus angelicus, non posset formas suas reducere ad esse intelligibile, nisi prius reduceret eas ad esse formarum imaginatarum. Istud autem est impossibile, cum careant imaginatione; et ideo non videtur quod angelus possit intelligere per species a rebus abstractas, sed sibi a principio concreatas.” For the quoted text, see THOMAS DE AQUINO, *Summa theol.*, Ia, q. 55, a. 2. ad. 2, p. 265. This text of the *Summa* is also alluded to by *Correctorium Corruptorii* “*Sciendum*,” a. 18, p. 87. William de la Mare includes this position of Thomas as an error in his list: see GUILLELMUS LAMARENSIS, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, a. 19, p. 85: “Quod intellectus non potest ducere ad esse intelligibile istas formas materiales nisi prius reduceret eas ad esse formarum imaginatarum.”

73. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va): “Tertio arguitur sic. Si angelus cognoscit per speciem abstractam a re, cum omnis actio sit secundum modum formae, quae est principium agendi, et illa species abstracta sit a condicionibus materialibus, non poterit per talem speciem cognoscere nisi communem naturam rerum; igitur particularem non potest cognoscere nisi applicando speciem abstractam ad ipsum particulare. Aut igitur novit particulare cui applicat aut non. Si novit, ergo non oportet applicare. Et praeterea si per aliud cognosceret quam per speciem abstractam et non nisi per infusam, ergo illa superflua erit. Si vero non novit cui applicat, ergo casualiter applicat. Ergo videtur quod nullo modo possit istam speciem ad particularia applicare et sic nec cognoscere; ergo angeli nullo modo possunt intelligere per species acquisitas sed innatas.” See *Correctorium Corruptorii* “*Sciendum*,” a. 18, p. 87: “Si angelus intelligit per speciem abstractam a re, cum omnis actio sit secundum modum formae quae est principium agendi, et ista species abstrahitur a conditionibus particularibus, non potest per illam speciem cognoscere nisi naturam communem rei, rem particularem non potest cognoscere nisi applicando speciem abstractam ad ipsum singulare. Aut igitur novit cui applicat aut non; si non, ergo casualiter applicat; item non potest ad aliquid alterum applicare, ut videtur, nisi illud alterum sit aliquo modo praecognitum; qui enim novit medium, scilicet applicationem, oportet quod sciat extrema. Si igitur praecognoscit, quaero per quid. Non per speciem illam abstractam; igitur vel per sensum aut per imaginationem, quod falsum est, aut per speciem innatam. Non igitur est ponere abstractum quia superflueret.” The theory criticized stems from Bonaventure: see T.B. NOONE, “Saint Bonaventure and Angelic Natural Knowledge of Singulars,” pp. 153-159.

74. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va): “Sed sciendum quod sicut iustitia originalis dicebatur naturalis, non quia causatur a principio naturae, sed quia cum natura conferebatur ut quoddam donum gratiae naturae humanae divinitus collatum, sic illae species dicuntur naturales, non quia causentur a principiis naturae, sed quia convenienter naturae angelicae conferuntur.

this first section of question 20, Godin's main source is *Sciendum*: apart from the second argument, which is quoted from Part 1 of Thomas' *Summa* and only alluded to by *Sciendum*, the rest of the section is taken from *Sciendum*. The latter, in fact, provides the blueprint for Godin's argument in favour of angelic cognition by innate species.

It is at this point, having made clear that angels know *all* natural things by innate species, that Godin introduces the problem of the impact of local distance on angelic cognition. According to Godin local distance does not constitute an impediment to the cognition of separate substances, but their knowledge of things is unaffected by whether they are distant or close. If angels know by connatural species, it follows that they know things whether they are present or absent since these species do not change, whatever the location of things may be.

