DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY 1250–1350

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a historical and a philosophical study concerning the doctrine of divine providence, as it was understood in Latin academic theology in 13th and 14th centuries. The method of the study is systematic analysis. The aim of the study is to understand the meaning and the doctrinal value of divine providence for some of the most important authors in the era, and analyse philosophical and theological problems that these authors considered important. The dissertation consists of four chapters. In the first chapter, the historical background of the Christian idea of a provident God is traced from Plato and Aristotle and the Hellenistic schools of philosophy to the late ancient Christian authors Augustine and Boethius. Particular attention is paid to the nascent Platonic and Aristotelian traditions of understanding providence. In the second and third chapters, the ideas that a number of medieval authors held on providence are analysed. Some of the most important authors in chapters 2 and 3 include Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, Matthew of Aquasparta, Peter Auriol, Robert Holkot and Thomas Bradwardine. The fourth chapter focuses on a relatively unknown 13th century work Liber de bona fortuna, attributed to Aristotle. Liber de bona fortuna, consisting of Latin translations of chapters found originally in Aristotle’s Ethica Eudemia and Magna Moralia, asks whether good fortune ought to be attributed to nature, intellect or god. A number of medieval authors, including e.g. Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, John Duns Scotus and Peter Auriol, became highly interested in Liber de bona fortuna. They provided original explanations of the phenomenon of good fortune, ranging from Henry of Ghent’s providential model to Giles of Rome’s naturalistic and Peter Auriol’s psychologizing explanations.

This study shows that the central philosophical questions regarding providence, considered important in the ancient era, were inherited and adopted in medieval theology. These questions include most importantly 1. Whether divine providence is reconcilable with freedom of the will and contingency in general; 2. Whether divine providence is concerned with all particular beings, or exclusively with species of beings; and 3. Does divine providence cause its effects immediately or through the mediation of a chain of secondary causes. A special theme regarding the first question is how divine providence may be reconciled with evil and sinful actions committed by rational agents. I argue that two different strategies of treating these questions may be distinguished in the philosophical thought of the 13th and 14th centuries. According to the accidental strategy of reconciling divine providence and evil, evil results accidentally from God’s good providential plan. While evil is not part of divine providence qua evil, it comes under the influence of providence by receiving a just punishment. In contrast, the instrumental strategy of reconciling divine providence and evil treats evil as
an instrument used by God for advancing his good plan for the creation. While evil remains evil considered from the created perspective, considered from the divine perspective it has an instrumental function. It is noted that while some authors display a clear preference for one of these strategies, other authors employ them side by side.
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INTRODUCTION

The three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, agree that God has not only created the world, but is also actively involved in its history. This belief in a provident God has been foundational in Christian belief and worship since its very beginnings. The idea that God has care, concern and a plan for his creation is called divine providence (providentia divina) in Christian theology. Because in traditional theism God is held to be omnipotent, the standard view is that divine providence is all-reaching and infallible. A theologian could, of course, also imagine a creator God who did not concern itself with the created world after the work of creation. This kind of idea remains, however, a minority view in the history of Western theological and philosophical reflection. Instead, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and also some of the pre-Christian Greek philosophical traditions agree that the creator of the world actively cares for his creation. According to Thomas Flint, in systematic theology the doctrine of divine providence can be inferred from the doctrines of God’s omniscience, perfect goodness and omnipotence. Because of his perfect knowledge, God knows all past, present and future events. Being perfectly good, God is willing to direct the creation in accordance with his benevolent will. And finally, because of his omnipotence, God is able to implement and execute his plan for the creation in the smallest detail. As Katherine Sonderegger has pointed out, the doctrine of divine providence is first and foremost a doctrine about God. It does concern the creation too, but only in a relational and external way.

While the Bible is not a philosophical book as such, it contains plenty of material that can act, and has acted, as a starting point for philosophical reflection. This was the case with the topic of providence too. The gospel of Matthew in the New Testament quotes Christ stating that God has care and concern for the smallest beings, including such beings that might seem unworthy from the human perspective. Although the original written context of the saying was not philosophical, the philosophical import of Christ’s words was realized early on. The question of particular providence, whether God (or gods) have providence for particular beings in addition to species of beings, was one of the central questions in the late ancient discussions on the topic of providence.

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1 Flint 2010, 329–330. In the medieval era, Richard of Middleton presented a similar argument in his commentary on the Sentences. See chapter 3.4 in this work.
2 Sonderegger 2009, 144–145.
3 Friedman, for example, discusses the importance of Biblical material for medieval speculation especially on the doctrine of the Trinity. Friedman 2012, 1–12.
4 According to Matthew 10:28–31, not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God’s permission, and the hairs on the heads of human beings are all counted.
providence. The ancient Christian thinkers were drawn towards the position that divine providence extends to particular beings. With the help of Biblical material, they could argue for this conclusion on Scriptural grounds, in addition to devising philosophical arguments to support their view.

Although providence is not explicitly mentioned in ecumenical Christian creeds, the idea of a provident God features centrally in both the New and the Old Testaments. I will next provide a few examples on Biblical themes that will become relevant in the medieval discussions on divine providence. In Isaiah 46:10, for example, Yahweh states that he has had a plan for the world from the beginning and everything will take place in accordance with his will. The idea of God’s historical plan for the salvation of humankind is a central idea in the New Testament corpus and is thoroughly explicated in e.g. Colossians 1:9–23. Another Biblical idea, relevant for my study, is God’s will to save all human beings, I Timothy 2:4. As is well known, Christian theology asserts, however, that not all human beings are actually saved. To avoid the unwelcome conclusion that there would be some fault in God leading to the loss of salvation of some human beings, theologians in mainstream Christianity have agreed that the fault is to be found in humanity instead. Such conviction can be seen in James 1:13–15, where the author of the letter claims that no temptation to evil comes from God, but instead by the evil desires of people themselves.

As earlier scholars have noted, the history of the concept of providence is closely related to the concept of fate both historically and conceptually. From the viewpoint of medieval Christian authors, the most notable late ancient work discussing providence and fate was Boethius’s *Consolatio philosophiae*. In medieval commentaries on the *Sentences*, the authors who presented their views on providence in an independent question typically did so in distinction 39 of the first book, where Lombard discusses divine knowledge and related themes. These authors most often addressed divine providence, fate and their mutual relationship within the same distinction. I will return to the relationship between providence and fate on numerous occasions in the course of this work. At this point, I will offer some general remarks on the topic. In the history of Western philosophy, fate has been understood as a natural system of causes that determines all the past, present and future causes and effects in a given way. Especially Christian thinkers who

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5 The salvation-historical idea that God acts in history is, of course, present in the creeds too. One might also mention the Christian practice of prayer, which implies belief in a provident God.

6 Isaiah 46:10 “declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”


8 Historically speaking, most writers in the ancient philosophical tradition treated the phenomena of providence and fate together in single works. This practice was also adopted in the Middle Ages. Bobzien 1998a, 5.
have accepted the existence of both fate and providence have typically held that the whole order of fate is based on divine choice. Therefore, the main philosophical problem related to both the concepts of fate and providence is the problem of causal determinism. According to causal determinism, all the effects in the universe happen in the way they do because of antecedent causes, without any possibility of happening in any other way. Now, whether fate is understood as an invariable cause of all events or as the whole connection of singular causes and effects, its existence appears to give rise to causal determinism. Something similar can be said of divine providence. If 1. God has predetermined or planned the whole history of the created world and 2. God is an infallible, unchangeable, and omnipotent agent, how could causal determinism be avoided? It should be noted, however, that if one holds that fate is based on free choice from the divine viewpoint, God himself does not come under the determinism imposed by fate. Yet, all the beings and events contained in the order of fate, including human beings, are causally predetermined by divine choice.

In general, the medieval theologians were opposed to causal determinism. Following Augustine, their basic theological intuition was that if all the choices of human beings had been externally coerced, the Christian doctrines of sin, salvation and eternal punishment would not have made sense. The scholastic theologians held that for human beings to be morally responsible for their choices – and according to Christian doctrine they were morally responsible – their choices had to be free in a way that they could have been other than what they were.

The problem of causal determinism arising from the definition of divine providence (and fate) can also be named the problem of reconciling divine providence and contingency. If a being or an event is contingent, the said being or event must be able to be other than what it is. Yet if divine providence infallibly causally necessitates lower beings and events, no room for contingency appears to remain. In addition to the capacity of intellectual creatures to make free choices, most medieval thinkers also saw nature as an independent source of some contingency. In the Aristotelian tradition, it was customary to consider chance events such as the birth of a child with six fingers as contingent outcomes of natural causation. The birth of a child with six fingers was understood as a contingent event that was not entirely reducible to either human free will or any other proper natural cause. The different

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9 For a similar way of presenting the problem of causal determinism with regard to fate and providence, see Thomas Aquinas’s commentary on *Metaphysics* VI, dealt with in chapters 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 of this work.

10 On the other hand, the very concept of providence has for a long time carried the dual meaning of both the order present in the divine mind and the temporal execution of this order. This ambiguity in the definition of providence kept the question of the relationship between providence and fate acute.
strategies used to reconcile the contingency of chance events with divine providence will be another major theme in this study.

In addition to human free will and chance causation in nature, the third special theme concerning the relationship between divine providence and contingency is the reconciliation of divine providence and evil. Broadly speaking, the medieval philosophers understood evil to be the outcome of the sinful choices of rational agents. This too raises conceptual problems if divine providence is understood as an infallible cause of all lower events. Why would a perfectly and essentially good God allow or, let alone, cause evil?

Thus, the first set of problems I will treat in this study is the relationship of divine providence to 1. the free choices of human beings, 2. chance causation in nature and 3. the reconciliation between divine providence and human evil. What these three share in common is that the philosophical problems arise from the relationship between divine providence and contingency. In addition, there are other major philosophical issues related to the doctrine of divine providence. These issues are the question of particular providence and the issue of the causal analysis of providence. I will next briefly introduce these two issues.

A question that became acute in ancient discussions on providence and remained important in the Middle Ages too, is whether divine providence is concerned with individual beings taken as individuals or exclusively with species of beings. To a modern reader this might at first glance seem surprising. Why would a philosopher or a theologian hold the view that God is not concerned with individual beings? In brief, the main philosophical motivation with this view had to do with divine perfection. God was held to be perfect and therefore God’s knowledge had to be perfect too. Knowledge concerning individual beings would have interfered with the essentially perfect nature of divine cognition. The reason for this was that knowing an imperfect thing would have implied having, in some way, an imperfect thought, which would have contradicted divine perfection. While some ancient pagan thinkers had denied the possibility of particular providence, medieval theologians considered particular providence to be a part of the revealed doctrine.

Ancient and medieval authors agreed that divine providence was the cause of all, or at least some, events in the history of the world. Thus, another important task in this study will be to analyse what kind of cause divine providence is considered to be. Aristotle famously distinguished between four types of causes, that is, efficient, final, formal and material causes. Most of the medieval authors in the Latin tradition accepted this foundational Aristotelian division. Yet there was no universal agreement about how providence should have been classified within the Aristotelian causal theory. Many medieval authors understood the causal powers of providence to be a special mixture of final and efficient causality. Another interesting aspect of causal analysis regarding providence has to do with the immediacy of providence. Are all the
effects of providence seen as immediate effects of providence, or does providence work through secondary causes?

This study will offer a historical and systematic look at the doctrine of providence, with particular attention paid to the philosophical arguments that the various authors presented to support their theological views. My aim is to understand the ideas of the historical figures, most of them having lived in the 13th and 14th centuries, in their own context. I do not primarily attempt to provide conceptual tools for contemporary systematic discussions on providence, although shedding light on various well-thought and systematic historical theories may also provide insight for the scholars engaged in the modern discussions.

I have already mentioned the name of Thomas Aquinas. He will certainly be an important figure in the course of this work, but I wish to shed light on a number of other medieval authors as well. It must be noted, however, that several of the 13th- and 14th-century authors chose to omit a discussion of providence altogether. In this respect, providence is a very different topic for a scholar of medieval thought to approach compared to, for example, doctrines of incarnation or the Trinity that were treated by virtually all scholastic thinkers. The medieval authors who discussed providence often discussed it in their commentaries on the first book of the Sentences. Some of them may, however, discuss providence extensively in other works, such as quodlibetal questions (e.g. Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus) or independent tractates (e.g. Giles of Rome and Matthew of Aquasparta). Therefore, a modern student of the doctrine has to look to a variety of sources to discover the most relevant sources. It needs to be said, however, that my aim is not to cover all the scholastic theologians who wrote on the topic of providence, but rather to focus on those who put forward original and relatively new insights concerning the doctrine.

In the first chapter of this work, I will introduce the history of the concept of divine providence before the Middle Ages, beginning with the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. While providence was not a major theme in the works of Plato and Aristotle, in the Hellenistic era, when providence became a fiercely debated topic among the Stoics and the Epicureans, and later followers of Plato and Aristotle started to look for guidelines in the works of their masters. I will pay attention to the development of the doctrine in the Middle Platonist and Neoplatonist schools, which influenced the Medieval Christian tradition through the mediation of the Christian theologians Augustine, Boethius and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Within the Aristotelian tradition, I will focus on Alexander of Aphrodisias, whose ideas were inherited into the scholastic tradition mostly through Arabic authors and translations. I will end the background chapter with an analysis of Augustine’s and Boethius’s views on providence. In addition to the Bible, these two late ancient authors were the most important authorities for scholastic theologians on the topic of divine providence. The focus of my work is in theological and philosophical developments in the medieval academic setting after the
rediscovery of Aristotle. For this reason, I will offer only brief comments on medieval theologians predating this turn.

In the second chapter I will mostly focus on the highly sophisticated theory of providence put forth by Thomas Aquinas. I will pay special attention to his reconciliation of divine providence and creaturely evil. I will propose that Thomas’s thinking on the topic went through some changes in the course of his career. These changes have gone unnoticed in the previous scholarship. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Thomas included detailed discussions of providence in all of his major works. I will mostly focus on Thomas’s early work, commentary on the Sentences, Summa contra gentiles, De veritate, commentaries on Aristotle’s Physics and Metaphysics, as well as his late masterpiece Summa theologiae. In addition to Thomas, I will treat some of his predecessors, including Alexander of Hales and his teacher Albert the Great. I also discuss Siger of Brabant, an early critic of Thomas’s theory of providence. In his De necessitate et contingentia causarum Siger argues that Thomas’s theory of providence leads to determinism. Siger is well known for having had some of his opinions condemned in the doctrinal condemnations of 1270 and 1277. For this reason I will also review to what extent Siger’s ideas on providence came under attack.

In the third chapter I will continue analysing the medieval authors that wrote after Thomas and Siger. I will pay particular attention to the covenantal model of providence that was first developed by Matthew of Aquasparta in his Quaestiones disputatae de productione rerum et de providentia, a work which included a systematic treatment of creation, divine providence and other related topics. A later author to put forth a covenantal theory of providence, in a voluminous commentary on the Book of Wisdom, was the Dominican Robert Holkot. In addition, I will focus on Peter Auriol’s complex, and at times obscure, discussion of providence.

Finally, in the fourth chapter I will discuss Liber de bona fortuna, a small book that began circulating in Latin in the late Middle Ages as a work of Aristotle. The book contains authentic Aristotelian material that was translated into Latin and rearranged in the 13th century. This book played a highly interesting role in the development of the doctrine of providence and has only recently started to receive the attention it deserves in historical scholarship. Among the authors who wrote questions on providence inspired by Liber de bona fortuna are Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus. As Henry and Scotus had very little to say on providence outside the context of Liber de bona fortuna, the questions they wrote on the book are vital for understanding their ideas on providence.

I have approached the subject of my study by making a systematic analysis of medieval texts as well as their intellectual background and context. By systematic analysis I refer to a careful reading of the Latin sources with particular attention to the conceptual analysis of the central arguments, terms and the implicit assumptions present in these sources. I mostly limit myself to the medieval discussions in which the term providence (providentia) is
explicitly attributed to God. I discuss a number of topics related to divine providence, including for example creation, the efficacy of the divine will and the scope of divine knowledge, insofar as these topics come up in the discussions explicitly centred on providence.

The relationship between the concepts of divine foreknowledge (praescientia or praevidentia divina) and divine providence calls for closer attention, however. The philosophical problems arising from the relationship between divine foreknowledge and contingency have a classic standing in the history of philosophy and, one might say, medieval philosophy in particular. In brief, the problem is this: if God foreknows all future, and God’s knowledge is (in accordance with the definition of knowledge) true, then all the future events will necessarily happen as God has foreknown and no room for contingency remains.\textsuperscript{11} In both historical sources as well as modern scholarship the term providence is sometimes used to refer to God’s foreknowledge. I wish to stress, however, that conceptually speaking, the doctrines of providence and foreknowledge should be kept separate. The reason for this is that knowledge as such is not causal. Any true proposition \(p\) that I have knowledge of, is not determined or caused by my knowledge. Although my knowledge of \(p\) entails logically that \(p\) is true, \(p\) would be equally true even if I had no knowledge concerning it. The epistemological connection does not imply any causal connection. Providence, on the other hand, contains a causal dimension. The very idea of providence entails that God’s providential plan is realized because of God’s own causal activity. Some of this causal activity might be mediated through secondary causes, but divine causality remains efficient nevertheless. Therefore, the problems having to do with the relationship between divine providence and contingency can be, and in my estimation, should be studied as distinct from those having to do with foreknowledge and contingency. At any rate, it may not be surprising that the two problems have often been treated together in contemporary scholarship, as even medieval authors did not always distinguish clearly between the two.\textsuperscript{12}

Harm Goris has also paid attention to this problematic. He distinguishes between the foreknowledge problem and the providence problem, employing the terms diachronic and synchronic. Goris names the foreknowledge problem a diachronic one, as certain foreknowledge imposes logical necessity on a future event. The providence problem is a synchronic problem, however,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} The scholarly literature on the philosophical problems concerning foreknowledge of future contingent propositions is vast. See e.g. Craig 1988, Knuuttila 2008 & 1993 and Zagzebski 1991.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} This ambiguity goes back to late ancient philosophy, as will be seen in the treatment of Boethius in the first chapter of this work. On the relationship between divine foreknowledge and divine providence, see Freddoso 1988, 1–9 & Goris 1996, 53–99.
\end{itemize}
because if providence or will is the efficient cause of an event in the future, then the necessity will be imposed only at the moment of being-caused.13

The doctrine of divine providence remained central in the Western philosophical thought from antiquity to the early modern era. Consequently, there is a large amount of historical scholarship available on the topic. Surprisingly, however, the history of the doctrine in the late Middle Ages is clearly underdeveloped in scholarship. The realization of the lack of a systematic presentation of the history of divine providence in medieval thought was an important source of motivation for this study from the beginning.

Yet in the scholarship on the intellectual history of the Middle Ages, one can discern a certain imbalance. While there is plenty of scholarship on the ideas of Thomas Aquinas on the topic of divine providence, other medieval authors often receive no more than a mention. While Aquinas is by no means the only scholastic theologian to write a major treatise on providence, he may well have been the only one to return repeatedly to the topic of providence in virtually all of his major works and systematically work the doctrine of providence into his whole system of thought. Aquinas’s theory of divine providence was also influential for the subsequent tradition, and sparked a critical reaction in a number of authors writing after Aquinas. While there is a lot to be said on the original and interesting ideas of, for example, Henry of Ghent and Peter Auriol on the doctrine of providence, the doctrine still remains in a supporting role in their theological enterprises taken as a whole. The same cannot be said of Aquinas. Understanding Aquinas’s ideas on providence requires more emphasis on understanding several other parts of Aquinas’s theological and philosophical thought.

Some other notable studies on the medieval theories of divine providence are, for example, the studies on Henry of Ghent’s ideas on providence by Gordon Wilson, as well as J.J. Duin’s classic study on Siger of Brabant’s theory of providence.14 Since I started working with the topic in 2012, there have been some interesting historical studies published on the topic of providence. Professor Carlos Steel’s festschrift Fate, Providence and Moral Responsibility in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014 is a major publication containing 37 articles by various scholars.15 With only a cursory look at the table of contents of part 7 of the book, “The Medieval Latin Tradition”, one notices that the articles mostly focus on Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent. While acknowledging the utility and

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13 Goris 1996, 63. Goris has argued that the importance of this distinction has gone unnoticed in most contemporary scholarship.


15 Especially the articles by J. Dudley and J. Opsomer have been useful for the historical background chapter in this work, whereas the papers by R. Taylor, V. Cordonier, G. Wilson and K. Emery Jr. are concerned with themes also treated in chapters 2–4 of this work.
excellence of the collection, in my own work one of the central aims is to shed light on some of the lesser known authors as well.

Chris Schabel’s *Theology at Paris, 1316–1345: Peter Auriol and the Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000 is a study on the philosophically rich and complex medieval debates on divine foreknowledge. The concepts of foreknowledge and providence were closely related in the medieval era and some of the arguments already studied in Schabel’s work will reappear in modified forms in the course of this work.

Concerning *Liber de bona fortuna* and the discussion it generated, I rely on Valérie Cordonier’s pioneering work on the book. As Cordonier has shown in a number of studies, *Liber de bona fortuna* was a Latin work since its creation, although it contains authentic Aristotelian material.¹⁶ Cordonier’s studies have been highly helpful for studying the views of the medieval authors on *Liber de bona fortuna*. In addition, Gordon Wilson has written a number of articles on Henry of Ghent’s views on providence, mostly developed in his question concerned with *Liber de bona fortuna*.

On Aquinas’s views on providence, some studies that ought to be mentioned are Nicholas Kahm’s article “Divine Providence in Aquinas’s Commentaries on Aristotle’s Physics and Metaphysics, and Its Relevance to the Question of Evolution and Creation”, where Kahm clearly shows how aspects of Aquinas’s theory of providence developed and went through changes in his more mature works. Wayne Hankey’s “*Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum*: The Place of Natural and Necessary Emanation in Aquinas’ Doctrine of Creation” is an article which sheds light on the originally Neoplatonic principle that a simple being can only cause one kind of effect. In the upcoming pages, I will focus on the tensions between this principle and the idea that God is in some sense the cause of all the effects in the created world.

¹⁶ *Liber de bona fortuna* is a literal translation of two chapters originally found in Aristotle’s *Ethica Eudemia* and *Magna Moralia*. For more information on the contents and the history of the book, see chapter 4 in this work and the literature referred to therein.
1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will introduce the history of the idea of divine providence starting with Plato and Aristotle and leading through the Hellenistic philosophers to the late ancient Christian philosophers Augustine and Boethius. My aim is to provide the reader with a sufficient understanding of the earlier history of the doctrine to allow for a better grasp of the philosophical issues that both remained and became acute in medieval theology.

By the term divine providence, I refer to the idea that there is a god or several gods that have a plan or concern for the world, and that this god or gods causally participate in the implementation of the plan.1 Within the progress of this study, the reader will notice continuity in several key ideas in the development of the doctrine of providence beginning with classical Greek philosophy all the way up to Thomas Aquinas and his followers. On the other hand, a number of the philosophical ideas of the pagan thinkers were not transferable to the Christian context without modification. Therefore, the late Middle Ages also gave birth to several new philosophical problems and ideas concerning divine providence.

Another topic of interest in this chapter will be the theories of causality put forth by the ancient thinkers. The medieval theologians implicitly agreed that an understanding of divine providence begins with an understanding of the type of cause divine providence represents. In this analysis they turned to the theoretical framework current in their universities, i.e. Aristotelianism infused with elements of Neoplatonic developments inherited from Augustine and the Arabic philosophical traditions and translations. A special topic pertaining to causality that came to be central in medieval theology was the relationship between providence and chance events. For this reason, I will introduce Aristotle’s and Boethius’s main ideas concerning chance events and accidental causation as well.

1 In brief, the Epicureans held that gods exist, but are not concerned with worldly affairs. The Stoics, on the contrary, believed that all causes and effects were predetermined by the divine logos. Aristotle and his followers thought that god influences the lower world as a final cause through being imitated by the lower things. For them, god has not created the world, however, and according to the standard interpretation, is not even intellectually aware of its existence. The Platonists believed in providential gods, but aimed to conceptualize providence in a way that left more space for human freedom and spontaneity than the Stoic view. Sedley 2007 is a study on the views on creation, presented in ancient philosophy. The book contains a wealth of information on ancient ideas in divine causality and on providence too.
I will discuss the theories of the major ancient philosophical schools, Epicureans, Stoics, Peripatetics and Platonists, before a treatment of the late ancient Christian authors. This allows for an understanding of to what extent the accounts of providence given by the late ancient Christian thinkers were derived from the pagan theories. The two late ancient Christian authors that came to have by far the greatest influence for the subsequent medieval tradition were Augustine and Boethius. In addition, I will make some remarks on John Damascene’s (c. 676–749) *De fide orthodoxa*, a work that also had a notable influence on the medieval discussions.

The ancient debate on divine providence flourished in the Hellenistic era especially within the Stoic, Middle Platonic, Peripatetic and Neoplatonic schools, although many of the main positions and arguments had their roots in the ideas of Plato and Aristotle. For this reason, I will begin my historical treatment of the development of the doctrine of providence with Plato and Aristotle, whose theological views set the stage for the later ancient developments.

In this chapter I will focus on three questions that were acute in the ancient discussions and will later remain relevant in the medieval period as well. These themes include:

A. the question of particular providence: whether divine providence is concerned with particular beings as particulars, or only insofar as they fall under a given species of beings. How do particular human choices and particular chance events relate to divine providence?

B. providence as efficient versus final cause: does divine providence directly govern things as an efficient cause, or remain a purely final cause and a source of the imitation of the lower beings.

C. immediate versus mediated providence: does God(s) provide for all beings directly or rather by using some created things, such as celestial spheres.

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2 Medieval philosophers had relatively little knowledge of the theories of providence presented before Aristotle. Although the name of Plato is often mentioned in medieval discussions of providence, the medieval authors’ knowledge of Plato himself was based on a very limited number of sources, mainly parts of the *Timaeus*. Their understanding of Platonism was largely based on Augustine’s and other church fathers’ descriptions of Plato and his followers. In addition, many Neoplatonic ideas including e.g. the hierarchy of all being and the diffusiveness of good became integral parts of Christian theology through the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (late 5th century to early 6th century). Pseudo-Dionysius wrote his works anonymously, but was identified with a man named Dionysius, mentioned in Acts 17:34. Throughout the ancient and medieval periods Pseudo-Dionysius’s authority as a convert of Paul the Apostle went mostly unquestioned. Later on, in the 15th century when the Epicurean and Stoic sources became available for the Latin humanists, they accepted and agreed with aspects of Stoic and Epicurean moral theories but rejected the atheism of the Epicureans and the deterministic aspects of Stoic and Epicurean physics. Poppi 1988, 647. On the history of Latin translations of the ancient philosophical sources, see e.g. Marenbon 2007, 210–215 and the more comprehensive list in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, 793–832.
or lower gods as their mediators. This question was particularly important in the Aristotelian tradition after Alexander of Aphrodisias (late second to early third century AD).

1.2 Plato and Aristotle on Providence

Aristotle did not formulate an explicit theory of providence (pronoia) in his surviving works. Yet some modern interpreters have attributed a doctrine of providence to Plato. It is clear, however, that both Plato and Aristotle did discuss the relationship between the gods and the sublunary world and human beings rather extensively. Later on, when providence became a fiercely debated topic between the Stoics and the Epicureans, the Platonist and Peripatetic schools also came to attribute a clear-cut theory of providence to their teachers. Before looking at these later interpretations, I will begin by introducing Plato’s and Aristotle’s own ideas on the relationship between the gods and the lower world.

The modern interpretations of Plato’s theological views have often highlighted the transcendence of the idea of Good in a way that leaves little space for any concrete form of divine providence. Yet there are passages in the Timaeus and the Laws that give rise to a very different picture. One of Plato’s most important discussions of divine care for worldly things is found in Laws, X. In this work, Plato lets the Athenian Stranger argue that it would be inappropriate for god to take care of the larger structures in the universe but at the same time ignore the smaller details. Plato draws an analogy with mortal workers such as builders who have to place smaller stones well in a building in order to make the whole stand strong. Myrto Dragona-Monachou notes that Plato’s arguments concerning divine providence are founded on perfect, all-

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3 Dudley writes, however: “It would not appear improper to speak of a kind of divine providence in Aristotle, if providence is understood to mean divine influence by final causality promoting the good of the beneficiary of such influence.” Dudley 2014, 64. The fact remains that Aristotle did not choose to refer to his ideas of divine final causality by the term providence (pronoia), although many of his later commentators and readers did.

4 See e.g. Dragona-Monachou 1994, 4420.

5 The extent to which Plato really held the religious views presented in the form of myths in his works remains under debate in current scholarship. This question need not concern us here, since the late ancient tradition certainly considered eschatological myths to be authoritative texts.

6 In addition to the passages dealing with providence, the Timaeus also seems to argue for a temporal creation of the world by a divine craftsman. The ever acute question of whether this should be taken literally or whether Plato actually believed in an eternal universe goes back to antiquity. See Sedley 2007, 98–107 and fn. 30 in particular for the early reception.

7 Plato, Laws X, 902d–e.
reaching divine justice. The divine attributes of benevolence, omnipotence and omniscience require that gods care for both great and small things.8

The smaller building blocks of the universe such as individual human beings contribute to the perfection of the whole. The whole harmony was not born for the good of humans, but on the contrary, human beings were born for the good of the whole. Plato connects the providentially managed order of the whole to the idea of transmigration of souls. The gods repeatedly place the better souls in better bodies and vice versa to retain perfect order in the universe.9 Dorothea Frede has pointed out that Plato does not offer any explanation of the mechanisms through which divine providence works in the world. Rather, the idea that gods must have concern for individuals is deduced through a type of *a fortiori* argument: a master of any craft would take care of the smaller matters relating to his craft in addition to managing the larger structures. God cannot be an exception. Since the macrocosm is well ordered and organized, Plato thinks that divine care must extend to the smaller matters in the universe too.10 Even though the idea that gods take care of individuals is mentioned only in passing in the *Laws*, it came to have a great influence on the later Platonic tradition.

The Myth of Er, found in *The Republic* book X, is a Platonic text worthy of particular consideration because of its influence on the theories of providence of the later Platonists. The Myth of Er contains the important idea that intellectual beings receive a just reward or a punishment after their earthly life, which is in accordance with their moral worth. Er is the name of a Pamphylian hero who has died in battle. Before his body is burned he revives and tells about his experiences in the afterlife. Er tells how he saw great judges ordering the souls of men to follow different paths according to their moral merits or sins. The good receive an award for their deeds, whereas the evil are described as receiving a tenfold punishment for each of their bad actions. From the viewpoint of the later tradition, the most important claim of the myth is that the human souls have complete responsibility for the lives they live. The souls get to choose their entire lives before they are united with physical bodies. They are solely responsible for this pre-natal choice and cannot blame the gods for how their upcoming lives turn out in the end. After this initial choice has been made, the soul may not deviate from the life it has chosen. This text came to be of utmost importance for the Middle Platonic interpretations of Plato’s theory of fate and providence.11 It should be pointed

8 Dragona-Monachou 1994, 4421.
9 Plato, *Laws* X, 903 b–905d. Dabut has questioned whether Plato’s view really counts as providence since in Plato’s views human beings exist only for the good of the whole and not vice versa. If the definition of providence is taken to include an aspect of love that God has for the creation, good harmony would instead have to exist for the sake of humans. Dragona-Monachou 1994, 4422.
out that in Plato’s text the initial choice is concerned with the whole life of the individual. In choosing its future life, the soul chooses its entire life with a single, non-reversible choice. In the later Middle Platonic theories of conditional fate, the idea was extended and adapted to the numerous particular choices that an individual faces during his life. It is also important to note that the main concern of Plato in the Myth of Er is the question of moral responsibility. Plato stresses that individual souls are responsible for the choice they make, and the gods should not be blamed for this choice. In interpreting the Myth of Er, the later Platonic tradition became more concerned with questions concerning the possibility of free choice and freedom of the will.12

In the *Timaeus*, Plato presents Demiurge, the creator-god, giving a speech to the younger gods. Describing his plan for the creation of the world, the Demiurge tells that the world must be perfected by the creation of all possible species of beings. The theme of the perfection of the world, understood as the realization of a maximum diversity of species, became influential in ancient and medieval philosophy. The Demiurge also declares that those souls who live righteously are allowed to return to the stars, where they were born. Meanwhile, the unrighteous souls are born into lesser bodies, such as animals, in the afterlives. An interesting feature of the text is that the Demiurge lets the lower gods take care of a large part of the creation “in order to exempt himself from responsibility for any evil they (i.e. the souls of men) might afterwards do”.13 This Platonic idea that god is not to be held responsible for any evil came to be important in the late ancient philosophical schools. It was also inherited to the Middle Ages through the early Christian tradition.14

Aristotle’s view on the divinity has been subject to a great deal of scholarly debate. Famously, in *Metaphysics* XII Aristotle argued that all the movement found in the world may be traced back to a causally prior mover in a chain of movers that in turn cannot be infinite. Therefore, Aristotle claims, an unmoved mover must be posited.15 This unmoved mover is the first cause of all movement, but remains itself wholly unmoved. The unmoved mover is described as eternal, perfect, unchanging, and most importantly, as pure self-thought. In other words, the unmoved mover is an idea that consists of simply thinking of itself and without knowledge of anything distinct from itself.16 In

12 Bobzien 1998b, 161.
14 See e.g. Plato, *Republic* X, 379a–380c.
15 The unity of the unmoved mover is also controversial since Aristotle in most contexts refers to a singular unmoved mover, but in *Metaphysics* XII chapter 8 refers to a plurality of unmoved movers. Sharples 2002, 7.
16 This too has been contested recently. Some modern scholars have held that the unmoved mover also thinks of necessary truths, such as mathematical theorems and the forms of living creatures. Sharples 2002, 9. Sedley points out that Aristotle’s idea of divine activity as pure and perfect
the standard interpretation, the unmoved mover does not move anything as an efficient cause. Rather, remaining in its remote perfection, it acts as the final cause of the lower beings. First and foremost, the unmoved mover acts as the final cause of the heavenly spheres that imitate its perfection through their endless rotating movement. This idea that the heavenly spheres start to rotate because of their desire to be like the unmoved mover became widely spread and central in the late tradition. One might ask, why exactly did Aristotle come to think that the spheres imitate the remote being of the unmoved mover by rotation? Since Aristotle thought that rotation was the most perfect kind of movement, he saw rotation as the best means of imitating such an eminent being as the unmoved mover.17

Since the spheres rotate, the planets and stars attached to the spheres also rotate eternally in a uniform way. Especially the rotation of the sun allows for the changing seasons and makes the life of the plenitude of living beings found on the earth possible.18 Aristotle famously held that all the species of living beings found in the world are eternal and unchanging. This allowed him to argue that the species imitate the unchanging and eternal rotation of the celestial spheres by their equally eternal repetition of generation and corruption. Thus, in a sense, the species imitate the unmoved mover too, but only by the mediation of their imitation of the spheres. That is, the species imitate the spheres that, in turn, imitate the unmoved mover. Aristotle himself does not speak of providence (pronoia) in this context. Yet the idea of the contemplation is preceded by Plato in the Timaeus. Plato argues that human beings can imitate the gods by focusing their minds on the eternal truths of mathematics and astronomy. Yet the Platonic gods themselves are not completely dedicated to such contemplation, but rather also have some concern for the sublunary world. Sedley 2007, 169.

17 Dudley, on the other hand, suggests that Aristotle must have thought of the unmoved mover as existing in a place outside the universe. This would explain why the celestial spheres start moving to come closer to the unmoved mover. Dudley 2014, 64 fn. 21. The notion of a place outside the universe is problematic. Not only can there be no physical place outside the universe, when the universe is understood as the totality of physical existence, but also the unmoved mover is immaterial for Aristotle. Thus, the idea of the celestial spheres striving to come physically closer to the unmoved mover seems incoherent. Scharle refers to Physics VIII, 265a28–b9 to explain that for Aristotle “each point on a circle is as much an end as any other point, circular motion imitates the self-ended activity of the Prime Mover”. Scharle 2008, 159. This interpretation seems much better founded than that of Dudley. In the synthesis of Alexander of Aphrodisias, the willing of the spheres to become like the unmoved mover became central, although this idea is not explicitly stated in Metaphysics XII. Sharples 2002, 6. See Sedley 2007, 170 for an explanation of how Aristotle’s idea of God as the final cause of creaturely imitation goes back to Plato.

18 Sharples 2002, 9. Aristotle held that the heavenly spheres are ensouled, but it remains controversial whether these souls are the same as the unmoved mover(s), discussed in Metaphysics XII. Since the sphere-souls are attached to their given spheres, they too remain eternally in the cyclical movement. See Sharples 2002, p. 4 for references to the most relevant literature on the topic.
species of beings trying to attain the perfection of the unmoved mover through the eternal cycle of generation and corruption came to be of fundamental importance in the later interpretations of the Aristotelian theory of providence. This interpretation was formulated in the Hellenistic era and remained acute and influential throughout the Middle Ages.

Interpreting the Aristotelian idea of the species’ imitation of the unmoved mover as providence is not unproblematic, however. Aristotle denied the unmoved mover’s knowledge of things other than itself. If the unmoved mover is wholly devoid of any knowledge or volitions directed outside of itself, how can it be said to have providence for the world outside of itself? Typically, the concept of providence is understood to imply that the provider has care and benevolence for the objects of his providence. Sharples has drawn attention to Aristotle’s analogy of a general and an army in *Metaphysics* XII. In this passage, Aristotle asks whether the order discovered in the world exists as something external or internal. He draws an analogy to a general and a well-ordered army. In this case the order is both internal (the general has a plan and an idea of a well-ordered army in his mind) and external (the formation of the actual army is well ordered). The order found in the general’s mind is, however, primary for Aristotle, because the army’s order is dependent on the general’s plan, whereas the plan as such is not dependent on the actual formation of the army.\(^{19}\) Ancient and modern interpreters have agreed that in the analogy, the general stands for the unmoved mover and the army for the plenitude of worldly beings. In his interpretation of the analogy, Sharples suggests that for Aristotle the unmoved mover might not be quite as unknowing of the external world as the majority of modern scholars have thought. He points out that an idea of a general that did not even know that his army existed would be a very strange one. Sharples remains uncertain in the end, but considers Aristotle’s analogy of the general and the army an interesting piece of evidence for the view that Aristotle’s unmoved mover possibly did have some knowledge of the external world.\(^{20}\)

There is an important difference between Plato’s and Aristotle’s ideas regarding divine goodness. In Plato’s understanding of divine goodness, the maximum goodness of god required that god exercised virtues that were other-regarding. That is, in order to manifest his goodness, god had to create a world and act providentially towards his creation. Meanwhile, for Aristotle, divine goodness consisted in god’s thinking of a maximally good thing, i.e. of god himself.\(^{21}\) The fundamental disagreement between Plato and Aristotle concerning whether divine goodness required a beneficial attitude towards other beings, or rather a perfect cognitive self-directed act, gave rise to tensions in the medieval conceptions of providence too. Whereas the medieval

\(^{19}\) Aristotle, *Metaphysics XII* c. 10 (1075a 13–15); Sharples 2002, 10.

\(^{20}\) Sharples 2002, 10–11.

\(^{21}\) Sedley 2007, 147–148.
authors read from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* that divine perfection consisted in
divine self-thought, the Platonic view of providence, on the other hand, was
inherited to the Christian tradition through a tradition of Christian
Neoplatonic interpretation. Another fundamental difference in Plato and
Aristotle – at least as understood by their later interpreters – was that Plato
allowed for divine providence of particulars, whereas Aristotle limited it to
species of beings. The question of particular providence remained one of the
central points of interest in the philosophical discussions concerning divine
providence all the way up to the late Middle Ages. In fact, some medieval
authors even came to question the standard view that Aristotle did not allow
for divine providence regarding particular beings.

### 1.3 Aristotle on Causality and Chance

Philosophical analysis of divine providence tends to start with an analysis of
causality. What type of cause is divine providence? If it is a necessary and
infallible cause, how can it be reconciled with the contingency found in the
natural world or based on human freedom? For the purposes of this study,
Aristotle’s causal theory constitutes a historically pivotal analytical tool in the
analysis of divine providence. For this reason, a look at Aristotle’s ideas of
causality, contingency and accidental causation are in order.

In Aristotle’s thinking, contingency can be a feature of both states of affairs
and causes. In other words, a contingent cause brings about contingent
effects. A contingent state of affairs is such that it is actual sometimes but not
always, whereas a necessary state of affairs is actual always. On the other hand,
a contingent cause is a cause that brings about its effect in most cases, whereas
a necessary cause always brings about its effect.

Aristotle held that there are causes in nature that act as a source of
contingency. Natural causes tend to cause their natural effect in most cases,
but sometimes the action of a natural cause may lead to a surprising
unforeseen effect. An oft-repeated example of this phenomenon is when a
child is born with six rather than five fingers. A question then arises, what is
the cause for such chance effects that did not take place in a predictable way,
but rather seem entirely random and unanticipated. Does chance have some
independent ontological status as an efficient cause? If it does not, what is then
the efficient cause of chance events? Aristotle argues that it is obvious that
some effects take place by chance, since some effects take place outside the
normal functioning of observable causes. Thus chance must be a real
phenomenon in nature.

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22 Aristotle, *Physics* II c. 5.

23 Aristotle, *Physics* II c. 4; c. 5.
In *Physics* II Aristotle stresses that chance should not, however, be considered an essential and independent cause in itself, but rather an accidental cause. The reason for this is that unlike proper causes, nature and reason, the effects that take place by chance do not always happen uniformly or in most cases. Chance is thus defined as the accidental cause of the non-standard effects of those causes that work uniformly in most cases. In other words, accidental causation follows from the fact that most causes do not cause their proper effect always but rather in most cases. When a non-standard effect proceeds from a natural cause, chance is said to be the accidental cause of the effect in question. A similar analysis is provided in the sixth book of *Metaphysics*. Aristotle writes that that which is accidentally is actual in some particular cases, but not always nor in most cases. Since most causes do not work in a uniform way always, but rather in most cases, it follows that some things are caused accidentally.

In *Metaphysics* VI, 3 Aristotle writes that there are chance effects in nature that lack a *per se* cause. Aristotle’s example is a man who gets killed by a band of robbers while fetching water. In the example, Aristotle asks us to think of a man who first ate salty food and then became thirsty. After this he went to the well to find water and there got killed by a band of robbers. The point is that such an accidental outcome does not allow us to conclude that eating salty food was the proper reason for him getting killed. On the contrary, eating the salty food only led to him being killed accidentally. The existence of chance events, that is effects lacking a *per se* cause, is vital in Aristotelian natural philosophy in order to avoid determinism. Unlike necessary *per se* causes, chance and fortune as accidental causes are not predetermined to a single outcome. For this reason, the reality of accidental causation guarantees that there is genuine contingency to be found in nature.

Grgic has argued that *Metaphysics* VI, 3 contains the earliest account of the idea that later came to be called the *connexio causarum*, that is, a complete and all-embracing network of causes and effects that leaves no room for spontaneity or contingency. The concept of *connexio causarum* will feature centrally in the medieval discussions concerning divine providence. According to most modern interpreters, Aristotle in *Metaphysics* VI, 3 denied the reality of such an all-reaching connection of causes in order to defend nature as a source of contingency.

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24 It is noteworthy that in *Magna moralia*, the authenticity of which has been questioned, Aristotle adds a third member to this list of proper causes: divine care or providence (*cura divina*). In the 13th century a chapter of *Magna moralia* and a chapter of *Ethica eudemia* were circulated in Latin under the title *Liber de bona fortuna*. See chapter 4 of this work for a detailed study of *Liber de bona fortuna* and the philosophical discussion it inspired in the Middle Ages.


Richard Sorabji points out that Aristotle’s idea of a cause is closely connected to that of an explanation. Therefore, an accidental cause is not a real cause as it does not sufficiently explain the state of affairs under consideration, due to its very unpredictability. As the example of the thirsty man getting killed at the well shows, chance events are often produced by a concurrence of several independent causes. Aristotle holds that there may often be no proper cause for such concurrences. This seems reasonable, since even if all the individual effects coming together have a proper cause, the fact that they occur simultaneously may remain completely without explanation. In Sorabji’s interpretation this is what Aristotle means when he argues that coincidences are uncaused. Sorabji gives another example of five different plane crashes that happen simultaneously during a single day. Such a coincidence, or state of affairs, may lead to actions such as stricter security measurements. Yet there is no explanation for the fact that these five crashes happened during the same day. It was simply a coincidence and the coincidence as such was uncaused.

For Aristotle, all the effects do not necessarily follow from antecedent causes because there are accidental causes that do not always work in a uniform way, but rather occasionally produce a non-typical effect. We might live in a world, however, where causes have some such variance built into them, but regardless of this every particular effect is still predetermined by antecedent causes – even though some of the effects are accidental and non-typical. Sharples points out that it is not altogether clear whether Aristotle distinguished between these two ideas of contingency, that is 1. contingency based on the variance of the functioning of types of causes and 2. contingency based on the inherent spontaneity of individual causes. Even if some effects seem random from the viewpoint of scientific explanation, they can still remain completely predetermined in a way that does not allow for the real possibility of opposites. In more concrete terms, a person can be capable of opposite effects, such as walking and not walking in a way that is perfectly compatible with determinism. If this would be the case, all the individual events coming together in a coincidence could be necessitated. Sorabji agrees that Aristotle has provided an argument for the position that coincidences lack explanations. He has not defended, however, the stronger claim that all the single events coming together to a coincidence would not be necessitated.

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28 Sorabji 1980, 3–25. Filip Grgic has argued against Sorabji’s interpretation. Grgic stresses that there is nothing in Metaphysics VI c. 3 to suggest that Aristotle thought of causes outside the causal chain entering the chain at some given time from the outside, as Sorabji’s interpretation suggests. Grgic 1998, 131. According to Grgic, Aristotle’s refutation of causal determinism in Metaphysics VI c. 3 requires that there are new beginnings in causal chains. It remains unclear, however, what exactly gives rise to such new beginnings.


30 This example is given in Bobzien 1998b, 152.

The distinction between the contingency of types of causes and the contingency of individual causes will have great import in the analysis of the medieval views.

