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## Some considerations on Aquinas's I *Sententiae* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3: *intentio*, *ratio* and their relationship\*

We seek to understand the profound meaning of *ratio* in I *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 since it constitutes a decisive affirmation concerning Aquinas's theological thought and a point of convergence of many philosophical questions.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

*Differentia ratione* is not an ideal difference but something that is between a simple identity and a real difference; in fact different *rationes* are fundamental for comprehending many divine attributes.

Many names refer to the divine essence, thus these are not synonymous; they signify aspects of the one divine nature, giving different prerogatives that, at the same time, by analogy, demonstrate that the divine nature is the cause of multiple features that characterize reality.

Although God is simplex, we use many words to express His nature; it is clear that our mind is limited and we are unable to denote divine simplicity by a single word; only God can say the all by means of His unique Word. From this it follows that a continuous interaction exists between logical and metaphysical perspectives. God says one word only because He is simple: this axiom is fundamental for understanding the coherent project of Aquinas's theology.

Linguistic limits are evident in I *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3, when speaking of the relationship between *ratio* and *definitio*; in fact *ratio* is less accurate than *definitio* although it tends to give the full significance of the object<sup>1</sup>. Accord-

\*Aquinas's works are drawn from [www.corpusthomisticum.org](http://www.corpusthomisticum.org) (26/3/2017), *Scriptum super Sententiis*: *Sent*; *Summa contra Gentiles*: *CG*; *Summa Theologiae*: *ST*; *Quaestiones disputatae*: *de Potentia*: *De Pot*; *Compendium theologiae*: *Comp*.

<sup>1</sup> I *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3: «Quantum ad primum pertinet, sciendum, quod ratio, prout hoc sumitur, nihil aliud est quam id quod apprehendit intellectus de significatione alicuius nominis; et hoc in his quae habent definitionem, est ipsa rei definitio, secundum quod Philosophus dicit (Metaph. 4, text. 11): "Ratio quam significat nomen est definitio." Sed quaedam dicuntur habere rationem sic dictam, quae non definiuntur, sicut quantitas et qualitas et huiusmodi, quae non definiuntur, quia sunt genera generalissima. Et tamen ratio qualitatis est id quod significatur nomine qualitatis; et hoc est illud; et hoc est illud ex quo qualitas habet quod sit qualitas. Unde non refert, utrum illa quae dicuntur habere rationem, habeant vel non habeant definitionem».

ding to the human mind *diversae rationes* are not sufficient for expressing *plenitudinem rei*, especially on the divine essence.

The problem is how to join the reality of many divine attributes and the divine simplicity, without contradiction and even more to affirm that many attributes are not synonymous but rather each of them, has its origin from the divine nature, nor does being synonymous contradicts the others.

According to Ventimiglia the significance of *ratio* is deliberately equivocal<sup>2</sup>, but this situation is necessary for accepting the principle of non-contradiction, underlining the truthful foundation of every divine attribute but even more to justify their difference. Ventimiglia thinks that the idea of distinction among attributes is not justified by Aquinas by affirming only a generic foundation of their existence<sup>3</sup>.

Difference of non-synonymous attributes is thinkable as *diversitas rationum* because *ratio* is the prerogative of the intellect tending to an object for knowing it. From this point of view *ratio* is equivalent to *intentio* as what is towards *res*, but *ratio* is also what our intellect learns of a noun. *Ratio* is *intentio conceptionis* when it includes two aspects: cognitive and metaphysical. *Definitio* underlines a complete knowledge of a thing; while *ratio* is intension about a thing, and then is defined as *intentio*. For this reason: "every definition is a *ratio*; but the *ratio* extends beyond definition"<sup>4</sup>.

Different *rationes* are founded in divine essence and then they are not totally *ex parte hominis* and this is true because *ratio* is *intentio conceptionis*. Particularly about God *ratio* does not coincide with *definitio*, although there is a likeness between God and the human mind and it justifies the use of an analogy.

*Ratio* is an example of second intention<sup>5</sup>, that requires a double mediation of intellect. This fact signifies that it is not immediately formed according to external reality, since *conceptio* is derived by intellect as expressed in *De Pot* q. 8 a. 16.

There are two expressions on *ratio* from which we can understand Aquinas's thought about a correspondence between *ratio* in human mind and *ratio in re*; since *ratio* is caused by human activity, *ratio* is an expression of second intention, but because *ratio* represents the form of a thing,

<sup>2</sup> VENTIMIGLIA, Giovanni: *Differenza e contraddizione. Il problema dell'essere in Tommaso d'Aquino: esse, diversum, contradictio* (= *Metafisica e storia della metafisica* 17). Milano: Vita e Pensiero 1997, 336.

<sup>3</sup> *Differenza e contraddizione*, 334.

<sup>4</sup> KOSSEL, Clifford G.: *Principles of St. Thomas's distinction between the esse and ratio of relation I*, in: MS 24 (1947), 19–36, 32.

<sup>5</sup> SIMONIN, Henri D.: *La notion d' intentio dans l'œuvre de s. Thomas d'Aquin*, in: RS Ph Th 19 (1930), 445–463, 458.

<sup>6</sup> *De Pot* q. 8 a. 1: «conceptio autem intellectus non est nisi in intellectu; et iterum conceptio intellectus ordinatur ad rem intellectam sicut ad finem; propter hoc enim intellectus conceptionem rei in se format ut rem intellectam cognoscat».

not expressed by a definition, it is the best way possible to know reality. For this reason, knowledge of a correspondence between *ratio in re* and *ratio* as product of human activity is the foundation of truth and *conceptio* is a sign of the meaning<sup>7</sup>.

It can be underlined how in a subject there are concepts as signs and that their significations are in external things. Intellect as the subject produces concepts<sup>8</sup> but these are signs of external reality; these significations underline the relational character of knowing.