Ex hoc apparet quod localis distantia non impedit cognitionem substantiae separatae, sed indifferenter extenditur eius cognitio "ad distans et propinquum secundum locum. Si enim intelligant angeli per species connaturales, cum in speciebus naturalibus non sit variatio per distantiam et propinquitatem rerum, sequitur quod fiat per eas cognitio, sive res sint praesentes sive absentes".⁷⁵

The text, in fact, draws heavily on William de la Mare's presentation of the problem, the only substantial difference between the two texts being that Godin speaks of "present" and "absent" things (*sive res sint praesentes sive absentes*), whereas William uses the terms "distant" and "close" (*sive res distantes sint, sive propinquae*). This divergence seems to prepare the ground for the arguments in which Godin deals with intellectual knowledge and intelligible species. Clearly, Godin takes William's treatment as the true

Per istas igitur species intelligit angelus omnia naturalia." See *Correctorium Corruptorii* "*Sciendum*," a. 18, pp. 87-88: "Sed sciendum quod sicut iustitia originalis dicebatur naturalis, non quia causabatur ex principiis naturae, sed quia erat quoddam donum gratiae naturae humanae collatum, sic istae species dicuntur connaturales, non quia causantur a principiis naturae sed quia communiter naturae angelicae conferuntur. Per istas igitur species intelligit angelus omnia naturalia *non autem supernaturalia*." Apparently, Godin deems the fact that innate species are principles of angelic natural knowledge to be self-evident. He therefore omits the reference to the supernatural realities found at the end of *Sciendum*.

75. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va); see: GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii* "Quaestione," c. 18, p. 90: "Secundus articulus, qui dicit quod *cognitio angeli indifferenter se habet ad distans sicut ad propinquum secundum locum, sequitur ex praecedenti. Si enim angeli intelligunt per species connaturales, cum in speciebus connaturalibus non sit variatio per distantiam vel propinquitatem rerum, sequitur quod non fiat per eas diversa cognitio, sive res distantes sint, sive propinquae*."

origin of the debate on the local distance as it relates to angelic cognition – he does not once mention Thomas in this context.

Having presented these three reasons supporting angelic cognition by innate species, Godin raises four objections, two of which have no direct bearing on the question of local distance. The first, a direct quote from William, shows that the species – in this case both kinds, i.e., innate and acquired species, come under attack – are useless when it comes to knowing singular things, which are changeable and countless.⁷⁶ Godin refutes the objection without difficulty, quoting *Sciendum's*⁷⁷ presentation of Thomas' theory that each species, though unchangeable, represents a singular thing in all its changes and its particular accidents, because it is a resemblance of the idea in the divine mind.⁷⁸ The third counter-argument reveals the contradiction implicit

76. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va): "Contra primum arguitur primo: Video quod ipsa singularia sunt mutabilia et variabilia omnia. Modo quaero, an angelus habeat tot species unius rei quot modis ipsa variatur, aut tantum unam. Si primo modo, ergo habebit infinitas, quod est inconveniens. Si autem unam tantum habebit, aut variabilem et mutabilem secundum variationem rei aut immutabilem et invariabilem. Si immutabilem et invariabilem, numquam per talem speciem cognoscit rem perfecte, nisi quando est in illa una dispositione ipsa res quam representat illa una species, et ita plura ignorabit de illa re quam cognoscat, cum ipsa res sit diversimode mutabilis. Si vero habet speciem mutabilem secundum mutationem rerum, eadem ratio erit de mutatione cuiuslibet rei alterius. Ergo infinitae mutationes erunt in angelis continue, vel ad minus tot erunt in eis mutationes quot sunt mutationes et motus in mundo"; see GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Le Correctorium corruptorii "Quaestione"*, c. 18, p. 90: "Primum multi et magni dixerunt, non tamen credo quod sit verum, quia video quod singularia omnia variabilia sunt et mutabilia. Modo quaero, an angelus habeat tot species unius rei quot modis ipsa res variatur, aut tantum unam. Si primo modo, ergo infinitas. Si habet tantum unam, aut variabilem et mutabilem secundum variationem rei, aut invariabilem. Si invariabilem, numquam perfecte cognosceret rem per illam speciem, nisi quando res est in illa unica dispositione quam repraesentat illa species, et ita necessario plus incomparabiliter ignorabit de qualibet re quam cognoscit, quod est inconveniens. Si vero habet speciem mutabilem secundum mutationem rei, eadem ratio erit de specie cuiuslibet alterius rei. Ergo infinitae mutationes erunt in angelis continue, vel ad minus tot mutationibus et motibus subiacebunt continue, quot sunt motus et mutationes in mundo."