Aristotle’s understanding of natural teleology was of fundamental importance to the later interpretations of the so-called Aristotelian doctrine of providence. Modern commentators have not agreed on the way in which Aristotle considered nature to be end directed. According to Scharle, the debate has largely centred on Aristotle’s example of winter rain in the second book of *Physics*. A group of notable scholars, including Martha Nussbaum and W. D. Ross, have argued that for Aristotle the winter rain is a natural process that does not really occur for the sake of anything such as the growth of corn. The other interpretation, advanced by e.g. David Furley and David Sedley, is that for Aristotle winter rain teleologically strives to advance the biological process of corn growth.32

Scharle’s own interpretation is interesting for its close resemblance to the medieval theologically oriented interpretations of Aristotle. Scharle disagrees with Furley and Sedley on the detail that for Aristotle the nature of winter rain is not directed at the growth of corn as such. Rather, according to Scharle, Aristotle held that all the lower beings exist and act for the Prime Mover, not in order to help the Prime Mover, but in order to become perfect like the Prime Mover, “which is eternal, purely noetic activity”. As already seen, this imitation takes various forms: the circular motion of the heavenly bodies, the eternal reproduction of plants and animals and the contemplative activity of human beings are all forms of imitation of the perfect activity and actuality of the Prime Mover.33 Scharle stresses that although Aristotle argues that sublunary beings are hierarchically ordered with the lower beings trying to become better through imitating the higher beings, he does not explicitly argue that the lower beings would imitate the Prime Mover through the mediation of imitating higher sublunary beings.34 This is worth noting, as the idea of such mediated providence will reappear in the medieval discussions of the topic. All in all, Scharle’s reading highlights the position of the Prime Mover as the object of imitation of every single lower creature and thus, as will be seen, is closely reminiscent of, for example, Thomas Aquinas’s interpretation of Aristotle’s natural teleology.35

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33 Scharle 2008, 158–159.
1.4 The Epicureans and the Stoic Theory of Fate and Providence

The Epicurean position on providence was that the gods did not concern themselves with worldly things in the slightest. Instead of rational design, they believed the universe was governed by chance. The motivation of the Epicurean denial of providence was based on their observation that all-reaching providence appeared incompatible with the existence of evil. If the gods had direct concern with worldly affairs, why would they have allowed evil things to happen? The alternative view that the gods had providence for some things but not for others, on the other hand, seemed impossible to reconcile with the traditionally held attributes of gods, i.e. omnipotence, omniscience and complete goodness.36 Sharples has argued that it was within the Epicurean school that the first indeterminist theory of human action was formulated. The Epicureans argued that human freedom was the result of the random movement of certain atoms.37 This view, attributing human freedom to randomness in physical phenomena, is problematic as it fails to explain how human freedom would account for moral responsibility, for example. The epicurean materialist theory of human freedom did not exercise any notable influence in the medieval period.

The Stoic discussions concerning fate and providence spanned a period of some 400 years. Chrysippus (c. 279–c.206 BC) was the most influential theorist of the early Stoic tradition.38 His theories were developed until the time of the Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias, after which the Stoic position became less important.39 Chrysippus was the first Stoic philosopher to discuss the topics of fate, providence, determinism and freedom systematically. Chrysippus wrote works titled On Fate and On Providence that have been lost, but survive in part through later quotations.40 Chrysippus emphasized that divine providence had to be all-reaching. He viewed moral evil as necessary for the perfection of the world as a whole. Only

36 Knuuttila & Sihvola 2000, 132–133. Plato had already written in Laws X that if the gods did not care for us it would be through ignorance, indifference or inability. Sharples 2003, 119.
37 Sharples considers Aristotle’s position concerning determinism and indeterminism somewhat unclear and notes that its difficulties became clear later when Alexander of Aphrodias used Aristotle to defend his own indeterminist position. Sharples 1983, 7–8.
38 The theories of e.g. Zeno and Cleanthes are in practice impossible to reconstruct with any detail from the later sources. Bobzien 1998a, 12.
39 A further problem is introduced by the fact that our knowledge of the theological arguments of the early Stoics is largely based on later sources, including Cicero’s The Nature of Gods and Sextus Empiricus’s Outlines of Pyrrhonism and Against the Professors. Knuuttila & Sihvola 2000, 125. Bobzien notes that since the second century AD, the originally separate topics of fate and providence were usually discussed together in single works. Bobzien 1998a, 5.
40 Bobzien 1998a, 1–3.
in relation to vices did the virtues become truly visible and laudable.\textsuperscript{41} Chrysippus also claimed that good could not have been known without knowledge of evil. Good and evil thus had a vital connection not only in an epistemological but also in an ontological sense.\textsuperscript{42}

The closely intertwined concepts of fate and providence became important technical terms in the Stoic deterministic philosophical system.\textsuperscript{43} The Stoic theory of fate and providence was connected to their causal determinism, which did not leave any room for contingency through truly spontaneous chance events, nor human choices that would have been free in the libertarian sense. According to the Stoics, all events, including human choices, were fated to happen the way they actually did.\textsuperscript{44} From another point of view the whole connection of causes and effects was derived through unchangeable divine providence. Thus in mainstream Stoicism, the contents of fate and providence were seen to be identical.\textsuperscript{45} At the same time, following Plato, the Stoics held that god was not to be held responsible for moral evils, an idea found already in \textit{Hymn to Zeus} written by the second head of the Stoic school, Cleanthes.\textsuperscript{46}

Yet the Stoics did not deny free choice altogether. In modern terms, they held a compatibilist position that human freedom was compatible with causal determinism.\textsuperscript{47} They argued that regardless of the fact that human choices too

\textsuperscript{41} Knuuttila & Sihvola 2000, 134–135.
\textsuperscript{42} Algra 2003, 171.
\textsuperscript{43} Opsomer 2014, 138–139. Dragona-Monachou notes that “Absolute confidence in divine providence was one of the most basic tenets of Stoicism”. Dragona-Monachou 1994, 4425.
\textsuperscript{44} Stoic belief in divination was one of the manifestations of their causal determinism. Although the liver of the sacrificed animal was not the actual cause of any upcoming events, they were still both linked in the complete connection of causes and effects. This allowed an expert to deduce upcoming events by carefully observing the liver. Sharples 1991, 8–9.
\textsuperscript{45} The fact that fate and providence were seen as containing the same connection of causes and effects does not necessarily mean that they would have been the same thing. While providence had a more theological connotation for the Stoics too, it is important to note that for the Stoics, providence was “not a transcendent principle, but a force present in the world”. Steel 2007, 12. This Stoic identification of the contents of fate and providence was later denied by both the Platonist and Peripatetic schools. Cleanthes, the second head of the Stoa, distinguished between fate and providence, arguing that everything happens in accordance with fate but a part of the fated events – morally condemnable human actions – is not included in the divine providential plan. This rather robust solution remained in the margin in later Stoic thought that typically tried to emphasize the all-pervasive nature of divine providence. Knuuttila & Sihvola 2000, 134–135. Cf. Dragona-Monachou 1994, 4432.
\textsuperscript{46} Dragona-Monachou 1994, 4424.
\textsuperscript{47} It is worth noting that \textit{eleutheria}, the Greek term for freedom, was not regularly employed in the ancient discussions that led to the birth of the modern concept of freedom. Rather, the ancient discussions were centred on the concept of “what depends on us” (\textit{to eph’ hêmin}). Bobzien 1998b, 135. In this chapter, I will make use of several modern concepts, including, for example, “causal determinism”, “compatibilist” and “libertarian”, even though these concepts were not used in ancient
flowed from divine providence, this did not imply that god was to be held
responsible for the morally bad actions of human beings. Instead, human
beings remained responsible for their bad choices, even though these choices
could not have been anything other than what they actually were. The technical
term “that which depends on us” (to eph` hêmin) was used to refer e.g. to the
attitudes, beliefs, likes and dislikes of human beings, but it did not include
physical features such as the colour of one’s eyes nor the place one had in
society. The Stoics aimed to show that causal determinism could be reconciled
with moral responsibility by pointing out that human actions played a part in
causal chains, despite the predetermined nature of these chains.48 Even
though Oedipus could not have acted otherwise, the choices he made were still
dependent on what Oedipus was. A human being with different characteristics
would have chosen differently, due to these very characteristics. On such
grounds, the Stoics claimed that freedom, understood as a capability for
opposites, was not a necessary prerequisite for moral responsibility. The Stoic
deterministic view of fate, providence and freedom was not adopted by any
other philosophical schools in antiquity, but remained highly influential as the
shared enemy of the Platonist and Peripatetic schools. Insofar as the Stoic
theory was known in the Middle Ages, it was criticized because of its
determinism.49

The theory of providence was constructed within a broader framework of
Stoic physics. In addition to determinism, the Stoic physical theory was
characterized by compatibilism50 and materialism. There was no room in Stoic
physics for a transcendent immaterial god, because they thought that

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48 Steel 2007, 5–6. Bobzien has pointed out connections between Stoic psychology and determinism.
For the Stoics any given person’s mind is a physical thing that cannot be separated from the person’s
character, dispositions and volitions. Such a person is considered the voluntary agent of those actions
that he assents to. This person is morally responsible for actions that are caused by him and not by
something else. Nothing in this model requires or implies libertarian freedom between alternatives,

49 See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, In De divinis nominibus, c. 3: “quidam vero extenderunt
divinam providentiam usque ad omnia, sed dixerunt ex divina providentia res omnes necessarios
eventus habere, totaliter a rebus contingentiam auferentes et haec fuit opinio Stoicorum ponentium,
secundum inevitabilem causarum seriem quam fatum nominabant, omnia ex necessitate contingere”.
(Also quoted in Hankey 2011, 7.) The Stoic conception of providence probably had little direct influence
on scholastic theology. The major influence of Stoicism on the ancient debates, however, makes the Stoic
notion of providence at least indirectly influential for the Scholastics too. Dragona-Monachou 1994,
4418.

50 Baltzly 2013, 6.4.
immaterial things could neither act nor be acted upon. Rather, they held that the divine logos was present in all physical things.

The Stoics were the first in the history of Western thought to come up with the idea that the deity providentially controls even the particular beings and events of the world in addition to providing for the creation on the level of species. For the Stoics, both the doctrine of eternal recurrence and causal determinism were derived from the perfect providential ordering of the world. Dorothea Frede has stressed that in the Stoic view, providence is nothing but an all-inclusive immanent principle present in all of nature. This principle binds together every single cause and effect in a way that simply leaves no room for randomness nor libertarian freedom. Therefore, the Stoic conception of providence contains only what came to be called general providence that is, a set of predetermined rules for the functioning of natural world. The all-pervasiveness of this set of rules left no space for any spontaneous choice or deliberation on the part of god, which later came to be called special providence.

The main difference between the Stoic theory of providence and the medieval theories put forth by scholars such as Thomas Bradwardine, who were drawn towards determinism, was that the Stoics denied that providence would have been in any way based on a choice of god. While some medieval theologians were drawn towards determinism with respect to the created world, they still rejected determinism with respect to the divine will.

1.5 The Middle Platonists, Conditional Fate

After questions related to divine providence had become acute philosophical problems in the Hellenistic world, the interpreters of Plato and Aristotle started to look for answers to the current debates in the texts of their authorities. Although Plato and Aristotle had not regarded divine providence as an important philosophical theme, their late ancient commentators began to attribute a clear-cut doctrine of providence to both of their teachers. As providence had become an acute topic in the Stoic and Epicurean schools, the

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51 White 2003, 131.
52 Baltzly 2002 labels the Stoic view as pantheism. See in particular pp. 8–10 for Baltzly's arguments against seeing the Stoic view as panentheistic.
53 Sedley 2007, 150.
54 White 2003, 143.
55 Frede 2002, 104.
56 Frede 2002, 113–115. According to Elliott 2015, 8, Athenagoras may have been the first to distinguish between general and specific providences.
followers of Plato and Aristotle started searching for clues as to how their masters would have reacted to the contemporary philosophical problems.57

As noted above, Plato did not have an explicit theory of divine providence, although he made several remarks that may allow the interpreter to invent such a theory. This is what happened in Middle Platonism, when Plato’s followers came to believe that Plato had held that god exercised a three-fold providence towards the creation. According to the Middle Platonists, the first providence was practised by the highest god with the heavens as its object, the second was practised by the heavens and concerned with the species and the third providence belonging to the demons was concerned with individuals. This doctrine was based mainly on Timaeus 41c–42e, where the demiurge gives the lower gods the task of creating mortal beings so that they would be distinguished from the gods created by the demiurge himself. The third providence was in some way concerned with the lives of individual human beings. While Middle Platonism was by no means a unified school of thought, belief in providence concerning particulars was widespread amongst the Middle Platonist authors.58 Pseudo-Plutarch, for example, found proof for the providence exercised by demons in Socrates’s personal demon, referred to in Plato’s Apology.59

Unlike the Stoics, who had held that fate and providence had the exact same content, the Middle Platonists clearly distinguished fate from providence, which was seen as a metaphysically higher principle than fate. According to

57 Sharples 2003, 110. Bobzien argues that many of the Middle Platonist and Neoplatonist theories concerning fate and freedom of choice were modifications of earlier Stoic theories. Bobzien 1998a, 5.

58 Sharples lists three ancient sources that mention this doctrine: De Platone of Apuleius, De fato by Pseudo-Plutarch and De natura hominis by Nemesius. These sources contain some variation on the exact nature of the first and secondary providences. Nemesius, for example, writes that the secondary providence is also concerned with the birth of individual things, whereas the tertiary providence is concerned with human actions. See Sharples 2003, 107–109; Sharples 2002, 35. According to Opsomer the primary providence is “Likely to be conceived as a single invariable act by which order is preserved”, while the lesser divinities are more concerned with the fates of individual human beings and other more minute details found in the world. The lesser divinities exercise providence through council and advice rather than through coercion. Opsomer 2014, 163; 166. A similar idea will later appear in Thomas Aquinas’s doctrine of angelic influence. The threefold providence of the Platonists is also briefly mentioned by Thomas Aquinas in Summa theologiae, 1a, q. 22, a. 3, co: “Et secundum hoc excluditur opinio Platonis, quam narrat Gregorius Nyssenus, triplicem providentiam ponentis.” In Summa theologiae Aquinas repeatedly refers to Nemesius’s De natura hominis as a work written by Gregory of Nyssa. Boys-Stones has pointed out that the original theory may have distinguished simply the providence of the demiurge from nature that by extension was named secondary providence. Pseudo-Plutarch, remaining the sole early witness explicitly describing three distinct providences, may have begun calling the demonic work a third distinct level of providence. Boys-Stones 2007, 445–447. For an overview of Middle Platonic interpretations, see Boys-Stones 2016.

59 Opsomer 2014 162–163.
the Middle Platonist theory, there were events that fell under the influence of providence that were not fated. Fate, too, was dependent on providence, whereas providence, being a superior principle, was not dependent on fate. The distinction between providence and fate became widely accepted in the subsequent Platonist tradition. The distinction was also adopted by Boethius in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, a work through which it was inherited into medieval Christian theology.60

Although the Middle Platonic authors disagreed over some of the details concerning providence and fate, the basic principles were agreed upon by all authors. These principles include most importantly the divinity and immutability of fate, the reality of contingency and the point that god is held responsible for only good and not evil things.61 All these views were later shared by medieval Christian authors. Furthermore, the Middle Platonic tradition gave birth to a theory commonly known as conditional fate. Some features of this theory present us with a less obvious but all the more interesting parallel to the medieval theories.62 The interpretation of the theory of conditional fate is an ongoing task in the scholarly literature. I will sum up the main features of this theory.

Alcinous (second century AD) developed the theory of conditional fate on the ground of the myth of Er in *Laws* X. His interpretation became standard in the later Platonist tradition and is mentioned by e.g. Proclus (412–485 AD). In the myth, Plato writes that before their incarnation, souls have to choose their forthcoming lives. While this choice itself is not predetermined by fate, it sets the condition on which later events follow inevitably in accordance with fate. If the soul is later unhappy with its life it has no right to complain to the gods, since the initial choice was freely executed by the soul itself. Plato himself had noted in the myth of Er that the responsibility belongs to the one who made the choice in the first place.63 The theory of conditional fate is best understood in opposition to the Stoic theory, where fate was seen as absolute and did not admit exceptions. According to the Stoics, whatever was fated to happen was predetermined to happen in the given way. The Middle Platonist theory of conditional fate asserted, however, that when a free agent acts in a

60 Opsomer 2014, 162; Steel 2007, 7.
61 Opsomer 2014, 140.
62 Several medieval authors argued that human sins fall under the influence of divine providence through receiving a just punishment at a later time. While the sinful action as such is not part of providence, the punishment is induced providentially. Rather similarly, the Middle Platonist theory of conditional fate asserts not that morally condemnable human actions would be fated, but rather that their consequence follows inevitably, once the relevant action has been freely taken.
63 Opsomer 2014, 162; Steel 2007, 7.
given way, the consequence of this choice will be fated. A typical example would be: “If Paris steals Helen, the Greeks will go to war.”\textsuperscript{64}

Opsomer notes that when Middle Platonists speak of fate as law, one ought not to think of law in the sense of natural law as a general rule that does not admit of exceptions. A better point of comparison would rather be a law of a state that connects a consequence to a condition, for example “if you steal, then you will be put in jail”.\textsuperscript{65} In the standard interpretation, the philosophical motivation of the theory of conditional fate was to safeguard free choice. The majority of interpreters have viewed the Middle Platonists as libertarians on the free will debate. That is, for them free agents had to have an actual capacity for opposites. Without this capacity the choices made by intellectual agents would not have any moral worth. Opposing Stoic causal determinism, the Middle Platonists were led to posit an immaterial soul with a faculty of will that was capable of making free choices, that is, taking courses of action that could have been other than what they actually were.\textsuperscript{66}

The Middle Platonists argued that fate, consisting of a set of conditional rules, was finite even though the actual historical events falling under its influence could be infinite in number. Influenced by Aristotle, they held that actual infinities were unknowable even to the gods. Therefore, it would have been impossible that the gods would have had knowingly preordained all the particular events in the infinite history of the world.\textsuperscript{67} In opposition to the Stoics, several Middle Platonists held that the multitude of singular events

\textsuperscript{64} This example was used by Alexander of Aphrodisias in \textit{De fato} c. 31. Eliasson 2013, 65. George Boys-Stones has criticized the standard interpretation of the theory of conditional fate. In Boys-Stones’s view, the Middle Platonists are much closer to Stoicism than in the standard interpretation, accepting the principle that all the events are inevitable effects of antecedent causes. The main difference between the Middle Platonists and the Stoics is in this view that while the Stoics accept only one physical causal network that is identified with divine providence, the Middle Platonists, on the other hand, accept an independent causal network in addition to divine providence: that based on matter. Although divine providence is the highest cause, it does not operate on the level of material individuals. After all, in the theory of the Platonists, the thought-content of God consists wholly in universal forms. On this interpretation, the theory of conditional fate mainly asserts that physical and natural events follow inevitably from the physical causes preceding these events, given that God first generated the cosmos. Thus in Boys-Stones’s reading, the Middle Platonic natural world is causally predetermined, although its very generation remains conditional upon a causal order outside the natural world itself. Boys-Stones 2007; see esp. 441–442.

\textsuperscript{65} Opsomer 2014, 147–148.

\textsuperscript{66} Bobzien 1998b, 173.

\textsuperscript{67} Cf. Eliasson 2013, 74. The mainstream of medieval scholasticism until John Duns Scotus (c. 1266–1308) upheld the thesis of the unknowability of actual infinity. The doctrine of divine omniscience did not, however, clash with the unknowability of actual infinity, as the medieval theologians held that the world had a temporal beginning and a temporal end. Thus, regardless of the extremely large number of individual events that the omniscient God knew, this knowledge was not seen as actually infinite.
were not under the influence of fate in the same way. They distinguished between events included (περιέχειν) in fate and events in accordance with fate (καθ’ εἰμαρμένην). The first group consisted of all the events, including contingent and sinful human choices, while the second group included only the events that were necessary.\(^\text{68}\) For the Stoics, on the other hand, all events were both included in fate and were predetermined by fate (i.e. they were also in accordance with fate). However, the problem of causal determinism was not done away with altogether in Middle Platonism. It resurfaced in connection with the Middle Platonic theory of providence, for divine providence was held to contain the multitude of human choices. Even though human choices were not fated, they were still in accordance with divine providence. An acute, related problem was the reconciliation of divine providence and the existence of evil, having its beginnings, at least in part, in human choices.\(^\text{69}\)

The 4th-century Christian bishop Nemesius of Emesa was an important source for the medieval authors on Platonic ideas of providence. Nemesius attacked the Stoic doctrine of fate and denied the possibility of compatibilism between a deterministic view of fate and the existence of divine providence.\(^\text{70}\) Nemesius emphasizes human capacity for choice and argues that fate is ultimately dependent on god.\(^\text{71}\) Nemesius was strongly influenced by the Platonic tradition, but remained critical of some central Platonic ideas of providence, including the theory of conditional fate. Nemesius argues that the reality of providence and moral responsibility, that is things depending on us, requires that sometimes the resulting act of a given human choice is based on both providence and human choice, but at other times solely on providence or human choice. He did not formulate a clear theory regarding how human autonomy was to be reconciled with divine providence.\(^\text{72}\) Nemesius argued that according to Aristotle there was no special providence, but rather only general providence.\(^\text{73}\) This view will later resurface and be subject to much debate in the later Middle Ages.

### 1.6 The Peripatetic Tradition and “Aristotle’s theory of providence”

The standard interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of providence in the Peripatetic tradition before Alexander of Aphrodisias was that divine

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\(^{68}\) Bobzien 1998b, 147.

\(^{69}\) Bobzien 1998b, 173.

\(^{70}\) Nemesius, De natura hominis, c. 34 (Ed. Verbeke & Moncho, p. 133–135).

\(^{71}\) Sharples & Eijk 2008, 14–16.

\(^{72}\) Nemesius, De natura hominis c. 40 (Ed. Verbeke & Moncho, p. 145–149); Sharples & Eijk 2008, 16.

\(^{73}\) Sorabji 2004, 95.
providence extended to the spheres above the moon, whereas the world below the moon remained without any intentional providential control. According to Sharples, the reason why such a view came to be attributed to Aristotle must remain a mystery since such a large number of the works of the early Peripatetics have been completely lost. In this view, providence had an influence on the sublunar world only by having an influence on the spheres that in turn had an influence on the sublunar world. From the point of view of providence, the influence it had on the sublunar world was thus purely accidental and the sublunar world was properly speaking governed by its own natural laws.74

The so-called Aristotelian theory of providence, recognized by the medieval authors too, received its definitive expression in the writings of Alexander of Aphrodisias.75 Alexander argued that, providence (pronoia) extended to the sublunar world through the mediation of the heavenly spheres and bodies.76 Especially the sun had in Alexander’s cosmology the role of bringing about the changing seasons and preserving the sublunar species in existence.77 In formulating his theory of providence, Alexander’s aim was to find a compromise between the Epicurean denial of providence and the Stoic theory of providence that left no room for contingency.78 The most influential aspect of Alexander’s theory was that individual, morally relevant choices were not part of divine providence.

Alexander took the earlier interpretations of the Aristotelian theory of providence as the starting point of his own theory. There are, however, highly surprising features in Alexander’s theory. Whereas the earlier tradition had emphasized that Aristotle’s view had been that providence extends only to the world above the moon, Alexander argues that the correct interpretation for the Aristotelian dictum “providence extends as far as the moon” is that it is the sublunar realm and not the realm above the moon that is provided for. This seems rather forced. Alexander’s interpretation is even more striking when one takes into account that the sentence that Alexander quotes is nowhere to

74 Sharples 1982, 199. Sharples notes that there might have been passages justifying such a view in the Aristotelian works that are now lost. This is, of course, nothing more than speculation. Sharples 2003, 23. See also pp. 22–29 for more information on the Peripatetic doctrine of providence before Alexander.

75 Alexander was not, however, the first to present a view like this. See Sharples 2002, 14–18. Sharples notes that it remains unclear why such a theory of providence was in the end attributed to Aristotle. Sharples 2002, 23–24.

76 Sharples 2007, 601; 603.

77 Sharples 1982, 198.

78 Sharples 1982, 198. Aristotle himself had been repeatedly engaged in an analogous project of forming a philosophical theory that took note of the previous theories, but through dialectical criticism aimed to discover a middle ground between them.
be found in the surviving works of Aristotle. Nevertheless, Alexander wanted to present both his theories on fate and providence as those of Aristotle. As seen, for most Stoics there was no substantial difference between fate and providence. On the contrary, Alexander held a theory of fate, clearly distinct from his theory of providence. He interpreted fate as a system of efficient causes *ut in pluribus* and identified it with nature. Such causes never worked with complete regularity and thus Alexander could reconcile fate with contingency.

It was precisely Alexander’s Aristotelian doctrine of providence, introduced to the Western world through the works of Averroes that asserted that providence was exercised through the mediation of the heavenly spheres and had the species of the sublunary world as their object. Individual beings fell under the influence of divine providence only *qua* members of species. Alexander denied explicitly that providence would have been primarily concerned with what happened to individual beings. This idea later came to be one of the most fiercely debated aspects of the medieval discussions concerning Aristotle’s ideas on providence. Another important point made by Alexander was that providence, properly speaking, required that the divinity had to have intellectual cognition of the effects of providence. If the effects of providence were simply an accidental outcome of the causality practised by the gods, it would make no sense to speak of divine providence. Yet, on the other hand, Alexander emphasized that the primary objective of providence was not the well-being of the sublunary particulars. For this, in his view, would have implied that the gods exist for the sake of the sublunary particulars. Alexander’s middle-ground solution was that the gods existed in a state of perfect and remote happiness, knowing that their good nature was beneficial for sublunary things too. In this sense, divine providence did not primarily exist for the well-being of particular beings under the moon. Their well-being was not, however, an accidental effect of providence either, but rather something based on a divine choice.

Alexander made use of the classic argument that just like a *paterfamilias* does not care for every single minor detail, such as the individual ants moving around in his home, so it would be shameful for god too to direct his attention to the most worthless details in the universe. In addition, if god was responsible for the individual actions of particular human beings too, this

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81 Sharples 2002, 30–31; The medieval authors agreed that providence connoted divine intellect and will and also emphasized that no effects could be *per accidens* with respect to divine providence.

would make god the cause of evils. Instead of having direct care and concern for every single detail, god is rather concerned with preserving the general continuity of the sublunary world. A critic could point out that perhaps it is not so much due to the minor things being unworthy of human attention, why the *paterfamilias* ignores some details in his home. On the contrary, human beings lack the capacity to take care of all the particular things that are potentially within their power. On this interpretation, an omnipotent god should have no problem in providing for the smallest details in addition to more major concerns. Alexander’s concern was not so much in divine omnipotence, but rather in divine perfection. The species contained no imperfections and fell entirely under the influence of divine providence. Particular beings, on the other hand, were capable of evil and failure. Attributing any imperfections like this to divine providence would have interfered with the idea of divine perfection. This must have a major philosophical motivation for Alexander’s theory of divine providence as limited to species of beings.

There was, however, a deeper philosophical problem for Alexander in accounting for divine knowledge of particular things: how to reconcile divine cognition of contingent things (such as free human actions) in light of the Aristotelian principle that the mode of the known object determines the mode of the knowledge. According to Alexander, “every intellect [...] comes to be in a way the same as its object.” For this reason god could not have any knowledge nor providence of the contingent and defective individuals *qua* individuals, as this would have interfered with divine perfection. This principle was a subject of controversy for the later Neoplatonic and Christian authors alike. Alexander’s solution was to argue that the gods know contingent things contingently in the sense that the gods know only that a free intellectual being will either do this or that. Thus, the choice in question is not in any way determined by divine knowledge, since divine knowledge does not extend to...

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83 Alexander of Aphrodisias *De providentia* 23.16–25.19. (Quoted in Sharples 2003, 116–117.) The argument that gods ignore the smaller details in the universe is presented as Stoic in Cicero’s *De natura deorum*. This is rather striking, considering that the orthodox Stoic doctrine was that nothing whatsoever remained outside the scope of all-reaching divine providence. Sharples hints that the argument Cicero refers to may reflect later influences from the first two centuries A.D., when the existence of evil and divine providence were reconciled by making divine providence concerned only with e.g. the preservation of species. Sharples 1991, 32–33.

84 A similar criticism, pointing out that Zeus must have no problems in taking care of both major and minor worldly concerns, was raised by Proclus. Sharples 2003, 117. William of Auvergne made use of this argument in his *De universo* almost a thousand years after Alexander. William of Auvergne, *De Universo* I, 3, C. 2 (transl. Teske, p. 36).

85 Sharples 2002, 36.

particular choices before they actually take place.\textsuperscript{87} Alexander’s main influence on the Neoplatonic tradition came to be his defence of the reconcilability of divine providence and the freedom of intellectual beings. Alexander’s solution remained substantially different from the later Neoplatonic theories, as will be shortly shown.\textsuperscript{88}

It has been pointed out that the notion of libertarian free will received its first clear formulation in Alexander. Like the medieval authors, Alexander attributed to Aristotle the notion of free will, capable of choosing between different alternatives in the exact same situation regardless of earlier causes. Bobzien stresses that no such idea is actually found in Aristotle. For Alexander, the notion of free will does not appear problematic in relation to the notion of divine providence, since Alexander’s understanding of providence does not require that all events including future contingents fall under divine providence equally.\textsuperscript{89} This was a more acute problem in the Middle Platonic treatments of the relation of the human will and divine providence. The situation was to remain largely the same with the Neoplatonists, to whom we shall turn to next.

\section*{1.7 The Neoplatonists: All-reaching divine providence}

The Neoplatonic theory of providence was formulated in opposition to both the Peripatetic theory denying providence to individuals, and the Stoic theory identifying providence with a deterministic causal system that, in the view of the Neoplatonists, had devastating consequences for human freedom and moral responsibility.\textsuperscript{90} The Neoplatonic theory of providence greatly influenced Augustine and Boethius, the most important Christian theorists of divine providence in the late ancient world. Furthermore, several features of it, including most notably the distinction between fate and providence, were inherited by the medieval theologians. Often they were not quite aware of their pagan sources, however.\textsuperscript{91}

Plotinus’s \textit{Enneads} contains a treatise on fate and two (possibly originally united) treatises on providence. Armstrong points out in his edition of the \textit{Enneads} that the treatise on fate is an early work and does not contain much that was not already established in the Platonic tradition. The treatises on providence, on the other hand, were written in a later part of Plotinus’s life and

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\textsuperscript{87} Sharples 1983, 165.
\textsuperscript{88} Hankey 2011, 14–15.
\textsuperscript{90} See e.g. Proclus \textit{De providentia}, c. 63 (Transl. Steel 2007, 70).
\textsuperscript{91} Hankey 2011 traces Neoplatonic elements in Aquinas’s theory. Aquinas often thought that the Neoplatonic ideas he adopted were Aristotelian in origin.
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contain much more original ideas.\textsuperscript{92} My treatment of Plotinus will be focused on the treatises on providence.

The basic theory of divine causality in the Neoplatonists following Plotinus is based on the three fundamental metaphysical principles: the One, the Intellect and the Soul. The One is the wholly indistinct, primary basis of all being and acts as the source of emanation of diversity from itself. This emanation is neither understood as anything temporal nor as anything like putting a complex unity, such as a puzzle, to pieces. By saying that the One is the first cause of everything, Plotinus and his followers meant that it is ontologically prior to everything and no distinct beings could exist without the One. The Intellect is the first thing that emanates from the One. It includes the intelligible ideas that are not actual in the One. The third metaphysical principle, the Soul, emanates from the Intellect. This third stage of emanation can be described as a discursive version of the second stage. Unlike the first two stages, the third stage gives rise to temporality.\textsuperscript{93} There is no spontaneity nor contingency whatsoever in the emanation from the One. This emanation takes place with natural necessity. In this sense, the Neoplatonic metaphysics of emanation are in stark contrast with the Christian idea of God’s free creation of the world.

Plotinus identifies providence with the second emanation of the One, i.e. the Intellect. The One remains transcendent to providence as it is transcendent to all being. In Lloyd P. Gerson’s interpretation this distinction between the One and providence allows Plotinus to counter the Epicurean problem of theodicy. Since providence belongs more properly to the Intellect that the One uses as an instrument, the blameful things resulting from providence come rather from the instruments used by the One than from the One itself.\textsuperscript{94} Plotinus stresses that providence extends to all the lower things, including the actions of rational agents. Plotinus stresses that human choices too are included in the complex causal network that as a whole is equal to the providential plan.\textsuperscript{95} The lower causes need to have some independent causality for providence to exist. This is the case because providence consists of care for non-divine causes.\textsuperscript{96}

Plotinus and his followers took seriously Plato’s statement in the \textit{Laws} that god has concern for individual beings too. Unlike the Peripatetics, Plotinus and his followers held, however, that providence extended to the smaller details of the world too. Hankey argues that for this reason he is to be held as a major influence for the Christian authors of late antiquity, Boethius and

\textsuperscript{92} Plotinus \textit{Ennead} III (transl. Armstrong 1967, 40).
\textsuperscript{93} Wildberg 2016, 2-4; Gerson 2012, c. 2.
\textsuperscript{94} Gerson 1994, 40-41; 209; Hankey 2011, 11.
\textsuperscript{95} Plotinus \textit{Ennead} III. 3. c. 3 (transl. Armstrong 1967, 117).
\textsuperscript{96} Plotinus \textit{Ennead} III. 2. c. 9 (transl. Armstrong 1967, 73).
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Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. On the other hand, influence from the Peripatetic tradition can be discerned in the Neoplatonic school. For example, Plotinus has an idea of providence functioning by means of final causality writing in *Ennead* III that heaven rotates eternally in imitation of the Intellect, seeking for nothing outside itself and that all sublunary things seek Good "in proportion to its own power". Proclus, too, following Alexander of Aphrodisias, writes that sublunary things regenerate in imitation of the eternal rotation of the celestial bodies.

Steel points out that due to their shared Platonic premises, many Neoplatonists were attracted to the Peripatetic theory of providence, denying divine providence and knowledge of particular things from the gods. The mainstream interpretation of the theory of forms upheld that the proper object of the Intellect was the Platonic forms and that there were no forms of individual things, but rather only universal forms. How then could the incorporeal divine intellects have knowledge of particular beings? Proclus’s solution to this problem was to argue that the special characteristic of divine knowledge is that it is prior to all distinctions, including the distinctions between the different Forms too. Thus, the gods may know everything simultaneously in virtue of the oneness that all things share prior to the distinctions receiving their birth on the level of the Intellect.

Proclus wrote a work named *On Providence*, in which he refutes a deterministic interpretation of fate and providence put forth by his old acquaintance Theodore, who is not mentioned in any other historical sources. Theodore’s theory is presented as a collection of philosophical ideas put together by a layman with a basic philosophical education. The majority of Theodore’s ideas come from Stoicism, but they also feature Aristotelian and sceptical elements that would have been unacceptable to the Stoics. Using Stoic arguments, Theodore denies free choice altogether, whereas the Stoics had strived to retain human freedom in a causally determinist philosophical framework. The aim of Proclus’s work is to defend human beings’ freedom of choice by systematically refuting the arguments put forth by Theodore.

For Plotinus, providence had belonged to the Intellect. Proclus points out, however, that etymologically the Greek word *pro-noia* can be understood as that which comes before the Intellect, and there is nothing before the Intellect but the One. Proclus adopted the distinction between fate and providence

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97 Hankey 2009, 2.
98 Plotinus *Ennead* III. 2. c. 3 (transl. Armstrong 1967, 53); Proclus *De providentia*, c. 12; transl. Steel 2007, 47. Plotinus, using Aristotle’s analogy from *Metaphysics* XII, also likened divine providence to a general that has perfect control over not only his own, but also his enemy’s army. Plotinus *Ennead* III. 3. c. 2 (transl. Armstrong 1967, 115–117).
99 Opsomer & Steel 2012, 6–9.
100 Steel 2007, 1–4.
101 Proclus *De providentia*, c. 7; transl. Steel 2007, 44.
from the earlier Platonists. He wrongly believed that the distinction had originated with Iamblichus (fourth century AD). As we have seen, this distinction had already been used in the Middle Platonic school. In the Neoplatonic theory, rational souls including humans and angels were subjected to providence but were free from fate, since fate was limited to physical bodies. Proclus argues that fate, as a causal connection, is limited to natural and physical things. Immaterial and voluntary things are free from it. The fact that things strive for good, on the other hand, is due to the work of providence.

Aristotle’s idea that the mode of the object of knowledge determines the mode of the knowledge-relation had led to problems in Alexander of Aphrodisias’s treatment of providence. Gods could not have had necessary knowledge of human choices, unless they were necessary too. Iamblichus and Proclus argued that the mode of knowledge is determined on the contrary by the knower and not the object of knowledge. Proclus wrote that since knowledge resides in the intellect of the knower and not in the thing known, knowledge must be similar to that in which it exists. Even if the thing known is indeterminate and contingent in itself, if the knower is determinate and necessary, the knowledge will receive the mode of the knower. After all, Proclus points out, it is common to think that the gods have ingenerated and incorporeal knowledge of generated and corporeal things. Why should they not then analogously be able to have determinate knowledge of indeterminate things? Thus, gods can have knowledge of things that are radically unlike themselves, without becoming like the things known through the act of intellection. With this move, Proclus was able to account for the necessary and immutable knowledge of things that remained contingent and mutable. This influential idea was probably formulated in the first place to allow for gods’ immutable knowledge of mutable things. Alexander of Aphrodisias had thought that gods knew necessarily that future contingents were contingent. That is, gods knew that a free human being will either do $\alpha$ or non-$\alpha$. Proclus criticized Alexander of limiting divine omniscience and claimed instead that when gods know future contingents contingently, they know that the free

102 Steel 2007, 16.
103 Steel 2007, 47. c.13.
105 Proclus De providentia, c. 64; transl. Steel 2007, 71. See also Proclus, In Timaios 1.352, 5–16. (Quoted in Sorabji 2004, 73). According to Ammonius, this idea originated with Iamblichus. The text of Iamblichus has been lost. Opsomer & Steel 2012, 11. Within the Christian tradition, the view that God can have necessary knowledge of contingent things appeared already in Origen’s On Prayer. Sharples 1991, 27. Hoenen names the position that the mode of knowledge is determined by the subject and not by the object of knowledge as “Aristotelian-Boethian epistemological subjectivism”. Hoenen 1993, 172. On Thomas Aquinas’s use of this axiom, see Wippel 2007. Aquinas refers his reader to the authority of Boethius’s Consolatio philosophiae in his use of the principle. Wippel 2007, 115.
human being will do a – but in a contingent way. In Proclus’s understanding, contingency became a feature of solely the freely acting human being, whereas divine knowledge remained wholly necessary and unchanging. The same solution later reappeared in Boethius’s *Consolatio philosophiae* and became an important building block in medieval understandings of providence.

Divine foreknowledge still remained a mystery for the Neoplatonists: knowing contingents in an atemporal present seems to amount to determinate knowledge anyway. Why would this kind of knowledge not cancel the contingency of the known objects? The Platonists argued that divine knowledge was unlike human knowledge, but this amounts to stating a mystery, not to explaining one.

Likewise, Proclus employed the distinction between providence as eternal and divine and fate as the temporal instantiation of providence that was adopted by Boethius and in turn virtually all of his medieval followers. In addition, Proclus developed the idea of evil as a being with only diminished non-substantial existence. This idea featured importantly in Augustine’s theory of providence as well.

### 1.8 Augustine and the Christian Formulation of Divine Providence

In addition to Aristotle and Boethius’s *Consolatio philosophiae*, Augustine was the most frequently referred to authority in medieval discussions of providence. One aspect that sets Augustine’s account of providence apart from Boethius’s is the large number of scriptural quotations. Augustine held that both the Old and the New Testament testify of the reality of divine providence, whereas Boethius treated providence from a more strictly philosophical viewpoint. I will here focus on three of Augustine’s works that feature most importantly in the medieval treatments. These works include *The City of God*, *83 Questions* and the *Literal Commentary on Genesis*.

Augustine adopted an originally Stoic idea of seminal reasons (*logoi spermatikoi*), that referred to non-physical seeds of causal relations planted in the world at creation. According to the theory, the seeds were given birth and actualized later at their respective times. Augustine refers to seminal reasons in the *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, when he attempts to harmonize some problems concerning the chronology of creation in the sixth day found in the two, originally separate, accounts of creation given in *Genesis* 1–2. With the theory of seminal reasons, Augustine was able to assert that all creation took place in a single instant of time. The variety of created things was

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106 Hankey 2011, 6; Sharples 1983, 165.
107 Opsomer & Steel 2012, 16.
108 Helmig & Steel 2012, c. 3.4. See also Sharples 2009, 216.
simply not created to become actual at that same instant. In his account of creation, Augustine stresses that God is a voluntary agent and the creation of the world is based on divine choice. This is one of Augustine's major innovations in his philosophical theology, deeply influenced by Neoplatonists.

The concept of seminal reasons is closely connected to the concept of providence understood as a set of causal relations predetermined by God. It also highlights the close connection between Augustine's theories of divine providence and creation. Through seminal reasons the providential plan is implicitly inherent in the world from its very creation, even though its temporal execution takes place in time. Augustine does, however, explicitly deny the idea that God's work would be limited to creation. This is shown by his emphasis on the theory of divine conservation, closely connected to the idea of providence. Creatures, having been brought into existence from absolute nothingness (ex nihilo) are dependent on constant divine conservation in order not to vanish into nothingness.

Echoing the Peripatetic theme of providence as the preservation of species, Augustine writes in the Literal Commentary on Genesis that it would contradict Biblical teaching to suppose that God would exercise providence by the creation of new species instead of ruling the world through the species that were created in the first six days. As in other works, Augustine argues that providence extends equally to the natural world and intellectual beings, including angels and humans.

He points out that some have believed that the higher regions of the universe are controlled by providence, whereas the lower world is left to be governed by chance. He refutes this theory by quoting Psalm 148, 7–8, according to which the whole of nature acts to fulfil God's command. Thus, there cannot be anything in the natural world that would not be contained in the order of divine providence. Augustine adopts the Stoic idea that the

110 Knuuttila 2014, 81; 89. This applies to Augustine's theory of providence too. Augustine and his medieval followers stress that ultimately the order of providence is based on a divine choice and is thus caused supernaturally. The Neoplatonists, on the contrary, tended to conceptualize providence as an order that emanated from the One with natural necessity.
111 Augustine, De Genesi ad litteram 1, l 5, c. 20; 40. (transl. Taylor I p. 171).
113 John Hammond Taylor, the translator of The Literal Commentary on Genesis, is unable to identify the proponents of this theory. Augustine, De Genesi ad litteram 1, (transl. Taylor I p. 260, n. 74). It seems possible that Augustine has some earlier Peripatetic philosophers in mind. As noted, in Aristotelianism before Alexander of Aphrodisias, it was common to deny providence from the sublunary world and limit divine care to the higher spheres. See Sharples 1982, 199. In The City of God too, Augustine takes note of fortuitous events. He argues that with respect to the will of God, fortuitous causes are no different from any other causes. They are named fortuitous only insofar as they are hidden from
suitability of the parts of human body for their tasks is also evidence for rational planning. Moreover, since the human soul is evidently superior to the human body, it would be absurd to assume that providence is limited to the body and does not reach to the human psychological faculties including the will.  

Augustine distinguishes between the natural and voluntary providences of God in *The Literal Commentary on Genesis*. The whole order of natural phenomena belongs under natural providence. This includes all the natural movement of physical bodies, for example the growth of trees, and the birth and decay of humans and other living beings. The voluntary actions of rational beings, on the other hand, are contained in the voluntary providence of God. Not only morally laudable acts, but also morally neutral and evil voluntary acts constitute a part of voluntary providence. Augustine’s position remained throughout his life, however, that God is not the author of evil and is not to be blamed for human sins.

Augustine’s views on the relationship of divine providence and evil are multifaceted and went through changes and development in the course of his life. They had a major influence on medieval thinkers. Precisely the fact that Augustine expressed different views on the relationship between evil and divine providence allowed medieval authors to develop different replies to the problem and to still label all of them Augustinian. I will next introduce the aspects of Augustine’s thought on providence and evil that came to exercise the greatest influence for medieval thinkers.

The problem of the source of moral evil was treated by Augustine from his earliest writings until the end of his life. If God is not the source of evil and yet evil exists and is displeasing to God, how can the doctrine of divine omnipotence be retained? After becoming Christian, Augustine was strongly opposed to the Manichaean view that evil constitutes a formidable opponent to the good God. Augustine believed that God is not only perfectly good but also omnipotent. He held that all evils are either punishments sent by God or caused by some rational being other than God and only allowed by God for the sake of some greater good.

A well-known strand of Augustine’s thought on the reconciliation between divine providence and the existence of evil is based on the analysis of the human free will. Augustine’s celebrated view that evil as such is never an independently existing reality, but rather a privation of goodness, was based

human beings. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* V, c. 9 (Transl. Dyson p. 202). The idea that no cause is fortuitous with regard to God was universally accepted by medieval authors. At the same time, they wanted to stress the reality of fortuitous effects following Aristotle’s theory presented in *Physics II*.

Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 1, l. 5, c. 22. (transl. Taylor I p. 173–174). Aristotle had discussed the parts of animals and final causality in e.g. *Physics II*, c. 8.

Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 2, l. 8, c. 18. (transl. Taylor II p. 45–46).

on the idea of the goodness of the creation. Everything that exists is created by
God and as such is good. Thus, evil is not a positively existing being, but rather
a privation of goodness.\textsuperscript{117}

A metaphysical ground for the existence of evil in human beings was in the
fact that they had been created \textit{ex nihilo}. Since human beings are brought
about from nothingness, they still have a tendency to this nothingness that
gives rise to evil in the human will. While Augustine also acknowledged the
possibility of natural evil, such as earthquakes, his focus was clearly on the
evils based on the sinful use of free will by intellectual creatures. The only thing
that is able to choose between good and evil, or in other words, commit a sin,
is the rational will.\textsuperscript{118} Yet even sinful human volitions come under the divine
providential order through receiving just punishments. God does not cause
evil, but punishes it and it is in this sense that human sins too come under the
order of divine providence.\textsuperscript{119}

There is, however, another strand in the thought of Augustine that Rist
traces back to Stoic philosophy. The Stoics had held that many things regarded
as evil were not really evil on closer scrutiny. One who understands the true
nature of good and evil will realize that natural disasters, for example, are only
apparently evil. In the Stoic view, only morally evil human beings were really
evil. Nevertheless, even human sins can add to the beauty of the whole world
like the shadowy part of a beautiful painting. This idea can be found in
Augustine’s work too. In the late work \textit{Enchiridion}, Augustine writes that evil
that is rightly ordered in the universe will allow the good to shine more brightly
when it is compared to the evil. Being omnipotent, God is able to bring about
good even from these evils. In \textit{De civitate Dei}, too, Augustine compares the
sinners in the universe to shadows in a painting that enhance the overall

\begin{footnotes}
\item[117] Evans 1982, 34–35.
For Augustine’s ideas on predestination, see e.g. Wetzel 2001 and Rist 1994, 266–283. As is well-known,
Augustine’s mature theory of predestination was formed largely in the course of his bitter argument with
Pelagius. In Augustine’s view Pelagius’s emphasis on human free will in the process of salvation
trivialized the saving grace of God. Augustine’s opposition to Pelagius and his emphasis on grace led
Augustine to downplay the value of free will in matters considering salvation. Rist has pointed out that
Augustine most likely considered the majority of mankind doomed in all parts of his life. Only a small
number of elect were chosen to manifest the grace and goodness of God in heaven, while the majority of
mankind was justly doomed to suffer eternally for their sins. A problem that Augustine struggled with
had to do with the arbitrariness of divine salvation and damnation: what reason exactly God had for
saving one sinner and dooming another?
\item[119] Augustine, \textit{De libero arbitrio}: 1:1 “At si Deum bonum esse nosti vel credis, neque enim aliter fas
est, male non facit: rursus, si Deum iustum fatemur, nam et hoc negare sacrilegum est, ut bonis praemia,
ita supplicia malis tribuit; quae utique supplicia patientibus mala sunt. Quamobrem si nemo inuiste
poenas luit, quod necesse est credamus, quandoquidem divina providentia hoc universum regi credimus,
\textit{illius primi generis malorum nullo modo, huius autem secundi auctor est Deus.”
\end{footnotes}
beauty of the universe, even though considered in themselves, the sinners are unworthy. Rist considers the idea that evils add to the beauty of the whole “simplistic and unscrutinized”, while admitting that the idea is also present in Augustine’s most mature writings. As will be shown in the next chapter, the idea that evils add to the beauty of the whole will resurface and be further developed in several medieval authors as well, most notably in the works of Thomas Aquinas.

In the 5th book of *The City of God*, Augustine treats the compatibility between divine providence and human freedom in more detail. He argues that all human affairs, including the fates of temporal rulers and empires, fall under divine providence. Reminding of the distinction introduced in the *Literal Commentary on Genesis* between natural and voluntary providences, he argues that providence extends to both natural and voluntary causes. Augustine stresses that sins committed by freely willing men are not caused nor wanted by God in any relevant sense. Yet, having the capacity to bring good out of even seeming evils, God makes use of these sins as well by his providence. The influence of divine providence is also seen in the rewards that the good creatures receive and the punishments that are given to the evil. While Augustine does not explicitly distinguish between divine providence and the will of God in *The City of God*, the term providence seems to come up mostly in contexts having to do with order.

In *The City of God* Augustine aimed to refute the arguments against divine foreknowledge presented by Cicero in his three works concerned with the relationship between the gods and human beings: *De divinatione*, *De natura Deorum* and *De fato*. Cicero had held that human freedom and divine foreknowledge are incompatible. If God certainly foreknew human actions before they actually took place, these actions could not have been anything other than what was already foreknown by God. In order to avoid determinism and defend the human capability for morally relevant choices, Cicero denied that the gods could have foreknown the free future actions of men. Augustine argued against Cicero that to deny the foreknowledge of God is


121 Augustinus, *De civitate Dei* V, XI: “[...] nullo modo est credendus regna hominum eorumque dominationes et servitutes a suae providentiae legibus alienas esse voluisse.”


123 Pacioni 1999, 687.

124 Sharples points out that while Augustine’s reading may be considered somewhat selective, he may not be accused of actually distorting Cicero’s argument. Sharples 1991, 25.
practically the same as denying the existence of God, since a god without omniscience and foreknowledge could not be considered the true God. Augustine writes: “Thus, because he [Cicero] wished to make men free, he made them ungodly.”

Against Cicero, Augustine makes it clear that divine foreknowledge, providence and human freedom are compatible. His refutation of Cicero is built around an adaptation of the Neoplatonic understanding of the relationship between divine providence and human freedom. In this theory, God foreknows that human beings will make certain choices freely and contingently. Augustine argues that the omniscient God has knowledge of all the efficient causes and their effects before these effects take place. Since free human volitions play a major part in the causal network, according to the definition of omniscience, God must have foreknowledge of these free volitions too. The will remains the efficient cause of human volitions and actions even though its activity is foreknown by God. Furthermore, God cannot be said to impede the freedom of human beings, since as the creator of human wills God is the one who gives power to human wills in the first place.

Yet, Augustine comments that sinful human volitions do not come from God, being no more than perversions of the power that God had created.

In *The City of God*, Augustine stresses that Christians should not attribute independent causal powers to the celestial bodies nor the stars. This is worth pointing out since, as will be seen, several medieval theologians followed Aristotle who, on the contrary, saw the celestial bodies as exercising important causal agency in the sublunar world, too. It is unclear, whether Augustine’s criticisms were directed consciously against the Peripatetics. It should be noted that Augustine refers to the Aristotelian theory of chance events as uncaused in the same chapter where he criticizes those who have attributed independent causality to the stars. This allows room for speculation whether the whole chapter is written against Peripatetic philosophers. Augustine famously argued against both the view that stars would have independent causal powers as well as the position that stars signify forthcoming events through the example of twins who, despite being born at virtually the same time...
time, often lead totally different lives. Augustine’s own advice is that one should speak of fate only if the word fate is used to refer to the will of God.

Another important source for the medieval discussions of the relationship between chance events and divine providence was Augustine’s 24th question in his work *83 Questions*. In this question Augustine first points out an apparent problem concerning the reconciliation of providence and chance events. He writes: “Whatever happens by chance happens without design. Whatever happens without design does not happen due to Providence. If therefore some things in the world happen by chance, then not all the world is governed by Providence.” In order to show that this syllogism is not valid and that divine providence is in reality all-reaching, Augustine argues that existing things are good only insofar as they participate in the immutable good. The only thing that is not good by participation but rather in itself is the immutable good that is called divine providence. Thus, in this brief question, Augustine aims to show that the foundational Neoplatonic idea that being as such is good may be considered a proof of the all-reaching nature of divine providence. Anything that exists is good and things are good only through participation in God’s providence. Therefore, there could not be anything in existence that would not participate in divine providence. He also takes note of the idea, also contained in *The City of God*, that both human merits and sins come under the influence of divine providence through the divine order of reward and punishment that is in turn based on free human choices. The idea that sins as such are not determined by providence, but come under its influence through setting a condition for concomitant effects determined by providence is reminiscent of the theory of conditional fate developed by the Middle Platonists. According to the theory of conditional fate, human choices as such are not fated, but they set a condition for a later consequence which will be fated. In Augustine’s theory of sin, God has determined a punishment for evil actions that rational agents freely commit.

In sum, it may be said that for Augustine divine foreknowledge extends to both meritorious as well as sinful human volitions that remain wholly free despite their being foreknown. Meritorious volitions are, in addition, derived from divine providence, since the very human will, capable of being used for good, has been provided by God. Sinful human volitions, on the other hand, come under the influence of providence through receiving a punishment either in this life or in the afterlife. The fact that human sins *qua* evil volitions are not included in providence in as strong a sense as meritorious volitions does not really restrict the scope of providence for Augustine. This is due to his theory

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129 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* V, c. 1 (Transl. Dyson p. 187–189). The only Aristotelian work that Augustine had with certainty read was *Categories*. He did have more knowledge of Aristotle’s ideas through e.g. Cicero and the numerous Neoplatonic works that he had read. Tkacz 1999, 58.

130 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* V, c. 9 (Transl. Dyson p. 201).

131 Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, q. XXIV.

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of evil as a privation of good. Not having influence over something that does not really have positive existence does not limit the power of an omnipotent agent.

1.9 Boethius’s Consolation of Philosophy

Boethius’s well-known work, *The Consolation of Philosophy (Consolatio philosophiae)*, had a considerable impact on medieval thought in general and on the topic of divine providence in particular. While Boethius explicitly treats the topic of providence in depth in the fourth and fifth books of *The Consolation*, the whole work is set in a context closely related to divine providence. Boethius, writing in the first person, is in prison waiting to be executed and demands to know why it is that the good must suffer while the evil prosper. Two Platonic ideas encountered above feature centrally in Boethius’s treatment of providence. These ideas are: 1. the distinction between providence as the eternal and unchanging disposition of causes, and fate as the temporal instantiation of providence and 2. the idea that it is the mode of the knower and not the mode of the thing known that determines the mode of the knowledge-relation.

Boethius discusses the distinction between fate and providence in the fourth and fifth books of *The Consolation*. This distinction is thoroughly adopted from the Neoplatonists Plotinus, Iamblichus and Proclus (who in turn had inherited it from the Middle Platonists). Boethius transmitted the distinction between providence and fate to the medieval authors, who almost unanimously repeat the distinction, referring to the authority of Boethius. Boethius’s use of the distinction is similar to the earlier Platonists: he uses it to explain how the immutable and timeless God can have knowledge of what is changing and temporal. In his earlier commentary on Aristotle’s *De interpretatione*, Boethius had argued that some causes found in nature must be completely undetermined in order to avoid the all-reaching determinism posited by the Stoics. Yet in the *Consolation* Boethius writes that from the viewpoint of theology and divine providence no effect whatsoever is absolutely fortuitous. In other words, Boethius stressed the contingency and randomness of chance events with regard to their natural causes even though at the same time chance events too were predetermined with regard to divine providence.

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132 Gelber rightly notes that on the topic of divine providence *The Consolation* was the most important ancient source for scholastic theologians. Gelber 2010, 761

133 Hankey 2011, 16.

The second Neoplatonic idea that Boethius adapts comes up in the best-known part of the *Consolation*, that is, Boethius’s reconciliation of divine foreknowledge and human freedom. Boethius draws attention to the eternity of God. According to Boethius, God, being outside our temporal order, sees the effects of all natural and free causes happening in a single instant of eternity. In the created and temporal sphere this does not entail necessity on our freely willed actions. Because God is outside the temporal order, he views all the events in the created world happening as present and not future. Boethius distinguishes between two types of necessity, unqualified necessity (*necessitas simplex*) and conditional necessity (*necessitas conditionis*). For example, if one sees a man walking at some time $t$, it is necessary at $t$ that the man is walking, given the condition that he really is walking. This is because change is not possible in an instant.\(^{135}\) On the other hand, the same man, being a free rational agent, could have remained standing at the time $t$ and thus the fact that he walks is not necessary in an unqualified way. The point of the example is that the observer’s cognition of the man does not have any causally necessitating force on him. Analogously, God’s vision of human beings’ actions does not necessitate these actions because from God’s perspective these actions are cognized as present.

Now we are in the position to recognize that Boethius’s argument based on divine timelessness is an application of the Neoplatonic principle that the mode of the knower, and not the thing known, determines the nature of the knowledge-relation. God, being outside time, may have non-temporal knowledge of things that are in time. Sharples points out that the main building blocks of Boethius’s reconciliation of human freedom and divine omniscience in book V of *The Consolation* are all found in the earlier Neoplatonists. In addition to God’s timelessness, understood as God being in an everlasting present moment, these building blocks include the distinction between unqualified and conditional necessity and the principle that the mode of the knower determines the mode of the knowledge-relation. However, Boethius was the first thinker to combine these originally separate theories to explicate the nature of divine omniscience. The earlier Neoplatonic idea that the gods know contingent future events necessarily according to their own mode of being does not really explain how the future may remain contingent regardless of this necessary precognition. Boethius’s emphasis on divine knowledge operating in an eternal present is thus an important addition to the earlier attempts to explain the simultaneity of divine omniscience and the contingency of the future.\(^{136}\)

\(^{135}\) Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae*, V, prosa 6. Boethius had discovered the idea of the necessity of the present in Aristotle’s *De interpretatione*. In prosa 6 Boethius offers his well-known definition of eternity: “aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio”.

\(^{136}\) Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae*, V, prosa 4: “Cuius erroris causa est quod omnia quae quisque novit ex ipsorum tantum vi atque natura cognosci aestimat quae sciantur. Quod totum contra est; omne
One ambiguous theme in *The Consolation* has to do with what might be called the epistemological and causal aspects of providence. On the one hand, the Latin *providentia* can be taken to mean seeing (*videre*) something before it happens. Understood in this way *providentia* becomes synonymous with foreknowledge, more commonly named *praescientia* or *praevidentia* in the medieval theological tradition. Another way to look at things is to distinguish between *pro-videntia* and *prae-videntia*, so that the latter receives the more epistemological meaning of foreknowledge, whereas the “pro” of the former is interpreted to have a causal connotation (to see on behalf of something). It seems that in *The Consolation*, Boethius does not at all times distinguish between the epistemological and the causal aspects of providence.\(^{137}\)

In the fourth book of *The Consolation* Boethius describes divine providence as the efficient cause of all events. If providence is the efficient cause of all events, what space remains for human freedom? In philosophy today compatibilists consider external determination compatible with human freedom and moral responsibility. Boethius held, however, that human beings must be free in a way that their choices are not causally determined by anything external in order to remain responsible for their actions.\(^{138}\) The strategy employed by Alexander of Aphrodisias had been to conceptualize providence as a final cause rather than an efficient cause. In the third book of *The Consolation* Boethius appears to take this route instead.\(^{139}\) The fact that Boethius in the end defined providence rather loosely and did not clearly distinguish between the epistemological and causal aspects of providence, nor did he strictly categorize providence as an efficient or a final cause, left room for discussion about the nature of providence in the late Middle Ages.

### 1.10 Boethius on Causality

Boethius aimed to write commentaries on all the surviving works of Plato and Aristotle. This project was left largely unfinished at the time of his death in c. 526. Boethius only managed to produce translations and commentaries of...
Aristotle’s logical works. Thus, he did not have the time to publish commentaries on *Physics* or *Metaphysics*, the most important Aristotelian works for the topic of divine providence. He does, however, discuss causality and the sources of contingency in his two commentaries on *De interpretatione*. In these works, Boethius starts from the assumption that contingency is real and causal determinism is false. Boethius also accepted the Aristotelian modal paradigm according to which all genuine possibilities are sometimes realized in order not to exist in vain. He held, however, that this rule applies with reference to species and not to individuals. Boethius refers to the Aristotelian example of a cloth that may either be cut up or wear out. Determinism may thus be avoided with regard to natural causes too, since at least some of the natural causes remain undetermined with respect to different alternative outcomes.

Boethius admitted the reality of chance and even considers it in some sense to be a basis for contingency in addition to the categories of possibility (possibilitas or *ad utrumlibet*) and free choice. Boethius’s understanding of chance events was heavily influenced by Aristotle. He agreed with Aristotle that the occurrence of chance consists in the unintended outcome of a free agent acting intentionally. Boethius refers to Aristotle’s example of someone digging a trench and accidentally running into a hidden treasure. Thus the proper cause of the finding of the treasure is the same as that of digging the trench: a decision of free choice. Chance is said to be the accidental cause of finding of the treasure due to the fact that the digger did not intend to find the treasure. Chance events may also be analysed as the meeting of individual causal chains. Even in this case, however, an act of choice, not necessitated by any preceding causes, is required for a chance event to take place.

Boethius’s later account of chance differed from Aristotle. Boethius writes that in the final analysis there is nothing that would not proceed from a “legitimate” cause. Rather than being uncaused, a chance event is something that happens outside the intention of the agent. Boethius’s idea, presented in

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140 See e.g. Marenbon 2016, c. 2.

141 Kretzmann 1985, 28. According to Kretzmann, Boethius held that all the natural causes were necessarily ordered to their one proper effect and thus the only genuine source for contingency was human choice. Kretzmann notes that in his commentaries on *De interpretatione*, Boethius mostly leaves God as the possible source of contingency out of discussion. In this regard the approach taken in *Consolatio philosophiae* is quite different. Kretzmann 1985 33–35. Boethius retained the Aristotelian notion of a cause *ad utrumlibet* that is not internally necessitated to some given outcome. Knuuttila has argued against Kretzmann that Boethius’s understanding of nature thus contains some amount of contingency in itself that is not reducible to acts of human or divine free will. Knuuttila 1993, 51; 57.

142 Knuuttila 1993, 46–47.

143 This example was very often repeated and commented in the medieval treatments of chance events. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* V c. 30, 1025a15–1025a24.

the fifth book of the _Consolatio philosophiae_ is that in the final analysis chance events are not totally random, because they fall under the all-reaching causality of divine providence.\(^{145}\) This idea was particularly influential for the medieval tradition, where the idea that nothing is chance with respect to the First Cause became standard.

### 1.11 John of Damascus

John of Damascus (c. 676–749) was a Syrian monk who wrote a number of influential Greek theological treatises. For the topic of providence, John’s most important work was _An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith_ ( _De fide orthodoxa_), translated into Latin in the 12\(^{th}\) century. The medieval authors often referred to John’s exposition of providence, even though it expresses some views somewhat different from the Augustinian-Boethian tradition. This will become visible in the medieval tradition, where several authors refer to John’s apparently problematic ideas in their initial arguments.

Quoting Nemesius of Emesa, John argues that providence is on the one hand divine care for existing things and on the other hand the same as God’s will. He stresses divine perfection and notes that the world must have one single creator and provider. Both a perfect creator who was not capable of exercising providence, as well as a perfect provider who was not capable of creating would remain imperfect beings.\(^{146}\) John interestingly writes that human actions, that is the actions dependent on us, are outside the sphere of providence.\(^{147}\) This is something that Augustine and Boethius, influenced by the Neoplatonic tradition, would have certainly disagreed with, as the medieval authors were quick to point out. In the final analysis, John thinks our

\(^{145}\) Kuuntilla 1993, 50.

\(^{146}\) John of Damascus, _De fide orthodoxa_ l. II, c. 43; 1 (ed. Buytaert, p. 155–156): “‘Providentia igitur est quae ex Deo ad existentia fit cura’. Et rursus ‘providentia est voluntas Dei, propter quam omnia quae sunt convenientem ductionem suspiciunt. Si autem Dei voluntas est providentia, omnino necesse est’ omnia quae providentia sunt, ‘secundum rectam rationem et optima et Deo decentissima fieri, et ut non est melius fieri. Necesse est enim eundem esse factorem esse universorum, aliun autem provisorem’ Ita enim in inbecillitate omnino sunt uterque: hic autem providendi. Deus igitur est et factor et provisor, sed et factiva eius virtut et contentiva et provisiva bona eius voluntas est.”

good actions too are dependent on divine co-operation, whereas human sins follow upon a desertion of God.\textsuperscript{148}

John refers to the distinction, later famously used by Thomas Aquinas and others, between God’s antecedent will of good pleasure and God’s consequent will of permission. Evil human actions do not depend on either the antecedent or the consequent will of God, but rather purely on the corrupt human will. John stresses that God has, however, the power to make use of evil created things too, as is shown, for example, in the Gospel account of the demons and the pigs (Matt. 8, 28–34). John’s point is that even though human sins are in no way willed by God and wholly outside God’s providential order, nevertheless God can use the sins to advance his plan for the creation.\textsuperscript{149} This view was also encountered in Augustine, and will feature centrally in the medieval discussions on divine providence.

\textsuperscript{148} John of Damascus, \textit{De fide orthodoxa} l. II, c. 43; 6 (ed. Buytaert, p. 158–159): “Oportet autem scire quoniam “electio quidem operationum in nobis est”; finis autem bonarum quidem Dei cooperationis, iuste cooperantis praeelegantibus bonum recta conscientia secundum praecognitionem eius; malarum autem derelictionis Dei rursus secundum praecognitionem eius iuste derelinquentis.”

2 DIVINE PROVIDENCE FROM ALEXANDER OF HALES TO SIGER OF BRABANT

2.1 Accidental Causality, Free Choice and Evil

Divine causality was discussed by the medieval theologians under the rubric of several independent doctrines. All the authors studied in this work held that providence worked through an order of secondary natural causes. This sets the theology of providence apart from the theology of salvation, for example. The salvation or damnation of any given individual was based solely on divine causality. The realization of the providential order, on the other hand, was founded on the co-operation between divine and created causality. While this order was certainly based on divine disposition, its practical implementation was carried out by the total order of causes (connexio causarum). In this sense, divine providence was conceptualized in a natural philosophical framework.

One of the foundational themes in Aristotelian natural philosophy, the notion of causality, was central to the medieval discussions concerning divine providence. According to Aristotle, causes come in four distinct types: material, formal, efficient and final.1 From the perspective of this study, the last two are of greater importance than the material and formal causes. As shown in the previous chapter, Boethius’s Consolatio philosophiae was of crucial importance for the medieval theories of divine providence. Boethius’s understanding of providence contained elements of both efficient and final causality.2 Meanwhile in Averroes’s influential interpretation of Aristotle, divine providence was seen exclusively as a final cause, whereas the efficient causality of God was not considered to be of direct relevance for the topic. Averroes claimed explicitly that what he set forth was nothing else than Aristotle’s own doctrine of divine providence.3 Thus, the Latin authors, being educated in universities permeated by Aristotelian philosophy, were drawn to consider the exegetical question of whether Averroes’s interpretation of the so-called Aristotelian doctrine of providence was trustworthy, in addition to determining the theological question concerning the nature of this doctrine in accordance with the faith of the church.

Aristotle’s discussions of chance events and the final causality of nature were considered important by the medieval Latin commentators.4 The two

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1 See e.g. Falcon 2015.
2 Marenbon 2016, c. 5.
3 Taylor 2008, 189
4 Jan Aertsen has stressed that the medieval Christian view of nature was marked by its emphasis on the rational determination of nature. With regard to the First Cause, most Christian writers denied
Aristotelian texts that came to be particularly important for the medieval discussions on divine providence are *Physics* II, 4–6 and *Metaphysics* VI, 3. According to Aristotle there are genuinely chance events that are not completely reducible to preceding *per se* causes. A position like this seems difficult to reconcile with all-reaching divine providence, if divine providence was to be understood as a *per se* cause of all existing things. To overcome such problems, a common interpretation since the time of Alexander of Aphrodisias had come to be that according to Aristotle divine providence is not concerned with individual beings but rather with the species of beings. This kind of view of providence helps solve the philosophical problems in reconciling chance events and divine providence. According to Aristotle, chance and fortune come about only in singular events. Therefore, if the sphere of providence is limited to the level of species, events on the level of individual beings have no bearing whatsoever on the infallibility of divine providence. This Alexandrian interpretation of providence was known to the Latin writers mainly through Averroes.

In Aristotle’s causal theory, proper causes cause their effects always or in most cases. When a proper cause fails to produce its effect, chance or fortune is named as the accidental cause of this unusual outcome. This general framework of causality and the existence of chance events understood in Aristotle’s sense went unquestioned in 13th-century scholasticism. Yet the relationship between chance events and divine providence had been problematized by an authority of no less importance than Augustine. This problem will resurface in most of the medieval authors discussed in this study. As I noted in the first chapter of this work, the problem itself dates back to ancient philosophy. Augustine was, however, the immediate source of it for the medieval Christian writers. Augustine had claimed in the 24th question of his work *83 Questions* that:

> Whatever happens by chance happens without design. Whatever happens without design does not happen due to Providence. If therefore some things in the world happen by chance, then not all the world is governed by Providence.

In this chapter, I will study the relationship of divine providence and medieval natural philosophy from Alexander of Hales to Siger of Brabant. I will focus on three major questions in this and the following chapter of my work. The first question concerns the reconciliability between *divine providence and contingency*. This question can be divided into two separate problems. The first concerns the relationship between divine providence and chance events, namely contingency found in natural causes. If chance events

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the reality of chance events. At the same time with regard to particular causes, chance events were considered real. Aertsen 1988, 134–135.

are actually seen as random and unknowable, as Aristotle writes in *Physics*, how is it possible that divine providence would extend to them? According to Aristotle chance is something indeterminate and unknowable, because the number of individual causes working together in chance events may be infinite. On the other hand, how do the various authors examined reconcile divine providence with the contingency based on the choices of intellectual agents? If divine providence is infallible and extends to everything, including human choices, how may human freedom remain as anything more than a fluke? This question was explicitly treated by virtually all the medieval theologians, and as noted in the previous chapter assumed a central place in the debates of the Hellenistic schools as well as in Augustine and Boethius. The medieval discussions had their starting points in these late ancient theories. My second question in the current and following chapter is whether divine providence is conceptualized as *immediate or mediated* in one way or another by creatures. Like question one, this question is also familiar from the background chapter. The development and criticism of the so-called Aristotelian theory of providence formed an important part of the medieval discussions on providence. In the scholastics’ understanding, the Aristotelian theory of providence asserted that God as a simple being caused only one necessary effect, that in turn acted as the efficient cause for the subsequent

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6 Aristotle, *Physics* II c. 5: “Infinitas quidem igitur causas necesse est esse a quibus utique fiat quidem est a fortuna. Unde videtur fortuna infiniti esse et immanifesta homini.” See e.g. Anonymous, *Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna*, q. 4; 78v: “Item illud proprie et solum est causa bonae fortunae, cuius solius causalitas ad infinita se extendit. Et hoc probatur quia bona fortuna attenditur respectu eorum, quae possibilitia sunt coniungi per accidens effectibus per se intentis, quae infinita sunt, ut patet 2. Physicorum. Talia autem non sunt nisi a causa infinitiae virtutis. Sed Deus solus est infinitae virtutis, vt patet 8. Physicorum et ex commento 78 et 79, et 12 Metaphysicae et ex commento 41. Ipse igitur solus est causa bonae fortunae.” Anonymous probably found this idea from Henry of Ghent’s question on good fortune, which he shows himself to be familiar with. Henry of Ghent *Quodlibet VI* q. 10 (p.117): “[…] infinita accidentaliter connexa praevidere, sive circa unum effectum per se intentum ab aliquo sive circa plures, et per se illa connectere non potest nisi agens providentiae sive praevidentiae infinitiae, cuismodi non est nisi solus Deus, cuius virtus est universalis et per se respectu omnium effectuum generaliter” Boethius had a significant impact on the Christian understanding of chance events. In *Consolatio philosophiae*, he stressed that all chance events are inevitable, considered in their relation to divine providence. Meanwhile, in his earlier commentaries on Aristotle’s *De interprettatione* he stressed that some natural causes, as well as human free will, are not reducible to previous necessitating causes. Knuuttila 1993, 49–51.

7 The question of the immediacy of the effects brought about by the First Cause also features importantly in the Parisian condemnations of 1277. See e.g. propositions 54 (67) “Quod primum principium non potest immediate producere generabilia, quia sunt effectus noui. Effectus autem nouus exigit causam immediatam que potest aliter se habere.” (Piché 1999, 96) and 61 (70) “Quod deus possit agere contraria, hoc est, mediante corpore celesti, quod est diuersum in ubi.” (Piché 1999, 98). Robiglio 2004, 53.
effects. Contingency and plurality are then born in the later steps of this emanation. In general, it may be argued that the earlier authors up to around the time of Thomas Aquinas, treat the Aristotelian theory of providence with a much less critical attitude than the later scholastics. Around the time of Henry of Ghent, the Aristotelian theory (identified also e.g. with Avicenna and Averroes) is started to be seen as outright heresy from the viewpoint of the Catholic faith.8

The third question concerns the reconciliation between divine providence and evil. How is the existence of evils to be reconciled with divine providence? If God is good and omnipotent, and all things fall under the influence of divine providence, why does God allow evils including human sins and natural disasters, such as floods and hurricanes that cause human suffering, to occur?9 This question is, of course, better known as the problem of evil or the problem of theodicy. In this work I will limit myself to studying the problem of evil with a special emphasis on divine providence: how the existence of evil can be reconciled with the doctrine of divine providence in the medieval texts that are directly concerned with divine providence?10 I shall propose that in these texts two partially overlapping strategies concerning the reconciliation of divine providence and evils can be detected. I will label these strategies the accidental strategy and the instrumental strategy.

a) According to the accidental strategy evils, especially human sins, are outside providence qua evils. God’s creates rational agents capable of free choice because of their inherent value for the creation. As a non-intended and an accidental side effect, some of these rational agents commit sins that are not a part of the providential plan as such. They do, however come under the order of providence through receiving a punishment later and for this reason the all-pervasiveness of divine providence is safeguarded.11 The accidental

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8 A highly interesting, but relatively little studied work concerned with the history of this question, is the Pseudo-Aristotelian Liber de bona fortuna. The medieval texts focusing on this text form a relatively unified whole, and will for this reason be treated in more detail in chapter 4.
9 It should be pointed out that in the sources I have read, the question regarding the relationship between divine providence and human sin is by far more prominent than the question of why God allows the natural evils.
10 An overview of the status and the various answers offered concerning the problem of evil in medieval philosophical theology would require studying a wide variety of texts on, for example, the divine will, creation, moral psychology, the ontology of evil, and is thus beyond the scope of this study. On the problem of evil, particularly in Aquinas, see Stump 2011, 2010 & 2003, 455–478.
11 This solution is in some parts reminiscent of the theory of conditional fate developed in the Middle Platonic school and mainly came to be known in the late Middle Ages through the influence of Augustine. As seen in the previous chapter, according to the Middle Platonic theory of conditional fate, human actions as such are not fated, but they do set a condition for an outcome of the action that in turn is fated.
strategy puts great stress on the human capacity for free choice, since human sins as such are seen to remain outside the order of divine providence. God has the capacity, however, to bring forth good consequences even from these sins. Nevertheless, the actual sinful choice is attributed to the human agent, while divine omnipotence is protected by pointing out that even human sins are permitted by God.

b) The instrumental strategy asserts that all created evils including sins are a part of God’s providential plan. This raises the obvious counter argument that it seems to make God an author of evil and thus contradicts the principle of God’s perfect goodness. According to the followers of this strategy, God is not a particular provider, however, on whose part singular evil outcomes would imply impotency or lack of goodness. Rather, God is a universal provider who may allow for particular evils, in order to maximize the goodness and well-being of the whole. In this strategy, evils are seen as something like shadows in a painting that contribute to the overall beauty of the whole picture. It is thus reminiscent of Leibniz’s well-known ideas of the perfection of the world. The most notable difference in the medieval theories and Leibniz is, however, that the medievals did not attempt to argue for the perfection of the created world, but rather for the perfection of divine goodness and providence, despite the limited goodness of the created world.

It must be pointed out that the two strategies have many shared traits. In both of the strategies, God has the ability to make good out of evil. In both the accidental and the instrumental strategies, God is seen as permitting some evils for the sake of the good of the whole. As noted in the previous chapter, strands of both strategies are present in the thought of Augustine. In all the medieval authors, the Augustinian principle that God is not the author of evil and not capable of evil due to his essential goodness naturally still stands.

The important difference between the two strategies is this: in the accidental strategy the existence of human freedom is seen as such a valuable end that God may allow some evils, consequent on the deficient use of human free will, that will later be rectified through just punishments. In the instrumental strategy, on the other hand, particular evil actions have a positive

Similarly, in the accidental strategy sinful human actions are not decreed by God, but come under divine influence through being rectified by a punishment that is decreed by God.

12 The idea that God makes good out of evil by rectifying human sins through just punishments comes up again and again in the medieval sources. It should be pointed out that the medieval authors did not consider the notion of punishment, or even an eternal punishment, problematic from a moral perspective. The suffering inflicted on the morally evil human beings in hell was thought to advance the overall goodness of the universe. This is a clear locus where medieval philosophical and moral intuitions differ from modern views.
function in themselves. God uses particular evils as a tool in order to achieve the greatest good for the whole of creation. The particular evil actions are evil considered on the lower levels of causation, but from the divine viewpoint their evilness is only apparent. Rather, from the viewpoint of divine providence they are necessary parts for achieving the universal good. Thus, both strategies agree that the existence of some particular evils is good for the whole. In the accidental strategy the particular evil actions are an accidental and non-intended by-product of the perfection of the world requiring human freedom. On the contrary, in the instrumental strategy at least some of the particular evil actions are a means to an end in the divine plan.13

In a closer look at the sources, I will pay attention to whether the two models appear side by side, or whether one model is favoured above the other by the author in question. If both models are employed, a further question must be asked whether the author in question attempts to explicitly reconcile the two models, or simply uses them side by side without any recognition of the tension between them.

2.2 Avicenna and Averroes on Providence and Causality

Before moving to a discussion of the Latin authors, I will briefly look into Avicenna’s and Averroes’s discussions on divine providence that were highly influential in the Latin world – despite some of their problematic theological implications.14 The Latin discussions of chance events and providence were influenced by certain ideas adopted from the Arabic Peripatetic philosophers, Avicenna and Averroes. Avicenna had given the concept of necessity a central place in his metaphysics. According to his well-known idea, everything that exists is either necessary in itself or necessary through another. As an uncaused being, God is the only being necessary through itself and being necessary through another is equivalent to being caused. Thus, according to

13 In contemporary philosophy of religion, Alvin Plantinga has famously defended the view that God could not eliminate all the evil in the world without eliminating the freedom and moral responsibility of rational agents. The value of the existence of such agents is so great that God’s choice of allowing the evils committed by these rational agents is justified. Plantinga 1977. This idea that the freedom of rational agents is so valuable for the creation that some evils ought to be permitted, receives an important role in the accidental strategy too. Views reminiscent of the instrumental strategy have been developed in contemporary philosophy of religion as well. The similarity between the contemporary idea that evil is defeasible and the medieval instrumental strategy is in acknowledging that the same human act may be good as caused by God, but evil as caused by the human being. The instrumental strategy puts less stress, however, on the moral development of the human being. See section 8 in Mccann 2017.

14 Akasoy notes that the polemical attitude towards Islam, among the Latin theologians, did not have a major significance on the appreciation of the Arabic philosophical works. Akasoy 2011, 92.
Avicenna, the relationship of an effect to its cause is always necessary and never merely possible.

Avicenna held that only God exists of necessity. Meanwhile, finite beings ultimately received their capacity for existence from the emanation of God. Considered in themselves, the finite beings have no potential for existence, but rather for non-existence. An influential aspect of Avicenna’s causal theory was that in relation to its cause, every effect was considered necessary. In other words, everything that was actually caused was necessarily what it was and actual existence thus became equated with necessity. Some of Avicenna’s modern interpreters, such as Catarina Belo in her monograph *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes* have held that upholding this principle makes Avicenna a causal determinist.

An Avicennian principle that became highly important in the medieval Latin discussions of divine providence, is that from one simple thing, acting as a cause, only one effect can proceed (*ab uno simplici non est nisi unum*). This principle will resurface a number of times in the progress of this study. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to it as “the *ab uno* principle” in the upcoming pages. The historical background of the *ab uno* principle is in Neoplatonic metaphysics of emanation. The Neoplatonists held that the first principle of being, the One, is utterly simple and transcendent. In itself it lacks any metaphysical complexity. Yet, the One potentially contains all the possible things, which cannot remain unactualized. Thus, the lower stages emanate from the One with natural necessity. The first emanation is the emanation of the Intellect from the One. Because of the utter simplicity of the One, it cannot directly cause a variety of lower principles or emanations. Rather, the Intellect is the only thing that could possibly emanate from the One, and it proceeds from the One necessarily. In turn, the lower, metaphysically complex, structures are derived from the One through stages of successive emanations.

Accepting the doctrine of God’s absolute simplicity, several Christian thinkers, too, found the *ab uno* principle philosophically intriguing.

With regard to divine providence, the *ab uno* principle implied that God or the First Mover, due to his utter simplicity, may not cause a multitude of diverse effects. Rather, the causal effect of God must be one, simple and unchanging. The acceptance or denial of this principle thus in effect determines whether metaphysically simple God is seen as an agent acting through natural necessity, or as a voluntary agent having the capacity to choose between alternatives. The *ab uno* principle was adapted from the Neoplatonists to Islamic philosophical theology by al-Farabi and Avicenna in order to emphasize divine unicity. The immediate source of this principle for

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16 Knuuttila 1993, 36–37; Gerson 2012, c. 2; Wildberg 2016, c. 2.
17 For Avicenna’s use of the *ab uno* principle, see e.g. McGinnis 2010, 204–205.
the Latin authors was Avicenna. It was common to think in the Middle Ages that Aristotle held that the first cause did not immediately participate in the effects of the secondary causes, but rather only through the mediation of intermediate causes that were hierarchically below the first cause. In practice, the authors studied in this work understood the ab uno principle to imply that God could influence the sublunary world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies. In what follows, I will use the designation ab uno principle in both the more general sense that from one only one can proceed, and the more specific sense that God cannot cause new effects in the sublunary world except through the mediation of the celestial bodies.

The name of Averroes came up in Latin discussions of divine providence mainly with regard to his view that divine providence is limited to the care of species and does not extend to individuals as such. The Latin theologians came to know this position of Alexander of Aphrodisias through the works of Averroes. Often the Averroistic understanding of providence was simply taken to be Aristotle’s position as well. Averroes discussed divine providence both in his commentaries on Aristotle and in his theological works. The influence of the commentaries was most significant to Latin discussions, whereas the theological works of Averroes were not widely read in the Latin world. Nevertheless, according to Taylor, Averroes’s theological description of providence is largely affirmed in his long commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics.

Averroes agreed with Aristotle that God as a perfect being must be concerned with thinking about a perfect object, that is, his own goodness. Any knowledge that God has of things other than himself must come from God’s knowledge of himself. God does not move nor create the celestial spheres as an efficient cause. Since the world and the spheres are eternal, there is no need

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18 Hankey 2007, 6; 10. Hankey notes several passages of Aristotle where a similar principle is at play. See especially Physics (250a 18-19, translatio Arabico-Latina): “Illud autem, quod est non motum, quia est sicut diximus simplex, et permanens in eadem dispositione, movet uno motu simplici.” (Quoted in Hankey 2007, 8.) According to Maimonides, this principle was agreed upon by all the previous philosophers he was aware of. Hankey 2007, 7. For a brief description of Avicenna’s metaphysics of emanation and the ab uno principle, see Wippel 1990, 74–76.

19 Bos 1992, 177.

20 For example, Henry of Ghent in his Quodlibet VI q. 10 considered the theory of providence where divine guidance is limited to the level of species to be Aristotle’s theory. Wilson 2014, 600–602. I will return to Henry’s question in greater detail in chapter 4 of this work. Sharples points out (quoting Fazzo and Wiesner) that some Arabic sources refer to a work of Aristotle titled On Providence. Alexander of Aphrodisias’s description of his theory as that of Aristotle probably led some readers to believe that Alexander was actually quoting an authentic Aristotelian work. Sharples 2002, 12.


22 Taylor 2014, 471.
to posit an efficient cause for them. Rather, God is the final cause of their movement, insofar as they strive to imitate the divine being as perfectly as they are able to. Likewise, species existing in the sublunary world seek perfection and order and take the orderly celestial movement as their final end. Thus, an individual human being, say Socrates, striving to perfect his humanity also falls under the influence and power of divine providence, although strictly speaking God does not intend anything at all regarding individuals. Averroes endorsed Aristotle’s view that the species existing now have always existed and will always exist. That is to say, the species are eternal and necessary. The order found in the species existing in the sublunary world is based on imitation of the celestial spheres and God, albeit only in a mediated sense. Limiting the influence of divine providence to the eternal species allowed Averroes to avoid one of the central philosophical problems pertaining to divine providence: How could the eternal and necessary providence of God include temporal and contingent beings and events? In Averroes’s interpretation of Aristotle there was nothing more to divine providence than the conservation of the species that were considered eternal. Averroes explicitly denied that God would deliberate or make choices like human beings do. In human beings, judgement and choice between alternatives implies that the agent is lacking something, whereas God lacks nothing. Averroes denies that God would be a voluntary or natural agent in the univocal sense in which these terms are attributed to the natural world.23

There are thus two central features in Averroes’s philosophical doctrine of providence: the denial of the divine providence of particular beings and the emphasis on the idea that divine providence works exclusively through final causality. Averroes did not understand divine causality in terms of efficient causation like Avicenna had done in upholding the ab uno principle. Rather, in Averroes’s theory, divine final causality reaches all created things as God acts as the perfect exemplar and final end for the lower beings.24 In his mature works, Averroes rejected Avicenna’s emanationist model of divine causality that he had found appealing in his earlier works. Unlike natural causes that are determined to one natural effect in their causal activity, God’s unique causality grounds the being of all existing things.25 Instead of causing only one effect, for Averroes, God simultaneously causes the totality of movement in the world, which acts as the final end of the celestial intellects.26 The rotation of the heavens makes the birth and continuity of living things possible, but Averroes stresses that this is not the primary intention of the heavens. Averroes cites approvingly the principle that greater things do not exist for the sake of lesser things. Rather, the heavens rule the sublunary realm because of

24 Taylor 2014, 460–461
26 Belo 2007, 193.
their perfection.\textsuperscript{27} Similarly, God exists for his own sake and for the sake of lower things, ruling and directing the heavens on account of his perfect being. This is not, however, what God primarily intends. Rather, God’s primary intention is to remain in his own perfection and goodness. God’s providence for the lower world comes about from God remaining in his perfect being but this is intended by God only secondarily.\textsuperscript{28}

Averroes’s understanding of the relationship between causes and effects differed from Avicenna in one important respect. As noted, for Avicenna the relationship between cause and its effect was always necessary. Although some things were for Avicenna contingent \textit{in se}, they nevertheless became necessitated through being caused. In Averroes’s causal theory the focus shifted from the effect to the type of cause in question. Averroes thought that if an effect was brought about by a contingent cause, it remained contingent even after being actualized. The medieval authors inherited these two unique ways of analysing the modal statuses of causes and effects. In general, the Averroistic way of distinguishing between types of causes was more important in most 13\textsuperscript{th}-century authors, as will become clear on the pages below.\textsuperscript{29}

\section*{2.3 Alexander of Hales and Summa Halensis}

Alexander of Hales (c. 1180–1245) was an early Franciscan theologian. In his \textit{Quaestiones disputatae “antequam esset frater”} Alexander treats the topics of predestination, divine foreknowledge and human freedom, making some interesting claims about the concepts of necessity and contingency in the process.

Alexander aims to tackle the old problem concerning the reconcilability between necessary divine omniscience and the contingency of created things. He notes that to retain divine omniscience free acts must be known by God, not only insofar as they are based on divine grace but also insofar as they are based on free human choice.\textsuperscript{30} In addition, divine justice and providence

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Taylor 2014, 462.
\item Taylor 2014, 466, 469.
\item The influential thesis concerning Avicenna’s and Averroes’s different ways of understanding the relationship of causes and effects was first put forth in Maier 1949. More recently, the topic has been treated in e.g. Porro 2013.
\item Alexander de Hales, \textit{Quaestiones disputatae ‘antequam esset frater’} I, q. 10, 74 (ed. Quaracchi 1960, 127): “Si dicatur quod quae sunt a libero arbitrio, sunt a Deo, et in quantum sunt de voluntate Dei mediante gratia, sic proportionatur scientiae Dei, et sic aliquo modo sunt necessaria; item aliquo modo contingentia, quia in quantum sunt a libero arbitrio, non subiacent scientiae Dei; quod falsum est, quia 16 Prov., 2: omnes vias hominum patent oculis eius; et 23 Eccli., 28: Oculi Domini, multo lucidiore sole, circumspiciunt omnes vias hominum etc. Unde quae sunt a libero arbitrio, quoad ipsum esse quod habent a libero arbitrio, quoquomodo subiacent scientiae Dei.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
presuppose knowledge of singular and contingent human choices. The most original aspects of Alexander’s treatment are in his analysis on the proportionality between the act and the object of knowledge. It seems that necessary knowledge requires that the thing known is necessary too, and, on the contrary, if the thing known is contingent this would seem to lead to the contingency of the knowledge of the thing in question.

To avoid the unwelcome conclusion that God’s knowledge of contingent things is contingent and that God could be mistaken in his knowledge concerning contingent things, Alexander draws a distinction concerning the relationship between knowledge and the thing known. On some occasions (1) the thing known has its foundation in knowledge. This is the case in the proposition “God has perfect foreknowledge of all future things.” On the other hand, there are cases when (2) knowledge has its foundation in the thing known, such as when a human being has knowledge of mathematics. That is to say, human knowledge is dependent on facts that simply are out there, whereas divine knowledge is completely independent. Alexander points out that with respect to truth, knowledge and the thing known are always in proportion. That is to say, if a state of affairs P is not the case, one cannot have knowledge of P as true. With respect to necessity (in differentia necessitatis), however, things are not so straightforward. Alexander argues that unlike truth,

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31 Alexander de Hales, Quaestiones disputatae ‘antequam esset frater’ I, q. 10, 77–78 (ed. Quaracchi 1960, 128): “Item, suppositum est apud omnes quod Deus iustissime praemiat bonos et iustissime punit malos. Sed hoc non posset, nisi meritum cognosceret; sed merita sunt opera bona et mala, quae singularia et contingentia; ergo cognoscit singularia et contingentia quae procedunt a libero arbitrio. Item, in libro De divinatione: ‘Mundus providentia administratur’. Providentia autem non potest esse de rebus ignotis; ergo omnes res a Deo administratae in mundo, cognoscuntur ab eo. Cum ergo res, quoquo modo sint, vel a natura vel a libero arbitrio, administruntur a Deo, restat quod ab eodem cognoscantur.”

32 Alexander de Hales, Quaestiones disputatae ‘antequam esset frater’ I, q. 10, 80 (ed. Quaracchi 1960, 128–129): “Cum ergo in veritate proportionantur scientia et scibile, si scientia est necessaria, et scibile erit necessarium. Vel ergo scientia Dei est contingens, vel si scientia necessaria, et scibilia necessaria; et ita praedestinatio ratione praescientiae erit necessaria.”