This principle about the divine nature is important; in fact it is naturally impossible to define the divine nature, but at the same time, the divine nature is the fundamental principle of truth<sup>9</sup>.

#### PARALLEL TEXTS AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPING

Some texts are compared to understand different and common aspects appearing in Aquinas's works on description on *ratio* especially on its relationship with *conceptio* and *intentio*.

Though in most cases *ratio* and *intentio* seem synonyms, also the relationship with *conceptio* is to be considered. Analysis must be further enlarged by thinking of *nomen*.

Starting from what appears to be a resolute passage, we dwell on *De Sententiis* where it is affirmed that *ratio* does not mean *conceptio* but *intentio conceptionis*<sup>10</sup>. Once it is said that *ratio* is in mind and the subject of *ratio* is *intellectus*, at the same time, it is asked which relationship is between external object and *ratio*. Aquinas maintains, by analogy, that it is similar to that between *significatum-signum*. It must be emphasized that *ratio* is strictly closed to name; *ratio* is what is understood on the meaning of *nomen*. *Ratio* represents a passive content having a correspondence with a concept. This judgment does not agree completely with the meaning of *intentio*<sup>11</sup>. In its most generic form *intentio* signifies *tendere ad* excluding

<sup>7</sup> LEE, Sang-Sup: *Wirklichsein und Gedachtsein. Die Theorie vom Sein des Gedachten bei Thomas von Aquin unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Verbum-Lehre*. Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen & Neumann GmbH 2006, 113.

<sup>8</sup> To this respect see *De Pot* q. 8 a. 1 where the global dynamics of *conceptio* is shown as different from other terms.

<sup>9</sup> KLIMA, Gulya: *The semantics principles underlying Saint Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics being*, in: MPT 5 (1996), 87–141, ici 99–103.

<sup>10</sup> 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3: «Nec tamen hoc nomen ratio significat ipsam conceptionem, quia hoc significatur per nomen sapientiae vel per aliud nomen rei; sed significat intentionem huius conceptionis, sicut et hoc nomen definitio, et alia nomina secundae impositionis.»

<sup>11</sup> CHÈNEVERT, Jacques: *Le Verbum dans le Commentaire sur les Sentences de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (II) Sc Ec, 360–390, ici 362–364.



passivity<sup>12</sup>. As it has been seen the fact of thinking of *ratio* as *intentio conceptionis* includes a dynamical perspective of this word.

We can enumerate other affirmations implicitly on *ratio* so as we find in several Aquinas's works, considering the term *conceptio* also where *ratio* does not appear.

For example in 1 CG 35 there is a consideration on the significance of *nomen* and as in this case, it is closer to *conceptio intellectus* than *res intellecta*. From this it is deduced the possibility of a plurality of names, *secundum diversam rationem* about a same thing<sup>13</sup>.

In 1 CG 53 it is observed that *intelligere* signifies to form *intentionem rei intellectae, quae est ratio eius*. By deducing a parallelism between these it is underlined a proportion having as extremes *intentio conceptionis* and *intentio rei intellectae* and as medium *ratio*. In this case *ratio* is seen in a more limited way compared with 1 Sent d. 2. q. 1 a. 3; in fact it refers only to the definition, by identifying *ratio* and *definitio* but it derives from fact that the range of *res intellecta* is more restricted compared to that of *conceptio*, as it is affirmed in 1 CG 35, seen below.

Difference between extremes is included in a different approach of 1 CG 53 and 1 Sent d. 2 q. 1 a. 3. In the first case *ratio* is always considered as *definitio*; in the second, it is said that *ratio* coincides with *definitio* where it exists, but not necessarily. In fact on categories *ratio* always exists but no definition because of their generality<sup>14</sup>. *Ratio* exists where there is an intellectual conception of a thing signifying a similitude of thing itself even if a definition is impossible<sup>15</sup>.

1 Sent d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 is a decisive passage where it is said that *ratio* is beyond *conceptio* since it must be considered as *intentio conceptionis*<sup>16</sup>. In this regard it seems questionable Weidemann's interpretation according to which *conceptio* is more inclusive than *ratio*<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> PINI, Giorgio: *Categories and logic in Duns Scotus. An interpretation of Aristotle's categories in the late thirteenth century* (= Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 77). Leiden: Brill 2002, 30. On this argument see SIMONIN: *La notion d'Intentio dans l'œuvre de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, 447.

<sup>13</sup> 1 CG 35: «Et ita, cum non secundum eandem rationem attribuantur, constat ea non esse synonyma, quamvis rem omnino unam significant: non enim est eadem nominis significatio, cum nomen per prius conceptionem intellectus quam rem intellectam significet.»

<sup>14</sup> MCINERNEY, Ralph: *Aquinas and analogy*. Washington D.C.: CUA Press 1996, 80.

<sup>15</sup> RICHARD, Robert L.: *The problem of an apologetical perspective in the trinitarian theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (= Analecta Gregoriana 131). Rome: Gregorian University Press 1963, 66.

<sup>16</sup> SCHMIDT, Robert W.: *The domain of Logic according to Thomas Aquinas*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martin Nijhoff 1966, 85.

<sup>17</sup> WEIDEMANN, Hermann: *Metaphysik und Sprache. Eine sprachphilosophische Untersuchung zu Thomas von Aquin und Aristoteles*. Freiburg: Verlag Alber 1975, 142.

Rabeau realizes the importance of this statement saying that, by means of *ratio*, Aquinas does state not so much relationship between our *conceptio* and *res* but the purpose of that relationship<sup>18</sup>.

Humbrecht underlines how it is necessary to distinguish between *conceptio* and concept. We can have *conceptio* about God but no concepts; you can say something on divine attributes, but you cannot have appropriate concepts<sup>19</sup>.