77. *Correctorium Corruptorii "Sciendum"*, a. 18, p.88: "[...] angelus per suam speciem invariabilem cognoscit omnem varietatem singularis quia cognoscit per eam non solum singulare in sua substantia sed etiam secundum omnia accidentia eius; et ideo cognoscit cuicumque accidenti subsit singulare variatum. Sed hoc habet species ex hoc quod est participata similitudo ideae in mente divina, quae totum quod est in creatura repraesentat." Here, *Sciendum*, followed by Godin, rephrases *Summa theol.* Ia, q. 57, a. 2, where Thomas addresses the question of whether angels know singular things: see above, n. 19.

78. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb): "Ad omnia illa dico, et primo ad primum, quod angelus per unam speciem cognoscit rem in se et quantum ad omnia accidentia sua, ita quod illa species in se invariabilis est representativa omnis variationis cui subiacet singulare. Hoc autem habet ipsa species inquantum est participata similitudo ydae existentis in mente divina."

in the connection between innate species and numbers. Since angels have all innate species of things and the species of numbers are infinite, the angelic intellect must contain infinite species, with the result that angels know *infinita* by these species.⁷⁹ Godin's reply is that even supposing there are infinite species of numbers, angels have only species of natural things. These species are finite, so angels do not need infinite numbers to count them.⁸⁰

The second objection – a compilation of different passages from William's *Correctorium Fratris Thomae* that have already been examined here – states that if angels knew by connatural species, they would also know both non-existents and future events as if they were present, which they do not.

Lect. Thom., II, d. 4, q. 20 (Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va) GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Quaestione"*, a. 18, p. 90

Secundo sic. Si cognosceret per species naturales, Item, *si cognosceret per species connaturales* [...]

GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Correctorium Corruptorii "Quare"*, a. 18, p. 80

tunc aequae posset cognoscere non entia et futura sicut praesentia quod tamen falsum est ideo etc. Si ergo angeli per species connaturales possunt cognoscere distantia sequitur quod per easdem *possunt cognoscere futura et non entia* [...]

79. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33va-b): "Tertio arguitur sic. Si habet omnes species rerum innatas, cum infinitae sint species numerorum, infinitae erunt species in intellectu suo; et sic, cum cognoscat omnia quorum species habet, cognoscat infinita."

80. *Ibid.* (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb): "Ad tertium dico quod, supposito quod species numerorum sint infinitae, non oportet quod habeant infinitas numerorum species, quia tantum habent species rerum naturalium quae sunt finitae ad quas numerandas non requiritur infinitas numerorum."

GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii* “Quaestione”, a. 18, p. 90

Probatio maioris. Dicitur III *De Probatio maioris per Philosophum*, III *anima* quod pro tanto intelligimus *De anima: Intelligimus cum volumus*, cum volumus, quod intelligibilia, sci- *quia intelligibilia, id est species intel-* licet species intelligibilium, sunt pra- *ligibilium sunt praesentes intellectui.* esentes intellectui nostro. Non autem *Non autem sentimus cum volumus*, sentimus cum volumus, quia sensibi- *quia sensibilia non sunt semper praesen-* lia non sunt semper praesentia nobis; *tia sensui.* sed sive res sint sive non sint, semper species sunt praesentes intellectui angeli.