33 The basic position of Peter Lombard in Sententiae was that divine knowledge is the cause of things when taken in the sense of approval (beneplacitum) and disposition. Peter Lombard, Sententiae I d. 38 c.1: 8: “Si vero nomine scientiae includitur etiam beneplacitum atque dispositio, tunc recte potest dici causa eorum quae Deus facit.” This did not apply to God’s knowledge of evils, which were known to God but were not approved by him. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, Iª q. 14 a. 8 ad 3: “Sed quia ipse actus liberi arbitrii reductur in Deum sicut in causam, Ad tertium dicendum quod res naturales sunt mediae inter scientiam Dei et scientiam nostram, nos enim scientiam accipimus a rebus naturalibus, quarum Deus per suam scientiam causa est. Unde, sicut scibilia naturalia sunt priora quam scientia nostra, et mensura eius, ita scientia Dei est prior quam res naturales, et mensura ipsorum. Sicut aliqua domus est media inter scientiam artificis qui eam fecit, et scientiam illius qui eius cognitionem ex ipsa iam facta capitat.”
necessity or contingency is not a general disposition according to which a derived thing (principiatum) is derived from its foundation (principio). Thus, in cases such as (2) human knowledge of mathematics, there is necessity in the thing known since it is necessarily what it is. Yet human knowledge of mathematics is contingent in nature, since it requires study that not everyone is willing to go through. The necessary nature of the object of knowledge does not flow into the act of knowledge. On the other hand, in cases such as (1) divine knowledge of future contingents, where knowledge is the foundation of the thing known, necessity is present on the part of knowledge, whereas the things known may be either contingent or necessary. Thus, proportionality of knowledge and the things known with respect to their truth values do not lead to proportionality in their modal statuses.\textsuperscript{34} The importance of Alexander’s analysis from the perspective of providence is that it allows for necessary divine knowledge of contingent beings.

The \textit{Summa Halensis} was completed in 1257. Traditionally, it was attributed to Alexander, but more recently scholars have agreed that the work was edited and compiled by a group of Alexander’s followers, probably working under his supervision.\textsuperscript{35} For this reason I will refrain from calling the author of the work Alexander, although it is likely that it reflects Alexander’s thinking on important issues.

\textit{Summa Halensis} contains an extensive treatment of divine providence. Terminologically, in \textit{Summa Halensis}, providence (providentia) is treated as

\textsuperscript{34} Alexander de Hales, \textit{Quaestiones disputatae ‘antequam esset frater’} I, q. 10, 87 (ed. Quaracchi 1960, 130–131): “Respondeo: Verum est quod proportionantur in veritate scientia et scibile, non tamen proportionantur in differentia necessitatis, scilicet in necessitate et contingentia. Et haec est ratio: scientia est in aliquo non dependens a scibili, sed scibile dependet a scientia, et non e converso semper; in aliquo vero scientia dependet a scibili et non e converso; in aliquo nec scientia dependet a scibili nec e converso; sed cum dicitur ‘homo scit mathematica’, ibi scientia dependet a scibili, quia scientia fit secundum receptionem similitudinis a scibili. Cum vero dicitur ‘anima se ipsam cognoscit’, neutrum ab alio dependet, quia haec scientia non fit per similitudinis aggenerationem a re, nec per aggenerationem rei a similitudine sicut in Deo est. – Ubi res dependet a scientia, semper stat intentio veritatis in scientia et scibili, quia veritas est dispositio generalis secundum quam procedit principiatur, a principio, sicut unitas; unde in hac dispositione conveniunt scientia et scibile. Sed necessitas sive contingentia non est dispositio generalis secundum quam procedit principiatur a principio; immo necessitas determinata conditio est a parte principii, contingentia vero determinata conditio ‘ut in pluribus’ est a parte principii; sed non propter rationem principii, sed quia possibilitas est in principiato ad esse et non esse, quia est ab alio et de nihil. Unde Philosophi dividunt ens in necessarium et possibile. – Ubi ergo scientia est principium respectu sciti, a parte scientiae erit necessitas, sive necessitas sive contingentia sit ex parte sciti. Quando vero scientia datur a scito, semper erit necessitas a parte sciti, sive contingentia sive necessitas sit ex parte scientiae. Dico ergo quod non sequitur, si proportionantur in veritate, quod propter hoc in necessitate vel contingentia.”

\textsuperscript{35} Cullen 2011, 62–64. Gelber 2010 contains a brief discussion of Alexander’s theory of providence found in \textit{Summa Halensis}.
a phenomenon based on a conceptually prior divine disposition (dispositio), which, as carried out by secondary causes, is named governance (gubernatio). This terminology was later used also by Aquinas and several other authors. Another interesting terminological point is that the authors of Summa Halensis distinguish between general and special providences. This distinction is found already in Augustine, and was important in the later Franciscan discussions of providence.36

The authors of Summa Halensis argue that divine providence reaches to all created things. Both natural and voluntary things as well as good and evil things are contained in the providential order. Natural things are contained under providence of acceptation (providentia secundum acceptationem), whereas voluntary things are provided for with the providence of concession (providentia secundum concessionem). Natural things are ordered naturally, and incapable of being otherwise. The example of Summa Halensis is the sun, which rises every morning without any inherent possibility of not rising.37 The special case of chance events is also under the influence of divine providence, despite its random appearance. The author of Summa Halensis simply cites the solution provided by Boethius in Consolatio philosophiae V: chance events are surprising outcomes that come about when two independent causal chains meet. Although these events seem entirely random from the human perspective, the whole connection of causes is disposed and foreknown by God. Chance events are not contingent in the sense that they could be other than what God foreknows.38

Through his providence of concession, God allows voluntary things, that is, rational beings capable of free choice, to choose between good and evil. Instead

36 Summa Halensis I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi I, 295b): “Dicendum quod duplex est cura providentiae divinae. Una est cura divinae providentiae, quae generalis est, qua res pro tempore sibi debito et determinato conservantur in suo esse a divina providentia, et hoc modo verum est quod est ei cura de omnibus. Alia est cura specialis providentiae, quam specialiter habet de rationali creatura, secundum quam erudit ipsam, dando ei praecepta et legem, et secundum hanc non est ei cura de omnibus.” Most importantly, the distinction was used by Henry of Ghent, but also John Duns Scotus refers to it. I will treat this distinction in more detail in chapter 4 of this work.

37 Summa Halensis I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi I, 294b): “Notandum quod aliter subsunt providentiae ea quae sunt liberi arbitrii quam naturalia. Nam, sicut dicit Damascenus: ‘Duplex est providentia; una est secundum acceptationem, alia est secundum concessionem’. Et dicit quod providentia secundum acceptationem est ubi non contingent esse resistentiam nec contradictionem; unde haec providentia est de iis, ubi non continget resistentia: et hoc modo est de ipsis naturalibus, quae sunt ordinata nec aliter possunt esse, sicut solem oriturum cras.”

38 Summa Halensis I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi I, 293b–294a): “dicit Boethius […]. Licet igitur definire casum esse inopinatum, ex confluentibus causis in iis quae ob aliud geruntur, eventum; concurret vero atque confluentes causas facit ordo ille inevitabilis connexione procedens, quid de providentiae fonte descendens, cuncta suis locis temporibusque disponit’. Ex quo patet quod casualia subiecta sunt divinae providentiae, quoniam ab ipsa est quod confluunt causae ad talem eventum.”
of coercing them to choose good, God permits rational beings to choose as they please, but assists only morally laudable choices with the instinct of grace (\textit{instinctus gratiae}). Good things then come under the influence of providence as being created or at least partially caused by divine providence. Evil things, on the contrary, come under the influence of providence as being ordered to good. The author of \textit{Summa Halensis} is thinking of just punishments that God inflicts upon sinful human beings and angels. Although the sinful acts as such are not part of God’s providential order, they come under the providential order after having been ordered and punished by God. Furthermore, the omnipotent God is able to bring forth good even from human evils. This Augustinian solution will reappear in a number of later authors studied in this work. It is an example of the accidental strategy of reconciling divine providence and evil, given that human evils are seen as accidental side effects of the good providential plan. In this sense, the treatise on providence found in \textit{Summa Halensis} puts more stress on human freedom with respect to divine providence.

Although the main means of reconciling divine providence and evil in \textit{Summa Halensis} is based on the use of the accidental strategy, the author of the work briefly refers to a different type of idea. Again, following Augustine, the author writes that although it is better to achieve good through good things, the glory and the beauty of the creation are further perfected if good is also achieved by making evil things serve good ends. The author notes that

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\textit{Summa Halensis} I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi I, 294b): “Providentia autem secundum concessionem est de iis, ubi contingit esse resistentiam et contradensionem: sic est in libero arbitrio; Deus enim dedit libero arbitrio ut consentiat vel non consentiat bono, et ipsi malo consentiat si velit; et quidquid faciat, sive bonum sive malum, semper ordinat ipsum providentia. Unde subicitur providentiae secundum concessionem, quia non cogit liberum arbitrium, licet sub ipsa sit, sed permittit ei facere quidquid vult; sed in bono ipsum adiuvar instinctu gratiae, in malo autem non, sed tamen malum perpetratum ordinat.”

\textit{Summa Halensis} I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi I, 292a): “Sed notandum quod dupliciter dicitur aliquid esse sub divina providentia: uno modo, ut ab ipsa creatum vel factum et sic sunt bona tantum sub providentia; alio modo, non ut ab ipsa factum, sed cum factum est ab homine vel angelo malo, ab ipsa ordinandum, et sic sunt mala sub divina providentia. Sic ergo sub divina providentia sunt bona tamquam ab ipsa facta, et etiam mala tamquam ab ipsa ordinata.”

As Augustine has shown, ontologically speaking, evil choices have no positive being. Rather, their evilness consists in nothing other than a privation of goodness. \textit{Summa Halensis} I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi I, 292a): “dicendum quod non est simile de creatione et gubernatione. Creatio enim est de nihil; unde non ponit rem praexistentem, immo est de non-esse ad esse sive de nihil in aliquid; malum autem e converso, scilicet de aliquo in nihil sive de esse in non-esse, et hoc est quia malum est corruptio ipsius naturae, quae est ens et bonum”

\textit{Summa Halensis} I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi 1, 298a): “Dicendum quod Deus etiam providet per malos.”

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although the better way of achieving good is to achieve it by employing good things, evil things can nevertheless be employed instrumentally to achieve good. Using both good and evil things to achieve universal good is the greatest way of increasing the glory and the beauty of the creation.\textsuperscript{42} The author of \textit{Summa Halensis} thus uses both the accidental and the instrumental strategies in the reconciliation of divine providence and evil. He is by no means the only medieval author to do so, although some later authors showed a clearer preference for either one of the two strategies.

As Gelber has noted, the author of \textit{Summa Halensis} conceptualizes divine providence mostly in terms of final and formal causality. Efficient causality, too, can be attributed to God because of, for example, his power to create. Providence has to do, however, with divine wisdom and understanding, as well as the ordering of things to their ends. For this reason, the author prefers to speak of providence as a final and formal cause.\textsuperscript{43} The treatment in \textit{Summa Halensis} concerning whether providence is an immediate cause of its effects, or is mediated by creatures, is based on the traditional Boethian analysis. Providence, understood as the eternal plan in the divine mind, is unmediated. Yet the causal execution of this plan is mostly carried out by lower causes. Whereas Boethius had named the execution of the providential plan fate, the author of \textit{Summa Halensis} prefers the term governance (\textit{gubernatio}).\textsuperscript{44}

\section*{2.4 Albert the Great}

Albert the Great (c. 1200–1280) was a Dominican theologian who produced a large number of literary works on most of the scientific topics treated in the universities in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century. Albert is well known for having taught Thomas Aquinas. I will mainly focus on Albert’s ideas on providence found in his commentaries of Aristotle’s \textit{Physics} and \textit{Metaphysics} and also make some notes on the later \textit{Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia Dei}.

Unlike several 14\textsuperscript{th}-century authors, Albert the Great included discussions of theological topics too in his Aristotelian commentaries, instead of simply putting forth the position of Aristotle. For my purposes, the most important

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Summa Halensis} I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi 1, 298a): “Dicendum ergo quod etsi melius esset quantum ad aliquid providere bonum per bonum, quia melius quantum ad illum per quem provideret, non tamen universali, quia malum in universitate etiam est ad maiorem pulcritudinem universitas et maiorem gloriam bonorum; et ponit Augustinus exemplum in sonis et in coloribus, sicut dicetur infra in Quaestione de permissione voluntatis divinae. In hoc enim est magna pulcritudo universi et magna laus bonitatis divinae, quod malos facit servire bonis.”

\textsuperscript{43} Gelber 2010, 763.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Summa Halensis} I, 1. 5. 2. 3. I (Ed. Quaracchi 1, 297a): “Providentia Dei dicitur proprie divina ratio qua cuncta gubernantur: et hoc modo providentia Dei se ipsa solum est; alio modo executio providentiae, scilicet ipsa gubernatio: et haec in pluribus est per creaturam.”
text is his commentary to *Physics* II, where Albert discusses chance and fortune in relation to fate and divine providence. Like Aristotle, Albert in this text first considers arguments denying the phenomena of chance and fortune altogether. After refuting these arguments, Albert proceeds to provide a definition of chance and fortune, and finally brings up the topics of divine foreknowledge and fate, aiming to show how chance, fortune, providence and fate may all co-exist.

Albert notes that positing chance and fortune seems at first sight contrary to the Catholic faith, since effects brought about by such accidental causes appear incompatible with divine foreknowledge. This is because in Aristotle's theory there is no *per se* cause for the concurrency of two separate causal chains, and for this reason the effects of accidental causes seem unknowable to any intellect. Albert is unwilling to stop here and deny the existence of chance events that Aristotle had considered an unquestionable feature of the world. Albert considers a possible solution to the apparent incompatibility of contingency and providence, based on a distinction between particular causes and the universal cause. Although from the point of view of particular agents many outcomes do appear fortuitous, with regard to the Universal agent, God, even these effects are preordered (*praedominata*) and thus no effects are fortuitous without qualification. This solution seems, however, to do away with free choice. If all the actions of the particular agents are ordered to an end by the universal agent, even though the lower causes are not aware of this, no room for free choice between different options remains. Albert notes that this counter-argument is based on a misunderstanding about the nature of chance and fortune. Thus, it may be properly addressed only after a thorough discussion of these accidental causes.

Albert starts his treatment of chance and fortune by noting that contingency comes in three varieties: *ut in pluribus*, *ad utrumlibet* and *ut in paucioribus*. These standard distinctions between the types of causes were widely employed by medieval authors. A cause that always produces its effect is called a *causa ut semper*. A cause that usually works like this is a *causa ut

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45 Unlike Aquinas, Albert did not deal with the themes of determinism and providence in his commentary on *De interpretatione*. Albert simply pointed out that questions concerning the necessity of causation, fate, fortune and divine providence should not be dealt with in a work of logic. Albert the Great, *Liber I Perihermenias*, tract. V c. 7 (ed. Borgnet, vol. I, p. 423): “Quaerunt etiam hic quidam de necessitate ordinis causarum, de fato, de fortuna, de consilio, de casu, de certitudine divinae providentiae in singularibus et voluntariis contingentibus. Sed de his hic quaerere stultum est: quia quaestiones istae ex istius scientiae principiis (cum logica procedat ex communibus quae in pluribus vel in omnibus inveniuntur) non possunt determinari: ista autem determinari volunt ex propriis.”

46 Albert also discussed fate in depth in *De fato*, a work written a few years after the commentary on *Physics*. In this work the focus is not so much in the relationship between fate and providence, but rather, as Palazzo writes, on “the celestial origin and the terrestrial effect of fate”. Palazzo 2008, 57.

in pluribus, whereas one that usually doesn’t produce its effect is named causa ut in paucioribus or causa ut raro. A cause that is equally open to contradictories (such as a pair of feet with regard to walking or a faculty of will with regard to willing or not-willing) is named causa ad utrumlibet. What is noteworthy about these distinctions is that the focus is not on particular causes and their effects, but rather on types of causes. Any cause’s status as necessary or contingent is based on the behaviour of other causes of the same type. If they bring about their effects always in a uniform way, the particular cause is also seen as necessary, while if they sometimes fail to bring about their effects the particular cause will be seen as contingent.48 To give a concrete example, imagine a particular apple tree produces apples every single summer until it is cut down. This tree would still not be considered causa ut semper, but rather causa ut in pluribus for the reason that some summers there are other apple trees that fail to produce apples.

Albert observes a disagreement in the peripatetic tradition concerning the right interpretation of Aristotle. Whereas some, for example Avicenna, considered chance and fortune taking place in both ad utrumlibet and ut in paucioribus cases, others such as Averroes restricted their domain to ut in paucioribus cases.49 Albert follows Averroes in thinking that chance and fortune are only possible in ut in paucioribus cases. Chance and fortune are treated as accidental efficient causes, which makes it impossible that they would be found in ad utrumlibet cases, since according to Albert only material

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48 Knuuttila 2008, 514–515. In this work I will use the Latin terms for the different types of causes to retain their original technical meaning.

49 Avicenna had thought that a man is undetermined, or ad utrumlibet, with regard to eating and non-eating, or walking and non-walking, for example. When a man has the will to eat or walk, his will becomes ut in pluribus cause with regard to these actions. Avicenna’s idea is that although from one perspective the man is ad utrumlibet cause with regard to these actions, from another perspective he is their ut in pluribus cause. Therefore, chance and fortune can take place in effects that are ad utrumlibet compared to one cause, as long as they are ut in pluribus compared to another cause. Albert the Great, Physicorum II, c. 12 (ed. Borgnet, vol. III, p. 143): "Rationes autem Avicennae, sicut apparat in Sufficiencia sua, sunt istae: quia contingens ad utrumlibet est, quod se habet aequaliter ad esse et ad non esse, sicut in operibus voluntatis est comedere et non comedere, ambulare et non ambulare, et hujusmodi. Cum enim illa in se considerantur, sunt ad utrumlibet. Si autem voluntas sit directa super ea, tune fiunt frequenter: quia de his quae frequenter fiunt, est hoc quod ambulat qui vult ambulare, et comedit qui vult comedere. Nihil autem prohibet (ut inquit Avicenna) id quod est ad utrumlibet secundum comparationem ad causam unam, fieri semper secundum causam aliam: et id quod est in paucioribus secundum causam unam, fieri frequenter vel etiam semper secundum causam aliam: et ideo potest casus et fortuna fieri in eo quod est ad utrumlibet secundum causam unam: cum tamen sit ordinatum secundum comparationem ad causam aliam." The disagreement, as reported by Albert, seems rather trivial. Although Avicenna does say that chance and fortune may occur in ad utrumlibet causation, he still grants that this may be the case only when the same effect is compared to another cause, that is not ad utrumlibet, but rather ut in pluribus.
causes may be *ad utrumlibet* causes, whereas efficient causes are always *ut in pluribus* causes.\textsuperscript{50} Albert follows Aristotle in writing that for chance or fortune to emerge, some efficient cause is required. When this efficient cause does not reach its typical end, but rather some untypical side effect ensues, this side effect is said to be caused by chance or fortune as a cause *per accidens*. Albert notes that some have argued that chance and fortune do not exist at all, since they can be wholly reduced to causes *per se*. This objection is countered through an analogy between substances and accidents on the one side, and causes *per se* and causes *per accidens*\textsuperscript{51} on the other. Accidents are always conjoined with substances, but they are not the same thing as substances. For example, being in Athens and being white are accidental properties reducible to the substance Socrates. Yet it is a different thing being in Athens and being white from being Socrates. Something analogous can be said of causes *per se* and *per accidens*; since chance and fortune are causes *per accidens*, they can be reduced to some cause *per se*, but they are still not the same thing as the cause *per se*.\textsuperscript{52} Like Aristotle, Albert insists on proportionality between causes and effects: the legitimate cause of an effect *per se* must be a cause *per se*; similarly, effects *per accidens* must be caused by causes *per accidens*.\textsuperscript{53}

After explaining the status of chance and fortune, Albert is ready to tackle the problem of causal determinism, to which the existence of fate and divine providence seems to give rise. Albert takes the Peripatetic position on fate to be that the whole disposition of the world (*dispositio mundi*) is based on the movement of the celestial spheres, which are in turn disposed by the First Cause. Yet these dispositions are not carried out in a regular way in all cases, as material causes may be impeded in some cases. This leaves space for some


\textsuperscript{51} In the Aristotelian tradition, a builder is called a *per se* cause of a house, the typical outcome of his work. Meanwhile, the same builder may be called a *per accidens* cause of flute playing if he happens to be able to play the flute.


surprising effects to occur by chance and in turn causal determinism may be avoided. Albert’s own position does not deviate much from this Peripatetic theory. Albert writes that the things proceeding first from God, such as the celestial spheres and their movements, are necessary. Moving further on a ladder of being from God and the celestial spheres, sublunary causes start to be composed of a mixture of contrary elements and cause their effects in most cases, but may also be impeded occasionally. Nevertheless, basing his conclusion on the Neoplatonic metaphysics of emanation, Albert thinks that God is able to know all the contingent events of the sublunary world, including chance events, as he himself is their remote cause. Although Albert does not in this context refer to ab uno principle (“From one, only one can proceed”), it seems quite clear that he implicitly accepts it. Furthermore, in some other works, for example in his commentary to the Liber de causis, Albert explicitly endorses the ab uno principle. Thus, in the philosophical works of Albert, God does not function as the cause of sublunary things immediately, but only indirectly through the mediation of the celestial spheres. Albert writes that God is the cause of all things through his intellect. The divine will, on the other hand, receives no mention. Albert’s focus on the divine intellect instead of the divine will might be explained by the fact that the discussion takes place in the context of an Aristotelian commentary. But in any case, Albert presents his ideas in the context of discussing the topics of fate and providence in

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56 According to Bonin, Albert did not see any great tension between the philosophical account of emanation and theological considerations. Hankey 2007, 2.
accordance with actual truth (secundum veritatem) and not only in accordance with Aristotle’s ideas (secundum Philosophum).

Following Boethius’s Consolatio philosophiae, Albert defines fate as the temporal execution of an eternal and simple providential disposition. Fate is defined as the total order of secondary causes (contextio causarum). Since the existence of the totality of secondary causes may not be denied, neither may the existence of fate. As such, fate is ultimately dependent on divine providence as the first and universal cause. Thus, providence is seen as the source of fate instead of being identical with it. This is because whereas all the causality of the lower causes is subject to divine providence, fate on the other hand does not contain the movement of the spheres, since fate is nothing but an effect of this movement.

Albert’s main ideas on the First Cause’s relation to the lower causes, found in his commentary on Physics, are largely confirmed in his commentary to Aristotle’s Metaphysics. In his discussion of the 6th book, Albert asks whether all existing beings are reducible to a single causal principle. Albert finds the alternatives that there would be several first principles or several universes absurd and not worthy of consideration. Yet, if there is only one first causal principle for the one existing universe, it must be explained how the diversity of lower causes can be derived from this one first causal principle.

Albert’s solution to the problem is that the divine knowledge is the one principle of the universe, functioning as the cause of the first things (omnium quae sunt prima) and also the cause of the order of all existing things. He points out that when it is said that the lower things have accidental causes, this must be understood to refer to their proximate causes, and not to the first cause that does not cause anything accidentally. Yet the divine intellect does not destroy contingency from material things and therefore the lower things

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57 Albert the Great, Physica c. 19 (ed. Borgnet, vol. III, p. 153): “ita Deus providentia quidem singulariter stabiliuerque facienda disponit, fato vero haec ipsa quae disponit, multipliciter ac temporaliter administrat.” Virtually all the later scholastic authors also refer to this Boethian definition when commenting on the topic of fate.


59 Albert the Great, Metaphysicorum VI, tract. II c. 6 (ed. Borgnet, vol. VI, p. 394): “Dubitabit autem aliquis, ex prae dictis dubitationis sumens rationem, utrum omnium entium universitas reducibilis sit ad principium universitatis idem et unum. Si autem omnia reducuntur ad unum universitatis principium, hoc non erit nisi intellectus divinus activus omnium: et cum ille sit causa uno modo existens et ordinata, videntur omnia esse ex principio uno et ordinato: ergo et ea quae sunt per accidentes, sunt ab hujusmodi principio: et sic eorum quae fiunt per accidentes, causa prima non est per accidentes: et hoc est contra praedicta. Si autem non omnium sit causa una, tunc sequitur quod ordo universitatis non est ad unum: et ex hoc sequitur quod plura sint universitas principia et plura universa, quae ambo sunt absurda. Si autem universitatis principium est unum, tunc quaeritur unde provenit diversitas causarum eorum quae fiunt semper, et eorum quae fiunt frequenter, et eorum quae fiunt raro.”
can act as accidental causes.\footnote{Albert the Great, \textit{Metaphysicorum} VI, tract. II c. 6 (ed. Borgnet, vol. VI, p. 394): “Hoc autem et hujusmodi non est difficile solvere: absque omni enim dubitatione tenendum est, quod universitatis principium est unum: et hoc est intellectus divinus, qui per suam scientiam quae tamen scientia est idem ipsi, est causa omnium quae sunt prima, et uno modo se habens ad omnia: et est causa ordinis omnium eorum quae sunt: quia ipse est qui facit causata et distribuit et ordinat ea, sicut una ars est in semine hominis, quae facit et distribuit et ordinat omnia corporis membra, sicut nos in ultima hujus sapientiae parte sumus ostensuri. Quod autem dicimus, quod ea quae fiunt raro et fiunt per accidens non reducuntur nisi ad causam per accidens, intelleximus de causa proxima, et non de causa prima in qua stat reductio omnium. [...] Quamvis autem intellectus divinus uno modo se habeat, et immaterialiter et intemporaliter et simpliciter et immobiler, tamen materia eorum quae fiunt frequenter, percipit bonitates suas multipliciter et materialiter et temporalieter et compositae et mobiliter: et hoc est idio, quia intellectus divinus non tollit possibilitatem a materia: et ideo licet in ipso omnia sint immobiler, tamen in materia fiunt contingenter.”} Albert reasons that the same things exist in the divine intellect in accordance with the power and the mode of being of the divine intellect, while they exist in matter in accordance with the power and the mode of being of matter. That is why they can have simple, immaterial, intemporal and immobile existence in the divine mind and a completely opposite kind of contingent and complex existence in matter.\footnote{Albert the Great, \textit{Metaphysicorum} VI, tract. II c. 6 (ed. Borgnet, vol. VI, p. 395): “Nec dubitamus quin omne quod est in aliquo sit in ipso secundum potestatem ejus in quod est: et ideo quae in intellectu primo sunt simpliciter et immaterialiter et intemporaliter et immobiler et uno modo, omnibus contrariis dispositionibus sunt in materia: propter quod non sequitur, quod si intellectus primus sit hujusmodi immobiler et certe, quod ista eveniant immobiler et certitudinaliter: quia intellectus divinus non tollit a materia nec a causis secundis dispositiones suas proprias”} Albert does not explicitly state that the same things are necessary with respect to providence while being contingent with respect to their proximate causes, but regardless, this formulation seems to capture Albert’s idea quite clearly. The principle that the contingent causes are really contingent on the level of proximate causation, but yet at the same time necessary in comparison to the first cause will be further developed and systematized by Thomas of Aquinas in his mature works, as will be shortly seen.

Albert provided another extended, and more theological, discussion of divine providence in his unfinished \textit{Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia Dei}. While in his commentaries on \textit{Physics} and \textit{Metaphysics} Albert discussed divine causality mostly from the persepctive of emanationist metaphysics, and did not clearly distinguish between creation and providence, in \textit{Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia Dei} he discussed providence explicitly in more traditional theological terms.\footnote{Despite problems in establishing the relative chronology of Albert’s works, it can be safely inferred that \textit{Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia Dei} is a later work than Albert’s commentary on \textit{Physics}. Brumberg–Chaumont 2011, 41. Albert does note, however, that in addition to being an unquestionable part of the Catholic faith, also philosophical reasoning assures that divine providence is real. Albert the}
Augustine and John of Damascene, he treats creation and providence as clearly separate doctrines. Albert primarily understands providence in accordance with the traditional Boethian view. Providence is the eternal unchanging plan existing in the divine mind, which is then temporally realized through the secondary causes. Albert argues that providence cannot necessitate all things coming under its influence because the reality of moral order requires that the actions of human beings are not necessitated. Following Liber de causis, Albert points out that providence, as the primary cause (causa primaria), has more influence on the being of the lower caused things than their secondary causes (causa secundaria). Yet, the secondary causes of these things determine their modal dispositions. That is to say, created effects receive their necessity or contingency from their proximate causes, although divine providence remains the primary cause of their being. A similar distinction between divine providence and the proximate causes will also feature centrally in the theory of providence of Thomas Aquinas.
2.5 Thomas Aquinas

2.5.1 OVERVIEW OF AQUINAS’S THEORY OF PROVIDENCE

Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) devoted more intellectual attention to the topic of divine providence than any of his contemporaries. Aquinas carefully tied the doctrine of providence to his system of thought and treated virtually all the philosophical problems related to divine providence in Latin scholasticism. My treatment of Aquinas in this chapter will focus on 1) Aquinas’s reconciliation of divine providence with the contingency found in nature and the freedom of created intellectual beings. 2) The Aristotelian backgrounds of Aquinas’s theory of providence including the final causality Aquinas attributes to God, and the role he gives to celestial bodies as the mediators of divine providence. 3) Aquinas’s theory of the relationship of evil and providence. I will also pay attention to the development of Aquinas’s reconciliation of freedom of will and divine providence from the early commentary on Sentences towards the later commentary on Metaphysics and Summa theologiae. The change in Aquinas’s views will also have major implications for his views on divine providence and created evils.

In the fourth chapter of this work, I will return to Aquinas and take a closer look at his interpretation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Liber de bona fortuna. The use of this work allowed Aquinas to argue that Aristotle had held a theory of special divine providence in addition to the view of providence attributed to Aristotle since Alexander of Aphrodisias, implying that providence was concerned only with the species of beings.

The notions of perfection and order are crucial for understanding Aquinas’s theory of divine providence. The explicitly stated aim of divine providence is for Aquinas the perfection of the universe.66 For Aquinas, perfection in this context does not refer to qualitative perfection in the sense that the universe would be the best of all possible worlds. Rather, the type of perfection Aquinas has in mind has to do with the idea of completeness and order. According to Aquinas, the created world is not perfect in the sense of having the best possible parts, but it is perfect in the sense of having the best possible order with the parts it has.67 According to the standard medieval view, shared by

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66 This idea remained central in Aquinas’s theory of providence from his early to his late works. See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, Iª q. 22 a. 4 co. “Post bonitatem autem divinam, quae est finis a rebus separatam, principale bonum in ipsis rebus existens, est perfectio universi, quae quidem non esset, si non omnes gradus essendi invenirentur in rebus. Unde ad divinam providentiam pertinet omnes gradus entium producere.”

67 Mann 2001, 43. With the notable exception of Peter Abelard, the idea that God would have actually created the best possible world remained very unpopular in the Middle Ages. On Auriol’s ideas on divine perfection and creation, see Marenbon 2013, 45–89.
Aquinas, creatures are ordered both in relation to each other and towards an ultimate goal, God.⁶⁸

Divine providence secures that all the grades of being are realized in the universe. It aims to complete the creation through the realization of all possible grades of being in the existing species. In addition, an all-reaching order contributes to the perfection of the universe. This order is for the most part conceptualized in terms of a Dionysian hierarchy.⁶⁹ Higher beings are related to lower beings in a way that there are no gaps between the various grades of beings. Divine goodness constitutes both the efficient as well as the final cause of divine providence. God has providence for the world because of his goodness, and the final end towards which divine providence has ordered all the species of created things is divine goodness.

In addition to the hierarchical structuring of the world, Aquinas’s description of the order that divine providence constitutes in the created world is to a great extent influenced by Aristotle’s cosmological ideas. Before being realized in the universe, order exists first in the divine mind. This order found in the divine mind constitutes the definition of providence for Aquinas. In the 22nd question of *Summa theologiae* divine providence is defined as follows:

> […] it must be that the reason (ratio) of the order of things towards their end pre-exists in the divine mind. And the reason of things ordered towards their end is, properly speaking, providence.⁷⁰

The temporal execution of this intellectual cognition of order happens through the causality of secondary causes. This idea is, of course, ultimately based on the traditional Middle Platonic idea of fate as the temporal execution of providence that was transmitted to medieval authors through Boethius’s *Consolatio philosophiae*. It must be noted, however, that Aquinas mostly prefers to speak of the execution of providence as governance (*gubernatio*) rather than fate. In *Summa theologiae*, he is reluctant to admit the existence of fate, understood as a cause, in any other sense than the will or power of God.⁷¹ When the secondary causes have been ordained by God to cause their

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⁶⁸ Hayes 1964, 31.
⁶⁹ For the later Christian tradition, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, having lived in the turn of 5th and 6th centuries, was an important source on the Neoplatonic hierarchical ideas.
⁷⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1ª q. 22 a. 1 co: “[...] necesse est quod ratio ordinis rerum in finem in mente divina praeeexistat. Ratio autem ordinandorum in finem, proprie providentia est.”
effects, fate can be said to be in the secondary causes. Therefore, fate is ultimately caused by God. The concepts of governance and fate come close to each other in meaning, but Aquinas clearly preferred the concept of governance, because of the pagan implications of the concept of fate that Augustine had already criticized in *De civitate Dei*.

### 2.5.2 CHANCE EVENTS

Aquinas wrote extensive commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, which will here serve as the main sources of my exposition of his ideas on chance events and providence. In brief, while Aquinas primarily considers chance and fortune from a natural point of view in his commentary on *Physics*, questions pertaining to the relationship between chance events, free will and divine providence are treated in more detail in the commentary on *Metaphysics*.

In the second book of *Physics*, Aristotle had stressed the importance of final causality found in nature. Like Aristotle, Aquinas considers the order found in nature, and in particular the fact that parts of animals are well suited for their operations, as evidence for final causality in nature. Aquinas regarded this end-directedness of nature as proof of the existence of divine providence. For something to be directed to an end, an intellectual director is required. Who else than God could direct all of nature towards a certain end? Aquinas thought that a denial of final causality in nature would have amounted to a denial of divine providence. The phenomenon of chance events in nature is a result of this final causality: sometimes nature does not attain its proper end, but a surprising chance outcome follows instead. Like virtually all of his

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72 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Iª q. 116 a. 2 co. “Sic ergo est manifestum quod fatum est in ipsis causis creatis, inquantum sunt ordinatae a Deo ad effectus producendos.”

73 Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Physicorum*, lib. 2 l. 12 n. 3.

74 Cf. The fifth way in the well-known proofs of God’s existence in *Summa theologiae*. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologicae*, Iª, q. 2 a. 3 co. For a discussion of the relationship of the fifth way in *Summa theologicae* to the argument for divine providence in *Commentary on Metaphysics*, see Kahm 2013, esp. 655–656.

75 Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Physicorum*, lib. 2 l. 12 n. 1. “Dicit ergo primo, quod dicendum est primo quod natura est de numero illarum causarum quae propter aliquid agunt. Et hoc valet ad quaestionem de providentia. Ea enim quae non cognoscunt finem, non tendunt in finem nisi ut directa ab aliquo cognoscente, sicut sagitta a sagittante: unde si natura operetur propter finem, necesse est quod ab aliquo intelligente ordinetur; quod est providentiae opus.” Averroes had endorsed the same idea in his own commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics*. *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* Vol. IV, 76v: “et similiter, si Divinus non concesserit eam [causam finalem], non poterit probare quod Deus habet sollicitudinem circa ista, quae sunt hic”

76 Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Physicorum*, lib. 2 l. 14 n. 3: “Hoc ipsum igitur quod in arte contingit esse peccatum, est signum quod ars propter aliquid operetur. Ita etiam contingit in naturalibus rebus;
contemporary authors, Aquinas thus follows Aristotle in defining chance and fortune as causes that cause their effects outside the intention of agents acting towards an end. The reason why some given per se cause does not always lead to its effect, can be either the result of 1) material disorder (indispositio) on behalf of the patient, or 2) the intervention of some other cause. In chance events something other than the typical outcome of a per se cause is brought about. Aquinas argues that such events have no proper per se cause at all, but only a cause per accidens.

Aristotle wrote in the 2nd book of Physics that some Athenians had considered chance wholly unknowable and divine in origin. Whereas Averroes had refuted this position as wholly irrational, Aquinas notes that it actually has some truth to it. Nevertheless, Aquinas also finds fault in this position. According to Aquinas, per accidens causality is always parasitic to per se causality as there are no per accidens causes that would not be attached to some cause per se. Thus, it would imply conceptual confusion to claim that the

in quibus monstra sunt quasi peccata naturae propter aliquid agentis, inquantum deficit recta operatio naturae. Et hoc ipsum quod in naturalibus contingit esse peccatum, est signum quod natura propter aliquid agat.”

77 Thomas Aquinas, In libros Physicorum, lib. 2 l. 8 n. 10. “Et dicit manifestum esse ex praemissis quod fortuna est causa per accidens in his quae fiunt secundum propositionem propter finem in minori parte.” An accidental cause can be understood on the part of the cause or of the effect. The first way applies when something acting as a cause has an accidental property, such as when a house builder is white. In such a case, white can be named the accidental cause of a house. The second way applies, when something is connected accidentally to the effect, such as when a digger digs a hole and the place dug accidentally happens to contain a treasure chest. Thomas Aquinas, In libros Physicorum, lib. 2 l. 8 n. 8. Cf. Sorabji 1980, 4–7. In the Summa theologiae Aquinas writes in a similar vein that the very existence of chance events in the sublunary world proves that the world is controlled by divine providence. Without providence functioning as the final cause of the created world, irrational things could not be directed to an end, and as we have seen without end-directedness, chance events, by definition could not even exist. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, 1a, q. 103, a. 5 ad. 1. A similar argument will reappear in the anonymous author treated in chapter 4 of this work, who argued that with chance and fortune removed, providence would also be destroyed.

78 Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 1: “quaedam causae sunt agentes ut in pluribus: unde eis positis, adhuc potest impediri effectus per accidens, sicut propter indispositionem materiae, vel propter occasum contrarii agentis, vel propter aliquid huissimodi.” Later in the same question Aquinas mentions a third reason for accidental causation: a defect in the agent. Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 20: “Si igitur ea quae hic sunt contingentia, reducamus in causas proximas particulares tantum, inveniuntur multa fieri per accidens [...] Tum etiam propter defectum agentis, cui accidit debilitas, ut non possit pervenire ad finem intentum; sicut cum aliquis cadit in via propter lassitudinem.”

79 Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 11 “Verbi gratia, quod iste occidatur a latronibus habet causam per se quia vulneratur; et hoc etiam habet causam per se, quia a latronibus invenitur; sed hoc non habet nisi causam per accidens.”

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First Cause is fortune. After all, fortune is by definition an accidental cause, whereas the First Cause is a per se cause, to which nothing happens accidentally.\textsuperscript{80} If the accidental outcomes of the lower causes are reduced to the order of a superior cause, they are no longer accidental with respect to it.\textsuperscript{81}

Aquinas acknowledges Aristotle’s contention that the causes leading to chance and fortune can be infinite and cannot be reasoned about because one can reason only about that which happens always or in most cases.\textsuperscript{82} This is worth noting, since the problem of unknowability of chance events will become relevant in the discussions concerning Liber de bona fortuna, the topic of the fourth chapter of this work. In his commentary on Physics, Aquinas briefly comments on the topic of good fortune too, noting that good fortune is uncertain because good fortune is nothing but an instance of fortune that has a desirable outcome for the agent. Thus, good fortune is uncertain just like fortune in general.\textsuperscript{83}

In his commentary on the 6\textsuperscript{th} book of Metaphysics, Aquinas discusses divine providence in relation to the problem of causal determinism. He makes remarks on Aristotle’s well-known example of a man who eats salty food and gets thirsty. After this, he is murdered by a band of robbers while fetching

\textsuperscript{80} Averroes, Physica: “incoepit [Aristoteles] inducere tertiam sectam, et sunt illi, qui concedunt ipsum esse, et dicunt quod nullus sit quidditatem eius, sed est res divina. Et tacuit istos, quia iste sermo est irrationabils, scilicet vt sit hic causa ignorata naturaliter. Et etiam(?) contradictio eorum est demonstrando eis quid sit casus. Et sermo eius residus manifestus est per se.” Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis Vol. IV, 66r; Thomas Aquinas, In libros Physicorum, lib. 2 l. 7 n. 9: “Et dicit quod quibusdam videtur quod fortuna sit causa, sed immanifesta intellectui humano, ac si sit quoddam divinum et supra homines. Volebant enim quod omnes fortuiti eventus reducerentur in aliquam divinam causam ordinantem, sicut nos ponimus omnia ordinari per divinam providentiam. Sed quamvis haec opinio habeat veram radicem, non tamen bene usi sunt nomine fortunae. Illud enim divinum ordinans non potest dici vel nominari fortuna; quia secundum quod aliquid participat rationem vel ordinem, receedit a ratione fortunae. Unde magis debet dici fortuna causa inferior, quae de se non habet ordinem ad eventum fortuitum, quam causa superior, si qua sit ordinans.”

\textsuperscript{81} Thomas Aquinas, In libros Physicorum, lib. 2 l. 10 n. 13: “Considerandum est autem quod si ea quae fortuito vel casualiter accidunt, idest praeter intentionem causarum inferiorum, reducantur in aliquam causam superiori vel ordinantem ipsa; in comparatione ad illam causam non possunt dici fortuita vel casualia: unde illa causa superior non potest dici fortuna.”

\textsuperscript{82} Thomas Aquinas, In libros Physicorum, lib. 2 l. 9 n. 4: “Dicit ergo primo quod recte dicitur fortunam esse sine ratione: quia ratiocinari non possimus nisi de iis quae sunt semper vel ferequent; fortuna autem est extra utrumque. Et ideo, quia causae tales, in paucioribus existentibus, sunt per accidens et infinitae et sine ratione, sequitur quod fortunae sint causae infinitae et sine ratione: omnis enim causa per se producit effectum suum vel semper, vel ut ferequenter.”

\textsuperscript{83} Thomas Aquinas, In libros Physicorum, lib. 2 l. 9 n. 8: “Tertio ibi: amplius incertum etc., assignat rationem quare euafortunium sint incerta: et dicit quod hoc ideo est, quia euafortunium fortuna quaedam est; fortuna autem est incerta, cum sit eorum quae non sunt semper neque frequenter, ut dictum est. Unde sequitur euafortunium esse incertum.”
water. The question is whether this man was necessarily killed as a result of eating salty food. Aquinas notes that if we conceive of this event as something in the future, it will be, at least in principle, possible to trace back the chain of causes until we come to some cause existing at the present, or passed already in the past. Aquinas takes note of the Avicennian causal principle that the relationship between a cause and its actual effect is always necessary. If this principle is true and every single effect has a *per se* cause, then due to the necessity of present and past, all-reaching determinism follows.\(^8\) In order to avoid this unwelcome conclusion, Aquinas argues that some of the *per se* causes do not cause their effects always but rather in most cases (*ut in pluribus*).

In *Summa contra gentiles*, Aquinas cites an illuminating example provided by Aristotle in *Physics*, concerning a man who is simultaneously white and a musician. There is a *per se* reason for him being white and a *per se* reason for him being a musician, whereas there is no *per se* reason for him having these two features together.\(^8\) Chance events are like this. While the two concurring events are both caused by proper *per se* causes, their concurrence can at the

\(^8\) Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 6–7: “Constat autem, quod tempus quantumcumque futurum accipiatur, sive post centum annos, sive post mille, est finitum, incipiendo a praesenti nunc usque ad illum terminum. Cum autem generatio causae praecedat tempore generationem effectus, oportet quod procedendo ab effectu ad causam auferamus aliquid de tempore futuro, et appropinquemus magis ad praesens. Omne autem finitum consumitur aliquoties ablato quodam ab ipso. Et ita sequitur quod procedendo ab effectu ad causam, et iterum ab illa causa ad eius causam, et sic deinceps, auferatur totum tempus futurum cum sit finitum, et ita perveniat ad ipsum nunc. Quod quidem patet in hoc exemplo. Si enim omnis effectus habet aliquam causam per se, ad quam de necessitate sequitur, oportet quod iste de necessitate moriatur, vel per infirmitatem, vel per violentiam, si exit domum suam. Exitus enim a domo eius invenitur causa esse mortis eius, vel violentiae; puta si exiens domum invenitur a latronibus et occiditur; vel per infirmitatem; puta si exiens de domo ex aestu incurrat febrem et moritur. Et eodem modo hoc erit ex necessitate, scilicet quod exeat domum ad hauriendum aquam si sitiis. Nam sitiis invenitur esse causa ut exeat domum ad hauriendum aquam. Similiter per eamdem rationem hoc erit de necessitate, scilicet quod sitiis, si aliquid aliud erit quod est causa sitiis: et ita sic procedens de effectu ad causam perveniet ad aliquod quod nunc est, idest in aliquod praesens, vel in aliquod factorum, idest in aliquod praeteritorum. Sicut si dicamus quod sitiis erit si comedit mordicantia vel salsa, quae faciunt sitiis: hoc autem, scilicet quod comedat salsa vel non comedat, est in praesenti. Et ita sequitur quod praedictum futurum, scilicet quod iste moriatur vel non moriatur, ex necessitate erit.” Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 9. The fact that later Scholastic thinkers following Scotus questioned the necessity of the present is not of great relevance here. Aquinas could easily, for the sake of argument, dismiss the necessity of the present. Nothing more would be required than a single step from a presently existing cause to a previous cause, already in the past, to make the argument effective again.

\(^8\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, l. 3 c. 86 n. 11 “quia autem sunt per accidens, non habent aliquam causam; sicut quod sit musicum, habet aliquam causam in homine, quod autem homo sit simul albus et musicus, non habet aliquam causam.”
same time be entirely random and accidental at the level of the proximate causes. No proper cause needs to be posited for the concurrence.\textsuperscript{86}

So Aquinas’s basic solution to avoid causal determinism is to defend the reality of chance. All the effects in the world are not caused by necessarily functioning \textit{per se} causes. Rather, some effects are caused by accidental causes that function contingently by definition. There is, however, a deeper philosophical problem related to the relationship of chance events to fate and providence. The Aristotelian theory of chance events as non-
typical outcomes of \textit{ut in pluribus} causes, seems to be incompatible with the existence of fate and providence. For Aquinas, the alleged incompatibility arises from the fact that the theory of fate assumes that all effects have an infallible \textit{per se} cause in the movement of the celestial bodies, whereas the theory of providence subjects all effects under the likewise infallible \textit{per se} causality of divine providence.\textsuperscript{87} At the same time, as noted, chance events supposedly have no \textit{per se} cause at all. Thus, with regard to both fate and providence, no room for chance events seems to remain. After all, Aquinas is clear that nothing whatsoever is chance with regard to divine providence.