On this same theme it is considered 1 *Sent.* d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3 in which other points of views about *ratio* are examined<sup>20</sup>. *Ratio* is *nomen intentionis* that is not in *re* but in *anima*, although there is a correspondence between *anima* and *res*; this prerogative is also described in 1 *Sent.* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 by means of sign-meaning. Properly *ratio*, according to 1 *Sent.* d. 19 q. 5 a. 1, appears to be mediation between mental and real aspects, and this prerogative is proper of its being.

In this context it must be remembered 1 *ST* q. 5 a. 2 which states the interaction between what *intellectus* conceives about *res* and the signification of name as interpretative point of view about *ratio*. There is a prevalence of *ratio* compared to *conceptio* at least as regard *nomen*, although *nomen* itself expresses *conceptio*<sup>21</sup>. It is said that *ratio significata* by means of *nomen* is connected strictly with *conceptio* for the fact that *ratio*, although it is not *res*, is linked to *res*. Turning again to 1 *Sent.* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 we reconsider the words *intentio* and *conceptio* and their relationship; there it is excluded an identification of *ratio* with *conceptio* underlining the role of *intentio*; instead *Comp* l. 1 c. 52 highlights identity of *conceptio intellectus* and *intentio intellecta*<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> RABEAU, Gaston: *Species. Verbum. L'activité intellectuelle élémentaire selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (= Bibliothèque Thomiste 22). Paris: Vrin 1938, 144.

<sup>19</sup> HUMBRECHT, Thierry-Dominique: *Théologie négative et noms divins chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (= Bibliothèque Thomiste 57). Paris: Vrin 2005, 196.

<sup>20</sup> 1 *Sent.* d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3: «Ad tertium dicendum, quod illa responsio bona est. Sciendum est autem, quod ratio sumitur dupliciter: quandoque enim ratio dicitur id quod est in ratiocinante, scilicet ipse actus rationis, vel potentia quae est ratio; quandoque autem ratio est nomen intentionis, sive secundum quod significat definitionem rei, prout ratio est definitio, sive prout ratio dicitur argumentatio.»

<sup>21</sup> 1 *ST* q. 5 a. 2: «Ratio enim significata per nomen, est id quod concipit intellectus de re, et significat illud per vocem, illud ergo est prius secundum rationem, quod prius cadit in conceptione intellectus».

<sup>22</sup> *Comp* l. 1 c. 52: «Est igitur commune in omni intellectu, ut ex dictis patet, quod oportet id quod in intellectu concipitur, ab intelligente quodammodo procedere, inquantum intelligens est, et sua processione ab ipso quodammodo distinguitur, sicut conceptio intellectus quae est intentio intellecta, distinguitur ab intellectu intelligente; et similiter oportet quod affectio amantis, per quam amatum est in amante, procedat a voluntate amantis inquantum est amans».

## ROLE OF NOMEN

In order to understand *ratio* is fundamental to reflect on what *nomen* represents; in fact in 1 *ST* q. 13 a. 4 it is written that *ratio* is a signifying *nomen*, better, is *conceptio intellectus of res significata per nomen*.

This reminds what appears in 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 when it is maintained that *ratio* is what is understood from the significate of *nomen*<sup>23</sup>. Following de Rijk it can be said what *ratio* does not indicate: «neither things as such are referred to by such terms, nor names and phrases as such, but things in as far as they are designated by certain names and phrases»<sup>24</sup>. In 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 the role of *nomen* is more efficacious to define *ratio*. To demonstrate the value of *ratio* different from that of *conceptio* is said also that *ratio* is not *conceptio* but is rather similar to *nomen intentionis* so as in 1 *Sent* 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3<sup>25</sup> consequently intentions are attributed to God, or rather, to His nature. In God there is an essential unity of intentions but also a foundational difference among intentions; in fact in God a foundation of all attributes exists: beauty, wisdom are founded in divine essence and in divine simplicity converge but, at the same time, from a formal point of view, they differ maximally<sup>26</sup>. There are some works in which Aquinas thinks of *conceptio* and *ratio* almost interchangeably<sup>27</sup>: in *De Pot* q. 7 a. 6 they may refer to both *res extra animam* and *res intellecta*. In this work it is underlined a decisive role of intellect reflecting on itself. From this fact, the power of thinking of species and genus derives; these aspects are not immediately perceptible from *res externa* but instead they are proper of *res intellecta*; since they represent second intentions, they are logical intentions because they are mediated by intellect which understands things immediately as *primae intentiones* and successively coincide *secundae intentiones* starting from *primae*.

In 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 it is distinguished between *conceptio* and *ratio* since it is underlined that *ratio* is the meaning of *conceptio*; what in *De Pot*

<sup>23</sup> HORVÁTH, Alexander: *Metaphysik der Relationen*. Graz: Verlag von ULR Mosers Buchhandlung 1914, 45.

<sup>24</sup> DE RIJK, Lambertus M.: *A special use of ratio in 13 and 14 century metaphysics*, in: FATTORI, Marta/BIANCHI, Massimo L. (eds.): *Ratio: VII<sup>o</sup> Colloquio internazionale*, Roma 9–11 Gennaio 1992 (= Lessico intellettuale europeo). Firenze: Leo S. Olschki 1994, 197–218, ici 199.

<sup>25</sup> KREMPEL, Anthon: *La doctrine de la relation chez saint Thomas. Exposé historique et systématique*. Paris: Vrin 1952, 311.

<sup>26</sup> MALET, André: *Personne et amour dans la théologie trinitaire de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (= Bibliothèque Thomiste 32) Paris: Vrin 1956.