The internal structure of the objection is far from convincing: Godin’s objection is seriously flawed by its overly synthetic form – a summary of William’s reasoning which leaves too much implicit for us to properly understand William’s argument. The text begins with the hypothesis that angels cognize by innate species, but does not mention distant things (*distantia*). Therefore, the connection between cognizing by connatural species and knowing non-existents and future events is not made evident. Most problematically, Godin does not refer to the concept of “out of our sight” (*extra prospectum nostrum*), the bridge – according to William de la Mare – between knowledge by innate species and non-existents, as is clear in the fourth and final objection, which explicitly deals with local distance. Godin is only able to prove the major premise of the reasoning (i.e., angels know by connatural species). He appeals to the well-known quotation from Aristotle’s *De anima*⁸¹ (*intelligimus quando volumus*), which suggests that intelligible species are always present to our intellect – obviously, since the angelic intellect is more perfect than the human one, this must also be true of it. Thus, regardless of the actual existence of extramental objects, angels always have species of these objects in their intellect and consequently know by innate species and not by sense experience.

The fourth objection is also a reworking of William’s argument on local distance, with a syllogistic structure.

81. ARISTOTELES LATINUS, *De anima*, II, 5, 417b24.

*Contra hoc quod dicitur quod angeli possunt cognoscere aequaliter distantia et propinqua, arguitur sic. "Quia ad notitiam eodem modo se habent distantia et non entia" "et vocantur distantia quae sunt extra conspectum nostrum";⁸² sed constat quod non entia non possumus cognoscere per species innatas; ergo nec distantia. Probatio maioris. Quia "si aliquod distans a nobis omnino corrumpitur, non magis scimus ipsum non esse nunc quam prius,"⁸³ quando fuit non ens. Ergo *distantia et non entia aequaliter se habent ad cognitionem.*⁸⁴*

The major premise is that, with regard to their knowability, distant things, which are out of our sight, are tantamount to non-existents; however, – this is the minor premise – we cannot know non-existents by innate species. Consequently, we cannot even cognize distant things. The major premise is based on the assumption that if something which is distant ceases to exist, we are now no more aware of its actual non-existence than we were earlier. It is worth observing that Godin disarticulates William's criticism of Thomas' theory that local distance does not interfere with angelic cognition; he deals separately (in the second and fourth objections and the replies to them) firstly with future things, and then with distant things.

In the reply to the second objection, Godin first gives the right interpretation of Aristotle's passage, which must not be misunderstood to be a key argument in a reasoning that leads to the possibility of knowing non-existents and future events. Rather, "we understand whenever we want" refers to those things which we know to have existed at some time, whether or not they now exist, and whether they are known through abstracted or impressed upon species.⁸⁵ Implying the unknowability of non-existents and future events, this argument lays

82. GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Circa"*, a. 17 (18), p. 91,31-33: "Quia non entia simpliciter et distantia, illa scilicet quae sunt extra conspectum nostrum eodem modo se habent ad notitiam nostram."

83. GUILLELMUS DE LA MARA, *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, in: *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Circa"*, a. 17 (18), p. 91,33-34: "Si enim aliquod distantium a nobis corrumpitur, non magis scimus ipsum esse quam prius."

84. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb).

85. *Ibid.* (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb): "Ad secundum dicendum quod maior patet esse falsa et quando dicitur de Philosopho quod 'intelligimus, cum volumus', etc., dicendum quod Philosophus intelligit de illis, quae per species iam intelleximus quae fuerunt aliquando entia, et tunc intelligimus cum volumus, sive sint res existentes sive non, sive per species abstractas sive infusas."

the ground for the reply to the fourth objection, in which Godin makes a radical distinction between the ontological status of non-existents from that of distant things.