Aquinas strives to retain the compatibility between the Aristotelian theory of chance events and divine providence by introducing a threefold distinction between higher and lower causes. The highest cause, God, is incorruptible and immutable; the second highest causes, the celestial bodies are incorruptible but mutable (with respect to place); whereas the lower sublunary causes are corruptible and mutable.\textsuperscript{88} Furthermore, the causality of the higher causes is

\textsuperscript{86} Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 11: “Hoc enim quod iste qui negotiatur, ad negotium vadens, inter latrones incidat, est per accidens, ut ex praedictis patet. Unde eius non oportet ponere aliquam causam. Ens enim per accidens, ut supra dictum est, non habet generationem, et ita eius generationis causam per se quaerere non oportet.”

\textsuperscript{87} Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 13: “Attendendum est autem quod ea quae philosophus hic tradit, videntur removere quaedam, quae secundum philosophiam ab aliquibus ponuntur, scilicet fatum et providentiam. Vult enim hic philosophus, quod non omnia quae fiunt, reducantur in aliquam causam per se, ex qua de necessitate sequantur: alias sequeretur, quod omnia essent ex necessitate, et nihil per accidens esset in rebus. Illi autem, qui ponunt fatum, dicunt, contingenta, quae hic fiunt, quae videntur per accidens, esse reducibilia in aliquam virtutem corporis caelestis, per cuibus actionem ea quae secundum se considerata per accidens fieri videntur, cum quodam ordine producantur. Et similiter illi, qui ponunt providentiam, ea quae aguntur hic, dicunt esse ordinata secundum ordinem providentiae.”

\textsuperscript{88} Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 17: “Invenitur autem in rebus triplex causarum gradus. Est enim primo causa incorruptibilis et immutabilis, scilicet divina; sub hac secundo est causa incorruptibilis, sed mutabilis; scilicet corpus caeleste; sub hac tertio sunt causae corruptibiles et mutabiles. Hae igitur causae in tertio gradu existentes sunt particulares, et ad proprios effectus secundum singulas species determinatae: ignis enim generat ignem, et homo generat hominem, et planta plantam.” Aertsen writes that the celestial bodies play a particularly large role in Aquinas’s understanding of the world. Aertsen 1988, 134.
said to be always more extensive than that of the lower causes. Aquinas provides a well-known example of higher and lower causes in *Summa theologiae*. In the example, a master separately sends two servants to a meeting point without telling either that another servant has been sent to the same place. The resultant meeting will be wholly accidental from the perspective of the servants, whereas it will be perfectly ordered and *per se* with respect to the causality of the higher cause, the master.

Now, according to Aquinas, Aristotle’s theory of chance events is wholly valid with regard to the lower particular causes, where many effects indeed have only causes *per accidens*. All natural effects, however, insofar as they are physical and moved, have a *per se* cause in the celestial bodies. Nevertheless, fate (i.e. the causality of the celestial bodies) does not impose necessity on all created causality, since the celestial bodies sometimes fail to produce their effects, namely when the matter is not properly disposed. Furthermore, Aquinas argues that the modal status of the recipient determines the mode of the effect when the cause in question is universal. That is, even if the celestial body causes in a necessary way, if the recipient is a contingent thing, the effect will retain the contingent mode of the recipient. Because of the contingent mode of being of the material sublunary things, the celestial bodies are causes *ut in pluribus* and not *ut semper* with respect to them.

To better understand Aquinas’s theory of the causality of the celestial bodies and its implications for his theory of providence, it is necessary to look into the third book of *Summa contra gentiles*, where the theory of the causality of the celestial bodies is developed in more detail than in the later commentary on *Metaphysics*. Aquinas argues that in the execution of divine providence the

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89 Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 15: “Ad horum autem evidentiam considerandum est, quod quanto aliqua causa est altior, tanto eius causalitas ad plura se extendit. Habet enim causa altior proprium causatum altius quod est communius et in pluribus inventum.”

90 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* Iª q. 116 a. 1 co.

91 Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 20.

92 Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 21.

93 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, l. 3 c. 86 n. 1: “Impressiones enim causarum universalium recipiuntur in effectibus secundum recipientium modum. Haec autem inferiora sunt fluxibilia et non semper eodem modo se habentia: propter materiam, quae est in potentia ad plures formas; et propter contrarietatem formarum et virtutum. Non igitur impressiones corporum caelestium recipiuntur in istis inferioribus per modum necessitatis” This principle is interestingly in some tension, or to say the least, unanalogous, with the idea originated by Iamblichus and Proclus and shared by Aquinas that the mode of knowledge is determined by the knower and not the object of knowledge. According to this principle, because God’s cognition and knowledge is necessary, God is able to know contingent facts in a necessary way. This principle is central for Aquinas’s theory of God’s knowledge of future contingents. In sum, whereas in knowledge-relations the mode of the higher cause is retained, in causal relations, on the other hand, the mode of the lower receiving cause becomes dominant as is shown in Aquinas’s discussion of the causality of the celestial bodies.
created things highest in the metaphysical hierarchy (i.e. the celestial spheres) are the starting point. As noted, the idea that the First Cause affects the sublunary world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies is one of the foundational ideas in the Aristotelian theories on providence. Aquinas’s theory of the causality of the celestial bodies is thus a systematized account of the so-called Aristotelian theory of providence.\(^{94}\)

Aquinas thus argues that God rules the physical things that are lower in the hierarchy by the mediation of the causality of the celestial bodies. One argument he presents for this position starts from Aristotle’s idea that the first cause of all movement must be entirely unmoved itself. Starting from this insight, Aquinas argues that the less moved something is, the more power it may have to move other things. Of all corporeal things, the celestial bodies are closest to the unmoved mover since they move only with regard to place, whereas the other corporeal things move in every species of motion, that is, also with regard to quality and quantity.\(^{95}\) Therefore, more than any other physical things, the celestial bodies must move the lower bodies.\(^{96}\) Material things have the capacity to influence only material things, however, and therefore the immaterial souls of human beings are beyond the powers of corporeal celestial bodies and free from the influence of fate.\(^{97}\) I will next explore Aquinas’s reconciliation of immutable and all-reaching divine providence with human free will. Before that, however, a few words about Aquinas’s relationship to the \textit{ab uno} principle are in order.

Unlike Albert and Siger, Aquinas does not make explicit use of \textit{ab uno} principle in his discussion of divine providence and chance events. Wayne Hankey has noted that Thomas refused to accept this principle in his discussion of the doctrine of creation. The main problem Aquinas saw in the

\(^{94}\) The development and the contents of these theories was treated in more depth in the first chapter of this work.

\(^{95}\) Aristotle describes the three kinds of motion in \textit{Physics} 5. “If, then, the categories are severally distinguished as Being, Quality, Place, Time, Relation, Quantity, and Activity or Passivity, it necessarily follows that there are three kinds of motion—qualitative, quantitative, and local.” (Transl. R. P. Hardie & R. K. Gaye).

\(^{96}\) Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra gentiles}, l. 3 c. 82 n. 5: “Praeterea. Oportet primum principium motus esse aliquid immobile. Quae ergo magis accedunt ad immobilitatem, debent esse aliorum motiva. Corpora autem caelestia magis accedunt ad immobilitatem primi principii quam inferiora: quia non moventur nisi una specie motus, scilicet motu locali; alia vero corpora moventur omnibus speciebus motus. Corpora igitur caelestia sunt motiva et regitiva inferiorum corporum.”

\(^{97}\) Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra gentiles}, l. 3 c. 84 n. 3: “Amplius. Si nihil causatur ab aliquo corpore nisi inquantum movet dum movetur, oportet omne illud quod recipit impressionem alicuius corporis, moveri. Nihil autem movetur nisi corpus, ut probatur in VI Phys. Oportet ergo omne quod recipit impressionem alicuius corporis, esse corpus, vel aliquam virtutem corpoream. Ostensum est autem in secundo quod intellectus neque est corpus neque virtus corporea. Impossibile est igitur quod corpora caelestia directe imprimant in intellectum.”
metaphysics of emanation was the resulting denial of divine freedom. If God only caused one, simple and necessary effect, how could God have any choice with respect to creation or providence of the world? Aquinas stresses that God, despite his metaphysical simplicity, can produce several effects immediately without the need for mediating causes. According to Wippel, Aquinas did not consider this position to be in contradiction with divine simplicity in any way.

This idea also fits nicely with Thomas’s ideas on providence. For Aquinas, the explicit goal of divine providence is the production of maximum diversity in the created world. If divine providence was understood in the light of the ab uno principle, the creation of diversity would be purely accidental with respect to God. Maximum diversity in the created world might be realized through several stages of necessary emanations, but God’s causality as such would not intend this kind of diversity. For Aquinas, a multiplicity of effects from divine providence is a prerequisite for the greatest diversity of the created world. This diversity is a perfect-making attribute that the created world receives through the goodness of God.

2.5.3 FREE WILL

The randomness and unpredictability that results from the materiality of lower causes is in no way an adequate explanation for the contingent nature of the free choices of human beings. Unlike the per accidens causes chance and fortune, free will is a per se cause of the choices of intellectual beings. With regard to fate, Aquinas explains the contingency of free will with reference to its immateriality. The contingent choices of free intellectual beings avoid the causality exercised by the celestial bodies by being free of matter. This is because according to Aquinas, the causality exercised by the movement of the physical celestial bodies is limited to other physical and moving bodies.

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98 Another reason for Aquinas to reject the Avicennian theory of emanation was its implication of creation having taken place through the mediation of the celestial bodies. In all of his mature works, Aquinas opposed the view that creatures could have creative powers. Wippel 1990, 78. Hankey 2007, 14; Hankey 2007, 2.

99 Wippel 1990, 79. Aquinas writes that natural causes are determined to cause only one type of effect, but voluntary causes retain the power to cause different types of effects. This is why the movement of celestial bodies cannot determine the choices of the human will. If this was the case, the will could not be directed to its end in more than one way. Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles, l. 3 c. 85 n. 5:

100 Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, Ia, q. 22, co. Wippel 1990, 79.


102 Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 23.

103 Thomas Aquinas, Sententia metaphysicae, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 21; 23. The principle that the causality of the material celestial bodies cannot affect immaterial things will reappear in the authors studied below.
Another related argument, raised in the 3rd book of *Summa contra gentiles* is that in the hierarchical order of divine providence the lower things are ruled by the mediation of higher things. An immaterial intellect is, however, higher than anything corporeal, including the celestial bodies, in the order of nature and therefore the corporeal celestial bodies have no rule over the incorporeal intellect.\[104\] Interestingly then, it can be summed up that fate does not do not do away with the contingency of chance and fortune because of the materiality of the proximate causes that give rise to chance and fortune. Conversely, because of the *im*materiality of free will, fate does not necessitate the effects that come about through its activity.

Aquinas also discusses the relationship between divine providence and the contingency of chance events and free will. Aquinas’s solution to this problem is probably one of the best-known ideas concerning divine providence in medieval philosophical theology. My exposition will mainly be based on the commentary on *Metaphysics* where Aquinas provides a more developed version of his argument than in *Summa theologiae*. In the commentary on *Metaphysics*, Aquinas argues that the First Cause is universal without qualification and extends to all being as being, including the accidents of being as being, including contingency and necessity. Therefore, even the acts of free choice fall under the causality of the First Cause and there is no lower cause whatsoever which is not subject to the order of the First Cause.\[105\] Aquinas aims to avoid determinism by pointing out that divine providence gives a contingent status to several created causes through the mediation of intermediary causes. Human choices are thus contingent because God has made the human will a free and contingent cause. At the same time, to safeguard divine omniscience

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\[104\] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, l. 3 cap. 84 n. 1: “Iam enim ostensum est quod divinae providentiae ordo est ut per superiora regantur inferiora et moveantur. Intellectus autem naturae ordine omnia corpora excedit: ut etiam ex praedictis patet. Impossibile est igitur quod corpora caelestia agant in intellectum directe.”

\[105\] The reader may note that this is in effect a sophisticated formulation of the Boethian principle that from the viewpoint of divine providence nothing whatsoever happens by chance. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 30: “Sicut autem dictum est, ens inquantum ens est, habet causam ipsum Deum: unde sicut divinae providentiae subditur ipsum ens, ita etiam omnia accidentia entis inquantum est ens, inter quae sunt necessarium et contingens. Ad divinam igitur providentiam pertinet non solum quod faciat hoc ens, sed quod det ei contingentiam vel necessitatem. Secundum enim quod uniuque dare voluit contingentiam vel necessitatem, praeparavit ei causas medias, ex quibus de necessitate sequatur, vel contingenter. Invenitur igitur uniuscuiusque effectus secundum quod est sub ordine divinae providentiae necessitatem habere. Ex quo contingit quod haec conditionalis est vera, si aliquid est a Deo provisum, hoc erit.” Cf. n. 30, where Aquinas explicitly argues that according to the Catholic faith nothing in the world happens by chance, but whereas Catholic teachers focus on providence, Aristotle speaks of particular proximate causes. Aertsen 1988, 134.
and omnipotence, Aquinas writes explicitly in *Summa theologiae* that in comparison to divine providence all the effects of every single created cause are necessary.\(^{106}\) Pasequale Porro has called Aquinas’s theory of providence and free will “providential determinism”, because the effects of all the lower causes, including the actions of human free will, are predetermined from the viewpoint of the infallible divine providence.\(^{107}\) It should be pointed out that Aquinas follows the same basic line of argument in his discussion of providence and contingency in the late *Summa theologiae*, although the discussion in the commentary on *Metaphysics* remains more detailed and thorough. The argument of *Metaphysics* is devised to show that not everything happens absolutely necessarily due to providence. This is because providence makes some things happen necessarily and others contingently. One might say (although this is not Aquinas’s personally preferred way of putting the matter) that due to providence everything happens conditionally necessarily. With the condition of the divine providential plan being what it is, everything will necessarily happen according to this plan.

One interesting point about Aquinas’s argument, as Nicholas Kahm has recently noted, is that in the argument in the commentary on *Metaphysics*, one of the central features of Aquinas’s theory of providence, that is, the divine ordering of created natures to their proper ends, goes completely unmentioned. On the contrary, Aquinas infers the existence of divine providence from God as the efficient cause of all things, some of which are necessary and others contingent. Thus, in the commentary on *Metaphysics* the stress is on God as an efficient cause, whereas the discussion in *Summa theologiae* puts more emphasis on the final causality of God acting as the ultimate end of all created things.\(^{108}\) Yet the most important features of divine providence, making some lower causes contingent and other lower causes necessary remains the same in both works, as does the idea that even the contingent lower causes are necessary with respect to providence.

A second, and for my purposes more important point, is that a look into a much earlier work of Aquinas, the commentary on *Sentences*, reveals a very different view of the relationship of divine providence and contingency. As already noted, Aquinas stresses the role of divine providence as providing

\[^{106}\] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Iª q. 22 a. 2 ad 4: “Sed quia ipse actus liberi arbitrii reductur in Deum sicut in causam, necesse est ut ea quae ex libero arbitrio fiunt, divinae providentiae subdantur, providentia enim hominis continetur sub providentia Dei, sicut causa particularis sub causa universali.”

\[^{107}\] Porro 2013, 121–127. It should be noted that even if the lower causes are predetermined, this does not amount to absolute determinism: the will of God would still remain a free and unnecessitated cause. In emphasizing the deterministic tendencies in Aquinas’s thought, Porro represents an opposite interpretation from the more libertarian reading of Aquinas offered most notably by Norman Kretzmann Eleonore Stump. Kretzmann 1997, 197–254; Stump 2003, 277–306; 455–463.

\[^{108}\] Kahm 2013, 649.
unique natures for different created things with the important aim of realizing the perfection of the world. As in the commentary on *Metaphysics*, Aquinas also argues in the commentary on *Sentences* that God gives different modal statuses to different created causes, albeit using a somewhat different terminology. Quoting Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Aquinas points out in the commentary on *Sentences* that God allows intellectual beings to either attain their proper ends or fail to attain them in order not to destroy the freedom proper to their nature. In other words, God makes these causes contingent and not necessary. This is completely harmonious with the theory discovered in the commentary on *Metaphysics* and *Summa theologiae*. Yet Aquinas does not argue in his commentary on *Sentences* that even contingent things would be necessary with regard to providence. The fact that Aquinas started to stress in his later works the necessity of all created causes and effects in relation to divine providence will have major implications for Aquinas’s views on providence and evil, as will be seen in the following section.

2.5.4 PROVIDENCE AND EVIL

Aquinas developed a systematic account of the reconciliation of divine providence and creaturely sins and evils. Setting it out clearly is mandatory also for reviewing its influence on later authors. An interesting line of development can be discovered in Aquinas’s theory from his early commentary on *Sentences* to his later works, including *Summa theologiae*, and the commentary on *Metaphysics*. I will next explore Aquinas’s theory and the major changes it went through starting with the commentary on *Sentences*.

It is important to distinguish between two different senses in which the activity of a created being can be opposed to God’s will. In the first sense, any action that is in contradiction with divine commandments and precepts is opposed to God’s will. Yet an action of this type, such as Judas’s betrayal of Jesus, could still be in accordance with God’s overall plan. Judas’s act of betrayal was sinful considered in itself. Yet at the same time, accidentally from Judas’s perspective, it advanced God’s salvific plan. In this sense, human sins can have a positive part to play in the unfolding of the providential plan. In the second sense, one could think of a human being acting in a way that was against God’s will without qualification. The possibility of something happening against God’s will in such an unqualified way was generally denied in medieval theology. Therefore, in the context of this study, the first sense remains more relevant.

In Aquinas’s commentary on *Sentences* the reconciliation of divine providence and evils is a central theme in the discussion concerning divine

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109 Thomas Aquinas, *Super Sent.*, lib. 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 co: “et ideo ex conditione sua sequitur quod rectum ordinem tenere possit tendendo in finem, et etiam deficere. Si autem inevitabiliter in finem tenderet, per divinam providentiam tolleretur sibi conditio suae naturae, ut dicit Dionysius.”
providence. In the 2nd question of the 39th distinction concerned with divine providence, the problem is addressed in many of the replies to the counter arguments as well as the respondeo part. One of the guiding principles of Aquinas’s treatment is the idea he attributes to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite that providence does not destroy, but rather preserves the natures of individual things.\textsuperscript{110} Human beings are free by nature, and their will is a cause \textit{ad utrumlibet}. For this reason, they sometimes attain their end, but at other times fail to attain it. The explanation for this seeming defect in human nature is grounded in the perfection and completeness of the universe, which is the goal of God’s providence.\textsuperscript{111} Aquinas thinks that the world is more perfect and complete if there are natures that can be impeded from reaching their ends as well as natures that cannot be impeded. Even though as such the non-impedible natures are better than the impedible natures, the world would be lacking in perfection and completeness if only non-impedible natures existed.

In the commentary on \textit{Sentences}, Aquinas argues that God created human nature foreknowing that it would not be able to resist evil always, but without intending human evils. Yet God is said to be able to make good even out of these human defects by rectifying them through just punishments.\textsuperscript{112} Thus, in the commentary on \textit{Sentences} Aquinas’s way of reconciling providence with evils seems like what I have labelled the accidental strategy (with an emphasis on God preserving the natures of things). After all, God has no intention concerning the particular human evils, but rather they remain quite random from the divine point of view. As noted, this is the main feature of the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{110} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Super Sent.}, lib. 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 co. “Cum igitur providentiae non sit destruere ordinem rerum, expletur effectus providentiae in rebus secundum convenientiam rei prout nata est consequi finem. Sicut enim dicit Dionysius, non est providentia naturas rei destruere, sed salvare.”

\textsuperscript{111} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Super Sent.}, lib. 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 co: “Sed in nobilioribus creaturis inventur aliud principium praeter naturam, quod est voluntas; quod quanto vicinius est Deo, tanto a necessitate naturalium causarum magis est liberum, ut dicit Boetius; et ideo ex conditione sua sequitur quod rectum ordinem tenere possit tendendo in finem, et etiam deficere. Si autem inevitabileri in finem tenderet, per divinam providentiam tolleretur sibi conditio suae naturae, ut dicit Dionysius; et ideo taliter a Deo instituta est ut etiam deficere posset; ita tamen quod in potestate ejus esset deficere vel non deficere; quod non erat in defectu naturalis principii.”

\textsuperscript{112} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Super Sent.}, lib. 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 co: “Et istos defectus voluntatum contingentes praeter intentionem providentiae praescivit Deus et ordinavit eos in bonum non tantum naturae, sed etiam singularis gratiae, sicut in bonum justitiae (quod ostenditur cum culpa per poenam ordinatur), et in bonum voluntatis aliorum, qui per eorum nequitiam vel corriguntur de peccatis, vel in meritis et gloria crescent; et in multa alia: quae humana ratio non sufficit explicare. Unde patet quod bonum et malum subjacent divinæ providentia, sed malum tamquam praescitum et ordinatum, sed non ut intention a Deo; bonum vero quasi intention; sed necessarium ita quod deficere non possit, et contingens ita quod deficere possit; et voluntarium ita quod poenam vel praemium habeat, aut in praemium vel in poenam aliquos ordinetur; naturæ autem ita quod consequatur finem naturalem, si bonum est, et cedat in bonum alterius naturae, si malum est.”
\end{quote}
accidental strategy.\footnote{However, Aquinas does write in the same distinction that even the sinful human actions fall under the scope of divine foreknowledge, but this is hardly surprising given that for Aquinas, all future contingents fall under divine foreknowledge.} In Aquinas’s early model, God’s primary intention is to create a world that is complete in terms of realized possibilities. The accidental and non-intended, but foreknown, result of this is that some created things fail to achieve their ends, which results in morally culpable actions. Nevertheless, it remains in God’s capacity to turn these defects into something good.\footnote{Interestingly, Aquinas does point out in a reply to one of the initial arguments that God foresees and preordains (praevidit et praeordinavit) both original sin as well as individual human sins. This view is not developed in much detail, however, and Aquinas’s considered position in the commentary on Sentences seems to remain that in creating natures with a potential to fail, God knows that these natures will occasionally fail without intending the actual failure. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Super Sent.}, lib. 1 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad. 4: “Sed in natura humana bonum videtur esse ut in paucioribus: et hujusmodi ratio potest assignari dupliciter. Una est propter corruptionem humanae naturae ex peccato originali, quam etiam Deus praevidit et praeordinavit, sicut et alia mala; sed non prohibuit ut natura maneret in sua libertate, qua subtracta naturae ratio deperiret.” Stump also highlights the idea favoured by Aquinas that God does not want to destroy the natures of any created things. By giving human beings free will, God accepts that some human beings will use this power for sinning. To attain the greater good of human beings being free, God wilfully permits some of them to use this freedom for sinning. Stump 2003, 459.} We are now in a position to note a connection between Aquinas’s reconciliation of divine providence and contingency in his commentary on \textit{Sentences}. Aquinas’s later idea that even contingent events in the created world are necessary in comparison to divine providence is not explicitly present in the commentary on \textit{Sentences}. This allows Aquinas to employ arguments in line with the accidental strategy. In Aquinas’s early theory, human beings, having received their freedom from God, act contingently and are also capable of evil. These evil deeds are not as such a part of the divine plan, but they come under the order of providence by receiving a just punishment. In his early theory of providence, Aquinas’s focus was in safeguarding the contingency of some of the lower causes as a part of God’s providential plan that aimed for the perfection of the universe.\footnote{In Brian Davies’s monograph \textit{Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil}, Davies exposes Aquinas’s theory mostly according to the model I call the accidental strategy. Davies writes “Aquinas does not think that this evil has to be (anymore than he thinks that the universe has to be), but he does think of it as representing a constraint on God of a ‘given that’ kind. God does not have to make people or viruses, but given that he has done so, human sickness is only to be expected.” In this and other passages Davies stresses that God’s particular evils are wholly outside the divine plan. God creates several good natures, the collection of which gives rise to some concomitant evils that are not as such intended by God. As Davies puts it: “To summarize him somewhat crudely: Aquinas’s view is that God cannot make lions and lambs without the lambs having something to worry about.” For Davies God is the cause of evils only accidentally. Davies further argues that God does not need to be considered the author of evil, however, mainly because of the metaphysical status of evil as a privation. Since evil is a privation and God as the...}
In a recent article Nicholas Kahm has noted that a problem with Aquinas’s early theory is that whatever happens for the most part (ut in pluribus) offers strong evidence for the existence of divine providence, but at the same time what happens for the least part (ut in paucioribus) constitutes a problem.\footnote{Kahm focuses on the commentary on \textit{Physics}, but the same problem is visible in the commentary on \textit{Sentences}. Kahm 2013, 641–642. In his earlier works, including the commentary on \textit{Job}, Aquinas considered the fact that different natures are end-directed as the strongest argument for the existence of all-reaching divine providence. Kahm 2013, 650. As will be seen below, later on Aquinas became increasingly aware of the problems that had to do with effects that take place \textit{ut in paucioribus} and human sins understood as defects and deviations from the proper ends of human beings.} As we have seen, in his early works Aquinas’s solution to this problem was that human evils, treated as failures from achieving the proper end of human beings, come under providence only in the way of later receiving punishment. Meanwhile, the actual evil act remains outside providence and is based only on a human defect. In this way, the scope of divine providence is limited. This limitation probably constituted one of the main reasons why Aquinas developed and altered his theory in his later works.

Shortly after finishing his commentary on \textit{Sentences}, Aquinas published the \textit{Quaestiones disputatae de veritate}, the fifth question of which is an extended discussion of divine providence. In the fourth article of the question, Aquinas asks whether all the actions and motions of sublunary things are subjected to divine providence.\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, \textit{De veritate}, q. 5 a. 4 “utrum omnes motus et actiones horum inferiorum corporum subdantur divinae providentiae.”} Large parts of Aquinas’s discussion pertain to the problem of reconciling created evils with divine providence. Aquinas notes that things can be subjected to the order of providence in two ways. The first group consists of things to which something else is ordered. The second group consists of the things that are themselves ordered to something else. To put it in more concrete terms, the first group consists of things that are ends for other things, such as a church can be the end of a Christian looking to pray in peace. The second group, distinguished by Aquinas, consists of the things ordained to ends. To use the same example, the Christian is ordained to reach ultimate happiness in enjoyment of God and praying. Ideally, things are subjected to providence in both ways, that is, so that they both act as ends as well as are ordered to ends themselves. In the example, the church is the end sought by the Christian, but at the same time the church is also ordered to greater perfection itself. Aquinas proceeds to point out, however, that if a
thing, such as a sinful human act, leaves the order of providence, it no longer comes under the order of providence in the first sense but remains in the order of providence in the second sense. That is to say, nothing else is ordered to the sinful act as an end, but providence will order this sinful act itself to an end, i.e. a just punishment. This leads Aquinas to bring up the traditional distinction of John Damascene between the providence of approval and the providence of permission. The things that leave the order of providence because of a failure of a lower cause are not approved by God, but they are still permitted.

How does Aquinas’s discussion in *De veritate* relate to the accidental and instrumental strategies? On the one hand, Aquinas is quick to attribute the evils in the created world to the failures of the secondary causes and not to a divine plan or causation. However, he points out that even these failures may be directed by God to something useful. In addition, those natures that are capable of failing are beneficial to the universe too, and providence saves rather than destroys these natures. The idea is again that God allows all created natures to exist and this will lead to some defects, evils and sins. Nevertheless, these evils are not based on a divine choice but purely on the failure of the lower cause. For this part, the theory is rather similar to the ideas presented in the commentary on *Sentences* and more in line with the accidental strategy, but with the important addition of Damascene’s distinction between the providence of approval and the providence of permission. Aquinas uses this distinction to avoid having to concede that evil things, such as human sins, would be entirely outside the order of providence.

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118 In other contexts, this distinction is expressed with the terms antecedent will and consequent will.

119 [Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 5 a. 4 co: “Nec tamen isti actus deficientes a recto ordine in rebus inferioribus, omnino sunt extra ordinem providentiae. Dupliciter enim aliquid subest providentiae: uno modo sicut ad quod aliquid ordinatur; alio modo sicut quod ad alterum ordinatur. In ordine autem eorum quae sunt ad finem, omnia intermedia sunt fines et ad finem, ut dicitur in II physicorum et V metaphysicae; et ideo quidquid est in recto ordine providentiae, cadit sub providentia non solum sicut ordinatum ad aliud, sed sicut ad quod aliud ordinatur. Sed illud quod exit a recto ordine, cadit sub providentia solum secundum quod ordinatur ad aliud, non quod aliquid ordinetur ad ipsum; sicut actus virtutis generativae, qua homo generat hominem perfectum in natura, est ordinatus a Deo ad aliquid, scilicet ad formam humanam, et ad ipsum ordinatur aliquid, scilicet vis generativa” Interestingly, the distinction between the providence of approval and the providence of permission is not a part of Aquinas’s reconciliation between providence and evils in the other three major works on providence that Aquinas wrote, namely the commentary on *Sentences*, *Summa contra gentiles* and *Summa theologiae*.

120 [Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 5 a. 4 co: “sed actus deficiens, quo interdum monstra generantur in natura, ordinatur quidem a Deo ad alium utilitatem, sed ad hoc nihil alium ordinatur; incidunt enim ex defectu alius causae. Et respectu primi est providentia approbationis, respectu autem secundi est providentia concessionis, quos duos modos providentiae Damascenus ponit in II libro.”]
While they are not approved by God they are still under God's providence of permission.

However, in the same article Aquinas writes shortly afterwards that even though evil is unordered in relation to its proximate cause, it can still come under the order of divine providence.\textsuperscript{121} Furthermore, there are goods that could not be attained without some evils, which is instead a typical feature of the instrumental strategy.\textsuperscript{122} Aquinas writes that it would be culpable to do \textit{(facere)} evil for the sake of good, but evil may be allowed if something good can be drawn from it.\textsuperscript{123} The theory Aquinas presents in \textit{De veritate} cannot thus be easily classified as either the accidental or the instrumental strategy, but in contrast to his discussion of providence and evil in the commentary on \textit{Sentences}, Aquinas starts to use more arguments reminiscent of the instrumental strategy. Nevertheless, most importantly, particular human sins are still mainly considered to remain outside divine intention and come under divine providence, only understood as the providence of permission.

In his later works, Aquinas started moving more clearly towards favouring the instrumental strategy, stressing that human evils are a part of the divine plan and not actually evil from the divine point of view. In the 71\textsuperscript{st} chapter of \textit{Summa contra gentiles} III, Aquinas sets out to prove that providence does not remove evil entirely from created things. The basic strategy is familiar from the commentary on the \textit{Sentences} and \textit{De veritate}: God aims for the perfection of the universe and this perfection requires the existence of natures that have the potency to occasionally fail in reaching their proper ends. According to Aquinas, this does not limit divine goodness in any way, because the defects found in the secondary causes are to be attributed to the secondary causes and not the First Cause.\textsuperscript{124} After presenting the first four arguments following this

\textsuperscript{121} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{De veritate}, q. 5 a. 4 ad 3: “Ad tertium dicendum, quod quamvis malum, secundum quod exit ab agente proprio, sit inordinatum, et ex hoc per privationem ordinis definiatur, tamen nihil prohibet quin a superiori agente ordinetur; et sic sub providentia cadit.”

\textsuperscript{122} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{De veritate}, q. 5 a. 4 ad 5: “Ad quintum dicendum, quod aliquod bonum est quod non posset elici nisi ex aliquo malo, sicut bonum patientiae non nisi ex malo persecutionis elicetur, et bonum poenitentiae ex malo culpae; nec hoc impedit infirmitas mali respectu boni, quia huiusmodi non elicuntur ex malo quasi ex causa per se, sed quasi per accidens et materialiter.”

\textsuperscript{123} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{De veritate}, q. 5 a. 4 ad 10: “Ad decimum dicendum, quod facere malum, ut ex dictis patet, nullo modo bonis competit; unde facere malum propter bonum in homine reprehensible est nec Deo potest attribui. Sed ordinare malum in bonum, hoc non contrariatur bonitati aliquis; et ideo permettere malum propter aliquod bonum inde elicendum, Deo attribuitur.” See also Thomas Aquinas, \textit{De veritate}, q. 5 a. 5 ad 3: “et ideo ad hoc ut aliqua bona maiora eliciantur, permittit aliquos etiam in mala culpae cadere, quae maxime secundum genus sunt odibilia, quamvis unum eorum sit ei magis odibile alio; unde ad medicinam unius permittit quandoque cadere in alium.”

\textsuperscript{124} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra gentiles}, I. 3 cap. 71 n. 2: “Divina enim gubernatio, qua Deus operatur in rebus, non excludit operationem causarum secundarum, sicut iam ostensum est. Contingit autem provenire defectum in effectu propter defectum causae secundae agentis, absque eo quod sit
basic scheme Aquinas’s argumentation takes a rather new direction. In the next three arguments Aquinas’s strategy is to show instead that by allowing for particular evils, divine providence contributes to the greater good of the universe in a utilitarian way. In the first of these three argument, Aquinas writes that there are some goods that could not be realized without evil, such as the perseverance of the tormented martyrs. Such goods could not be attained if divine providence prevented all evils from happening. Aquinas argues that the goodness in good things is greater than the evilness in evil things, and thus from the viewpoint of the whole, it is better for divine providence to allow some evil things to happen.125 In the second argument, Aquinas writes that the good of the whole is more important than the good of the part. For this reason, a good governor should ignore some defects in parts to achieve the greater good for the whole. By allowing for some evils in parts of the universe, divine providence can make the whole universe better.126 The third argument highlights that human beings may appreciate good even more after learning about evil and experiencing it. For this reason, divine providence should not exclude evil wholly from the created world.127 All in all, in these three arguments we see how Aquinas’s view has developed from seeing evils only as accidental outcomes that simply follow from a good creation unintentionally, without any special divine intention. Instead, in this part of

125 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, l. 3 cap. 71 n. 6: “Adhuc. Multa bona sunt in rebus quae, nisi mala essent, locum non haberent: sicut non esset patientia iustorum si non esset malignitas persecuentium; nec esset locus justitiae vindicanti si delicta non essent; in rebus etiam naturalibus non esset unius generatio nisi esset alterius corruptio. Si ergo malum totaliter ab universitate rerum per divinam providentiam excluderetur, oporteret etiam bonorum multitudinem diminuiri. Quod esse non debet: quia virtuosius est bonum in bonitate quam in malitia malum, sicut ex superioribus patet. Igitur non debet per divinam providentiam totaliter malum excludi a rebus.”


127 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, l. 3 cap. 71 n. 8: “Adhuc. Res aliae, et praecipue inferiores, ad bonum hominis ordinantur sicut ad finem. Si autem nulla mala essent in rebus, multum de bono hominis diminueretur, et quantum ad cognitionem, et quantum ad boni desiderium vel amorem. Nam bonum ex comparatione mali magis cognoscitur; et dum aliqua mala perpetimur, ardentius bona optamus; sicut quantum bonum sit sanitas, infirmi maxime cognoscunt; qui etiam ad eam magis exardent quam sani. Non igitur pertinet ad divinam providentiam mala a rebus totaliter excludere.”
**Summa contra gentiles**, at least some particular evils are viewed as an integral part of the divine providential plan. Yet from the divine point of view – with the big picture in mind, so to speak – the particular evils are not really evil, for in the end they contribute more to the goodness of the whole than they take away from it.

Interestingly, Aquinas also refers to two biblical passages in Isaiah and Amos both referring to God as the creator of evil. Taking them up in context, where the main argument is that God allows evils to happen in order to achieve the greatest good for the universe, does away with the problem of God intentionally creating something evil that these passages would otherwise present. All in all, in **Summa contra gentiles** Aquinas uses the accidental and instrumental strategies side by side without seeing them as mutually exclusive answers to the problem of reconciliation between divine providence and evil.

Here my findings are directly at odds with what Davies has argued in his recent monograph, *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil*. It is worthwhile quoting Davies’s position at some length:

> When talking of evil done, Aquinas recognizes that he cannot appeal to concomitant good of any kind. If I wrongly cause you pain, he thinks, there is no flourishing to appeal to by way of explanation. For where is the flourishing here? Certainly not in you. And neither in me, or so Aquinas thinks. Bad moral choices do not, for him, add to or express the goodness of any human agent (though they might accidentally sometimes result in bad moral agents benefitting in some way). They are instances of failure—failure in the people who make these choices. Such people, Aquinas holds, do not exemplify human goodness. They are examples of things that fail to be what they ought to be.

Yet as we have seen, in **Summa contra gentiles** Aquinas explicitly uses arguments where human sins are seen as part of a providential plan, and indeed bring forth flourishing in the victim of sin, such as the tormented martyr. I wish to highlight this, because it reflects a larger change in Aquinas’s views. In Aquinas’s mature works, evils are no longer analysed simply as a failure of the sinful agent in attaining his proper end. In addition to being failures of the proximate agent, at least some of the human sins are at the same time completely preordained and planned for by the First Cause. This, of course, does not mean that God would be the agent committing these sins. Rather, from the divine point of view, actual human sins are not only evil but rather play a necessary part in achieving the greater good. The effect that is sinful with respect to the lower cause is not only evil with respect to the First

128 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, l. 3 cap. 71 n. 9: “Propter quod dicitur, Isaiae 45-7: faciens pacem et creans malum. Et Amos 3-6: non est malum in civitate quod Deus non faciat.”

129 Davies 2011, 70.
Cause. This is closely analogous to the idea especially stressed by Aquinas in his works from the same era that nothing is chance with respect to God, even though the very same events are really chance with respect to the proximate agent.\footnote{One might also mention another analogous idea, central to Aquinas’s ideas of divine eternity, that God perceives and experiences as atemporal also those things that are temporal in the created sphere.} That is, chance events are really random and accidental with respect to the proximate cause, while being at the same time completely preordained by the First Cause. Similarly, human sins are actually evil and sinful from the human perspective, but at the same time remain preordained, planned and foreknown by the First Cause.

In *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas further moves towards using the instrumental strategy as his means of reconciling divine providence with evil. At the same time, the accidental strategy is no longer explicitly employed. Another notable change to the ideas presented in the earlier works is that the emphasis on the natures of things is transferred more clearly to an emphasis on particular beings.\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Iª q. 22 a. 2 co.: “Sed necesse est dicere omnia divinae providentiae subiacere, non in universali tantum, sed etiam in singulari.” This idea can also be found in e.g. *De veritate*. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 5 a. 4 co: “Nos autem Deum perfecte cognoscere omnia particularia dicimus; et ideo praedictum providentiae ordinem in singularibus ponimus, etiam in quantum singularia sunt.”} Aquinas discusses the relationship between providence and evil in his reply to a variation of the classical argument that the existence of evil in the world necessarily implies imperfection either in divine goodness or divine power. His reply to this argument follows the already familiar scheme of the instrumental strategy. Universal good requires that some evil is allowed in particulars. Thus, a universal provider cannot and should not aim to make every single particular being good in itself. Aquinas explicitly writes that it pertains to providence to permit some defects in particular things so that the perfection of the universe can be achieved.\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Iª q. 22 a. 2 ad 2: “Cum igitur Deus sit universalis provisor totius entis, ad ipsius providentiam pertinet ut permittat quosdam defectus esse in aliquibus particularibus rebus, ne impediatur bonum universi perfectum.”}

In the 49th question of the first part of *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas treats the question whether God causes evil. Aquinas notes that evils that may be traced to a defect in action cannot be attributed to God, since in divine perfection there may be no such defects. On the other hand, evil may also be reduced to the corruption of some created things. This kind of evil may be reduced to God, who is the efficient cause of all creation. Aquinas argues, however, that such evils are not primarily intended by God. Rather, Aquinas repeats the argument already familiar from his commentary on *Sentences* that God intends the completion and perfection of the creation and to achieve this, he also needs to create things that are capable of failure and sometimes do indeed fail. Defects such as the death of some living beings are not the
intention of God *per se*, but rather follow accidentally from the creation of beings that are capable of corruption. In this sense, God is an author of evil. In addition, divine justice prepares righteous punishments for sinners. Insofar as these punishments are understood as evils, God can be said to cause evils.133

For my purposes, the most important group of evils is of course the evils of sin. The conclusions of the 49th question on whether God causes evil seem to be in some tension with what was said about Aquinas’s strategy of reconciling divine providence with sins in *Summa theologiae* above. In the 49th question of the first part of *Summa theologiae* on whether God causes evil, God is seen to cause the evils of sin only in an accidental way. God creates a perfect and complete world containing creatures that are both capable of and sometimes guilty of sinning. This greater good of the perfection of the world requires that there are also some evils of sin in the world. These are caused by God only in a kind of an accidental way (*quasi per accidens*). Yet, as noted, in the 22nd question on providence in the first part of *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas explicitly writes, for example, that God knowingly allows tyrannical persecution (an evil thing considered as such) to attain the greater good of the patience of martyrs.134

This look into the discussions of the relationship of providence and evil in the four major works of Aquinas shows that in his later life Thomas steered from the accidental strategy towards the instrumental strategy. Within the scope of this study, it is not possible to review in depth all the numerous works of Aquinas where he discusses the relationship of providence and human sins.

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134 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Iª q. 22 a. 2 ad 2: “Cum igitur Deus sit universalis provisor totius entis, ad ipsius providentiam pertinet ut permittat quosdam defectus esse in aliquibus particularibus rebus, ne impediatur bonum universi perfectum. Si enim omnia mala impediurentur, multa bona deessent universo, non enim esset vita leonis, si non esset occisio animalium; nec esset patientia martyrum, si non esset persecutio tyrannorum.”
It has been shown, however, that Aquinas’s emphasis on God’s intention of creating a perfect and complete world including natures that are capable of failure in achieving their ends, changes towards a view where even creaturely sins are seen to be part of a divine plan where particular sins, too, are required to achieve universal good. In the earlier model, human sins are an accidental and non-intended but a necessary part of a perfect and complete world. In the latter, they are also knowingly chosen so that a more perfect world can be achieved. The difference in outlook is subtle but important. As seen, it is related to Aquinas’s overall change of emphasis in his theory of providence. In his later works, Aquinas started to emphasize that contingent events are also necessary with respect to providence. As I have argued, this major change in his views must have motivated the changes in his theory of reconciliation of divine providence and sin. The presence of these two strategies has been noted to some extent by Eleonore Stump in her influential monograph *Aquinas*. Stump, in her treatment of providence and suffering, does not however note the development of Aquinas’s ideas but rather treats his thought as a unified whole, perhaps more so than my study of the development of Aquinas’s views would allow.

Furthermore, in a chapter on the problem of evil in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, Eleonore Stump has argued that in the medieval discussions the solution of treating sins and evils as something like shadows in a painting becomes rather marginal in comparison to Augustine’s connection between human sinning, the Fall, and divine redemption. Yet, it has been shown that in the specific context of the medieval discussions on divine providence Stump’s conclusion seems rather exaggerated. As has been shown, the instrumental strategy remains alive and well in an author of no lesser importance than Thomas Aquinas in his later discussions of providence.

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135 Stump, of course, does not follow my convention of naming these strategies.
136 Stump 2003, 455–463. In noting that, according to Aquinas, God actively permits even human sins in order to turn them towards the good of the saints, Stump refers to Aquinas’s commentary on Paul’s epistle to Romans. This work was written in the same period (1270–1273) as *Summa theologiae* and the commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* that my treatment was based on. Stump 2003, 463. On the other hand, whilst discussing Aquinas’s idea that God preserves the natures of things and this leads to some evils that are not part of the divine plan as such, Stump refers to the earlier *Summa contra gentiles*. Stump 2003, 459. Instead of noting the development and change in Aquinas’s views, Stump treats these ideas as parts of one Thomistic theory. She does not take into account, however, that in Aquinas’s more mature works, human sins start increasingly to appear as part of the divine plan, while in the earlier works they are seen as a rather unwelcome side effect of the positive fact that in the created world there are natures which are capable of making free choices.

137 Stump writes: “Augustine’s suggestion that evil is like a dark patch that contributes to the overall beauty of a picture did not altogether disappear from later medieval discussion, but it is his connection between suffering and redemption from the universal human tendency to wrongdoing that is central to later discussions of the problem of evil.” Stump 2010, 775.
If human evils came under the order of providence only through later punishments, as seems to be the case in Aquinas's early theory, they would in the first place remain outside the control and intention of divine providence. Yet as we have seen, Aquinas began stressing in his later life that all events are necessary in comparison to divine providence. This shift in his thought simply did not leave as much space for arguments based on the accidental strategy. Judged from this perspective, Aquinas’s mature thought thus developed into a direction that emphasized divine omnipotence at the expense of human free will. Although Aquinas did not explicitly criticize arguments based on the accidental strategy in his later works, it seems nevertheless quite possible that he became increasingly aware of the tension between the two strategies sometime after writing Summa contra gentiles. This is all the more interesting given that no such awareness can be found in some later authors, including Richard of Middleton and John of Paris.

2.6 Siger of Brabant

Siger of Brabant (c. 1240–c.1282) discussed the relationship between divine providence and contingency grounded in natural causes and the choices of intellectual agents in his De necessitate et contingentia causarum, edited by Duin in 1954. In addition, the topic is brought up in Siger’s commentaries on several Aristotelian works, most notably Metaphysics. The reportationes of the Metaphysics commentary from Cambridge and Vienna contain the question, Utrum omnia quae eveniunt, de necessitate eveniant. In addition to De necessitate, these questions are highly relevant for my study. From the sheer amount of surviving texts dealing with the topic, it is clear that Siger found questions regarding the relationship between divine providence and necessity important. Siger presents critical arguments against some aspects of Thomas Aquinas’s theory, although their theories are both based on a rather similar understanding of the main aspects of divine providence and modality.

Siger’s thinking on some important questions went through changes during his career. For example, the doctrinal condemnation of 1270 forced Siger to reconsider his views concerning the unicity of the intellect.138 For this reason, it is important to establish a relative chronology for his relevant works. According to van Steenberghen, De necessitate et contingentia causarum was composed around 1272, whereas the various redactions of the commentary on Metaphysics date from a later date around 1273.139 Furthermore, Dunphy has argued that the reportatio of Vienna is the latest version of Siger’s commentaries on Metaphysics.140 Maurer gives the terminus ad quem of 1276

139 Van Steenberghen 1977, 218. This chronology is confirmed by Maurer 1983, 14.
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for all the redactions of the *Metaphysics* commentary. This was the time when Siger came to the papal curia.\textsuperscript{141} At any rate, it is worth noting that all the works of Siger that are of most direct relevance for my study were all written in between the Parisian condemnations of 1270 and 1277.