<sup>27</sup> *De pot.* q. 7 a. 6: «Ex hoc enim quod intellectus in se ipsum reflectitur, sicut intelligit res existentes extra animam, ita intelligit eas esse intellectas: et sic, sicut est quaedam conceptio intellectus vel ratio, – cui respondet res ipsa quae est extra animam, – ita est quaedam conceptio vel ratio, cui respondet res intellecta secundum quod huiusmodi; sicut rationi hominis vel conceptioni hominis respondet res extra animam; rationi vero vel conceptioni generis aut speciei, respondet solum res intellecta».

q. 7 a. 6 is said explicitly as ability of thought to reflect on itself, in 1 *Sent* it is expressed as difference between *nomen primae impositionis* and *secundae impositionis*. *Ratio* does not include an univocity with *res externa*, but it is rather a conventional sign determined by a complex reflection connected with *nomen*<sup>28</sup>. From this it is deduced that *ratio* is more similar to concept if you think of it as interface between mind and reality<sup>29</sup>.

#### INTENTION AS RELATION

The fact that *ratio* does not coincide with *conceptio* but that it may be expressed as *intentio conceptionis*, affirms clearly to be close to relation existing between *nomen* and meaning<sup>30</sup>. This prerogative underlines that *ratio* is *nomen secundae intentionis* since it is not identified immediately with external *res*. From this point of view it is important the relationship with *nomen* to describe heuristic potentiality of *ratio* respect to *definitio*. Once Aquinas maintains that *ratio* may identify with *definitio* but not necessarily, *ratio* is analyzed as potentiality respecting *definitio* and at the same time as more common aspect of *nomen* and its references<sup>31</sup>. According to these considerations, *intentio* can be thought as relation that goes beyond *res significata* by *nomen* identified with *conceptio*.

Also when *intentio* assumes aspect of specification it has a generalizing virtuality: *intentio generis per se* limiting implies indirectly being *huius generis* as *natura*; *intentio* is what is grasped in a concept<sup>32</sup>; if on a hand it is limited by concept, on the other it is referred to *natura*.

*Ratio* associates a *relatio* to *natura* so as it is conceived by mind by means of a name; from this it is understood that *nomen intentionis* is different from *nomen rei*<sup>33</sup>.

The combination of words *intentio huius conceptionis* in 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 is an only case to explain the relationship between *ratio* and *conceptio*

<sup>28</sup> GELBER, Hester G.: *Logic and trinity: a clash of values in scholastic thought, 1300–1335*. The University of Wisconsin. Ph.D., 1974, 17.

<sup>29</sup> BUSA, Roberto S.J.: *Vocis ratio quae in Thomae Aq. Propriis operibus 36335 vicibus occurrit rationes atque numeros paucis hic conabar absolvere verbis*, in: *Ratio: VII<sup>o</sup> Colloquio internazionale*, Roma 9–11 Gennaio 1992, 173–195, ici 173.

<sup>30</sup> PARK, Seung-Chan: *Die Rezeption der mittelalterlichen Sprachphilosophie in der Theologie des Thomas von Aquin mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Analogie*. Leiden: Brill 1999, 119.

<sup>31</sup> KLIMA, Gulya: *The semantic principles of being underlying saint Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics of being*, in: *MPT* 5 (1996), 87–141, here 99.

<sup>32</sup> SPRUIT, Leen: *Species Intelligibilis. From Perception to knowledge I. Classical roots and medieval discussion* (= Brill's studies in intellectual history 48). Leiden: Brill 1994, 161.

<sup>33</sup> MCINERNEY, Ralph: *The logic of Analogy. An interpretation of St. Thomas*. Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1971, 63.

by means of *intentio*. If Aquinas often uses *intentio* as logical term<sup>34</sup> associated with *genus*, *species*, it is also true that in this passage the word *intentio* originates a different situation.

This context is quite complex since a consideration on names, *ratio*, *intentio* introduces polyadic relations. If on one hand, *conceptio* derives from *intellectus* as subject of understanding, on the other *ratio* is posed in linguistic terms by means of *nomen* to which *intentio* corresponds. According to Pini on intention there is an ambiguity. In fact if in some cases, in Aquinas's works, *intentio* coincides with a concept, in others it seems to be a property<sup>35</sup>; in Lemaigre's opinion *intentio* depends on known *res* more than *res externa* which is only a remote foundation of *intentio* since it is a particular way of seeing things<sup>36</sup>. *Intentio* is a particular way but real way to connect to reality. From this fact *intentio* is considered as partial aspect of reality that is not observable without considering the whole particular; for example it is not thinkable genus of animal in itself without observing animality of a single cat or dog. This condition expresses *intentio* as far as it is a rational prerogative connected with aspects of reality.

This introduces us to think of different divine attributes and their reciprocal interactions. If it is possible to accept that they are partial properties of divine essence, at the same time, it needs to consider how they are connected and identifiable in *re*.

#### PERSONAL DISTINCTION AND RATIONAL DISTINCTION

It is possible to justify rational/real separation in the divine nature: divine attributes are different depending on reason, persons depending on reality. In the quoted article *sed contra* 4 of *Sententiae* the problem is resolved by an example about the Father: The Father is God but divine Nature is not identified with Paternity so a divine attribute is not identifiable with all others<sup>37</sup>. The question is whether these arguments are connected and whe-

<sup>34</sup> TUNINETTI, Luca F.: *Per se notum. Die logische Beschaffenheit des Selbstverständlichen im Denken des Thomas von Aquin*. Leiden: Brill 1966, 149.

<sup>35</sup> PINI, Giorgio: *Categories and logic in Duns Scotus. An interpretation of Aristotle's categories in the late thirteenth century*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> LEMAIGRE, Bernard M.: *Perfection de Dieu et multiplicité des attributs divins*, in: RSPHTh 50 (1966), 218.