In the second part of the reply – an abridged version of a passage from Quidort's *Circa* that has already been examined – Godin's intention is to clarify the peculiarity of angelic understanding. Whereas human knowing is based on abstraction from sensory representations and intelligible species in human mind always presuppose sense perception, the species employed in angelic understanding do not originate from extramental things and so do not necessarily imply the existence of things. This means that, whether or not a thing is actually existent, angels only acquire knowledge of its quiddity through their innate species; their knowledge of the existence (*quia est*) of things only occurs when the thing to be known assimilates itself to the species in the angelic intellect not only according to its essence, but also to its actual existence.⁸⁶

The unknowability of non-existents is rehearsed in the reply to the last and fourth objection, where Godin makes his final remarks on the angelic cognition of distant things. He asserts that distant things and non-existents (which include future contingents) do not stand in the same relation to knowledge because the knowability and the being (*entitas*) of everything is necessarily correlated. Since this claim is a quotation from a text of *Circa* which we have already examined, there is no need to consider it further here.

Ad quantum dicendum secundum ordinem eundem quod falsum est quod eodem modo se habeant ad cognitionem non entia et distantia. Unumquodque enim tantum habet de cognoscibilitate quantum de entitate. Non entia ergo, quae nec sunt in suis essentiis, nec in suis causis, cum sint futura contingentia, illa sunt omnino extra genus cognoscibilitatis et etiam entitatis, nisi soli Deo, cui determinata sunt sicut praesentia. Sed distantia secundum locum non sic cadunt extra genus entitatis quare

86. *Ibid.* (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb): "Secundo dico quod non est simile de speciebus angeli et intellectus nostri, quia cum illae sint a rebus acceptae existentes in intellectu semper repraesentant et supponunt rem fuisse in phantasmate. Sed species angeli non supponunt rem fuisse, quia ab ea non accipitur; et ideo non semper per ipsam res intelligitur, nisi quando est, quia tunc solum incipit res speciei angeli assimilari, non solum quoad essentiam, sed etiam quoad actualem existentiam facto motu quidem non in intellectu angeli, sed in rebus. Quantum enim ad essentiam cognitionis quid est angelus, aequaliter cognoscit rem non existentem sicut existentem, sicut etiam cognoscimus quid est rosa, non existente rosa in hieme. Sed ad cognoscendum de re, quia est quoad actualem existentiam, requiritur quod actualiter ei assimiletur per hoc quod actu existat."

nec cognoscibilitatis, ideo de ipsis angelus habet cognitionem ad minus quid sunt, et forte quia sunt, non obstante distantia, quia imitantur vel assimilantur speciei angelo concreatae, non solum quoad essentiam, sed etiam quoad existentiam, licet localiter distent. In nobis autem species intelligibilis accepta a rebus quae propter sui imperfectionem repraesentativa est solum rei quoad essentiam non quoad existentiam. Ideo per ipsam solum cognoscimus de re quid sit, non quia sit.⁸⁷

Godin does, however, make an important addition to the *Circa* text when he clarifies that the knowability of distant things and non-existents is only equivalent in the sphere of human understanding. Since the starting point of human knowledge is sense perception, only an already existing thing can have intelligible species and human understanding is therefore subject to physical conditions and influenced by the local position of its objects of knowledge. In sharp contrast, angelic cognition is independent of local restrictions, since the species, preceding the object of knowledge, functions as an a priori cognitive device. Godin's addition, while merely confirming the distinction between angelic cognition and human knowledge made in the previous reply, does also emphasize the peculiar features of human cognitive process.