My treatment will be based on the earliest and most extensive of Siger’s works dealing with the problems of causal determinism and divine providence, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*. According to Porro, this work was written as an answer to Aquinas’s mature theory of providence found in his commentary on *Metaphysics* and *Summa theologiae*. I will next offer a summary of Siger’s reconciliation of divine providence and contingency as presented in *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*, paying special attention to Siger’s criticism of Aquinas.

In the initial arguments concerning *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*, Siger makes a careful distinction between divine foreknowledge and divine providence. Whereas foreknowledge pertains to purely speculative knowledge, providence, on the other hand, as part of prudence, pertains to practical knowledge. What foreknowledge and providence have in common is that they are both infallible.\textsuperscript{142} Due to divine simplicity, this distinction is conceptual and does not refer to two distinct realities in God.\textsuperscript{143} The definition Siger offers for providence is somewhat reminiscent of that of Aquinas: “divine providence is nothing other than practical reason or understanding of the connection and order of causes in relation to the effects”\textsuperscript{144}

There is an important point where Siger differs from Aquinas. Like Albert the Great in his commentary on *Physics*, Siger stresses that the First Cause is not the immediate cause of anything more than only one effect i.e. the first intelligence. Thus the First Cause causes effects in the sublunary world exclusively as a remote cause, through the mediation of the secondary

\textsuperscript{141} Maurer 1983, 15.

\textsuperscript{142} Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 18, l. 96–05):

“Differunt autem praescientia divina futurorum et providentia; praescientia enim futurorum divina, sub ratione qua praescientia, ad intellectum divinum pertinet secundum quod speculativus illorum absolute; providentia autem, cum sit pars prudentiae de futuris existens – prudentia autem ad intellectum practicum pertinet, – providentia futurorum pertinet ad intellectum divinum non solum secundum quod speculativus illorum, sed etiam secundum quod practicus; unde providentis est exsequi provisa. Conveniunt autem in hoc providentia et praescientia quod utraque est infallibilis.”

\textsuperscript{143} Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 43, l. 47–48):

“providentia quam in Deo habet, Deus sit.”

\textsuperscript{144} Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 38–39, l. 45–47):

“Providentia divina nihil aliud est quam ratio practica seu intellectus connexionis et ordinis causarum ad sua causata.”
causes. In his commentary on *Metaphysics*, Siger writes that matter also is not created immediately by the First Cause but rather by a celestial orb. Siger thus quite explicitly endorses the *ab uno* principle and does not worry about the possible tensions between Avicennian emanationist metaphysics and the dogmas of Christianity. Siger stresses that the First Cause causes its sole effect necessarily. Thus, in Siger’s system contingency is not grounded in the will nor a free decision of the First Cause, but rather comes to play a part only on the level of the lower causes. This is a notable difference between Siger and Thomas Aquinas.

At any rate, Siger clearly accepts the Aristotelian commonplace that a large part of the causes in the sublunary world are contingent, i.e. not necessary. That is to say, the various effects taking place here below have often contingent proximate causes, whereas the First Cause is the necessary remote cause of everything. In addition to free choices of intellectual agents, contingency can arise from accidental natural causes. Siger identifies three possible sources for accidental causality. Accidental causality may be born 1) from the concurrence of two causal chains, 2) from the causality of a contrary agent or 3) from material indisposition.

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145 Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (Duin 1954, 26–27, l. 81–84): “licet Causa Prima non sit causa impedibilis seu cui concurrat accidens impedimentum, ipsa tamen producit effectus inferiores per causas mediate et non immediate”

146 Siger of Brabant, *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam* V, 11 (ed. Dunphy 1981, 257, l. 43–44): “Sic igitur patet quod materia est causata, non tamen generata; et patet quod non est immediate causata a Primo, sed ab orbe.”

147 On Siger’s views on the necessary causation of the First Cause, see also Knuuttila 1993, 134-136. According to Wippel, Siger’s remarks on the *ab uno* principle were not consistent during the different stages of his career. In a late work, the commentary on *Liber de causis* (c. 1275–1276), Siger seems to be opposed to the Avicennian theory of emanation. Wippel comes to the conclusion that Siger must have been “strongly attracted to this position at the time of his *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*”. Wippel 1995, 38–40. This conclusion seems to apply to *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* as well.

148 The first two sources of accidental causality seem to overlap. What else could the causality of a contrary agent be, but a concurrence of two causal chains? Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 23–24, l. 20–23): “Accidentia tamen hic inferius, sive sint duae causae concurrentes vel contrarium agens impediens vel materia dispositio aliqua, inveniuntur ordinate et habere causam per se suae coniunctionis in altioribus causis.” Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia metaphysicae*, lib. 6 l. 3 n. 20: “Si igitur ea quae hic sunt contingentia, reducamus in causas proximas particulares tantum, inveniuntur multa fieri per accidens, *tum propter concursum duarum causarum*, quarum una sub altera non continetur, sicut cum praeter intentionem occurrunt mihi latrones. (Hic enim concursus causatur ex duplici virtute motiva, scilicet mea et latronum). *Tum etiam propter defectum agentis*, cui accidit debilitas, ut non possit pervenire ad finem intentum; sicut cum aliquid cadit in via propter lassitudinem. *Tum etiam propter indispositionem materiae*, quae non recipit formam intentam ab agente, sed alterius modi sicut accidit in monstruosus partibus animalium.”
Siger identifies divine providence with the complete connection of the secondary causes (connexio causarum). Since Siger develops his theory in an Avicennian emanationist framework, it seems clear that he is thinking of the connexio causarum primarily in terms of efficient causes. The three other types of causes (material, formal, final) are not mentioned in the question. The lack of stress on final causality clearly sets Siger’s theory of providence apart from that of Aquinas.

Siger repeatedly stresses the infallibility of both divine providence and divine foreknowledge. How is it possible then that both divine foreknowledge and providence are infallible, if there really are contingent lower causes? Andrew LaZella has in a recent article argued that for Siger chance events do not fall under the influence of divine providence. LaZella stresses that Siger’s actual view was that if God knew or disposed chance events from eternity as their co-cause, they could not really remain contingent. Rather, on the contrary, determinism would follow. Thus LaZella claims that in Siger’s thought chance events were not predetermined nor foreknown by God.149 Was Siger really so radical that he would have greatly reduced the domain of providence in order to retain unqualified contingency of chance and fortune? After all, Siger’s formulations in both De necessitate et contingentia causarum and the commentaries on Metaphysics are clear on the fact that all future effects are eternally determined by divine providence and that both divine foreknowledge and providence are infallible.150 How could future chance events then remain outside divine providence for Siger, as LaZella claims?

To clear up this confusion concerning Siger’s understanding of the relationship between chance events and providence, it is necessary to take into account his distinction between causes that are actually prevented (impedita) and causes that are preventable in an unqualified sense (impedibilis). As noted, for Siger the First Cause is not the immediate cause of any inferior effects. Rather the inferior effects are caused by the First Cause only as the remote cause. Furthermore, the First Cause produces its actual effects through the mediation of causes that are not actually prevented (non impedita), but are in an unqualified sense preventable (impedibilis).151 This distinction

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149 LaZella 2011.
150 Siger of Brabant, Quaestiones in Metaphysicam (Reportatio) (Cambridge), l. VI q. 9 (ed. Maurer 1983, p. 324 l. 28–33): “in praesentibus est causa in actu cuiuslibet futuri quod eveniet [...] ita quod in connexione causarum determinate est causa in actu alterius partis cuiuslibet contradictionis de futuro a te imaginatae. Cuius probatio est primo ex providentia divina, quia ex ipsa determinatum est quae pars cuiuslibet contradictionis de futuro eveniet.”

151 It might be helpful to think of the distinction between causes that are not actually prevented (non impedita) and causes that are preventable in an unqualified sense (impedibilis) in comparison to the concept of a ut in pluribus cause. A cause that Siger describes as non impedita is any ut in pluribus cause when it is actually producing its effect, whereas a cause that Siger describes as impedibilis is any ut in pluribus cause that could, by its definition, be impeded from actually producing its effect. For Siger being
Divine Providence from Alexander of Hales to Siger of Brabant

occupies a central place in Siger’s theory, as presented in De necessitate et contingentia causarum and in the commentaries on Metaphysics. Siger argues that only those effects that come about from proximate causes that may not be prevented (non impedibilis) are necessary. It does not suffice for determinism that the First Cause or divine providence may not be prevented, since the lower causes are preventable in an unqualified sense.\(^{152}\)

Siger considers at length a counter-argument against the justification of the distinction between actually prevented (impedita) causes and causes that are preventable in an absolute (impedibilis) sense in both De necessitate et contingentia causarum and in the Munich and Cambridge reportationes. The argument is based on Avicenna’s causal principle that the relationship between causes and effects is always necessary and never merely contingent. Thus, it seems that a cause \textit{ut in pluribus} – given that it is not impeded – will cause its effect by necessity.\(^{153}\)

Siger concedes that a cause that is impedible, but not actually impeded, brings about its effect necessarily. This is, however, only qualified necessity due to the fact that the cause had the potency of being impeded. Siger thus qualifies Avicenna’s principle of the necessary relation between causes and

preventable in an unqualified sense refers to the type of the cause in question. An apple tree that produces an apple is preventable in an unqualified sense, because sometimes other apple trees fail to produce apples. In other words, Siger is not thinking in terms of synchronic alternative possibilities for a singular cause. Siger of Brabant, \textit{De necessitate et contingentia causarum} (ed. Duin 1954, 27, l. 81–88), “\textit{licet Causa Prima non sit causa impedibilis seu cui concurrat accidens impedimentum, ipsa tamen producit effectus inferiores per causas medias et non immediate; quae causae mediae, licet ex ordine Causae Primae accipiant quod producant effectus, et tunc, quod non sunt impeditae, non tamen quin in natura sua sint impedibiles; licet ergo Causa Prima non sit impedibilis, producit tamen effectum per causam impedibilem.”

\(^{152}\) Siger of Brabant, \textit{De necessitate et contingentia causarum} (ed. Duin 1954, 28, l. 11–15): “\textit{illa futura solus necessario fient, quae fient a causa per se non impedibili, et non solum causa prima sed proxima; et quia non omnia futura talia, sed quaedam eorum accidentia, quaedam autem eorum fient ex causis impedibilibus licet non impeditis, idcirco non omnia fient necessario.”

\(^{153}\) Siger of Brabant, \textit{De necessitate et contingentia causarum} (ed. Duin 1954, 15–16, l. 34–51): “\textit{Omne quod advenit, aut evenit a causa per se necessaria ad effectum quae impediri non potest, aut a causa per se frequenter et ut in pluribus causa quae tamen potest impedi, aut provenit a causa per accidens. Et de futuris provenientibus a primo modo causa planum est quod eventus eorum est necessarius. Eventus autem a causa ut in pluribus existente in dispositione illa in qua causa non est impedita, est necessarius, ita quod quandocumque ponitur illa causa in tali dispositione, nescesse est etiam effectus poni. Ita etiam est de effectu qui evenit a causa per accidens. Causa enim per accidens, accepta ut in dispositione in qua est causa necessaria sui effectus, de necessitate inducit suum effectum. Quod si aliquis dicat illi causae non accidere accidens per quod causat necessario, eo quod accidens non sit necessarium, arguatur ut prius: quod illud ens per accidens seu illa causa per accidens, cum sit effectus alius, procedet a causa existente in aliquo trium dictorum modorum, et sic eventus illius accidentis erit necessarius ut prius.”

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effects by pointing out that the necessity Avicenna spoke about is not necessity *simpliciter*, but rather analogous to the *secundum quid* necessity of the present: a man that is sitting now sits necessarily in the sense that he could not stand up while sitting. He does, however, retain the potency to stand up and in this sense his sitting is contingent in an unqualified sense. Similarly, a cause *ut in pluribus* is not rendered absolutely necessary by the fact that it is not actually impeded. In other words, the causation of such cause is necessary *secundum quid* but not *simpliciter*. Here one may clearly note that Siger understands the relationship between causes and effects in accordance with the Averroistic model. He considers that Avicenna’s model would amount to causal determinism, whereas the Averroistic model stressing the contingency of all the effects caused by *ut in pluribus* causes manages to avoid causal determinism.

Siger considers another counter-argument against his theory of divine providence: if the First Cause is a non-impedible cause of some given future effect, how is it possible that this effect is brought about by impeded proximate causes? If the proximate causes may fail in bringing about the given future effect, does this not mean that the First Cause too may be impeded? In his solution, Siger explains that even though the First Cause may not be prevented, it should not be considered a necessary cause of all the future effects, as this would lead to determinism. Rather, what Siger means by saying that the First Cause is a non-impedible cause of a future effect is that an impediment for this future effect may not take place outside the causal order of the First Cause. Nor, in turn, can any other future effect take place outside the causal order of the First Cause. Siger writes that if for any future contingent proposition only one part of the contradiction was in the order of

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154 Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 37, l. 02–11): “Ad primum in oppositum dicendum quod causa effectus *ut in pluribus*, secundum se accepta, non est ad effectum necessaria; ipsa etiam accepta *ut non impedita*, impeditibus remanens, non est etiam ad effectum necessaria. Sed verum est quod causa ut in pluribus, accepta ut non impedita et ut in dispositione in qua causa, non est in potentia ut non causet effectum, non impedita et sic se habens; et sic intellexit Avicenna quod omnis effectus respectu suae causae sit necessarius, quae necessitas, sicut prius visum est, non est nisi sicut omne quod est, esse necessarium quando est.”

155 Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 30, l. 50–55): “Sed adhuc super dictis tres oriantur dubitationes. Prima est, quomodo stant ista simul: Causam Primam esse causam non impedibilem respectu alcuibus futuri quod iet, et tamen illum effectum procedere ab ea per causas impedibles; nam si media et instrumenta impedibilia ab effectu sunt, tunc et Causa Prima impedibilis erit ab effectu eius, per illa media.”

156 Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 31, l. 80–86): “Sed Causam Primam esse causam non impedibilem non est eam esse necessariam ad effectum aliquem qui eveniet, sed est eam esse causam cui non potest accidere impedimentum extra eius ordinem, ita quod ex hoc quod Causa Prima non est impedibilis, sequitur quod eventus alcuibus futuri non possit contingere extra eius ordinem.”
the First Cause, this part would be realized by necessity. Thus, provided that the given future effect is really contingent in an unqualified sense, both of its parts must equally belong to the order of the First Cause. What happens then to divine foreknowledge? Divine omniscience would appear severely reduced if God only knew of any given future contingent \( f \), that “either \( f \) or non-\( f \) will be actual”.

It must be kept in mind that for Siger, divine providence, i.e. \textit{connexio causarum}, includes the complete set of necessary, contingent and accidental causes. Obviously the accidental causes, chance and fortune, too, are disposed to bring about some effect, although their effects are surprising on the level of proximate causation. Being equal to the \textit{connexio causarum}, divine providence thus contains the whole disposition of all the created causes to work in a given way. These causes are contingent in an unqualified sense as they could be prevented, even though they are not actually prevented. Some might argue that this theory too leads to determinism, since all sublunary causation is in effect determined in the causal order of the First Cause. According to Siger, such conclusion would be invalid, however. As he repeatedly stresses, a cause that could in an unqualified sense be prevented (\textit{impedibilis}) is not rendered necessary even though it is not actually prevented. Thus, the contingent nature of several sublunary causes does not have to prevent the First Cause from knowing the outcomes of these causes. And neither does divine providence or \textit{connexio causarum} nullify the contingency of accidental causes. Here my reading differs from that of LaZella. To sum up, Siger thinks that the future contingent effects happen in a given way according to the order of the First Cause, but their opposites remain in the order of the First Cause. Therefore, future effects remain contingent in an unqualified sense even though they are predetermined \textit{secundum quid} in the causal order of the First Cause.\textsuperscript{157}

I take Siger’s position to imply that divine foreknowledge could, absolutely speaking, be mistaken with regard to chance events, but in practice this never happens. In other words, accidental causality, that is, the effects brought about by chance and fortune relate to the First Cause in a contingently necessary way: the lower accidental causes could take place otherwise (that is to say, they are contingent), but in actual reality they take place in accordance with God’s infallible practical knowledge.\textsuperscript{158} In this sense, Siger’s theory reminds one of

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\textbf{Siger of Brabant, De necessitate et contingentia causarum} (ed. Duin 1954, 32, l. 95–00): & “quamquam de eventu illius futuri non sit possibile aliter evenire quam secundum ordinem Causae Primae eo quod non est causa impedibilis, quia tamen sub eius ordine non tantum cadit illud futurum sed et possibile oppositum, ideo nec respectu Causae Primae est eventus illius futuri necessarius.” See also Duin 1954, 323. \\
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\textbf{Knuuttila has argued that Siger’s theory in De necessitate et contingentia causarum limited divine omniscience with respect to chance events. Knuuttila 2008, 515.} & \\
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Ockham’s well-known solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge: God knows future contingents contingently, but in practice infallibly.

This theory could be successful in both retaining the contingency of chance events and also the infallibility of divine providence and omniscience. But is this really the final solution of Siger in *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*? Later on, in the same work, Siger points out that God has providence and foreknowledge only of that which is true. Yet, according to Siger, Aristotle has argued in *De interpretatione* that while it is true in the combined sense that there will be, or there will not be a sea battle tomorrow, in the divided sense neither option has truth value before the actualization of the given future event. Siger clearly hints that since God knows only what is true, God may not have any certain knowledge concerning future contingents, such as future chance events. Right after this he notes, however, that this kind of denial of all-reaching divine foreknowledge may be unacceptable to some and gives an account of divine knowledge, again in accordance with my interpretation of his theory, described above. This account is that God understands future contingents only through his own essence and not through future contingents as such. Certain knowledge of some future contingent event in itself (*in se*) would make it happen necessarily, but certain knowledge of this fact through something else (*in alio*), such as the divine essence, arguably does not necessitate the object of the knowledge. Although the future contingents are mutable, God’s knowledge of them through his own essence is immutable. In this way, God is able to have immutable and infallible non-necessitating foreknowledge and providence of mutable events through his own essence. How this is possible, Siger does not ultimately explain. He just wraps up the topic by noting that, “In the divine intellect God has immutable knowledge of mutable things and infallible foreknowledge and providence of fallible things”.

I will end my exposition of Siger’s ideas on divine providence with a look at his criticism of Aquinas’s theory of divine providence. In *De necessitate et

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159 Siger of Brabant, *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* (ed. Duin 1954, 42, l. 14–25): “Nunc autem, sicut vult Aristoteles in libro Perihermeneias, quamquam navale bellum fore vel non fore sit verum, non tamen divisim contingit alterum vere dicere. Si enim navale bellum fore esset verum, tunc navale bellum fore esset necessarium, ut ibidem pertractatur. Aut si graviter sonat in auribus aliquorum, quod non sit hoc praemeditatum a Deo, tunc dicendum, sicut prius dictum est, quod, cum hoc ipsum, quod est a fore, in Deo non habeat intellectum, nisi qui est ipsius substantialia divinae et ipsa substantia divina, etiam talis intellectus ipsius a quod fiet, qui est eius in alio quodam immutabili, quamquam quod a fiet sit mutabile, nullam imponit necessitatem ipsi a ad eventum.” The idea that God’s knowledge does not necessitate future events, it being knowledge of the immutable divine essence instead of mutable things, goes back to Boethius. Porro 2013, 130.

contingentia causarum, Siger presents a position argued by certain Parisian masters that in Siger’s view fails to avoid determinism. According to this theory, many effects follow contingently from their proximate causes but are still necessary in relation to the First Cause.\textsuperscript{161} It is clear that Aquinas is to be counted among the ranks of these Parisian masters. Aquinas’s theory was that the lower causes may be contingent with respect to their proximate causes, whereas in the final analysis they are necessarily what they are with regard to the infallible divine providence. In a theory like this, divine omniscience is, of course, not risked. God may be able to know the outcomes of future contingent effects, since they have a necessary causal relationship to divine providence.\textsuperscript{162}

Siger, however, finds such a theory seriously flawed. If the lower causes are necessary with regard to the First Cause, and the First Cause cannot fail, then the lower causes are not really contingent, but are instead necessary.\textsuperscript{163} Siger himself stresses that in order to remain contingent, the lower causes must be contingent in an unqualified sense (\textit{simpliciter}), both in relation to the First Cause as well as the lower causes. This point is also made in the commentary on \textit{Metaphysics}, where Siger notes that many Peripatetics have considered effects contingent in relation to particular causes, but necessary in relation to the whole harmony of causes. Siger approvingly notes that Aristotle is in disagreement with this view and repeats his position that several effects are really contingent \textit{simpliciter}.\textsuperscript{164}

Siger also considers a position, clearly identifiable as that of Thomas Aquinas: divine providence not only determines what will happen in the

\textsuperscript{161} Siger of Brabant, \textit{De necessitate et contingentia causarum} (ed. Duin 1954, 25, l. 54–61): “Aliud est quod quaedam sunt accidentia quae etiam secundum Aristotelem non sunt necessaria, ut fodiensem sepulcrum invenire thesaurum. Quodsi effectus qui, relati in aliquam causam particularem, fiunt ex ea sicut ex causa impedibili, relati tamen in Causam Primam, fiunt ex ea sicut ex causa per se cui non accidit impedimentum sui effectus in tempus determinatum, tunc huiusmodi effectus, qui fiunt a causa particulari ut in pluribus, relati tamen in Causam Primam necessario fient.”

\textsuperscript{162} For Aquinas, effects receive their modal status from the proximate, not the remote cause. See, for example, Aquinas Contra Gentiles, lib. 3 cap. 72 n. 2 “Ex causis autem proximis aliqui effectus dicuntur necessarii vel contingentes, non autem ex causis remotis.”

\textsuperscript{163} Siger of Brabant, \textit{De necessitate et contingentia causarum} (ed. Duin 1954, 25–26, l. 61–67): “Quodsi etiam illa, quae sunt accidentia secundum se et in respectu ad aliquas causas particulars, inveniuntur semper habere unientem causam et ordinantem, ut prius visum est, ita quod huiusmodi accidentia etiam a causa per se non impedibili, tunc etiam non obstantibus accidentibus evenirent omnia ex suis causis necessario.”

\textsuperscript{164} Siger of Brabant, \textit{Quaestiones in Metaphysicam (Reportatio)} (Cambridge), l. VI q. 8 (ed. Maurer, p. 314, l. 56–62): “Multi enim Peripateticorum volunt quod effectus contingentes, relati ad causas suas particulars secundum se acceptas, contingentes sunt; relati tamen in totam harmoniam et habitudinem praesentium omnes de necessitate eveniunt. Aristoteles autem videtur fuisse contrariae opinionis, scilicet quod aliqui effectus simpliciter contingentes sint et non per comparationes suas ad causas particulars, ut posterius apparebit.”
future, but also whether the modal status of these various future effects will be contingent or necessary. Siger notes that the central point of Aquinas’s theory, that divine providence necessarily brings about that certain effects take place contingently, can be understood in three ways. 1) The first way – according to Siger true but not actually held by Aquinas – is that the given future effects are by necessity contingent. In other words, they are contingent in a way that they may not fail to be contingent. 2) The second interpretation, coming closest to Aquinas’s own understanding of his theory, is that the given future effects come about necessarily with regard to divine providence, but yet contingently with regard to the proximate causes. Siger, however, dismisses the second interpretation since, as we have seen, for him the total connection of causes (i.e. divine providence) contains absolutely (simpliciter) contingent causes and thus does not bring about everything necessarily. If it did, according to Siger, determinism would follow. 3) The third interpretation of Aquinas’s theory is that the future effects are without qualification necessary with respect to providence and yet without qualification contingent with respect to the proximate causes. Siger points out that this interpretation implies that the opposite sides of a contradiction are true at the same time and must thus be dismissed.

The main disagreement between Aquinas and Siger is that for Aquinas an effect that has a contingent proximate per se cause remains contingent even if its remote per se cause is necessary. On the contrary, for Siger, an effect’s contingency requires that it is contingent in relation both to the proximate and the remote per se causes. Siger argues that although the First Cause is not

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"Propter hoc dixerunt alii, quod per providentiam divinam providetur de aliquo futuro non solum quod fieri, sed et qualiter fieri, utpote, secundum conditionem causae proximae, contingenter vel necessario; et ideo de eventu futurorum contingentium dicunt quod necesse est quod talia fiant, contingenter tamen. Sed iste sermo potest intelligi tripliciter. Uno modo ut intelligatur non quod huiusmodi futura necessario fiant, sed quod in eventu huiusmodi futurorum necesse est quod contingenter; et hoc est verum; sed hoc non intendunt dicere dicentes quod necesse est quod fiant huiusmodi futura, contingenter tamen, cum intentio eorum sit ponere necessitatem et infallibilitatem in eventu huiusmodi futurorum, eo quod provisum est de ipsis quod fiant, providentia infallibili. Et ideo secundo modo potest intelligi per sermonem dicentem quod necesse est quod huiusmodi futura fiant, contingenter tamen, quod huiusmodi futura contingenter eveniant relatione ad quandam causam eorum impeditibilem, et quod tamen necesse sit quod fiant, relatione ad providentiam et totam causarum connexionem. Et hoc est dicere quod simpliciter necessario eveniant, licet respectu ad aliquid sint contingenta; sed, sicut prius visum est, omnia esse necessario futura etiam in respectu ad totam connexionem causarum, falsum est. Tertio modo potest intelligi quod velint dicere contingentiam esse simpliciter etiam in respectu ad povidentiam divinam et causarum connexionem, et non tantum in respectu ad aliquam causam. Sed tune in dicto sermone implicantur opposita, quae simul stare non possunt. Non enim stant simul quod necesse sit quod a fiat et tamen contingenter fiat."
impedible, it causes the lower effects exclusively through the mediation of impedible causes. For this reason, the lower effects may be contingent in relation to the First Cause. In other words, Aquinas considers the necessity of a remote cause compatible with the contingency and freedom of a proximate cause. In sum, Siger criticizes Aquinas’s theory on strictly philosophical grounds. Theologically speaking, Siger’s understanding of providence is close to that of Aquinas.
3 DIVINE PROVIDENCE FROM 1277 TO THOMAS BRADWARDINE

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will continue studying the medieval authors’ views on divine providence in the era following the doctrinal condemnations of 1277 and leading to Thomas Bradwardine. In this era several of the authors studied were influenced by Thomas Aquinas. This is the case with e.g. Giles of Rome and John of Paris, who have clearly gained a positive influence from Aquinas’s ideas. In other authors, such as Peter Auriol, the influence of Aquinas is instead manifest in a critical reaction to themes found in Aquinas. The era between 1277 and roughly the first half of the 14th century also witnesses the birth of some quite novel ideas concerning providence. Most notably, one may refer to the covenantal theory of providence developed especially by Matthew of Aquasparta and Robert Holkot.

In this chapter, my presentation will be based on the three questions introduced in the previous chapter. To briefly remind the reader, these questions are:

1. The relationship between divine providence and contingency. How may created things remain contingent if everything is under the infallible causality of divine providence?

2. Providence as an immediate influence vs. providence as mediated by creatures. What is the role of created things in the causal mediation of divine providence and the unfolding of the divine plan? To what extent does divine providence immediately cause effects in the created world?

3. The simultaneous existence of divine providence and creaturely evils. If God is perfectly good and all things fall under divine providence, how can it be that evil things are found both in nature as well as in the actions of rational agents who are capable of making free choices? With regard to this question, I will continue to trace the development of the two alternative, but partially overlapping, strategies of reconciling divine providence with evil.1

The Parisian condemnations of 1277 also played an important role in the formation of the later interpretations of divine providence. I will therefore

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1 The instrumental strategy asserts that God uses creaturely evil per se as a means to an end. Although evil remains evil on the lower levels of causation, it can still play a positive part in the unfolding of the good divine plan. The accidental strategy, on the other hand, claims that creaturely evils follow accidentally from the contingency and freedom of lower causes. Although the world would be better off without evil, removing all evil would require removing the actual contingency of the lower causes. This trade-off would have a more negative than a positive impact and thus God allows for some particular evils to safeguard the actual freedom and contingency of his creation.
make some remarks on the historical context and the content of the condemnations before moving on to study the texts concerning divine providence written in the era after 1277.

### 3.2 1277 Condemnations

On March 7, 1277 Stephen Tempier, the Bishop of Paris, published a list of 219 theses, the teaching of which was to be prohibited at the University of Paris. This condemnation may be viewed as a culmination of a longer series of smaller condemnations that aimed to restrict the teaching of some aspects of Aristotelian philosophy at the University of Paris that were regarded as in contradiction with the Christian faith. The document issued by Tempier prohibited the teaching of the propositions included in the list with the threat of excommunication for those who would not desist from teaching them. The list published by Tempier contained various theses concerned with, for example, theology, natural philosophy and ethics. The condemnation was directed towards certain unnamed “philosophers”, that is, scholars working in the faculty of arts. Judging alone by the fact that the condemnation was issued by the Bishop working with a committee consisting of 16 masters of theology (including most notably Henry of Ghent), it is clear that Tempier’s action had deep implications for the relationship between theology and philosophy for the following generations of scholars, both at the university of Paris and beyond. While it is impossible to identify the authors behind a large part of the condemned theses, scholars agree that masters Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia were amongst the main targets of Tempier’s act.²

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² Piché 2011, 910–911. For complete editions of the condemned propositions, see Hissette 1977 and more recently Piché 1999. The traditional view of the 1277 condemnation is that Tempier and his group wanted to condemn certain deterministic ideas found in the Greek-Arabic philosophical tradition. Porro has recently argued that in questions pertaining to divine providence and the impedibility of causes in relation to the First Cause, the condemnation actually attacks some ideas of Siger of Brabant for putting too much emphasis to the contingency of the connexio causarum. Porro 2013, 132–134. This is seen, for example, in proposition 60 (95). “Quod ad hoc, quod omnes effectus sint necessarii respectu cause prime, non sufficeit quod ipsa causa prima non sit impedibilis, set exigitur quod cause medie non sint impedibiles. – Error, quia tunc deus non posset facere aliquem effectum necessarium sine causis posterioribus.” Piché 1999, 98. According to the condemned proposition, the First Cause not being impedible does not suffice for all the created effects being necessary with respect to the First Cause. Instead, all the intermediate causes would have to be non-impedible as well. In addition to condemning this view, the article argues positively that God must be able to make lower effects necessary regardless of the modal status of the intermediate causes. As noted in the previous chapter, Siger of Brabant had argued in De necessitate et contingentia causarum that although the First Cause is non-impedible, lower causes may be accidental, and not necessary, with respect to the First Cause, because connexio causarum (i.e. divine providence) contains accidental causes. It is then clear that the article is directed against
The condemnation of 1277 has sparked scholarly interest for decades. Some scholars, inspired by Duhem’s studies in the first decades of the 20th century, have even considered the year 1277 a remarkable watershed in medieval thought and the birth date of modern science. Duhem argued that the positive impact that the events of 1277 had for scientific development were an unintended side effect of the condemnations. At any rate, Tempier’s condemnation made the scholars working in the late 13th and the early 14th centuries question some central ideas of Aristotelian natural philosophy, such as the impossibility of a vacuum or plurality of worlds.

One central theological theme featured in Tempier’s condemnation is a defence of strong doctrines of divine omniscience and omnipotence. Thus, the doctrinal condemnations of 1277 provide an interesting background for the subsequent discussions of divine providence. The 20th condemned proposition, for example, was that everything that God acted was acted out of necessity. The historical background of this idea was in Avicennian emanationist metaphysics, which influenced a number of Christian authors, among them Siger of Brabant. But the emanationist view of divine causality will resurface in later authors too, especially in their expositions of Aristotle’s views of divine providence and causality. After 1277, the Christian authors in general became more cautious in pointing out that although the Aristotelian view of providence may have been that God did everything out of necessity, this view was not accepted by the church.

In addition, the denial of God’s possibility to immediately produce effects of secondary causes was condemned in the 69th proposition. It is also of direct relevance to the second main question of this chapter: the relationship between immediate and creaturely mediated providence. It should be noted that with the condemnation of the 69th proposition, Tempier’s group did not

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3 Courtenay 2001, 235; Bianchi 2003, 216. For a modern proponent of a Duhemian view of the 1277 condemnations, see Grant 2010.

4 See Grant 2010, in particular 49–90, for a discussion about the relationship between the condemnation of 1277 and the development of natural philosophy.

5 Some condemned theses argued that God can only cause effects in the created world through the mediation of the heavenly bodies. This topic features prominently in the discussions concerning Liber de bona fortuna, as will be seen in chapter 4. For example, proposition number 162 denied “that our will is subject to the power of heavenly bodies”. Piché 2010, 913–914.

6 Proposition 53 (20) “Quod deum necesse est facere, quicquid immediate fit ab ipso. – Error, siue intelligatur de necessitate coactionis, quia tollit libertatem, siue de necessitate inmutabilitatis, quia ponit impossibilitatem alter faciendi.” Piché 1999, 96.

7 Proposition 63 (69) “Quod deus non potest in effectum cause secundarie sine ipsa causa secundaria.” Piché 1999, 100.
claim that God did actually produce all the effects of the secondary causes. Rather, the claim was that God could produce those effects if he willed so.

The proposition “Human acts are not ruled by the providence of God” was already condemned by Tempier’s council in 1270.8 Several of the theses condemned already in 1270, including “the refusal to extend divine providence beyond the species to the individual” reappeared in 1277.9 Bonaventure, in his Collationes in Hexaemeron, had already attributed four errors to Aristotle that he regarded as harmful to the Christian faith. According to Bonaventure, Aristotle had 1. denied Platonic exemplarism, 2. held that God did not know singulars but rather only universals and therefore denied divine foreknowledge and providence, 3. held that the world was eternal and not created in time, and 4. claimed that there was only one agent intellect. As Wilson has noted, the errors identified by Bonaventure can be detected in different forms in the list of condemned propositions of 1277 as well.10

Only one of the 219 condemned propositions of 1277, number 195 (94), makes explicit mention of divine providence.11 This proposition condemns the idea that fate would not follow immediately from divine providence, but rather only by the mediation of the celestial bodies. The condemnation is closely related to the “ab uno principle”. If God was only able to cause one simple causal effect that would be received and mediated below by the highest spheres, the whole disposition of the universe would not proceed immediately from divine providence. This is what the condemnation of thesis 195 (94) denies. According to Hissette, the motive behind the condemnation of the “ab uno principle” was that such stress on the unicity of divine causality severely restricts the First Cause’s freedom to influence the sublunary world.12

Propositions 21(102) and 197 (93) are also of direct relevance for a consideration of divine providence. Proposition 21 (102) argues that nothing is chance and instead everything is necessary when all causes are taken into account. Hissette points out that it is not with regard to natural causation, but to human choice that the thesis is heterodox. Siger of Brabant refers to a group

8 “Quod humani actus non reguntur providentia Dei.” See Van Steenberghen 1977, 74–75 for the text of the 1270 condemnations.

9 Gilson stresses the import of the condemnation of the view that the First Principle was able to cause only uniform effects. According to Gilson, Tempier saw rightly that this Aristotelian view of divine providence was ultimately contradictory in comparison to the Christian understanding of a free God. Gilson 1955, 403; 407.

10 Bonaventura, Collationes in Hexaemeron, Visio I, collatio 3, 91–92 ed. F. Delorme. (Quoted in Wilson 2014, 592–593.) Rather surprisingly, as noted by Elliott, overall Bonaventure did not show much interest for the topic of divine providence. Elliott 2015, 94.

11 Proposition 195 (94): “Quod fatum, quod est dispositio universi, procedit ex providentia divina non immediate, sed mediante motu <corporum> superiorum; et quod istud fatum non imponit necessitatem inferioribus, quia habent contrarietatem, sed superioribus.” Piché 1999, 138.

12 Hissette 1977, 162–164.
of scholars upholding a thesis like this in his *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*, himself considering such a position as contrary to Aristotle’s actual position. It is thus clear that Siger may not be the target of this condemnation. Hissette concludes that Siger has some formulations which appear to accept providential determinism, but at the same time it was not uncommon in the 13th century to consider divine preordination and human freedom and contingency as compatible.\(^{13}\)

Finally, proposition 197 (93) denies both that something would be chance with respect to the First Cause, and that accepting that everything was determined by the First Cause would lead to determinism. Mandonnet pointed out that Siger writes repeatedly that some events seem to be chance also with regard to the First Cause.\(^ {14}\) According to Duin, Siger’s position with respect to chance and determinism is that he tries to steer a way between absolute determinism and the absoluteness of chance. Siger held that everything is preordered by the First Cause, but the freedom of human choices, however, was difficult to reconcile with this. At some point Siger even endorsed the Aristotelian position that the future is unknowable even to God, but soon resigned this position in fear of the reaction of the theologians.\(^ {15}\)

Siger had also defended the absolute contingency of accidental causes with respect to the First Cause, whereas for Aquinas the lower causes were contingent only in relation (secundum quid) to the proximate causes, but necessary with respect to the First Cause. According to Porro, the combination of the aforementioned article 60 (95) and article 197 (93)\(^ {16}\) shows that Tempier and his group in practice adopted this view of Aquinas.\(^ {17}\) While most scholars nowadays believe that the condemnations were in some part directed against Thomas Aquinas, it is thus clear that Aquinas’s views regarding divine providence nevertheless did not come under attack in 1277.\(^ {18}\)

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\(^ {13}\) Proposition 21 (102) “Quod nichil fit a casu, set omnia de necessitate eueniunt, et quod omnia futura que erunt, et que non erunt, impossibile est esse; et quod nichil euenit contingenter, considerando omnes causas. – Error, quia concursus causarum est de diffinitione casualis, <ud dicit boetius> libro de consolatione.” Piché 1999, 86; Hissette 1977, 172–173.


\(^ {15}\) Hissette 1977, 161–162.

\(^ {16}\) “Quod aliqua possunt casualiter evenire respectu cause prime; et quod falsum est, omnia esse praeordinata a prima causa, quia tunc evenirent de necessitate.” Piché 1999, 138.

\(^ {17}\) Porro 2013, 133–134.

3.3 Giles of Rome

Giles of Rome briefly discussed divine providence and fate in the 39th distinction of his commentary on Sentences. Giles treats three well-established questions: what is providence, whether it differs from fate, and whether all things fall under its influence. The first and the third questions contain the most interesting material, whereas the second question is rather standard in content and is mainly based on the already familiar material from Augustine’s De civitate Dei 5 and Boethius’s Consolatio philosophiae.

In the first question, Giles begins by pointing out that by looking at various authorities providence appears to be the same as 1. scientia 2. sollicitudo 3. ordo 4. dispositio 5. potestas 6. voluntas Divina and 7. gubernatio.19 In his description of what providence is, Giles explains how it is related to these concepts. Giles notes that divine providence is concerned with the end-directedness of things.20 He argues that providence differs from divine knowledge on the simple basis that God has knowledge of the ultimate end, the divine essence, too, whereas providence is by definition only of things that are directed towards ends.21 His discussion of the relationship between the

19 Giles of Rome, Commentarium in primum librum magistri sententiarum, d. 39, a. 1 (ed. Cordoba 1699, p. 744a, B–D): “Videtur quod Divina providentia sit idem quod scientia. Quia secundum Boetium 5 De Consolatio, providentia dicitur, quod porro a rebus infimis constituta, quasi ab excelsior rerum cacumine cuncta prosciat. Si ergo prospicere et videre convenient providentiae, providentia ad scientiam pertinet. Praeterea, videtur quod sit idem quod sollicitudo sive cura. Quia Damascenus liber 2 capitulo penultimo dicit, quod providentia est quae ex Deo ad existentia sit cura, ergo cura Divina circa existentia, hoc est providentia. Praeterea, videtur quod sit idem quod ordo. Quia Augustinus 83 quaestiones, quaestio de providentia, vult quod Deus provideat omnibus rebus ex eo, quod Summo enim Deo cuncta bene administrante que facit, nihil inordinatum in universo, nihil iniustum est. Praeterea, Boetius 4 De Consolatio dicit: providentia est ipsa Divina ratio in summum omnium principi constituta, quae cuncta disponit. Igitur est idem quod ordo et dispositio. Praeterea, videtur quod providentia sit idem quod potestas, nam providere est superiorum et potestatem habentium. Praeterea, videtur quod providentia sit idem quod voluntas Divina, quia Damascenus liber 2 capitulo 29 ait: providentia est voluntas Dei, per quam omnia quae sunt, convenientem deductionem suscipiunt. Praeterea, videtur quod sit idem quod gubernatio, quia Augustinus 83 quaestiones, quaestio de providentia, loquens de ea ait: quod Cum lex ipsa incommutabilis maneat, omnia, et mutabilia Deus pulcherrimae gubernatione moderetur. Et Sapientiae 14 scribitur, Tua autem, Pater, Providentia gubernat.” This is rather reminiscent of Aquinas, who in his commentary on Sentences d. 39 q. 2 a. 1 wrote: “Respondeo dicendum, quod ista tria, dispositio, scientia et providentia, se habent per additionem unius ad alterum.”


concepts of disposition, providence and governance is mostly familiar from Aquinas too. Providence is based on divine disposition, whereas governance is the temporal execution of eternal providence. Giles also notes that solicitude is a common feature of disposition, providence and governance, for each of the three is grounded in divine care and solicitude for created things. Since God not only knows the order of things towards their ends but also wants to and does realize this order, providence is related to the concepts of will and power. Lastly, providence is related to order because it presupposes disposition and order in the universe. Giles stresses the idea that the work of providence is visible in the diversity of species. The all-reaching disposition and order discovered in the world is based on the fact that divine providence has given the species different natures, some of which are superior, others inferior.

In the third question, Giles asks whether everything falls under divine providence. He notes that there are three things that seem to avoid the order of providence: chance events, evil things and contingent things in general.

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26 Giles of Rome, Commentarium in primum librum magistri sententiarum, d. 39, a. 3 (ed. Cordoba 1699, p. 750a, D–750b, A): “Quod autem videtur providentiam impedire est id, quod est per accidens, et praeter intentionem. Nam ex hoc dicitur aliquid improviso eventum, quod ab agente non est praecognitum, nec intentum. Huissimodi autem videntur esse, quae sunt per accidens. Nam quia eorum secundum Philosophum possunt esse causae infinita. Cum infinitas non videatur sub arte cadere, videtur ad talia providentiam non extendi. Haec autem tria esse videntur, videlicet fortuita, mala, et universaliter
Giles’s reconciliation between providence and chance events is based on the principle found in Boethius’s *Consolatio philosophiae* V, that every effect must have a cause. Giles notes that if a chance event is understood as something that does not have a cause, then nothing is chance at all. But if chance is understood as that which takes place accidentally and surprisingly, when some cause fails to cause the effect that is strived for, then several effects happen by chance. Thomas Aquinas had held that a chance effect is caused accidentally with respect to its proximate cause, but at the same time is caused *per se* by divine providence functioning as its remote cause. This distinction between proximate causes and remote causes allowed Aquinas to argue that chance was a real phenomenon, but at the same time nothing was chance with regard to divine providence. Giles does not refer to the distinction between proximate and remote causes in his analysis of the reconcilability between divine providence and chance events. Instead, Giles draws attention to the idea that chance events often take place because of the concurrence of two individual and independent causal chains, as is clear in the Aristotelian examples of a man getting killed on his way to the well to quench his thirst and a digger finding a treasure chest buried in his garden. Yet, Giles notes, this concurrency as such can be treated as an effect too and, again according to Boethius, each and every effect must be caused by some cause. Therefore, the very concurrency giving rise to the surprising outcome must be caused by a higher agent, namely divine providence. After all, divine providence is the cause of the whole connection of all the causes and effects and the order brought about by this complex connection.

Contingentia.” Cross considers Giles more drawn towards voluntarism than for example Aquinas. On Giles’s ideas on free will, divine grace and predestination, see Cross 2016, 37–45.

27 Giles of Rome, *Commentarium in primum librum magistri sententiarum*, d. 39, a. 3 (ed. Cordoba 1699, p. 750b, B–C): “[...] si nos volumus appellare fortuita et casualia, quae nulla causa nec per aliqua principia esse habent, sic nihil est fortuitum neque casuale. Ut probat Boetius 5 de Consolatio qui ait: nihil esse, quod ex nullis causis oriatur. Si vero casuale vel fortuitum appellare volumus, quoties aliquod agens alicuius gratia alicuius operatur, et quid aliud ab eo non intentum alicuius de causis contingit. Ut si quis colendi agri causa fodiens humum de fossa auri pondus inveniat. Sic multa casualia, et multa fortuita esse dicuntur”

chest example, the digger is the sole cause of the act of digging and the person who hid the treasure chest in the garden is the sole cause of the fact that the treasure chest was where it was. Yet the cause of the accidental discovery of the treasure chest is neither of these two persons, but rather divine providence.

Giles’s way of reconciling providence with evils is quite brief, but interestingly it is based on an exclusive use of the instrumental strategy. He writes that evil is not outside the order of divine providence without qualification. Giles argues that being the highest good, God allows evils to happen because they are advantageous from the viewpoint of the whole. In this sense, evil comes to be in the order of divine providence. Giles does not in this context mention the capacity of created intellectual beings to make free choices. Rather, he quotes a passage of Augustine’s *Enchiridion* stating that evil things contribute to the overall beauty of the world.  

In a brief comment on how divine providence can be reconciled with contingency in general, Giles repeats Aquinas’s solution to the problem of the simultaneous existence of divine providence, understood as the *per se* cause of all lower things, and contingency. Being the cause of being as being, God is also the cause of some things being contingent and other things being necessary.

All in all, it is clear that Giles’s treatment of providence is influenced by Aquinas. Given Giles’s stress in the first question on the idea that God mainly exercises providence by giving different species different ends, it seems likely that Giles mainly based this part of his treatment on Aquinas’s commentary on *Sentences*. Yet Giles’s reconciliation of providence with evils is based

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exclusively on arguments in line with the instrumental strategy, which was above seen to be mainly absent from Aquinas’s discussion in his commentary on *Sentences*. This allows one to infer that Giles must have had a clear preference for the instrumental strategy that Aquinas favoured in *Summa theologiae*. This sets Giles apart from the Franciscan Richard of Middleton as well as the Dominican John of Paris, who employed arguments based on both instrumental and accidental strategies in their own discussions of providence, as will be seen below.