<sup>37</sup> 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3, *sed contra* 4: «Praeterea, sicut Deus vere est pater, ita etiam vere est sapiens. Sed ex hoc quod vere Deus est pater, non potest dici quod ratio paternitatis sit in intellectu tantum. Ergo nec ex hoc quod Deus vere est sapiens, potest dici quod ratio sapientiae sit in intellectu tantum. Sed ratio paternitatis, quae realiter in Deo est, non est eadem cum ratione divinitatis. Unde nec paternitate est Deus, nec divinitate est pater: et tamen ista pluralitas rationum non tollit simplicitatem divinam, propter hoc quod essentia et paternitas idem sunt in re. Ergo similiter si ponamus sapientiam et essentiam esse idem re omnino, et rationes eorum diversas, non tolletur simplicitas divinae essentiae. Sed divinae essentiae simplicitas est tota causa quare ista attributa in Deo non differunt. Ergo non est



ther reciprocal inherence is justifiable. It seems that this involves a relationship between *relationes reales et rationis*: to what aim is their interaction justifiable? This fact implies yet another question: how one can differentiate *relationes reales* and *rationis*?

On the one hand, Aquinas gives the example of paternity with the essence but, on the other hand it is observed as a coincidence between essence and relation by means of a *relatio rationis* since essence and relations really coincide, at the same time that a difference among attributes of the divine nature is considered by means of *differentia rationis*<sup>38</sup>.

Many linguistic and ontological levels have to be examined: attributes and their rapport with the divine essence, relationship among attributes, and attributes with extra-mental world.

## STRUCTURE OF ARTICLE

The question is whether the plurality of divine attributes is caused by human intellect or whether it is proper to the divine being. From the simplicity axiom, an important result derives, since in God only two predicaments are possible (substance and relation), then divine attributes are the expression of the divine substance according to different points of view.

Solutions of the question are explained in four steps:

- 1) what is the notion by which divine attributes differ conceptually
- 2) how a notion is said to be or not to be in a thing
- 3) whether these different notions are in God
- 4) whether these notions are only in the intellect.

1) *Ratio* is what does not arrive at *definitio*. There is an interesting relationship between *definitio*, *conceptio*, *ratio*, and *intentio*: language is very complex because all these terms are polysemic and an exegetical examination of the terms must be given. It is important to see how *ratio* is understood: what is conceivable from the noun can be different from the concept, also if it depends on the mind particularly.

2) Problematic between the thing and the thought is founded on knowing: *conceptio* is closer to the thing known than the thing in itself. This relationship is explicated as that of meaning to sign.

inconveniens ponere, quod sapientiae et bonitatis ratio in Deo est, et tamen una non est altera, si res omnino una ponatur».

<sup>38</sup> FERRI, Riccardo: *Il Dio Unitrino nel pensiero di Tommaso d'Aquino dal Commento alla Sentenze al Compendio di teologia* (= Contributi di teologia 60). Roma: Città Nuova 2010, 68.



There are three ways of considering the relationship of *conception* to a thing<sup>39</sup>:

- conceptio* with a direct foundation in a thing
- conceptio* with a mediated foundation, as that of *genus*
- conceptio* without foundation

3) The idea of different foundations of notions in God, according to Aquinas, was expressed by some authors *via remotionis via causalitatis*; by others *via sovraeminentiae*. In either hypothesis conditions exist for affirming the existence of attributes because the value of the noun is more expressive in God, from which everything derives, than in created subjects.

4) Plurality in God exists because God exceeds our intellect but not only because of this; if by hypothesis, however, a man had seen God, the intellect would be forced to describe Him by means of multiple names. This does not signify plurality in God, rather it is necessary to find in the divine nature a unique foundation of multiple notions because these are not synonymous.

#### DIFFERENCE *RE-RATIONE*

What distinguishes the difference *re-ratione* is very complex, especially on divine nature; difference *ratione* has meaning since divine wisdom, for example, is not science; both aspects are identical *re* but different *ratione* according to the divine nature. In human nature science and wisdom are distinct *re* and *ratione*, in the divine case wisdom and science are not distinct *re* because a distinction in *re* would cause a composition including a potential form. To affirm this, it signifies somehow, to say that *distinctio ratione* corresponds to something that is source of distinction since in God there is the foundation of this difference; in fact formal difference among attributes is expressed properly in God. If the difference of attributes was thought only as deductible according to multiple effects, divine attributes would depend on them.

As it appears in the article, a real difference in God is only given by relation; in light of this statement, the meaning of *ratio* must be studied; as it shows in 1 *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3 *ratio* tends to a real thing, not expressing it completely because *ratio* is not *definitio*. *Ratio* really reveals its being as a tendency towards something. At the same time, *ratio* is what is produced by intellect and tries to verify a correspondence to reality. Before there is an action of intellect, but this does not guarantee a correspondence existing with the external world; in fact there are different ways by which

<sup>39</sup> PINI, Giorgio: *Categories and logic in Duns Scotus. An interpretation of Aristotles' categories in late thirteenth century*. Leiden: Brill 2002, 50–54.

foundation and *res intellecta* are related: intellectual action can refer also to no foundation.

Even if we saw immediately divine reality in His unity, we necessarily should use a plurality of notions. Foundation of this plurality is God Himself, because many ways of perfection are expressed in many forms<sup>40</sup>. By comprehending it, it is deduced that *rationes* are more distinct in God than in creation because in the divine nature they are represented formally and perfectly.

If this is true, it is asked how it is possible to harmonize this value of *ratio* with *relatio rationis* and its use in the trinitarian context. It would seem necessary to distinguish in the Trinity two different values of *ratio* according to two different categories: substance and relation. Divine attributes are proper to the substance; in this case we consider their foundation as one but if we want to know their reciprocal difference we need to think of them by means of relations. These relations are not real, otherwise it would negate an unitary value of substance.