Ad maiorem dicendum quod maior est vera in nobis, non tamen in angelis. Ratio est, quia non possemus habere speciem intelligibilem, nisi re prius existente. Ideo intelligimus cum volumus propter phantasma quod habemus de re. Sed non est sic de angelo, quia habet speciem antequam sit res quae est principium intelligendi rem.⁸⁸

87. *Ibid.* (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb); see *Le Correctorium Corruptorii "Circa,"* a. 17 (18), pp. 98,50-99,65: "[...] non entia simpliciter et distantia secundum locum, illa scilicet, quae sunt extra conspectum nostrum, eodem modo se habent ad notitiam nostram, dicendum quod falsum est omnino. Unumquodque enim quantum habet de entitate, tantum habet de cognoscibilitate [...] Non entia ergo, quae nec sunt in suis essentiis, nec sunt in suis causis, ut futura contingentia, illa sunt omnino extra genus cognoscibilitatis quia et entitatis, nisi soli Deo, cui determinata sunt ut praesentia. Sed distantia secundum locum, cum non sic cedant extra genus entitatis et cognoscibilitatis, ideo de ipsis distantibus secundum locum habet angelus cognitionem ad minus quid sunt, etiam forte quia sunt, non obstante distantia quia imitantur speciem angelo concreatam quantum ad essentiam et existentiam, licet localiter distent. In nobis autem species intelligibilis accepta a rebus propter sui imperfectionem repraesentativa est rei essentiae solum et non rei existentiae. Ideo per ipsam de re absolute cognoscitur quid sit, sed non quia sit."

88. GUILLELMUS PETRI DE GODINO, *Lectura Thomasina*, II, d. 4, q. 20 (see Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 475, f. 33vb).

CONCLUSION

The scholastics of the late-medieval period were fascinated by the large constellation of topics related to angelic knowledge (whether angels know by innate or abstracted species; whether a superior angel knows by fewer species; whether angels may know singulars, material things, future contingents, hidden things and secrets of the heart; whether spiritual substances are granted natural cognition of God; the nature of morning and evening knowledge; etc.) and devoted considerable energy to their comprehensive examination.⁸⁹

Standing midway between God and human beings, angels owe their peculiar being and their specific operations to this central position within the hierarchy of intellectual realities. Interest in the angelic creatures was thus also prompted by metaphysical concerns, for understanding the structure and dynamism of Creation entails defining the nature of angels. Acts and modes of angelic cognition had to be investigated in relation to the intermediate position of spiritual substances.

Due to their particular ontological status, spiritual creatures also provide an invaluable hermeneutical key to understanding the mechanics of human knowledge. Since angels are pure intelligences devoid of body, their acts of intellection are not influenced by sense perception. In their study of angelic knowledge, the scholastics were thus able to concentrate on the intellectual level of knowledge acquisition. The debate on the question of whether local distance affects angelic knowledge confirms this instrumental approach to angelic epistemology. Indeed, this issue became the pretext for investigating the nature and role of the *species intelligibilis* taken as the formal representation of the quiddity and existence of an object of knowledge, regardless of whether the species was innate or abstracted. Local distance in relation to angelic cognition therefore served as the framework for analysis of the *species intelligibilis* as a cognitive device through which objects become cognitively accessible, whether the intellection was performed by an angelic or a human intellect. Much attention was also paid to a locus from Aristotle's *De anima* 2 (5, 417b24 "intelligimus, quando volumus"). According to

89. It is no surprise that one of the questions disputed by Eckhart while Master in theology in Paris in 1300-1301 – one of the few extant questions from his time in Paris – is devoted to a topic of angelic epistemology: ECKHART, "Utrum intelligere angeli, ut dicit actione, sit suum esse," in: MEISTER ECKHART, *Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke* herausgegeben im Auftrag der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. *Die lateinischen Werke*, Bd. 5, A. ZIMMERMANN – L. STURLESE (hrsg. v.), Stuttgart 2006, pp. 49-54.

this passage, the intellect – not only the angelic intellect, but also the human intellect – is in itself capable – in any given moment – of bringing into act the intelligibles which are potentially at its disposal.⁹⁰