3.4 Richard of Middleton and John of Paris

I will discuss the ideas on providence of Richard of Middleton and John of Paris in the same chapter. Both Richard and John offer rather brief and traditional discussions on divine providence. For my study, the most interesting aspect about these two authors is their similar approach to reconciling divine providence with the existence of evil.31 Richard of Middleton (c. 1249–c. 1308) was a Franciscan master of theology in Paris. Richard’s commentary on the *Sentences* contains three questions on providence. In addition, he wrote a quodlibet question on the topic of good fortune that I will treat in the next chapter. Richard asks three questions concerning divine providence: whether divine providence is part of God’s practical knowledge, whether everything is subject to divine providence and whether God has immediate providence of all things.

In the first question, Richard’s argues that providence is a part of God’s practical knowledge.32 His main argument for this view is based on a quotation from Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*. Boethius wrote that providence is the unfolding of the temporal order united in the divine mind. Richard’s argument is that the *ratio* of the unfolding of temporal order has the same *ratio* as practical knowledge. That is to say, it is synonymous for me to have a plan concerning my future actions that will be carried out in time, and for me to have practical knowledge.33

An argument against the view that providence is practical reason comes from Damascene’s definition of providence as divine care towards the

31 I will return to Richard in the next chapter to briefly discuss his views on *Liber de bona fortuna*.

32 Notably, some decades after Richard wrote his work, Peter Auriol included a treatment of Richard’s views of providence in his own commentary on *Sentences*. Auriol’s discussion is entirely focused on Richard’s view that divine providence is practical knowledge.

33 Richard of Middleton *Super quatuor libros Sententiarum* 1 d. 39 a. 2 q. 1, 348a: “Item, Boethius libro de Consolatio longe ultra medium, temporalis ordinis explicatio in divinae mentis adunata prospectu providentia est. Sed ratio explicandi temporalem ordinem est ratio scientiae practicae. Ergo providentia Dei rationem habet scientiae practicae.” Peter Auriol’s discussion of Richard focuses on Richard’s view of providence as practical knowledge as will be shown in more detail below.
creation. While such care appears temporal, divine knowledge, on the other hand, is eternal and thus providence cannot be identical to practical knowledge. Richard solves this argument by referring to the traditional distinction between eternal providence and its temporal execution, pointing out that the care Damascene was talking about refers to the latter. Interestingly, Richard brings forth both the Thomistic concept of providence as governance (gubernatio) and the Boethian concept of fate, preferring the term governance because of Augustine’s critical remarks of the term fatum in De civitate Dei V.

Richard’s second question, whether everything is subject to divine providence, is largely centred on the reconciliation of divine providence and created evils. Like for example Aquinas and John of Paris, Richard, too, presents arguments both in line with the instrumental and accidental strategies. Richard considers it to be beyond doubt that all good things come from God. He refers to the first verse of Romans 13, which states that all things that come from God are ordered. From this he infers that all good things are ordered between both themselves and with regard to God and his providence. Evil things and acts, on the other hand, are not under the order of divine providence as such, but only accidentally through being punished. Evils also have the capacity to make goods more clearly manifest, but ultimately they are not as such part of the providential order, but rather are provided for only because of good. This gives the reader the impression that the evil acts

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34 Richard of Middleton Super quatuor libros Sententiarum I d. 39 a. 2 q. 1, 348a: “providentia non est in Deo, nisi ex tempore. Quia secundum Damascenum libro primo capitulo 28, Providentia est cura, quae ex Deo est ad existentia. Sed omnis scientia in Deo est ab aeterno. Ergo providentia in Deo non habet rationem alicuius scientiae.”

35 Richard of Middleton Super quatuor libros Sententiarum I d. 39 a. 2 q. 1, 348b: “Ratio autem ordinandi creaturas ad suum finem, et propositum huius ordinis exequendi in Deo fuerunt ab aeterno. Quamvis explicatio huius ordinis, quae gubernatio dicitur, non fuerit, nisi ex tempore. Cui videtur concordare Boetius 10 libro de consolatio longe ultra medium, volens quod temporalis ordinis explicatio, in divinae mentis adunata prospectu, providentia sit. Eadem vero adunatio digesta, atque explicate temporibus fatum vocetur, quamvis nomen fati non bene sonet. Quia secundum Augustinum libro 5 de civitate Dei capitulo 10, ordinem causarum, ubi voluntas Dei plurimum potest, nec negamus, neque fati vocabulo nuncupamus, nisi forte ut fatum ad fando dictum intelligimus. Dimisso ergo nomine fati, loco fati, gubernationem ponamus.”

36 Richard of Middleton Super quatuor libros Sententiarum I d. 39 a. 2 q. 2, 349b–350a: “Providentia ergo est ratio ordinis rerum inter se et in finem suum. Certum est autem quod omnia bona a Deo sunt. Et secundum Apostolum ad Romanos 13, quae a Deo sunt, ordinate sunt: omnia ergo bona inter se habent ordinem, et ad Deum. Cum ergo in Deo sit ratio omnis ordinis, sequitur quod omnia bona divinae providentiae subjunctae sunt. Mala eius omnia, inquantum eis competit ordo, intantum divinae providentiae sunt subjunctae. Eis autem non competit ordo per se, ut subjecti, sed per accidentes, inquantum mali, propter summa mala, quibus sunt subjecti, iuste ordinatur in poenam. Malo etiam convenit manifestare ordinem boni sibi oppositi. Quia secundum Philosophum 2. Elenchorum, opposita iuxta se
committed by human beings are not really chosen by God. Rather, they follow accidentally from the good he has actually chosen, that is human free will. Then the concomitant evils are provided for and ordained through punishments. That is to say, Richard appears to support the accidental strategy in his reconciliation of divine providence with evil.

Yet in his replies to the initial arguments, the picture starts to look quite different. The sixth initial argument and the reply to it are virtually the same as already encountered in Aquinas. The argument is that every wise provider prevents evil from happening for the things under their control. Thus, it seems that not everything is subject to divine providence because evil things happen in the world. Richard's reply is that because God is a universal and not a particular provider, God allows for some particular evils to happen in order to achieve greater good in the universe. To sum up Richard’s views, he first claims that worldly evils result accidentally from the divine plan and are in turn provided for only in a secondary way through being punished. Immediately after this he argues that the whole causal network including created evils are actively designed and permitted by God in order to achieve the greatest good for the universe. Again, conceptually speaking, the instrumental and the accidental strategies do not seem to be entirely reconcilable, and in Richard’s question the question of their reconcilability does not even appear. It seems, therefore, that Richard’s view of reconciling divine providence with worldly evils was not entirely thought through. The author we next turn to, John of Paris, suffers to an extent from the same problem.

Richard’s third question is whether God provides everything immediately. His answer is rather brief and standard, based on the classic distinction between providence understood as an eternal plan and providence understood as the temporal execution of this plan. When providence is understood as an
eternal plan, God has immediate providence over all things. But when providence is understood as temporal execution, God exercises providence through several intermediaries.\textsuperscript{39} Richard also stresses that every effect brought about by God through a mediating cause is at the same time immediately produced by God. This theme is not really developed any further and the question of whether Richard thinks that both causes are necessary or sufficient for the effect is left open.\textsuperscript{40}

The 39th distinction of the \textit{Lectura} version of John of Paris’s (d. 1306) commentary on the \textit{Sentences} contains a brief question on divine providence and a more extended question on fate. John was a Dominican and his ideas on providence show the clear influence of Aquinas, although scholars are not in agreement about the extent of John’s Thomism overall.\textsuperscript{41}

Concerning providence, John asks whether everything falls under divine providence. In many of its parts the question is rather standard. John goes through the list of ancient doctrines of providence adapted from Aquinas, who in turn adapted it from Maimonides.\textsuperscript{42} He also describes God as the universal provider in contrast to particular providers in terms clearly adapted from Aquinas. John also repeats Aquinas’s analogy of two servants meeting each other by chance, without knowing that their master had knowingly sent them

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{39} Richard of Middleton \textit{Super quatuor libros Sententiarum} I d. 39 a. 2 q. 3, 350b–351a: “Respondeo quod providentia potest accipi pro eo, quod ipsa nominat formaliter. Et sic idem est, quod ratio ordinis rerum in finem suum, quae est in summo omnium principae constituta. Potest etiam accipi pro executione et administratione huius ordinis, quae gubernatio dicitur. Et providentia, hoc modo accepta, dependet ex providentia primo modo dicta. Loquendo de providentia primo modo planum est, quod Deus immediate omnibus providet, quia in suo intellectu habet immediate rationem omnium etiam minimorum. Loquendo de providentia secundo modo, sic dico quod quibusdam providet mediabantibus aliis, quia inferiora gubernat per superiorem.”
  \item \textsuperscript{40} Richard of Middleton \textit{Super quatuor libros Sententiarum} I d. 39 a. 2 q. 3, 351a: “haec autem mediata gubernatio non excludit immediatam gubernationem. Sicut illum effectum quem producit mediante causa creat, immediate etiam producit. Unde omnis effectus, qui est a Deo mediante causa creat, est a eo media et immediate.”
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Lambertini 2011, 633.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} John of Paris, \textit{Commentaire sur les sentences} I, d. 39 q. 2, l. 29–40 (ed. Müller, p. 421): “Intelligendum tamen quod multi erraverunt circa hoc. Fuerunt quidam, sicut Epicurei, qui simpliciter negaverunt providentiam divinam de rebus, sed dixerunt omnia casu et fortuna contingere. Alii autem, sicut Democritus et sui sequaces, etiam similiter negaverunt providentiam divinam ponentes omnia ex necessitate contingere. Alii autem dixerunt providentiam divinam inesse de rebus incorruptibiliis et sic de angelis et superioribus et etiam de speciebus inferiorum, sed de singularibus et individuis non. Idem posuit Raby, sed ab hac generalitate exceptit intellectum humanum propter sui incorruptibilitatem. Alii autem, sicut Tullius et sui sequaces, posuerunt Dem habere providentiam de omnibus nisi solum de actibus humanis, quos posuit non subiacerere divinæ providentiae propter libertatem arbitrii, quia homo sibi relictus est.”
\end{itemize}
to meet. John does not explicitly refer to Aquinas’s influential idea of God providing contingent causes for contingent things and necessary causes for necessary things in the question on providence. He does, however, refer to the idea that the secondary causes only work by the virtue of the First Cause in a question on fate. Like Aquinas, John argues that God has providence also over things that are naturally necessary, for even such things are contingent with respect to God’s creation.

The most interesting part of John’s question concerns the reconciliation between evils and divine providence. John first seems to be clearly committed to the instrumental strategy described above, writing that in the case of a particular provider, allowing for evils with respect to the thing provided for is clearly a sign of imperfection. With regard to a universal provider, the situation is different, however. A universal provider may allow for particular evils in order to achieve a greater good for the whole, just like a man can protect himself from a slash of a sword with his hand in order to protect his body. John refers to Aristotle’s idea of the corruption of some things as the necessary prerequisite for the generation of others. Thus God, as the universal provider, may allow for evils in some parts of the world to allow for the flourishing of the whole universe. John refers to Augustine’s *Enchiridion* as an authoritative source for his ideas.

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45 John of Paris, *Commentaire sur les sentences* I, d. 39 q. 2, l. 98–101 (ed. Müller, p. 423): “Deus autem est auctor naturae. Unde et ista, quae fiunt de necessitate secundum cursum naturae, dependent ab eius voluntate et per consequens oportet quod subjiciant eis providentiae.” This position was to be later challenged by Peter Auriol, as will be shown below.

Interestingly, after this John directly turns to endorse the accidental strategy with respect to human evils. He first denies that a human being would be outside divine providence due to having free will. It is not the case that free agents would remain outside the care of God. Rather, having received freedom from God makes men fall under providence in a more special way.\textsuperscript{47} There is a further distinction with regard to good and evil men. Providence protects good men from falling into mortal sin, whereas the sins of evil men are ordained to good through divine justice. John further explains that the acts of free choice that are in accordance with the final end of free choice, that is, good acts and final salvation, are in the right order (\textit{rectum ordinem}) of divine providence, whereas evil acts that only come under the sway of providence through divine justice are outside this order. This is a clear example of the accidental strategy.\textsuperscript{48}

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\textsuperscript{47} John of Paris, \textit{Commentaire sur les sentences} I, d. 39 q. 2, l. 105–113 (ed. Müller, p. 423):

“Dicendum quod homo sibi derelictus est, non quod omnino excludatur a providentia Dei, sed quod non est ita astrictus ad unum sicut bruta, quae magis aguntur quam agunt, sed in quantum dominus suorum actus est, homo per liberum arbitrium valet ad op posita. Sed tamen per hoc non effugit providentiam divinam, immo hoc ipso magis et specialiori modo subiacet providentiae divinae in quantum habet a Deo quod sit liberi arbitrii. Item, per hoc habet non solum quod sit, sicut bruta et cetera animate, sed quod sit causa aliorum.”


3.5 Matthew of Aquasparta

3.5.1 PROVIDENCE AND FREEDOM
Matthew of Aquasparta (c. 1237–1302) was a Franciscan theologian who discussed the doctrines of creation and divine providence in great depth in his *Quaestiones disputatae de productione rerum et de providentia*, edited by Gedeon Gal in 1956. Matthew is known for defending the freedom of the will in his account of human psychology. This stress on human freedom for choosing between opposites is clearly visible in parts of his account of divine providence as well.

The various questions in the work follow a recurring pattern. In each question of the work, Matthew provides a large number of arguments *pro* and *contra* – in the 5th question, for example, there are 22 arguments *pro* and 8 arguments *contra*. The arguments against the author’s actual position are refuted one by one according to the standard scholastic practice. In addition, Matthew also provides critical comments upon the initial arguments, the conclusion of which he accepts. The *respondeo* parts, too, are structured in a repeating pattern, where the same conclusion is derived based on separate considerations on the nature of, for example, God, the creation, universal order, the beauty of the world and other main concepts involved in the question.

For my purposes, the most important characteristics of Matthew’s thought are 1. his legalistic model of reconciling divine providence with the freedom of created intellectual beings; 2. his reconciliation between human sins and evil, in which the same legalistic model plays a part and 3. his discussion of the creaturely mediation of divine providence. Matthew’s discussion of the mediation of providence is particularly illuminating for his ideas on the relationship between divine providence and divine conservation. These two originally separate but related doctrines are in a substantially closer relationship in Matthew’s thought than in the works of his predecessors.

In the first question of *Quaestiones disputatae de productione rerum et de providentia*, Matthew asks whether God rules the world with providence. In addition to arguing for the existence of a providential order, Matthew makes

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49 Yrjönsuuri 2011, 730

50 Hester Gelber has discussed Matthew’s account of providence in a recent article. Gelber stresses that in Aquasparta’s theory, God provides through giving laws to people who remain free to obey or disobey them. Gelber 2010, 765-767. For another recent, but a rather cursory discussion of this question, see Elliott 2015, 117.

51 Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 1: “Quaestio est de providentia; et quaeritur primo utrum Deus mundum regat providentia vel utrum mundus providentia regatur.” (ed. Gal, p. 231–257)
interesting remarks on the reconciliation of the freedom of intellectual creatures and divine providence. I will next discuss these two topics in turn.

Matthew argues that the existence of divine providence may be argued for both through a consideration of the nature of God and through a consideration of the created world. Starting with the consideration of the nature of God, Matthew refers to Romans 11, 36, which in the version used by Matthew reads “Quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia; ipsi gloria”.

Given that God makes everything by himself, through himself and for the sake of himself, Matthew's interpretation is that by Paul’s authority God is the efficient, formal and final cause of created things.

He next infers the same conclusion, that is, God’s tripartite causality, through a reasoning based on divine attributes. Being a rational agent, God does everything rationally and for the sake of an end, this end being himself. Furthermore, there could be no other first being but God and the first being must be the first agent too. By being the first and highest being (primum et summum ens), God is the highest good and since goods and ends coincide, the highest good will be the ultimate end as well. Therefore God makes everything by himself as an efficient cause, through himself as a formal cause and for the sake of himself as a final cause. This in turn implies that God provides for everything and leaves nothing without providence.

Strictly speaking, these considerations do not constitute an argument. Rather, Matthew’s aim is to show that a careful consideration of the divine attributes of e.g. eternality, goodness and being (that his readers would have certainly accepted) leads to the conclusion that God has providence for all creation.

Matthew argues that the existence of a providential order can also be inferred from a consideration of the universe. Observing the perfection of the universe allows for an understanding of the existence of divine providence. Matthew claims that the universe does not lack anything by quoting Augustine, who wrote in De libero arbitrio that human beings are incapable of thinking that

Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 241): “Ex parte Dei sumitur ratio, quoniam Deus est causa rerum in triplex genere causae, scilicet efficientis, formalis exemplaris et finalis. Omnia enim fecit se ipso et per se ipsum et ad se ipsum, sicut dicit Apostolus, Rom. 11, 36: Quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso sunt omnia; ipsi gloria. Omnia enim fecit et condidit potenter, sapienter sive rationabiliter et optime, ac per hoc non casu seu temerarie aut necessitate naturae, sed secundum rationem et propter aliquem finem, qui finis ipse est. Non enim potest esse aliud primum agens et ultimum finis; primum enim ens est primum agens et efficiens. Primum autem et summum ens est primum et summum bonum; bonum autem et finis idem; ergo summum bonum est ultimus finis, propter quem sunt omnia, iuxta quod dicit Apoc. 1, 8: ego sum alpha et omega, principium et finis. – Quia igitur omnia agit ex semet ipso, secundum semet ipsum et propter semet ipsum: ex semet ipso tanquam efficiente, secundum semet ipsum tanquam causam formalem, propter semet ipsum tanquam finem, propterea omnia curat, omnia providet nec aliquid iprovisum dimittit.”

Romans 11, 36: “For all things are from him, by him, and for him. Glory belongs to him forever! Amen.”

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of a more perfect creation than the one realized by God. Therefore, the universe must be composed by a perfect reason that Christians call providence. The idea that providence aims for the perfection of the universe was highly important in the theory of divine providence of Thomas Aquinas. In the case of Aquasparta, as well as Aquinas, perfection must be understood in terms of the completion and order of the universe, rather than the qualitative perfection of all the parts of the world. In other words, not every single part of the universe is perfect in itself, but taken together they form a whole that is both complete and well-ordered.

I will next discuss Matthew’s reconciliation of divine providence and creaturely freedom. As an important preliminary point, Matthew writes that to understand divine providence properly, it must be noted that although providence as such is uniform, it receives many different forms in the things that come under its influence. The diverse effects of providence are thus based on the diversity of its objects and not on providence itself. Matthew distinguishes between things that God provides for because of themselves (propter se) and things that God provides for because of the sake of something else (propter aliud). Rational and incorruptible things are provided for because of themselves, whereas irrational and corruptible things are provided for only for the sake of something else. I will next look into these distinctions in more detail.

Incorruptible things are provided for because of themselves, since they are required for the perfection and completeness of the universe. Divine providence extends to them both as individuals, as well as insofar as they belong in a species. Corruptible things, on the other hand, are not provided for

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55 Similar ideas were presented by e.g. John Duns Scotus in his brief discussion of providence in his 21st quodlibetal question. I will return to this theme in the next chapter of this work.

because of themselves, but rather for the sake of the continuity and perfection of the universe, which requires the generation and corruption of corruptible things. God conserves the corruptible things only for a certain period of time, whereas the incorruptible things are conserved eternally. Matthew thus employs the Averroistic connection of divine providence with the preservation of species. Through his providence, God conserves the incorruptible species eternally. Yet the eternity of incorruptible things, such as the celestial spheres, is in the final analysis based on a divine choice, instead of the nature of the spheres as such.

In addition, Matthew distinguishes between God’s providence for irrational and rational beings. Here he draws attention to the capacity for free choice that rational beings have, but irrational beings lack. Because of their lack of capacity for free choice, the acts of the irrational creatures are not morally relevant, and they are not subject to rewards or punishments for their actions. God does not provide for irrational beings, such as horses, for the sake of themselves (propter se) but rather for the sake of the conservation and continuation of their species (propter aliud). That is to say, God has providence for the horse species for the sake of itself, but individual horses are allowed to come and go out of existence. The distinction between providence for 1. corruptible and incorruptible beings and 2. irrational and rational beings is, of course, partially overlapping. Several incorruptible things, such as human souls and angels, are also rational, whereas several corruptible things are also irrational.

Matthew’s comments about God’s providence for rational and free agents are striking. He writes that rational creatures are provided for because of themselves. Again, the most notable feature of rational creatures is that they are capable of free choice and for this very reason they are suitable for


58 It should be noted that Matthew’s views certainly do not amount to a denial of particular providence even in the question of irrational beings. The individual irrational beings are still provided for by God. Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 247–248): “Aliter providet creaturas irrationales aliter racionales. Creaturae enim irrationales, quia hoc ipso quod irrationales, carent libero voluntatis arbitrio, earum actus non sunt digni laude vel vituperio nec praemio nec supplicio, ideo ad beatitudinem non ordinantur; ac per hoc nec propter se providentur, sed propter aliud, scilicet propter continuationem speciei ad perfectionem universi, et ideo non conservantur perpetuo, sed certa temporis periodo.”
beatitude. Since they are responsible for their actions, these actions are laudable or culpable in God’s view. Matthew notes that beatitude is attainable only through merit, and meritorious action is nothing but observing a set of given laws. Rational creatures thus receive a prize if they observe the laws given by God, but if they fail to observe the law they receive a punishment. Matthew argues that rational beings come under God’s providential order in either case. If they follow the order assigned by God, they are under divine providence willingly. On the other hand, if they knowingly break the divine precepts, they receive a punishment for acting against the divine order. The punishments too are a part of the providential order and in this sense anyone escaping the divine order with sinful acts receives a punishment and thus remains under the same divine order but in a different way. In modern terms, this model emphasizes the libertarian freedom of rational creatures to a much greater extent than, for example, Aquinas’s late theory, according to which even the actions of free creatures are necessary with regard to divine providence.

To conclude this section, I would like to draw attention to three aspects of Matthew’s ideas on divine providence of rational creatures. First of all, Matthew’s description of divine providence for intellectual creatures is a prime example of and an interesting variation on the accidental strategy of reconciling divine providence and human sins. In describing how intellectual creatures are provided for propter se, Matthew does not emphasize an overall divine plan encompassing even human sins qua sinful acts, but rather qua acts that will trigger a punishment in accordance with the divine order. The legalistic model presented emphasizes human freedom and the capacity to

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59 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 248): “Creaturae vero rationales, quia hoc ipso quod rationales, sunt arbitrio liberae, ac per hoc aptae ad beatitudinem et ordinatae ad immortalitatem. Quia autem sunt arbitrio liberae et sunt dominae suorum actuum, actus earum sunt laudabiles vel vituperabiles, meritorii vel demeritorii. Quia vero ad beatitudinem non pervenitur nisi per meritum, meritum autem consistit in observantia alicuius legis, ideo creaturis rationalibus data est lex, imposita praecepta, per cuius observantiam possint ad beatitudinem pervenire. Si autem transgrediantur legem vel praecepta, quam transgressionem appellamus peccatum, luant supplicia. Ideo creaturas rationales providet ‘secundum acceptancem et permissionem’, ut dicit Damascenus, secundum leges iustitiae aut praemiantis aut punientis, ut si ab assignato ordine recesserint, necessario in alium ordinem relabantur.” According to Hayes, Augustine thought that all moral evil is based on a misuse of the created will. In the quoted passage, Matthew seems to agree with this view. Questions that the Augustinian framework gives rise to are whether God could have created a will that was not able to sin at all and why did God choose to create a world that he knew would be infested by sin? Zachary Hayes has argued that the medieval theologians achieved little development in answering these questions after the foundations had been laid by Augustine. Hayes 1964, 46. Hayes’s description of Augustine’s ideas is certainly closer to what I have named the accidental strategy rather than the instrumental strategy. Hayes focuses on the medieval ideas of evil as based on the defective use of free will, but pays little attention to the idea of creaturely evils as a part of the divine plan.
choose evil. Divine providence remains responsible for the general framework in which human beings make their choices and the outcomes – i.e. the rewards or punishments – for these choices. Meanwhile, the particular actions of human beings are not seen as a part of any special divine providence. Yet, as will be shown in the next subchapter, later in the same work Matthew follows the opposite strategy in solving the very same problem.

Secondly, Matthew’s way of reconciling divine providence and freedom is notably different from e.g. Thomas Aquinas and Siger of Brabant. Matthew seems less concerned with offering a detailed modal analysis of the compatibility of human freedom and the infallibility of divine providence. Although Matthew also writes, echoing Aquinas, that necessary things receive their necessity from God, the idea that divine providence determines the modal statuses of created causes does not receive a central role in Matthew’s discussion. Matthew also makes no mention of Aquinas’s idea that all things are necessary with respect to divine providence. Instead, he stresses the radical

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60 Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 250–251): “De peccatis autem quae sunt in voluntariis, ex quibus avertuntur a fine, dico quod non sunt a divina providentia, sed a libero arbitrio deficiente voluntarie. Et ideo disponuntur a divina providentia non ut sic sint, sed quia ordinat ea ad supplicia, adeo ut nunquam sit dedecus peccati sine decore vindictae: unde etsi [peccator] recedat ab uno ordine, ut dictum est, in alium ordinem relabitur sub divina providentia.”; cf. Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 256): “quod homo utatur voluntate et sit arbitrio liber, hoc est [ex] divina providentia, quae sic hominem condidit et ordinavit. Cum hoc tamen est ex divina providentia quod si bene utitur, consequatur praemia, si male, supplicia.” It must be noted that Matthew does also argue that God will create good even out of human sins. But as has been noted, this Augustinian idea was commonplace in medieval theology, despite the disagreements in other aspects of the question. See e.g. Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 1, ad 4 (ed. Gal, p. 255), where Matthew quotes Augustine’s *Enchiridion* c. 107: “Omnipotens Deus, cum sit summé bonus, nullo modo sineret aliquid mali in operibus suis, nisi usque adeo esset omnipotens et bonus, un bonum faceret etiam de malo.”

61 The Thomistic idea of divine providence granting modal statuses to created things is not entirely absent from Matthew’s discussion. See e.g. Matthew’s reply to the 14th argument, where Matthew notes necessary things receive their necessity through divine providence but remain contingent with respect to it – both ideas familiar from Aquinas. Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 255): “Unde quod sint necessaria, hoc est ex divina providentia, quae indidit eiusmodi necessitatem, sibi autem non sunt necessaria, qui potuit et posset alter ordinare”. See also Matthew’s reply to the 7th argument, where Aquasparta writes that the effects of secondary causes receive their modality from the proximate and not from the first cause. Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 1. (ed. Gal, p. 253): “Et quia influentia causae primae recipitur in causis secundis secundum ipsarum exigentiam et secundum modum earum, ideo effectus sequitur conditiones causarum proximarum. Unde regula est quod quando ad unum aliquem effectum concurret causa necessaria et contingens, effectus sequitur condiones causae contingentes, et ideo non oportet quod omnia eveniant de necessitate.” Yet the fact remains that Matthew’s legalistic way of reconciling divine providence and human sins does not receive such a central role in the works of Aquinas.
freedom of rational creatures to choose between obeying and disobeying the laws given by God.

Thirdly, Matthew’s ideas are clearly reminiscent of the medieval intellectual movement that scholars such as William Courtenay and Hester Gelber have called covenantal theology, the most well-known representatives of which are William Ockham and Robert Holkot. According to the covenantal theologians, God is not bound by any absolute goodness that would be independent of the divine will. Rather, God is ultimately free to give his creatures such precepts as he wills. The merit or demerit of human acts is then judged by whether they are in agreement with the divinely given precepts. The covenant between God and his people sets the framework for judging the moral value of human choices. My aim here is not to categorize Matthew as a covenantal theologian per se. Rather, I wish to stress that Matthew’s theory of divine providence takes the laws provided by God and the human response to these laws as its starting point. For this reason, Matthew’s ideas on divine providence are clearly distinct from his predecessors, stressing the covenantal nature of God’s providence. In turn, God’s role as the remote cause of the effects of the lower causes becomes diminished and focus is moved to the free and contingent choices of the lower causes, understood as responses to a set of divinely ordained laws.

The main ideas of covenantal theologians came under a vehement attack from Thomas Bradwardine, whose ideas on divine providence will be dealt with shortly below. According to Bradwardine, the covenantal theologians were subject to the heresy of Pelagianism because in their theories human decisions made too much of a difference regarding the agents’ future salvation or damnation.

### 3.5.2 HUMAN SINS AND THE PROVIDENTIAL PLAN

Matthew treats the relationship between divine providence and creaturely evils in depth in *Quaestiones disputatae de productione rerum et de providentia*. In this work, Matthew is mostly concerned with the metaphysics of creation and order. Questions having to do with, for example, salvation and predestination come up only in passing in the book. In the 2nd question, Matthew asks whether divine providence administers the world in a more perfect way by permitting evil or not permitting it. He moves to present a total number of eighteen arguments for the position that the world would be better ruled if no evil was allowed. Several of the initial arguments aim to prove that a universe that has no evil in its parts nor in its whole is more perfect than a universe that has some evil in its parts, even if this evil does vanish in

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63 Gelber 2013, 5.1.
Matthew takes the opposite stance, however. He argues that particular imperfections in the universe may positively add to its perfection as a whole.

Matthew’s most important and original means of arguing for this conclusion is that although evils such as human sins cannot add to the perfection of the world as per se causes, they can do so as per accidens causes. Interestingly, Matthew explicitly makes this point only at the very end of the respondeo part of the question concerned with the utility of evil for divine administration of the world. Matthew writes that evil never causes good per se, but rather accidentally through the ordination of divine wisdom. For the most part, Matthew’s respondeo is based on an interpretation of biblical and patristic authorities, whereas Matthew’s more original idea of God directing creaturely evils towards good outcomes is addressed in more detail in the replies to the initial arguments. I will next turn to Matthew’s idea of goods drawn out of evils by means of divinely ordained accidental causation. In addition, I will pay close attention to Matthew’s reconciliation of divine providence and human sins with respect to the accidental and instrumental strategies.

One interesting argument Matthew considers against the view that the world would be better ruled if evil was not permitted, refers to the Augustinian definition of evil as a privation of being. According to the major premise, things relate to being (entitatem) and perfection in the same way. Thus, if something is a non-being (non ens) it cannot be perfect in itself, nor can it make anything else perfect. Evil is non-being, however, so it cannot add to the perfection of the universe. Therefore, the world would be better ruled without evil. Matthew disagrees with the conclusion. His reply is that because evil is indeed an imperfection it may not add to the perfection of the universe as a per se cause. It can, however, perfect the universe either by being ordered or because God can elicit good things from evil through his power, wisdom and goodness. Furthermore, evil is not strictly speaking non-being, but rather a

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64 See, for example, Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 261-262): “Item, pulcarius est quod est pulcrum in toto et in parte quam quod est pulcrum in toto tantum; unde et sponsus commendat sponsam ab ista totali pulcritudine, Cant. 4, 7: Tota pulcra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. Ergo universitas esset multo pulcrior si nulla esset in parte nec in toto deformitas. Sed malum dicit essentialiter deformitatem; ergo sine malis esset pulcrior: ergo etc.” See also arguments 10 (ed. Gal, p. 260) and 12 (ed. Gal, p. 261) for variations of this same idea.

65 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 271): “Intelligendum est tamen quod haec non proveniunt ex malis per se, sed per accidens, ex occasione, ex divinae sapientiae ordinatore.”

66 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 258) “Quoniam unumquodque sicut se habet ad entitatem, ita se habet ad perfectionem; ergo quod est omnino non ens, nec in se perfectum est nec facit ad perfectionem alterius. Sed malum est omnino non ens, igitur nullo modo potest facere ad universi perfectionem: ergo sine malis multo melius regeretur.”
privation of being. Implicitly referring to the medieval theory of transcendents, e.g. being, goodness and truth, Matthew points out that if evil was entirely non-being it could also be said to be not true (non-\textit{verum}), which Matthew considers not acceptable. Matthew argues that God can intentionally arrange evil things so that they bring about good accidentally with respect to their own causality. Like Aquinas, Matthew thus thinks that the effects of evils may sometimes be accidental from the viewpoint of proximate causes and yet remain intentional and \textit{per se} with respect to God. This is the case in situations where something good surprisingly comes out of a human act that is informed by an evil intention.

Matthew considers another interesting argument against the view that the world would be administrated in a more perfect way by not permitting evil. The argument is that while some say that evil can be beneficial as a testing (\textit{probationem}) for the good, this is only valid for the evils that are punishments (\textit{malum poenae}). The evils of sin (\textit{malum culpae}), on the other hand, have no such effects, but rather only lead to the destruction and reprobation of human beings. Matthew’s reply to this argument is revealing. He argues that the evils of sin do indeed lead to the fall of those who are the agents of sins. Yet, for example, the act of flagellation can, unintentionally and accidentally with respect to the agent of the act of flagellation, lead to the spiritual strengthening of the victim of flagellation.

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67 This has been stressed in recent literature by e.g. Eleonore Stump. Stump 2010, 773–774.
68 Matthew of Aquasparta, \textit{Quaest. disp. de providentia}, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 271): “Ad primum patet responsio, quoniam malum, quia dicit imperfectionem, ad perfectionem universi non facit per se, ut dictum est, sed per accidens vel ex ordinatione ipsius mali vel ratione boni eliciti, et hoc ipso Deo faciente sua potentia, sapientia et bonitate. Et tamen malum non dicit omnimodam negationem vel omnino non ens, sed dicit privationem. Si enim [non-ens] esset, non-\textit{verum} diceret.”
69 In the medieval discussions concerning the \textit{Liber de bona fortuna}, similar ideas were presented regarding chance events: even though chance events are in themselves unordered, God, the highest cause, arranges them to cause good things accidentally with respect to the own causality of the lower causes. I will discuss the importance of \textit{Liber de bona fortuna} and the ideas presented by the medieval authors commenting on it in detail in the next chapter.
71 Matthew of Aquasparta, \textit{Quaest. disp. de providentia}, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 272): “Ad quintum iam patet responsio, quoniam per se et in eo quo est casum et ruinam dicit sive importat, sed tamen facit ad alterius exercitationem. Dum enim mali bonos flagellant, exercent eorum patientiam et augmentant coronam. In eo etiam nihilominus in quo est, licet per se deordinet et privat bonus, tamen per accidens et divina dispositione potest cooperari in bonum, sicut dicitur Rom. 8, 28: \textit{Diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum}”
way of reconciling divine providence and human sins is a clear example of what I have labelled as the instrumental strategy. In this argument, Matthew most explicitly argues that God uses evils instrumentally to bring about good. Furthermore, evil appears as truly evil only with respect to the proper agent of the evil. God, through his all-reaching providence, is able to make good of the evils and the evils of sin are, at least in some cases, beneficial to the victims as well.

Matthew also considers one argument against his very own theory that God draws good outcomes out of evil things through accidental causation. The argument is that even if the existence of evil could accidentally advance the perfection of the universe and the spiritual growth of the elect, it would still be preferable if these noble goals were attained through *per se* and not through *per accidens* causes. Even if evil things can bring forth good accidentally, good things, on the other hand, can bring good forth *per se*, and thus the world would be better ruled without allowing evil. The argument is based on the assumption that it is in general better for an agent to cause good intentionally than to cause good accidentally. This seems rather intuitive. Imagine, for example, that the result of the action of two agents is equally good. If it turns out that the first agent acted intentionally while the second agent did not have any actual intention regarding the good result, but rather acted entirely randomly, we would certainly find the good intention of the first agent praiseworthy in addition to the good result.

Matthew, however, disagrees with the conclusion. In his reply to this argument, he refers to the principle that perfection in terms of a maximum number of realized possibilities is a greater contribution to the perfection of the world than the realization of only the best of these possibilities. The world is more perfect and complete when God brings about good both through *per se* and also *per accidens* causes. Furthermore, sometimes an accidental outcome can be preferable to the intended outcome. Matthew provides a variation of the example of the digger who accidentally finds gold while digging a ditch. Matthew points out that it is better for him to find silver accidentally (*per accidens*) than to find iron intentionally (*per se*). At any rate, the accidental causes too are ordained by God and thus not accidental with respect to God. This is again an implicit reference to the already familiar principle

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72 Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 259): "Item, quia dicebat quod malum facit ad universi perfectionem, electorum eruditionem et eorum probationem et exerctionem, non per se, sed per accidens, – contra: id quod est per se, praefertur ei quod est per accidens; sed bonum ad ista facit per se, malum per accidens: ergo cum bonis, sine malis, melius regeretur et administraretur mundus.”

73 Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 273): "Ad sextum dicendum quod utique illud quod est per accidens in quantum huiusmodi; nihilominus tamen et illud quod est per accidens bonum est, et ideo melius utrumque quam alterum; et licet non sub ista ratione, id quod est per accidens potest tamen præferrri ei quod est per se. Unde argentum inventum casu et per accidens est
that nothing is chance or accidental to God because the accidental causes too are ordained intentionally and per se by God.

Aquasparta also employs the traditional argument familiar from e.g. Aquinas and Giles of Rome that a good ruler of some particular realm must avoid allowing evil in his realm, whereas a good universal ruler may allow evil things in particular realms if they add to the goodness of the universal realm. Therefore, being a universal ruler, God can achieve more good for the whole of the creation by allowing some particular evils.\textsuperscript{74} As noted, this argument is central and typical for what I have labelled the instrumental strategy of reconciling divine providence with evil. Evil things are clearly contained in a divine plan and because of their utility for the whole, they are not truly evil from the divine point of view.

So far it seems clear that Matthew’s reconciliation of divine providence with the existence of evil is based on the use of the instrumental strategy. Yet some of the ideas presented in the \textit{respondeo} part of the question make the reader seriously question this impression. Matthew provides numerous quotations from the authorities of the church, mainly Augustine, to argue for the conclusion that the world is administrated in a more perfect way if evil is permitted. The first argument for this conclusion is based on Augustine’s idea that God gives some beings the capacity to make free choices and due to defects in these rational beings some of them use their will to choose evil. This view is, of course, well-known and traditional, but also in tension with the arguments of Aquasparta treated earlier. As we saw above, in his replies to the counter-arguments, Aquasparta stressed the ultimate divine control over human sins and evils: even though human sins are attributed to human beings and merely permitted by God, nevertheless God is able to use even defects instrumentally for reaching his preordained ends concerning creation. The picture emerging from Aquasparta’s references to Augustine in the \textit{respondeo} is very different. Aquasparta argues that when creating a rational being capable of free choice, it is beyond divine power to entirely avoid future sins from ensuing. Matthew thinks it would be logically contradictory to create a free being that could not use its freedom for sinning. Yet, the inherent value of the rationality and freedom of these creatures makes it worthwhile for God to accept that they will sometimes use their freedom badly. This position is, of course, a prime reason why God might allow evil things to happen in the world.

\footnotesize{melius quam ferrum per se effosum de mineria. Et cum hoc, licet dicatur per accidens per comparationem ad malum unde elicitor, est tamen per se per comparationem ad elicientem et ordinantem.”}

\textsuperscript{74} Matthew of Aquasparta, \textit{Quaest. disp. de providentia}, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 274–275): “Ad decimum dicendum quod non est de simile de rectore particulari respectu partis et rectore universali respectu totius, quoniam si regens particulare [mala fieri] permittit, non potest nec scit ex illis bona elicere; sed regens universa sic mala fieri permittit, quod tamen ex illis bona elicet. Et cum hoc, ut dictum est, universale regens non sinit aliud malum fieri in toto, immo, ut dictum est, si aliquod malium contingat in parte, ordinat illud ad bonum totius.”
example of what I have named the accidental strategy of reconciling divine providence with the existence of evil.\textsuperscript{75}

Nevertheless, in the \textit{respondeo} part, too, Aquasparta brings forth material that is in line with the instrumental strategy. He writes that divine providence intends to perfect the universe as far as possible and allowing evil into parts can be good for the whole.\textsuperscript{76} Again, quoting Augustine, Matthew argues that one way in which evil perfects the universe is that it allows good things to be manifest and shine more clearly in comparison to evil.\textsuperscript{77} The fact that Aquasparta, in the \textit{respondeo} part, brings forth Augustinian material backing both the accidental and instrumental strategies shows that he does not regard the two strategies as being in any tension with each other. This was the case with John of Paris and Richard of Middleton too. Yet, it seems to me that the arguments based on the instrumental strategy are made a more integral part of Matthew’s own thought and show more originality.

Like Thomas Aquinas, Aquasparta considers divine providence to aim for the perfection of the world in terms of realized possibilities. He develops this theme in some detail in his replies to the counter arguments. One of the counter arguments is based on an analysis of the three possible states of rational creatures: the state of innocence, misery and glory.\textsuperscript{78} In the state of

\textsuperscript{75} Matthew of Aquasparta, \textit{Quaest. disp. de providentia}, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 265): “Et primo potest ratio sumi ex parte causae mali. Causa autem mali, secundum Augustinum, XII \textit{De civitate}, 7 capitulo et in capitulis sequentibus, et I \textit{De libero arbitrio}, est voluntas creaturae rationalis a bono voluntarie deficiens: primitus angeli, postea hominis. Creatura autem rationalis, hoc ipso quod rationalis, est arbitrio libera. Ex hoc autem quod creatura est de nihil, potest deficere ex se, potest recte agere cum auxilio gratiae divinae; ac per hoc potest peccare et non peccare, malum agere et non agere. Quia igitur creaturam rationalem Deus bonam condidit, tamen quia non ita bonam sicut ipse est, ideo talem condidit ut ex arbitrio libero posset peccare; nec potuit facere quae non posset peccare, quia hoc repugnat creaturae rationali vertibili.”


\textsuperscript{78} The distinction between the three states is traditional. The state of innocence refers to the life of human beings before the fall, the state of misery to the earthly life after the fall, and the state of glory to the life in heaven after the earthly life of an individual.
innocence there can be no sin, but the state has the potential of declining. In the highest state, the state of glory, there can be no sin nor declining. Thus the higher value of these two states in comparison to the state of misery is based on the fact that they are further removed from evil. After all, sin and evil are an essential part of the state of misery, that is, the earthly life of human beings. From these considerations it may be analogically inferred that the universe, too, would be better ruled if there was no potential of any sin or evil happening. That is to say, if divine providence administered the world without permitting any evil, the world would be better ruled.\textsuperscript{79}

In his reply to this argument, Matthew points out that the distinction of the three states actually adds to the perfection and the beauty of the universe. In the highest state, the state of innocence, there is no possibility of evil. In the second highest state, the state of innocence, there is a possibility of both evil and non-evil. In the lowest state, the state of misery, there is no possibility of non-evil. The existence of the lowest state, too, is good according to Matthew, because its existence contributes to the perfection of the order of the states. Matthew’s idea is that a universe where all the conceivable states of rational creatures actually exist, is more perfect than a universe where only one or two of the more perfect states exist.\textsuperscript{80} In other words, the existence of less perfect states contributes to universal perfection, even though taken only in itself, the state of misery is less perfect than the states of glory and innocence.

All in all, it has been shown that Matthew develops detailed arguments both in line with the accidental and the instrumental strategies of reconciling divine providence with human sins. The first strategy features predominantly in the first question, where Matthew is mainly concerned with proving the existence of a providential order and reconciling it with the freedom of created intellectual agents. In the second question, however, Matthew employs arguments in line with both the instrumental and the accidental strategies. Given that Matthew argues for both positions in depth and detail, it may be safely inferred that he does not see any contradiction between the two

\textsuperscript{79} Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 259): “Item, triplex est status creaturae rationalis: status innocentiae, miseriae et gloriae. In primo statu nullum potuit malum esse, statu manente, potuit tamen status deficere; in ultimo statu nullo modo poterit esse malum nec poterit deficere. Sed isti status meliores sunt et perfectiores propter impermisionem mali et secundum quod magis a malo sunt elongati; ergo universum tanto perfectius quanto magis a malo elongatum: ergo sine malis multo melius, multo convenientius regeretur.”

\textsuperscript{80} Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 2. (ed. Gal, p. 272): “Ad tertium dicendum quod ista statuum distinctio est de universi perfectione et facit ad universi pulcritudinem; et licet sit optimus ille status in quo non potest esse malum, et melior ille in quo potuit non esse, etiam iste bonus est in quo non potest non esse, et habent isti status ordinem suum. Si enim creatura rationalis bene usa fuisse statu primo, transulata fuisse ad statum ultimum; sed quia illo male usa fuit, cecidit in istum et ita tamen quod per istum ex dispensatione efficacius et cumulatius potest pervenire ad illum.”
strategies. This is even more interesting, given that in the generation following Matthew, another Franciscan, Peter Auriol, clearly and explicitly denied that human sins would in any way fall under the divine will (even understood as permission), even though they are certainly known by the divine intellect.

3.5.3 CREATURELY MEDIATED PROVIDENCE

The question whether God provides for the creatures immediately, or through the mediation of other creatures is featured centrally in Matthew’s work. Like all the authors studied so far, Matthew thinks that a large part of divine providence is realized through creaturely mediation. Yet there are aspects in his reply that are both original and illuminating for his theory of providence as a whole. I will begin by studying some of Matthew’s arguments for supporting creaturely mediation for divine providence. After this, I will introduce Matthew’s ideas on divine conservation that occupy a more central place in his theory of divine providence compared to most of his contemporaries.

Matthew first refers his reader to the classic distinction between providence as an eternal disposition and the temporal execution of this disposition. Matthew writes that the unchanging disposition is entirely eternal and divine in origin. It is in no way mediated by any created things. The execution of this disposition, however, is bipartite; one part of the execution is immediately carried out by God, whereas the other part is mediated by creatures. In the rest of the question Matthew further explains

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81 As will be shown next, this is true of Richard of Middleton and John of Paris as well. Richard and John, while important authors in their own right, discussed divine providence much more briefly than Matthew of Aquasparta.

82 My discussion will be based on the fourth question of Quaestiones disputatae de productione rerum et de providentia. Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4 (ed. Gal, p. 305–336): “Utrum Deus omnibus creaturis immediate providet vel omnia immediate administrat, aut mediate uni creaturam mediante alia”

83 As noted in the background chapter, the immediate source of this idea for the medieval Christian authors was Boethius’s De consolatione philosophiae, although the distinction itself went back to the Middle Platonists.