*Rationes* of divine attributes are founded ultimately on *relationes*; to know signifies to connect *rationes* elaborated by mind with external things; externally only particular things exist but, for example the concept of *genus* is connected to external things constituting a second intention<sup>41</sup>, thus *ratio* is more inclusive than *definitio* and then it is adequate to refer to the divine; *ratio* is not a pure fruit of our mind but it implicates a relation. In God there are *rationes* corresponding to conceptions of mind, comparable to reality. From this point of view, *ratio* converges with *intentio*, implying a tendency to an external thing.

#### ROLE OF *RATIO* IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

Categories differ according to different *ratio*; nine categories are founded themselves on substance but each has its own *ratio*; relation, instead has as proper *ratio* that to be *ad aliud*; in this way relation differs from the others. *Ratio relationis* is the same for real relations and for those of reason since it does not determine reality or less of relation. While the other categories confirm by means of their *ratio* their being accident, *ratio relationis* is independent from its being real or rational. The fact that we are talking about relation as a category, implies that it may be real, but this affirmation is not sufficient to include as real all conceivable relations. In relation there is an evident distinction between being and *ratio*, a thing that does not take place in other categories. Also if the affirmation in the

<sup>40</sup> GALLUZZO, Gabriele: *Aquinas on mental being*, in: *Quaestiones* 10 (2010), 83–98, 95.

<sup>41</sup> FRIEDMAN, Russell L.: *Intellectual traditions at the Medieval University. The use of philosophical psychology in trinitarian theology among the franciscans and dominicans 1250–1350* (= *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 108) Leiden: Brill 2012, 56.

*Sententiis* underlines how *ratio relationis* always refers to another term respect to a subject, even because this does not guarantee reality, at the same time, a relationship between subject-object is the ordinary way, by means of which we know. Different concepts that we form depend on relations to reality. Different *rationes* are founded on immediate, mediate, or no real foundations<sup>42</sup>.

It is very interesting what Friedman says about ratio: there is an ambiguity of it caused by two perspectives: *ratio* includes a mental intention and the meaning of that intention<sup>43</sup>.

#### DIFFERENT FOUNDATIONS, DIFFERENT RELATIONS

In I *Sent* d. 2 q. 1 a. 3, Aquinas speaks about different foundation of relations: when a foundation is remote in this case as it appears in I *ST* q. 28 a. 1, about *genus* and *species*<sup>44</sup>, they are aspects depending on human way of knowing also and not immediately cognizable (for example difference between first and second intention). It seems that their difference consists precisely in their different type of foundation. About rational relations we can say that they depend on the way of knowing principally, but about real relations, one may ask what influence has our way of knowing since the immediacy of real relations depends, also, on our thought even if in different way. It seems impossible that real relations go beyond our mind and for this reason are real but in this way we understand real things as set in front of us, almost independently on mind.

Aquinas emphasizes the role of the human mind underlining as reality is indicated by a correspondence between human act and extra-mental condition when a convergence between these two aspects takes place.

In the Trinity the foundation of real relations is the essence; in this case the relationship between essence-persons is remote in the sense of considering the essence as the origin of relations and then that rational relations exist between essence and relations. Another approach is when it is thought that relationship among divine persons is real: relative opposition is the cause of real divine distinctions. Unity of nature among divine persons is not determined by belonging to the same species since divine persons are not to be considered as individual examples of the same species or different species of the same *genus*. This fact is impossible because it

<sup>42</sup> About this argument see PINI, Giorgio: *Species, concept, thing: theory of significance of second half of thirteenth century*, in: MPT 8 (1999), 21–52.

<sup>43</sup> FRIEDMAN: *Intellectual traditions*, 53 n. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *ST* q. 28 a. 1: «aliquando vero respectus significatus per ea quae dicuntur ad aliquid, est tantum in ipsa apprehensione rationis conferentis unum alteri, et tunc est relatio rationis tantum; sicut cum comparat ratio hominem animali, ut speciem ad genus».

would cause the existence of some form of potentiality<sup>45</sup> and divine simplicity would be denied.

#### LIMIT OF CONCEPT

Since *ratio* is proper to the human mind, not to a thing, it is asked how there can be a *ratio* in things; Aquinas says that a *ratio* corresponds to a concept of the mind, but it is impossible that a *ratio* should be in a thing, as a proper prerogative<sup>46</sup>; there is a priority of concept on things and this condition is thinkable when we analyze *intentio*. The relationship between *ratio* and *intentio* is very interesting, since *intentio* has a relational structure; for this reason, *ratio* describes properly relational dynamics but this aspect can more or less occur in things. When it occurs this signifies that relation is real, otherwise it is of reason. The problem is how to check this proper aspect of real relation. In principle it is impossible to distinguish rational relations and real relations: in created things fundamental condition for the distinction between rational and real is measure and the observation of this dynamic as the effect of relational reality. Measure and observability are not thinkable in the trinitarian context and this principle is replaced by *actio-passio*<sup>47</sup>. Unlike the principle of quantity that of *actio-passio* must be verified because, in this case, a necessary and sufficient condition does not exist to affirm that a relation is real or of reason<sup>48</sup>.

#### INVERSE RAPPORT BETWEEN APPROPRIATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES

Divine attributes, as seen below, represent a mediate instrument for understanding the divine nature, starting from the human limited mind, this mediation happens by means of *ratio*. Since *ratio* is typical of abstractive capacity, it combines metaphysical and cognitive aspects. As Aquinas affirms, divine nature is the foundation of all positive attributes. This fact can be understood by considering an analogical continuity; in God there is the perfection which we find in something in creatural state. We use attributes for trying to describe the divine essence. Since every attribute underlines a partial prerogative of divine essence, no attribute is able to describe the entire essence, on the other hand, divine attributes tend to describe

<sup>45</sup> BORGIO, Marta: *Universals and the Trinity: Aquinas's commentary on book 1 of Peter Lombard's sentences*, in: DSTradF 18 (2007), 315–342.