From a historico-philosophical point of view, it is worth noting that it was William de la Mare's *Correctorium Fratris Thomae* that first brought the problem of the relationship between local distance and angelic knowledge to the prominence that provoked the subsequent controversy analyzed in this paper. In Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* – William's source – the issue had only been touched upon, but by including the short argument contained in the *Summa* in his list of doctrinal errors, William made it the subject of specific discussion. The replies in subsequent *Correctoria* gave rise to an authentic debate and their authors – who developed new and sophisticated arguments and increasingly drew upon philosophical sources – turned the relationship between local distance and angelic knowledge into a topic of philosophical significance. Each of the *Correctoria* made an original contribution to the debate: *Quare* insisted on the distinction between sense perception and intellectual cognition; *Sciendum* emphasized the distinction between the acquisition and the use of science; *Circa* illustrated the two modes of knowledge (according to *quia* and *quid est*) and their metaphysical foundation (the essence-existence distinction); *Quaestione* focussed on non-existents and future contingents. As a result, what had been a peripheral argument merely alluded to by Thomas became the centre of a constellation of important epistemological and metaphysical concepts and topics: non-existents, future contingents and divine foreknowledge, angelic knowledge of individuals, intelligible species, indifference of essence, morning and evening knowledge, etc.

It is hardly surprising that when dealing with local distance and angelic cognition, William of Peter Godin turned to the *Correctoria* controversy. William de la Mare's critical account provided him with the topic and his objections to Aquinas' view that angelic understanding is indifferent to the position of its objects. Godin's own position, however, was strongly influenced by Quidort's analysis, with which Godin

90. The controversy on local distance as it relates to angelic cognition enabled medieval authors to adopt and refine notions and arguments which they then went on to adapt to other conceptual and doctrinal contexts. One may safely claim that reflections on angelic knowledge of distant things and non-existents introduces to the discussion on intuition of non-existents: on this debate, see e.g. D. PICHÉ, "L'intuition du non-existant selon Gérard de Bologne et Hervé de Nédellec," in: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 77 (2010), pp. 87-105.

concurr in making a radical distinction between distant things and non-existents on the basis of *Metaphysics* Book 2 (1, 993b30-31). Since all things are related equally to being and to truth, a non-existent cannot be known at all. Godin also asserts that angels, through their innate species, can have cognition of an object's quiddity, whether the object actually exists or not. Angelic cognition of the existence (*quia est*) of a thing, however, only occurs when the thing to be known assimilates itself to the species in the angelic intellect according not only to its essence, but also to its actual existence. Godin, of course, did not merely copy and paste other people's texts. As said above, the passages quoted are rearranged and subject to his own, original, interpretation: small textual changes reveal clever conceptual moves. This analysis of the issue of local distance and angelic cognition confirms the tendency of recent scholarship to abandon the old cliché of the *Lectura Thomasina* as an unoriginal compilation of borrowings from Aquinas. This case, however, allows us to make a step forward. Godin's originality has only ever been measured with regard to his relationship with the work of Thomas. From this perspective, scholars have recently drawn attention to Godin's development of a well-structured strategy of defence of Thomas' views in response to the latter's later opponents (Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome).⁹¹ Godin's contribution to the formation of a coherent and harmonious set of consistent Thomistic teachings has also been emphasized.

I hope this paper will lead to a new appreciation of the relationship between Godin and his direct sources (in particular the *Correctoria* and John of Quidort's *Sentences* commentary) as mediators of Thomas' thought. Future scholarship should – I believe – endeavor to determine the hermeneutical and doctrinal strategy adopted by the *Lectura Thomasina* in his treatments of these texts. Perhaps, more importantly, an attempt should be made to understand whether these sources had an impact – at least implicitly – on the way Godin selected, combined, merged, and interpreted Thomas' texts. To this end, it is hoped that my contribution on the question of whether local distance impedes angelic knowledge may provide a useful example, in that it demonstrates that Godin's understanding of Thomas' views was significantly influenced by the arguments put forward by the *Correctoria* within the polemical atmosphere that preceded the composition of the *Lectura Thomasina*.

91. See above, n. 9.