<sup>46</sup> KREMPEL, Anthon: *La doctrine de la relation chez saint Thomas. Exposé historique et systématique*. Paris: Vrin, 1952, 312.

<sup>47</sup> *De pot* q. 7 a. 10.

<sup>48</sup> This idea is discussed by some authors: in fact according to these philosophers same foundation of quantity does not induce real relation see for example LISKE, Michael T.: *Kann Gott reale Beziehungen zu den Geschöpfen haben? Logisch-theologische Betrachtungen in Anschluss an Thomas von Aquin*, in: TP 68 (1993), 208–228.

divine essence, but this is simple. By analogy with mathematics, we could say that to express perfect simplicity we have to add terms to infinity.

In God the all is one except relations, as Aquinas affirms. The only categories are relation and substance on which the persons depend but to think of the person it is necessary to take different linguistic and cognitive means. It is impossible to identify essential prerogatives with personal aspects<sup>49</sup> without mediation.

Personal dimension can be said by essential attributes since divine attributes correspond to essence and are founded on it. Discussion about divine attributes confirms how their *rationes* are comprehensible in the light of divine perfection and unity: from these, use of appropriations derives. Since attributes are distinguished *in ratione*, this does not signify that these are not in God; one must say rather that many attributes do not cause multiplicity in God. In God attributes have their formal radix because the divine essence is their perfect unity and their perfect rational distinction; this fact proofs that no possibility exists here of any real distinction among them<sup>50</sup>; rather it can be said as appropriations show an inverse rapport compared to attributes. While attributes refer themselves to the essence and to the divine unity underlining partial features for describing unity, appropriations, starting from partial features of the essence tend to characterize the property of every person<sup>51</sup>.

#### PREROGATIVES OF MIXED RELATIONS AND THEIR STATUTE

Perhaps to understand the difference between real relations and of reason, the mixed relations play an important role: this consequence is seen easily according to *De pot.* q. 7 a. 10. In that context the question about *sciens* and *scibile* is discussed. It is asked particularly how a different degree of reality concerning two poles is possible<sup>52</sup>. Since two different extremes are

<sup>49</sup> EMERY, Gilles: *Essentialisme ou personnalisme dans le traité de Dieu chez saint Thomas d'Aquin?*, in: RT 98 (1998), 5–38.

<sup>50</sup> RICHARD, Robert L.: *The problem of an apologetical perspective in the trinitarian theology of St Thomas Aquinas* (= *Analecta Gregoriana* 131). Rome: Gregorian University Press 1963, 64.

<sup>51</sup> CABARET, Dominique M.: *L'étonnante manifestation des personnes divines: les appropriations trinitaires chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*. Paris: Parole et silence 2015, 535.

<sup>52</sup> *De pot.* q. 7 a. 10: «Quaedam vero sunt ad quae quidem alia ordinantur, et non e converso, quia sunt omnino extrinseca ab illo genere actionum vel virtutum quas consequitur talis ordo; sicut patet quod scientia refertur ad scibile, quia sciens, per actum intelligibilem, ordinem habet ad rem scitam quae est extra animam. Ipsa vero res quae est extra animam, omnino non attingitur a tali actu, cum actus intellectus non sit transiens in exteriorem materiam mutandam; unde et ipsa res quae est extra animam, omnino est extra genus intelligibile. Et propter hoc relatio quae consequitur actum intellectus, non potest esse in ea. Quaedam vero sunt ad quae quidem alia ordinantur, et non e converso, quia sunt omnino extrinseca ab illo genere actionum vel virtutum quas consequitur talis ordo; sicut patet quod scientia refertur ad scibile, quia sciens, per actum intelligibilem, ordinem habet ad rem sci-



posed in relationship, we can ask ourselves why we distinguish mixed relations from that of reason or real. Objectivity of a relation must be united with a different degree of consciousness; a known thing exists, but the knower is aware of being in relation with the known thing; this fact does not happen in the external thing. On the other hand, there is an effective influence of the known thing on the knower but at the same time, the external thing is not influenced by the knower since an external object has not been conscious of this fact. From this implication we say that a real relation is necessarily also compatible with the conscious state determining a subject, where a subject is conscious of himself. This passage shows an effective presence of real aspects connecting two relational poles and how they are defined also by an action of the mind as a reflection of the subject.

#### THE PROBLEM ABOUT *RATIO*, ESPECIALLY ON DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

A relationship between *definitio* and *ratio* is important about divine attributes because they are not definable; in this case the difference between *definitio* et *ratio* can be understood as a necessary distinction between that which shows itself and that which one is able to understand about it<sup>53</sup>. Relationship among attributes is rational because this plurality is intended as that between divine persons and essence. Where a real relation does not exist, and thus the difference depends only on the human mind, the difference is of *ratio*. This does not signify that relation is false, rather than that the relation is not expressed completely, as according to a definition. In this case it is important to consider *conceptio* as an asymmetric term. In respect to the question about *definitio* and *conceptio*, the importance of *ratio* becomes crucial for showing the extra-mental dimension. In this meaning one understands the role of *intentio* by thinking of it as synonymous with *ratio*. In all cases *ratio* is connected to *relatio*, in rational or real relations.

What characterizes *ratio* is fundamental for thought categories and especially in reflecting on their differences. If all the categories are general terms for understanding reality, at the same time what differentiates categories is their particular *ratio*. This signifies and shows how *ratio* interacts with substance, determining the being of accidents.

tam quae est extra animam. Ipsa vero res quae est extra animam, omnino non attingitur a tali actu, cum actus intellectus non sit transiens in exteriorem materiam mutandam; unde et ipsa res quae est extra animam, omnino est extra genus intelligibile. Et propter hoc relatio quae consequitur actum intellectus, non potest esse in ea».

<sup>53</sup> HENNINGER, Mark G.: *Relations. Medieval theories, 1250–1325*. Oxford: Clarendon 1989, 15.



*Ratio* is what makes true every statement; for this reason *ratio* exists in things as in mind also, if in different manner; it does not coincide with the object to be known but it is that by which one can know<sup>54</sup>.

*Ratio*, is identifiable neither with the object, nor with the concept; the concept is the last form of the mind, produced by the abstractive capacity of representing universal reality, starting from individual things. *Ratio* is not limited to a concept but it tends to those things represented by that concept<sup>55</sup>: it is between sign and thing. One must underline how *ratio* depends on the mental act and the external object contemporaneously; *ratio* is connected with the way in which the mind apprehends external things, not with extra-mental thing directly<sup>56</sup>. In *ratio* there is a priority of our way of thinking of, respect to external thing: it is considered as relationship that takes place between significance and sign. For this reason *ratio* is known as second intention, since it does not show what one sees but instead it considers the way in which reality is present to the mind starting from *conceptio*. The important fact is conformity of reality and mind, the way of apprehension of reality, rather than an attention to absolute extra-mental things.

This affirmation does not signify that plurality of divine attributes is the consequence only of human incapacity of comprehending divine nature, but divine nature is the foundation of all attributes. In this aspect it underscores a connection with the state of relation and how the foundation plays a decisive role in both contexts.

#### DYNAMIC OF RELATION

Since a relation is constituted by two fundamental comparisons: one with substance with which, in the case of real relation, it is coincident (this coincidence itself is a relation but of reason) and another in respect to its correlative, and through this aspect one can see relational dynamics. In the case of divine attributes, these do not differ really because they are partial aspects of the one essence with which they coincide. From this point of view, attributes are the same essence, not showing an opposing dynamics. *Rationes* of attributes are plural but the essence is one only, without negation of the divine simplicity.

Divine attributes are not only in human mind, but they are in God, constituting the original form of *rationes*, otherwise they would be false.

<sup>54</sup> KLIMA, Gulya: *Theory of language*, in: *The Oxford Handbook on Aquinas*, ed. by B. Davies, E. Stump. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012, 371–389, here 374–375.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: “imposition of names is finalized to speak about things; when we use concepts we want to think on things (first intention) if we indicate *ratio* (second intention) we represent concepts but the all is ordered to external things”.

<sup>56</sup> LEMAIGRE, Bernard M.: *Perfection de Dieu et multiplicité des attributs divins*, 218.

One may wonder what is the relationship between paternity and divinity and those among the plural attributes that Aquinas examines.

Let us consider paternity and divinity and the relationship among divine attributes: one notion cannot be deduced from the other because paternity and divinity at level of being essence coincide and for this reason simplicity is not negated, if so one considers different divine attributes finding on this point affinity between arguments. What differentiates the relationship among divine attributes from that of paternity-essence is the fact that, although both are *relationes rationis*, by introducing paternity, also its opposite is included (filiation) and then the idea of real relation besides the idea of substance.

Definitively, it looks that the discourse on attributes and their relation among themselves is a long reflection on different levels of relation. When it is considered as substantial dynamics one finds a coincidence in essence of attributes; when instead it is examined as trinitarian opposite dynamics one sees real relations. At the same time there are two comparisons and then two dynamics, every one of which is instructive about divine simplicity.

Attributes are partial aspects of the divine essence but they appear separated one from the other, instead divine real relations have the capacity of including the opposite pole naturally.

#### TO CONCLUDE: NAMES, CONCEPTS, SIGNS

Relationship among these terms is fundamental to understanding the value of every aspect: we use names to denominate things but for the fact that they are denominated they are objects of the act of knowing; then when we denominate things we speak about them as far as we can know; on the other hand we speak about things by means of concepts, also if, by considering concepts we do not want to know concepts but things to which they refer; this fact is more evident when we observe the difference between *definito* and *ratio*<sup>57</sup>.

While *conceptio* is the fruit of *intellectus*, *ratio* includes *intentio*: under this aspect *ratio* mediates between intellect and reality; in fact *ratio* is a relation of which the subject is intellect and other extreme is reality. In this sense it is possible to comprehend dynamics of *ratio* as *mixta relatio*; our aim has been that of observing a general dynamics of ratio as *relatio mixta* as well as it is showed in *De Pot.* q. 7 a. 10<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> MCINERNEY, Ralph: *The logic of analogy. An Interpretation of St Thomas*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1971, 62.

<sup>58</sup> ID.: *Aquinas and analogy*. Washington D.C.: CUA Press 1996, 81; the author underlines a qualitative aspect of ratio as relation.

According to Friedman it is impossible to translate the word *ratio*<sup>59</sup>; perhaps the only way to comprehend its meaning is that indicated by Gelber: she thinks *ratio* that it can be identified *locally*, examining different levels of language: *ratio* about the same *genus*, between *genus* and *species* and so on<sup>60</sup>.

A conclusive observation remains about the state of *ratio*; there is the paradoxical observation in which, although *ratio* is a second intention connected with a noun by which things are denominated, *ratio* is fundamental for knowing. If *conceptio* is the best expression of intellect, *ratio* as *intentio conceptionis* underlines a synthesis between *conceptio* and *res* as form of a second intention.

### *Abstract*

*It is asked what is the dynamics on ratio in I Sent d. 2 q. 1 a. 3. By observing the interaction between intentio and conceptio it is deduced that ratio is close to relatio mixta. In fact, as in relatio mixta two poles exist of different prerogatives, so also in ratio the relation includes a real and rational extreme.*

<sup>59</sup> FRIEDMAN, Russell: *Intellectual traditions*, 53 n. 6.

<sup>60</sup> GELBER, Hester G.: *Logic and Trinity a clash of values in the scholastic thought 1300–1355*. Wisconsin University 1974, 20.