84 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4 (ed. Gal, p. 314–315): “Ad quaestionis intelligentiam praeventium est quod de providentia sive dispositione divina possimus duobus modis loqui, scilicet quantum ad aeternam ordinationem et disponendi rationem, prout definit Boethius, V libro De consolatione: ‘Providentia est ratio in summo omnium principiis constituta, per quam cuncta disponit’; et hoc modo omnia disponit immediate, id est sine creaturae ministerio. Alio modo possimus loqui de providentia sive dispositione quantum ad executionem et ordinis temporalis explicationem; et sic utique providet et disponit non tantum immediate, sed etiam mediate et per ministerium creaturae.”
this execution of providence that he calls governance (gubernare) or ruling (regere).

Matthew claims that the creaturely mediation of divine providence can be discovered in the orders of nature, grace and justice. Firstly, he argues, in the natural order, alterations and generations and corruptions must be reduced to a cause that is unalterable, ingenerated and incorruptible. The substantially unchanging and eternal celestial bodies are such causes in Matthew’s system. The celestial bodies are, however, in constant local motion and thus remain the eternal principle and the foundation of the movement of sublunary things. Without the local motion of the celestial bodies, movement of the lower things would entirely cease. Matthew further notes that according to both the philosophers and the authorities of the church, the celestial bodies are in turn moved by intelligences or angels (intelligentiis, quas nos angelos vocamus). Matthew’s conclusion is thus that God moves sublunary things hierarchically, first through the mediation of angels and then the celestial bodies. This movement consists of both local motion as well as physical changes, generations and corruptions of corporeal things.

Secondly, God uses intermediaries in providing for his creation in the order of grace. After the fall, God leads human beings to blessedness through the ministry of angels and prophets. For scriptural evidence, Matthew refers to Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, where Paul writes that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers of the church are sent by Christ. Thirdly, God uses creaturely mediation in executing the order of justice and inflicting punishments upon mankind. Here too, Matthew points his reader mainly to Biblical material including the punishments inflicted upon the Pharaoh in

85 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 317–318): “Quantum ad opera quidem naturae, cuiusmodi sunt generationes et corruptiones, alterationes, augmenta et decrementa et loci mutationes. Oportet enim reduci generabilia et corruptibia ad aliquod principium ingenerabile et incorruptibile, alterabilia ad aliquod principium inalterabile, cuiusmodi sunt corpora caelestia, et motus rectos ad motum circularem, sicut multitudinem ad unitatem, et varietatem ad uniformitatem. Ad hoc enim ut opera et motus naturales maneant, oportet manere principia. Sed si essent immobilia secundum locum et situm, sicut sunt invariabilia secundum substantiam, non possent esse causa diversitatis, ideo sic oportet esse invariabilia secundum substantiam ut tamen sint mobilia secundum locum ad hoc quod per accessum et recessum varios et diversos effectus possint efficere in istis inferioribus. – Quoniam autem corpora caelestia non sunt summa seu suprema in genere creaturae, sed [est] creatura alia superior, scilicet spiritualis et intellectualis, cuiusmodi est angelica, ideo illum motum oportet reducere ad aliam superiorem causam etiam in genere creaturae, utpote ad angelicum. Unde et Philosophi et Sancti ponunt corpora caelestia moveri ad intelligentii, quas nos angelos vocamus, sicut appareat per Philosophum, XI Metaphysicæ; et hoc ipsum ponit Augustinus. Ac per hoc administrantur quantum ad opera naturae mediantibus virtutibus angelicis.”
Exodus. These punishments were justly sent by God, but executed and carried out by angels.\footnote{Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 319): "Administrat etiam quantum ad opera gratiae et misericordiae. Postquam enim homo a gaudiis paradisi cecidit, non cessavit omnipotens Deus hominem redere ad beatitudinem, et hoc ministerio angelico, per Prohetas, revelationes, per visibles apparitiones. Nam sicut dicit Augustinus, III et IV De Trinitate, omnes illae apparitiones fiebant angelico ministerio, et omnes propheticae revelationes, quia quasi omnes fuerunt imaginariae. [...] Ad hoc etiam ordinatur tota ecclesiastica hierarchia; inde doctores, inde pastores, inde sacramentorum administratores, Ephes. 4, 11–13: Ipse dedit quosdam quidem Apostolos, quosdam autem Prophetas, alios Evangelistas, alios autem pastores et doctores, ad consummationem sancorum, in opus ministerii, in edificationem corporis Christi, donec occurramus omnes in virum perfectum etc." Administrat et regit seu disponit quantum ad opera iustitiae. Unde per creaturas spiritualis servientes punit peccatores: unde omnes plagae Aegypti factae fuerunt angelico ministerio”}

In addition to these mainly Scriptural arguments, Matthew writes that the creaturely mediation of divine providence can be deductively inferred from the nature of divine goodness as well as from the concepts of the order and perfection of the universe. These three ways are already familiar from the material treated above and are thus illuminating concerning Matthew’s method in De providentia as a whole. One of Matthew’s arguments for the existence of creaturely mediation of divine providence is based on the order found in the universe. Matthew refers to the authority of Dionysius in Angelicae hierarchiae. A principle central to Matthew’s treatment that he finds in Angelicae hierarchiae is named the law of divinity (lex divinitatis). According to this principle, the lowest things are ruled through intermediate things. The intermediate things, in turn, are ruled through the highest things.\footnote{This principle was central in Aquinas’s discussions of divine providence, too. Hankey 2011, 1. It is possible that Aquasparta’s adaptation of this principle was influenced by a reading of Aquinas.} Thus, divine providence must rule the universe so that superior things act on inferior things through intermediate things. Matthew returns to this important principle several times in the course of the work. He claims that perfect order in the universe requires the existence of higher and lower things. This could not be achieved with all things being equal to each other.\footnote{Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 321): “Secunda ratio est propter universi ordinem; et hic attribuitur divinae sapientiae, quoniam sapientia est ordinare. Ordo autem universi consistit in graduum disparitate, quoniam ut dicit Augustinus, XIX De civitate, cap. 13, ‘ordo est parium dispariumque’; unde ordo universi exigit et requirit multitudinem cum inaequalitate et disparitate. Nam ut dicit Augustinus, 83 Quaestionem, quaest. 44: ‘Si omnia essent aequalia, non essent omnia, quia non essent diversa rerum genera ex quibus conficitur universitas, primas et secundas et deinceps usque ad ultimas ordinatas habens creaturas’. Lex autem divinitatis est, ut dicit Dionysius, cap. 4 Angelicae hierarchiae, et est supra allegatum, et hoc est divina lege divinitus promulgatum: infima per media et media per superiore ad suprema reduci.” Matthew also quotes the Dionysian lex divinitatis in one of the initial arguments in favour of his own position (that God uses intermediates in the execution of divine will).}
Matthew’s most important argument for the existence of creaturely mediation of divine providence is founded upon another Neoplatonic and Dionysian idea of good being diffusive and communicative of itself. Since according to this principle divine goodness is diffusive, God not only grants goodness to creatures, but also grants some creatures the perfection of being able to communicate and distribute goodness themselves. God does not grant the latter perfection to all the countless created things, but rather to the highest creatures that are closest to himself. The highest spiritual creatures acting through intellect and will, i.e. the angels, God makes provident themselves, whereas the highest corporeal creatures, the celestial bodies, God makes able to carry out his own providence. Furthermore, the lower spiritual creatures that exist enjoined to a corporeal form, i.e. human beings, God makes provident in the limited sense of having providence regarding their own actions and goals.

Matthew repeatedly emphasizes that the fact that God gives a part of governance to the creatures is not based on any defect on God. Rather God allows created things to govern because of the abundance of God’s own goodness. In a reply to one of the initial arguments, Matthew explains this idea that creaturely mediation of divine governance is not based on a divine defect. The argument that Matthew seeks to refute is as follows. Whenever some ruler exercises his rule through a mediator, this arrangement is based on a limitation of the ruler’s essence, power or knowledge. If the ruler could be in

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89 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 311): “Item, Dionysius, 4 capitulo Angelicae hierarchiae, dicit quod lex divinitatis est secunda per prima et inferiora per superiora ad suprema reduci.”

90 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 320): “Secundum enim Dionysium, 2 capitulo Angelicae hierarchiae, ratio boni est quod est sui diffusivum et communicativum.”

90 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 320–321): “Igitur Deus, qui est summum bonum, voluit creaturae communicare perfectionem suae bonitatis prout possibile erat et naturae creatae non repugnaret. Et quoniam creatura capax erat divinae bonitatis non tantum ut in se bona esset, sed etiam ut bonitatem aliis creaturae communicaret, sicut sol per radiorum diffusionem non tantum facit corpora illuminata, sed illuminantia et alius lumen communicantia, ideo hanc perfectionem creaturae communicavit. Communicavit autem non omnibus, quia sic esset abire in infinitum, sed creatoris superioribus et sibi propinquioribus: ut creatoris superioribus in genere corporalium, et spiritualibus in genere spiritualium. Sed differenter, quoniam per spirituales sic regit et providet quod eas facit providentes, quia agunt per rationem et voluntatem; sed per corporales sic regit et providet quod non facit eas providentes, sed agentes tantum. Inter spirituales autem creaturas gradus es. Primum enim et supremum locum tenet natura angelica, quae non est corpori alligata, ideo eius providentia extendit super omnes creaturas inferiores; unde eis mediavitibvs et eorum ministerio omnis creatura inferior administratur et regitur. Secundum locum et gradum tenet anima rationalis, quae est unita corpori ut perfectio, et ideo habet providentiam arctatam et limitatam ad res humanas et [ad] ea quae in usum hominis veniunt.”
several places at the same time and was unlimited in his power and knowledge, no mediator would be needed. Therefore, because God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient he has no need for a mediator and instead rules everything immediately through his providence.91

Matthew disagrees with the conclusion of this argument. He notes that instead of a defect, the decision to use intermediaries in ruling may be based on a pursuit of perfect order. Matthew argues that this is clearly visible in angelic as well as ecclesiastical hierarchies that are ordered according to different ranks and offices, which ultimately constitute a unified whole. Even if the pope or the highest angels would be able to carry out all the tasks by themselves, Matthew believes, the whole will be more beautifully ordered if the lower tasks are appointed to beings lower in the hierarchy.92 Another flaw that Matthew finds in the argument is that although it could carry weight with respect to created agents it fails in the case of God. Since God is infinite in essence, power and knowledge it must be because of his abundant goodness and his aim for the beauty and order of the universe that a part of his governance is communicated to his creatures.93

Matthew also presents an argument for the existence of creaturely mediation of divine providence based on the idea of the perfection of the universe. In a perfect and complete universe all the imaginable possibilities must be realized. Here Matthew is speaking on the level of species, not on the level of particular beings. In a universe where all the possible species exist, it is still possible to think of logically possible particular beings that do not receive existence. Since there are moving things and moved things in the universe, there must be things that are moving and moved so that the perfection and completion of the universe may be attained. In other words, since God is provident and creatures are provided for, there must in addition

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91 Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 306–307): “Item, quod una causa agat alia mediante aliquod, vel regens regat alio mediante, hoc non est nisi aut propter limitationem essentiae aut potentiae aut scientiae, utpote quia non potest esse in pluribus locis simul nec potest virtutem suam ad plura extendere aut quia non potest plura simul cognoscere. Sed Deus est in omnibus per essentiam, potest in omnibus per potentiam, et omnia novit per sapientiam: ergo omnia immediate gubernat et disponit per providentiam.”

92 For the notion of hierarchy in medieval philosophy, see e.g. Luscombe 1998.

93 Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaest. disp. de providentia*, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 327–328): “Ad sextum respondendum est per intercessionem maioris, quoniam [una causa mediante alia, vel regens regit mediante alio], non [solum] propter defectum vel limitationem, sed etiam propter ordinem, sicut apparat tam in angelica quam ecclesiastica hierarchia, secundum quod sunt ordinati gradus dignitatum et officiorum, quae tamen omnia reducuntur ad unum hierarchiam. – Alias potest dici quod si istud posset habere veritatem in agentibus creatis limitatis et determinatis, non tamen in primo agente infinitatis essentiae, potentiae et sapientiae. Ergo non propter sui defectum vel limitationem agit mediantibus agentibus secundis, sed propter suae bonitatis communicationem et propter universi pulciritudinem, decorem et ordinationem.”
be creatures that are both provided for and provident. As already noted, for Matthew these creatures are the angels.94

The ideas of divine goodness, the order of the creation and the perfection of the universe, employed by Matthew in his arguments, were of course commonplace in the medieval Christian tradition. The original aspect of Matthew’s thought in this context is that he is using these widely accepted ideas to defend the particular view that God must provide for the lower parts of the creation through the mediation of higher creatures.

The theme of divine conservation that occupied a central role in Matthew’s reconciliation of divine providence and human will, features centrally also in the question concerned with the creaturely mediation of divine providence. As noted, Matthew names the temporal execution of divine providence ruling (regere) or governance (gubernare). Interestingly, he repeatedly identifies divine governance with divine conservation (conservatio divina) in the course of the work. This can be clearly seen in one of the arguments treated, opposing Matthew’s view that God exercises providence through creaturely mediation. The prologue of John famously asserts that everything that is made is made through the Word.95 The argument goes that if everything is created through the Word, then analogously everything must be conserved through the Word as well. Since everything is created through the Word immediately, therefore everything must also be ruled and conserved immediately through the Word.96 Here we see that divine ruling is paralleled and identified quite directly with divine conservation.

Matthew finds this argument inconclusive. His reply to the argument is that such analogy between creation (productio) on the one hand, and divine ruling and conservation on the other, is not legitimate. The reason for this is that divine production is ex nihilo and therefore does not presuppose any other existing thing. Therefore, the production of created things cannot be mediated by any existing thing. Conservation and governance, on the other hand,

94 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 322): “Tertia ratio sumitur propter universi perfectionem. Universum enim adeo perfectum est, ut dicit Augustinus, III De libero arbitrio, quod nulla differentia rerum, nulla combinatio possibilis, nulla connexio potest intelligi quae non sit in universo. Si igitur in universo inveniuntur extrema, si medium non repugnat extremis necesse est inveniri. Cum ergo inveniamus in universo movens tantum et inveniamus motum tantum, oportet ponere ad universi perfectionem movens et motum; et si invenimus efficiens tantum et effectum tantum, oportet inveniri ad universi perfectionem efficiens et effectum.”

95 In the Vulgata, John 1.3. reads “omnia per ipsum [Verbum] facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est.”

96 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 308): “Item, Ioan. 1. 3: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil, hoc est, id quod factum est sine ipso, nihil est, secundum unum modum exponendi ab Augustino. Igitur sicut omnia facta sunt per ipsum, ita conservantur per ipsum, ita quod sine ipso nihil. Sed omnia facta sunt per ipsum immediate: ergo omnia reguntur et conservantur per ipsum immediate.”
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premise the existence of other causes and of other things ordered to ends. These causes and things act as parts of the causal chains that lead to the ends preordained by divine providence. In Matthew’s reply, there are two interesting aspects, to which I wish to draw attention. Firstly, Matthew clearly distinguishes between creation and governance understood as the temporal execution of providence. In other passages too, he repeats the same point: creation presupposes nothing, but governance presupposes the existence of the things that are ordered to ends. As noted above, in some of the earlier authors, including Albert the Great, the distinction between creation and providence is not at all that clear. Secondly, and more importantly, it must be noted that the identification of divine governance and conservation, in the argument that Matthew opposes, is not in any way problematized in his reply to the argument. Time after time in the same question Matthew takes divine governance to primarily refer to divine conservation of created things. This kind of identification is absent in Aquinas, for example. Although the idea of the necessity of divine conservation is shared by all the scholastic authors, Matthew puts special emphasis on it in his treatment of divine providence.

What may have led Matthew to identify divine governance and conservation? I believe the answer to this question is in his legalistic model of divine providence that I described above in my discussion of Matthew’s reconciliation of divine providence and free will. Because of Matthew’s emphasis on the radical freedom of the created wills, he conceptualized the operation of divine providence mainly in terms of God committing himself to a covenant with human beings that they are obliged to follow. Yet because of their very freedom, they also remain capable of acting against the precepts and laws of the covenant. As also noted earlier, Thomas Aquinas had a very different understanding of divine governance. Above all, Aquinas did not place much emphasis on the legalistic function of providence. Aquinas stressed instead that divine governance could causally predispose and move free human beings in a non-coercive way that was compatible with their freedom. In Aquasparta’s model, however, much less space remains for such causally

97 Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 331): “Ad decimum tertium iam patet responsio, quoniam non est simile de productione et conservazione sive gubernatione. Nam productio nihil praesupponit, ideo nullum creaturae ministerium in opere creationes esse potest; sed conservatio et gubernatio praesupponit esse ordinabile in finem et alias causas, quibus mediantibus ad finem consequendum potest adiuvari et gubernari.”

98 See e.g. Matthew’s reply to the second initial argument. (Emphasis mine.) Matthew of Aquasparta, Quaest. disp. de providentia, q. 4. (ed. Gal, p. 325): “Ad secundum iam patet responsio, quoniam creatio sive productio primaria rerum, cum sit ex nihilo, nihil praesupponit. Et ideo Deus in creatione sive rerum productione primaria cooperationem sive ministerium alicuius agentis secundarii nullo modo admittit, sed nec admittere potest. Administratio autem sive gubernatio praesupponit esse ordinabile in finem et praesupponit nihilominus alia agentia et ordinem eorum, et ideo in administratione admittit cooperationem sive ministerium secundarum causarum.”
predisposing governance. Instead of Aquinas’s modal understanding of providence, where one of the main tasks of providence is to give some created causes a necessary and others a contingent modal status, Aquasperta assumes a legalistic understanding of providence. Yet, unlike several other authors of his age, he still chooses to employ the Thomistic terminology of divine governance as the temporal execution of divine providence. In turn, the function of divine governance is largely marginalized to the task of conserving created things in existence. Creation, the other main type of divine activity ad extra, is repeatedly distinguished from divine providence and governance.

3.6 Durand of St. Pourçain

Durand of St. Pourçain (c. 1275–1334) discussed divine providence and related themes in some depth in his commentary on the *Sentences*. The treatment shows close similarity to that of Aquinas, but Durand has some more original points as well.99

Durand’s theory of foreknowledge has consequences for his ideas on providence. Durand presents his theory of divine foreknowledge in the 38th distinction of his commentary on the first book of the *Sentences*. His theory is based on the assertion that knowing all the future causes, God also knows whether they are impeded by some other cause or not. This allows, Durand argues, for divine foreknowledge of contingent causes that does not do away with the contingency of these causes. Schabel has noted that Durand’s theory is rather original and not fully harmonious with Aquinas. For Durand, God does not know the causes directly, but rather through the divine essence. Schabel considers this a possible influence from Scotus.100

99 Interestingly, Nicolai Medensis, better known as Durandellus, did not include a chapter on Durand’s questions on foreknowledge or providence in his work *Evidentiae contra Durandum* (1325), where Durandellus critically goes through a number of distinctions from Durand’s commentary on the *Sentences* to demonstrate the coherence and superiority of the Thomistic system. Iribarren 2011, 1305–1306.

100 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 38 q. 3, n. 9, p. 104rb: “Sicut ex causa necessaria sequitur effectus necessarius infallibiliter, sic ex causa impedibili determinata ad unum, si non sit impedita, sequitur effectus contingens infallibiliter. Nisi quod haec infallibilitas est ex suppositione, prima autem est secundum se et absolute, et codem modo a causa indifferente et impedibili si determinetur et non impediatur sequitur suus proprius effectus infallibiliter. Igitur sicut in causa necessaria praecognoscitur effectus necessarius certa cognitione, sic cognita causa impedibili. Et omnibus quae eam impedire possunt et insuper ea quae eam impedient, vel non impedient, certitudinaliter potest cognosci quis effectus eueniet, vel non eueniet. Et similiter cognita causa indifferente et impedibili, si cum ea cognoscantur omnia quae eam determinare possunt et determinabunt, et omnia quae eam impedire possunt, et quae impedient vel non impedient, potest infallibiliter cognosciti quis effectus eueniet. Nunc autem Deus non solum cognoscit causam contingentem in se et absolute, quia sic in ea vel per eam non
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Durand asks first whether everything falls under the influence of divine providence. He notes that according to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* VI providence is a part of practical reason and practical reason only pertains to contingent things. Thus, it seems that necessary things are outside divine providence.101 Durand too takes the position, already encountered in Thomas Aquinas and John of Paris, that God has providence not only over contingent but also over necessary things. Durand points out that even the things we call necessary are in an absolute sense contingent as they are based on a free act of creation by God.102

Like others before him, Durand notes that chance events, contingencies *ad utrumlibet* and evil things seem to be outside providential control. He treats chance events as conurrences of two independent causal chains. They remain within providence as Durand sees divine providence as a cause that intentionally connects the two separate chains. Like in Aquinas’s theory, events that appear as chance in the sublunary world are not only foreknown by God but also actually predetermined and intended by God.103 Unlike Giles

cognosceretur infallibiliter aliquis effectus nisi tantum coniectura probabilis (ut bene dicunt alii). Sed cognoscit omnia que eam determinare possunt et que determinabunt, insuper cognoscit omnia que eam impedire possunt et quae impedient vel non impedient. Ergo deus in causa contingente sic cognita potest certitudinaliter cognoscere effectum futurum contingentem.” Schabel 2000, 50–51.

101 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 1, p. 107va: “quaeritur de prouidentia Dei, utrum omnia subsint diuinae prouidentiae. Et videtur quod non, quia quorum non est prouidentia, non est prouidentia, quae est pars prouidentiae. Sed necessariorum non est prouidentia, que est solum de contingentibus, de quibus est consilium et electio, ut patet ex 6 Ethicorum. Quum ergo in entibus multa sint necessaria, videtur quod non omnium prouidentia.”

102 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 13, p. 108ra: “Ad primum argumentum dicendum est quod prouidentia humana non se extendit nisi ad contingentia, nec ad illa omnia, sed solum ad illa quae possunt per hominem fieri vel impediri. Et quia homo non est factor rerum naturalium et necessariorum, ideo ad haec non se extendit prouidentia humana. Sed quum Deus sit factor rerum quas necessarias dicimus, licet libere et non necessario productae sint a Deo, ideo res necessarie subsunt diuinae prouidentiae, inquantum eis sciens et libere volens contulit ea que sunt expedientia ad consequensionem sui finis.”

103 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 9, p. 107vb: “Primum istorum non cogit. Non enim ex hoc dicitur aliquid casuale vel fortuitum, quia nullam habeat causam. Dicente Boetio 5 De consolatio, quod nihil est quod ex causis legitimis non oriatur, sed propter hoc quod euenit praeter intentionem agentis. Unde fossio agri per se causam habet, et reperto thesauri similiter, at concursus harum causarum est per accidens, et non intentus ab aliqua dictarum causarum. Ideo fodiens a casu inuenit thesaurum, si autem esse quo et alia causa has duas connectens, per se respectu illius non esset effectus casualis, sed intentus. Cum ergo omnis ordo et omnis causarum connexio sit a diuina prouidentia, respectu eius nihil est a casu vel a fortuna. Et haec est via Boetii 5 De consolatio, ubi dicit sic: licet casus sit inopinatus euentus ex confluentibus causis in his, que propter aliquid geruntur concurrere atque conflueri facit causas, ordo ille ex ineuitabili connexione procedens, qui de prouidentiae fonte descendens cunta suis locis temporibusque disponit.”
of Rome, Durand does not treat the concurrency as such as an effect, but rather claims that both of the independent causal chains are predisposed by divine providence.

Durand’s first way of reconciling between evils and providence is similar to that encountered in Matthew of Aquasparta. Durand argues that providence is part of divine knowledge that extends to more things than divine causality. God knows evils, but does not in any way will or cause them. Evils come under providence through punishments through which many goods will follow.104

Next Durand argues, however, that a universal provider is concerned with leading the whole universe to its proper end and this requires neglecting some particular goods. The good of the whole cannot be attained without some bad things happening to the parts. In this sense, Durand rather strikingly writes, that particular evils are intended by the universal provider (sunt intenta a provisore universali). With regard to human sins, Durand takes an Augustinian stance. Human freedom is such a valuable thing that it is worth it for God to allow for some evils consequent on the bad use of human free will. Furthermore, it would be better for the whole that free agents avoided sin freely than if they avoided sin necessarily. God has provided free agents with capacities to naturally avoid sin and thus, universally speaking, the co-existence of all-reaching providence and particular evils is harmonious.105 All in all, Durand’s strategy of reconciling divine providence with evil has characteristics of both accidental and instrumental strategies. He clearly does not consider the two models to be in contradiction with each other.

104 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 10, p. 107vb: “Secundum etiam non cogit, quia ad plura se extendit diuina scientia quam eius causalitas. Prouidentia autem ad scientiam pertinet, et ideo potest se extendere ad mala, ad quae non se extendit causalitas diuina. Unde cadunt sub diuina prouidentia, ut illa contra quae prouidetur hominibus ne fiant, et si facta fuerint, ordinantur per poenam, et ex isis per diuinam prouidentiam multa bona eliciuntur.”

105 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 14, p. 108ra: “Ad secundum dicendum quod ad pruisorem particularem pertinet remouere impedimenta finis particularis quem intendit. Ad pruisorem uero universalem pertinet amouere ea quae impedientia consequentia finis uniuersalis, propter quod neglect quoque bonum particulare. Mala autem particularia naturae, quae sunt mala poenae, non impedient bonum commune, imo promouent et necessaria sunt, quia in sphaera generabilium et corruptibilium non potest saluari bonum totius sine malo partis, quia generationes sunt ibi necessariae. Generatio autem unius non potest esse sine corruptione alterius, et ideo mala poenae uel potius naturae, ut defectus et corruptiones, sunt intenta a prouisore uniuersali. De malis uero culpae quod non alias debeant a deo habeant at ullo impediri, potest dupliciter dici. Vno modo quod non possunt impediri sine praejudicio boni uniuersalis, quia non permetteretur creatura rationalis agere secundum proprium motum suae libertatis. Alio modo quod ad pruisorem pertinet remouere impedimenta, uel dare rei illa per quae possit uitare illa quae impedientia ipsum a consecutione finis, et hoc est magis debitum his quae consequuntur finem ex meritu suae actionis. In hoc enim est magna pars meritui, quod homo liber causet ab his, quae possunt eum impedire a consecutione sui finis. Deus autem omni creaturae rationali contulit auxilia per quae potest uitare mala culpae et impedimenta suae salutis, ideo etc.”
In his consideration of the compatibility of *ad utrumlibet* causes and providence, Durand refers to his theory of divine foreknowledge. That is, God is able to know future contingents because he not only knows causes that may be impeded as such, but also all the possible impediments and whether they will become actual or not. Therefore, God may have providence over *ad utrumlibet* causes too. Durand does not explicitly refer to free choice in this treatment of *ad utrumlibet* causes. Yet one cannot avoid the impression that the treatment is unsatisfactory from the viewpoint of free choice. It seems counterintuitive to think of free choice as an undetermined cause that has a certain set of potential impediments, a part of which are actualized. And again, from the viewpoint of God, even the *ad utrumlibet* causes are preordained and foreknown.

Durand argues that God has immediate providence over some things, while other things are provided for only through the mediation of secondary causes. The basis for this is not in God but rather in created things. In this context, providence is seen primarily as an operation of the divine intellect rather than the divine will. Durand writes that from the perspective of God, all things are known equally as being directed to their ends.

Finally, in his discussion of the mediation and the immediacy of divine providence Durand makes an interesting modification of Aquinas’s model. According to Aquinas, divine providence is derived from divine disposition and divine governance in turn follows upon divine providence. In Durand’s model, the execution of disposition is named creation whereas the execution of providence is named governance. Providence and disposition are eternal, whereas creation and governance take place in time. Durand connects disposition and creation, i.e. the temporal realization of disposition, with the order of parts in relation to the whole. On the other hand, providence and

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106 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 11, p. 107vb: “Tertium similiter non ualet, nam et contingentia ad utrumlibet, licet sint indeterminata in sua causa particulari, secundum se considerata, tamen apud diuinam scientiam sunt determinata, ut dictum fuit prius. Quia Deus non solum scit causas impedibiles secundum se, sed omnia impedimenta, quae possunt euenire et quae euenient, quibus scitis scitur quicunque effectus contingens secundum determinatum esse. Et ideo contingentia sic determinate scita, prouidit Deus ad determinatos fines, et sic patet secundum.”

107 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 12, p. 107vb–108ra: “Quantum ad tertium dicendum, quod Deus non prouidet aequaliter omnibus. Quod patet dupliciter. Primo sic, illa quae non ordinantur ad aequalem finem non subsunt aequaliter proudientiae. Nam finis et ea quae promouent in finem debent habere proportionem. Prouidentia autem est eorum quae conferunt ad consecutionem finis. Sed non omnia ordinantur in aequalem finem, sed quaedam in supernaturalem, ut creatura rationalis, alia uero in finem pure naturalem, ut creatura irrationalis, ergo etc. Secundo sic, executio prouidentiae respectu aliquorum, scilicet respectu angelorum et eorum quae immediate a Deo producuntur, respectu autem aliorum est mediantibus causis secundis, quare manifestum est quod prouidentia Dei non est aequaliter de omnibus. Hae autem inaequalitas est ex parte rerum, et non ex parte Dei, qui una ratione simplici scit quod unuicique rei expedit ad consecutionem sui finis.”
governance have to do with the realization of ends. That is to say, providence and governance are concerned mainly with final causality just like in Aquinas’s model. Durand’s language shows the clear influence of Aquinas. He concludes that both disposition and providence presuppose divine knowledge through which God has cognition of both the things ordered to ends as well as the ends themselves. Durand harmonizes the accounts of Boethius and Damascene to show that providence, on the one hand, pertains to practical reason but, on the other hand, its execution requires divine will.108

3.7 Peter Auriol

3.7.1 OVERVIEW OF AURIOL’S THEORY OF PROVIDENCE

Franciscan theologian Peter Auriol’s (c. 1280–1322) theological and philosophical thought has received a relatively large amount of scholarly attention recently. Unlike many of his contemporaries, who only discussed divine providence very briefly (if at all) in their commentaries on the Sentences, Auriol chose to include an extensive treatment of providence in his commentary that has gone largely unnoticed in the previous scholarship. Schabel has stressed in a recent article that overall Auriol’s theological thought highlights divine simplicity, necessity and immutability and, on the other hand, human free will.109 This is largely true for Auriol’s treatment of divine

108 Durand of St. Pourçain, 1 Sent. d. 39 q. 3, n. 6, p. 107va: “Secundum hunc modum in toto uniuerso est primo ordo partium secundum diversos gradus naturarum, nam secundum nobilitatem naturae tenent res altiorem gradum in entibus et ordinantur ad nobiliores operationes. Secundo est ibi collatio eorum. quae necessaria sunt cuilibet naturae ad consecutionem finis per illam operationem. Ratio autem utriusque istorum est apud Deum ab aeterno, sed executio est ex tempore. Ratio igitur primi existens apud Deum uocatur dispositio, quae respicit ordinem partium in toto. Sed ratio secundi uocatur prouidentia, quae est eorum quae expedient rei ad operationem propter consecutionem finis. Prouidus enim dicitur qui bene coniecturat de conferentibus ad finem. Executio autem primi est creatio, sed executio secundi uocatur gubernatio, sicut scriptum est Sapientia 14, tu autem pater gubernans omnia prouidentia. Ex quo patet quod gubernatio supponit prouidentiam, sicut actus imperatus ab ea, prouidentia autem dispositionem, quia prius est unumquodque ordinare in suo gradu, quam prouidere de necessariis ad exequendum officium suum. Utrumque autem horum supponit scientiam, per quam Deus non solum cognoscit ea quae ordinantur inter se, et ad finem, sed etiam ipsum finem propter quem istum ordinem instituit. Patet ergo quod prouidentia per se et directe pertinet ad intellectum practicum sicut et prudentia. Et Boetius 4 De consolatione dicit, quod prouidentia est ipsa diuina ratio in summo omnium principe constituta, sed executio prouidentiae non sit nisi mediante voluntate diuina, quae importat actus transeuntes in materiam exteriorem et sic loquitur Damascenus lib. 2 cap. 29, quod prouidentia est diuina voluntas, secundum quam omnia quae sunt in finem, convenientem deductionem accipiunt. Sic ergo patet primum.”

109 Schabel 2012, 78.
providence as well. The philosophical problems that Auriol faces in his discussion on providence mostly result from his emphasis on voluntarism and divine simplicity. Auriol criticizes his predecessors, especially Aquinas, for defining divine providence in a way that contradicts divine simplicity. In addition, he finds deterministic implications in the earlier theories he discusses. Auriol also provides interesting discussions of his predecessors, most importantly Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus. Interestingly, Auriol connects his discussion of providence to an extensive treatment of Liber de bona fortuna, which I will discuss in the next chapter. All these factors together make Auriol a major figure in the development of the doctrine of divine providence in the 14th century.

Auriol’s discussion of divine providence is structured as follows: first the theories of providence of some of his predecessors are exposed and criticized (Scriptum\textsuperscript{110}, pp. 914–915), then Auriol presents his own theory of divine providence (pp. 916–919). Next he moves to discuss things related to providence, including fate (pp. 919–921), good fortune and premonitions (pp. 921–930). Finally, he explains how in his own theory (unlike in the theories of his predecessors) neither providence, good fortune, premonitions nor predestination nullify human free will (pp. 931–934). Auriol offers original and innovative solutions to several traditional problems. These include his distinction between objective and formal providence that serves the purpose of safeguarding divine simplicity, his reconciliation between providence and contingency founded on his controversial theories on divine foreknowledge and the divine will, and his psychologizing and largely naturalistic reading of Liber de bona fortuna.

In my discussion of Auriol’s theory of providence, I will begin with describing Auriol’s general theory of providence. Then I will discuss his reconciliation of providence with contingency and free will, with particular attention to his views on the existence of human sins in a providentially governed world. In the next chapter I will discuss Auriol’s ideas on Liber de bona fortuna. I will mostly postpone my discussion of Auriol’s views on immediate and mediated providence, as this theme comes up mostly with reference to Liber de bona fortuna in Auriol’s treatment.

Auriol begins his discussion of divine providence by presenting and refuting the opinions of Thomas Aquinas, Richard of Middleton and Durand of St. Pourçain. He introduces his own theory of providence to overcome the problems he discovers in the theories of his predecessors.\textsuperscript{111} Auriol describes Aquinas’s theory, briefly focusing on Aquinas’s definition of providence as the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{110} Scriptum refers to Auriol’s commentary to the first book of Sentences. In my references to Auriol, I mostly follow an unpublished collated version of Scriptum d. 40, a. 2–4 made by Chris Schabel. Used here with the permission of Schabel.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{111} This is characteristic of the method Auriol uses throughout his works. Friedman 2015, 3.}
ratio of the order of things ordained to an end by God.\footnote{112}{For Aquinas’s definition, see e.g. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa theologiae}, I\textsuperscript{a} q. 22 a. 1 co: 
“[…]necesse est quod ratio ordinis rerum in finem in mente divina praeexistat. Ratio autem ordinandorum in finem, proprie providentia est.” There is a surprising detail in Auriol’s description of Aquinas’s theory. Clearly following Aquinas’s text, Auriol notes that some argued that providence extended only to incorruptible things, including species of beings, the skies and the stars. Auriol attributes this theory to Averroes and Maimonides, without noting Maimonides’ focus on God’s special providence for human beings. Yet later in the same question, Auriol attributes special providence (i.e. in Auriol’s terminology: executive providence) to both Aristotle and Averroes without coming back to the view of Maimonides. Apparently, Auriol had not read Maimonides first hand, but one is left to wonder why Auriol omitted Maimonides’ focus on human species that he must have read about from Aquinas’s text. Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 2, 914b, E: “Est autem considerandum quod aliqui hanc rationes ordinis negaverunt universaliter, dicentes omnia fieri a casu, ut Democritus, et Epicurii; aliis vero negaverunt, quantum ad individua corruptibilium specierum, non autem quantum ad species quae incorruptibiles sunt et cetera incorruptibilium ut caelum, et stellae, et hanc opinionem sequitur Rabbi Moyses, et idem videtur Commentator sentire.” Cf. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Scriptum super Sententiis} l. I, d. 39, q. 2, a.2, co.: “Quaedam enim positio est, quod providentia Dei non se extendit nisi ad species, et non ad individua, nisi quae necessaria sunt; eo quod ponendam, illud quod exit cursum suum, providentiae legibus non subjacere; et ideo ea quae frequenter deficiant a cursu ordinato, non sunt provisa, sicut particularia corruptibilium et generabilia; et ista opinio imponitur Aristotelii: quamvis ex verbis suis expresse haberi non possit, sed Commentator suus expresse ponit eam in 11 Metaph. Dicit enim, quod non est fas divinae bonitati habere sollicitudinem de singularibus nisi secundum quod habent communicationem in natura communi, sicut quod aranea sciat facere telam, et hujusmodi. Sed haec opinio expresse tollit judicium Dei de operibus hominum. Et ideo alia positio fuit, quod Deus providentiam habet de omnibus quae dicta sunt, et ulterius de individuis hominum, non tantum secundum quod communicant in specie, sed etiam secundum parteculares actus eorum; et hanc ponit Rabbi Moyses.”} Auriol is mostly happy with Aquinas’s definition, but insists on distinguishing between what is caused by providence (\textit{quod providetur}) and the cognitive act that provides (\textit{quo providetur}). As will be shortly shown in more detail, this concern is of major importance in Auriol’s own definition of providence, which basically takes Aquinas’s definition as its starting point. Auriol stresses that the cognitive act that provides (\textit{quo providetur}) is providence in the most proper sense of the word instead of that which is caused by providence (\textit{quod providetur}). In other words, the term providence does not primarily refer to the order found in things as such, but rather to the divine cognitive act that is the ground for this order. Thus, for Auriol, Aquinas’s definition of providence confuses the subject of providence with its object.\footnote{113}{Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 2, 914b, E–F: “Dicendum est tamen quod omnia subsunt divinae providentiae, quia omnia participant rationem ordinis in finem qui praeeexistit in Deo. Sed hic modus dicendi quamvis in aliquibus verus sit, deficit tamen in hoc quod providentiam esse dicit rationem ordinis rerum in finem existentem in mente divina. Providentia enim proprie non est illud quod providetur, sed potius actus cognitivus quo providetur. Sed manifestum est quod ratio ordinis rerum...”} Auriol also finds flawed
the option that the *ratio* of order as found in the divine mind would be the subject of providence, whereas the same *ratio* of order as found in created things would be the object of providence. Auriol’s motive for denying this solution is in safeguarding divine simplicity. Auriol denies the possibility that there would be any other objects of thought in the divine intellect except for the divine essence itself.\textsuperscript{114} Auriol sees Durand’s theory as nothing more than a minor variation of Aquinas’s theory and in practice raises the same argument against it.\textsuperscript{115}

To overcome the problems in Aquinas’s and Durand’s account and to explain how God can have providence for creatures, despite the fact that the divine cognition is focused only on the divine essence, Auriol distinguishes between formal providence (*providentia formalis*) and objective providence (*providentia obiectiva*). This subtle distinction is of great importance in Auriol’s aim to defend the perfect simplicity of the divine essence and thus is worthwhile quoting here in its entirety:

*Providence may be understood either as formal providence, which is nothing else but divine providence or foreseeing (praeuidere) and this is the same thing as divine understanding. But understanding in God is nothing but the ratio of divinity itself connoting something posited in the divine gaze (esse prospecto); but the object gazed (prospectum) that divine understanding especially connotes, when it is specifically considered as providence, is the order of things in an end according to their works and secondary perfections, posited in the divine gaze. Thus, that divine understanding, which is divine providence, is nothing else but divinity insofar as this order appears (apparet) to him or is posited in the divine gaze.*

*But providence can also be understood as objective providence, insofar as we understand providence to refer to that which is posited in the gaze (prospectum) of the providing mind. And in this way, because only divinity is in the gaze (prospectum) of his own intellection, positing this is equivalent to positing the order of all things to their end and their various actions directed (proportionatae) to achieving this end. And thus the divinity, as connoting and denominating these things can*
be named objective providence as the ratio of the order of all things in the end. For, as has been said, divinity is equivalent to the whole perfection and being that this order imports. Hence, by thinking of divinity one thinks of such order.\(^{116}\)

This passage is very dense and full of technical terminology and will require unpacking. The concept of *esse prospecto* is crucial in Auriol’s description of formal and objective providence. *Esse prospecto* has here the same meaning as Auriol’s better-known concept of “apparent existence” (*esse apparens*), but applied to divine cognition.\(^{117}\) *Esse apparens* is the name Auriol gives to a cognized thing that has received a special type of existence in the mind of the cognizer. For Auriol, the thing having apparent existence (*esse apparens*) in the mind of the cognizer is the same thing as the object existing extramentally, but with a different type of existence, that is, apparent existence and not real existence.\(^{118}\) One way Auriol argues for this conclusion is to give the example that when we see an image in the mirror, the image does not become a really existing part of the mirror, nor of the eye. Neither is this image anything real existing as an independent being. The only viable option is, Auriol argues, the thing seen in the mirror has received apparent existence in the mind of the cognizer.\(^{119}\)

Since human beings do not cognize things directly, but only in their apparent existence, a concept of a cognized thing is derived from its *esse apparens*. Auriol did not allow any extra mental existence for universal concepts. Because of Auriol’s conceptualist view that universal concepts only refer to particular beings he cannot, of course, claim that the concept of humanity we derive from Socrates and Plato, for example, would be something

\(^{116}\) Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 2, 916a, A–D: “Prima quidem quod providentia potest accipi vel pro ipsa providentia formali quae non est aliu quam providentia seu praecordere divinum, et de illa constat quod non est nisi divinum intelligere. Intelligere autem in Deo non est aliu quam ipsam ratio Deitatis, vt connotat aliquid positum in esse prospecto; illud autem prospectum quod connotat in speciali duiinum intelligere prout specificatur ad providentiam, est ordo rerum in finem secundum operationes suas et perfectiones secundas, positus in esse prospecto. Unde illud intelligere quod est duiuna providentia, non est aliu quam Deitas in quantum ordo iste sibi appare vel ponitur in esse prospecto. Aut potest accipi providentia obiectiue in quantum positum in prospectu mentis providentis, consuevimus providentiam appellare; et sic cum sola Deitas sit in prospectu intellectios suae qua posita aequipollentior est positus ordo omnium rerum in finem et actionum varietates proportionatae ad finis assecutionem. Et ita Deitas ut connotans et denominans ista potest appellari providentia obiectiua, tanquam ratio ordinis omnium rerum in finem; est enim aequipollentier vt dictum est tota illa perfectio et entitas, quam importat huiusmodi ordo. Propter quod ea cognita cognitus est talis ordo.”

\(^{117}\) Following Tachau, I translate *prospectare* as “gaze”. Tachau mentions several synonyms that Auriol uses for *esse apparens*, but *esse prospecto* is not listed. Tachau 1988, 90.

\(^{118}\) Friedman 2015, 5–6.

\(^{119}\) Tachau 1988, 90–93.
universal. Auriol held that when one cognizes two particulars of the same species, the *rationes* acting as the grounds for human concept formation which are derived from them are maximally similar (*simillimae*). As two separate particular beings, they cannot be “the same” in any relevant sense. The concepts of maximal similarity and *esse apparens* thus serve the purpose, among other things, of accounting for scientific knowledge, that is, universal knowledge in a world composed exclusively of particular beings.\(^{120}\)

In the passage quoted above, Auriol distinguishes between formal providence and objective providence. On a most basic level the first refers to God as provident, and the second to the content or reference of divine providence. Given that one of Auriol’s most important theological priorities is to safeguard the simplicity of God, Auriol denies the existence of any really separate acts or powers in God and stresses that God does not, properly speaking, cognize anything else but the divine essence. This gives rise to a philosophical problem. How can God have providence over creation, and at the same time remain essentially simple, thinking only of his own essence? The distinction between formal and objective providence is formulated largely to overcome this problem.

For Auriol, formal providence is providence in the more proper sense. It is not really distinct from divine intellection that is, in turn, identical with divinity due to divine simplicity. Divine intellection understood specifically as providence (*diuinum intelligere, prout specificatur ad providentiam*) connotes the order of things into their end in accordance with their own causal activity. Thus Auriol’s definition of formal providence contains the idea also found in Aquinas that providence has to do with the order of things towards their end. Auriol puts more stress on divine simplicity, however. To think of divine providence is, according to Auriol, to think of the perfectly simple divine essence insofar as the divine essence is knowing of the order of things into their end.

To fully appreciate Auriol’s description of formal providence, a brief look at Auriol’s theory of connotation and the connotative distinction is in order. Auriol developed a detailed and original theory of connotation to provide a firm and philosophically sound grounds for theological language. According to Auriol, the divine attributes are connotatively distinct because they connote different things regardless of the absolute simplicity of God. That is to say, the concepts of divine goodness and divine wisdom make us think of different things, although there is no distinction whatsoever in the divine essence, which is the actual reference of the concepts of divine goodness and divine wisdom.\(^{121}\) Thus, when Auriol points out that divine providence refers to the

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\(^{120}\) Friedman 2015. The concept of *simillimae* is important for Ockham too. See Panaccio 1992, 258–267, also referred to in Friedman 2015.

\(^{121}\) The main difference between Auriol’s connotative distinction and the better-known formal distinction, developed by John Duns Scotus, is that in Scotus’s theory the distinction has metaphysical
divine essence connoting the order of created things, he aims to separate the metaphorical plurality and distinction of created things from the utter simplicity of God, while at the same time retaining the traditional Boethian and Thomistic meaning of the concept of providence that has to do with the order of created things as understood and willed by God.

Objective providence, on the other hand, connotes the object, or content, of divine cognition. Again, because of divine simplicity, the content of divine cognition is the divine essence itself. For Auriol, divine essence is an eminent similitude of all created things. In the quotation, Auriol uses the term denominans to distinguish between God’s knowledge of the divine essence as such, and God’s knowledge of created things through the divine essence.122 When God thinks of his own essence he comes to think of the order of created things towards their end and their actions directed towards this end. Thus, objective providence refers to the divine essence, taken as the object of divine thought and connoting the order of created things to their end.

Auriol also provides criticism of Richard of Middleton’s theory of providence, centred on the claim that divine providence is God’s practical knowledge.123 This leads Auriol to introduce another important distinction between providence and art or skill (ars). Auriol’s main concern with Richard’s theory is that if providence was practical knowledge, it would become a type of a skill or art (ars). Auriol thinks, however, that providence cannot be wholly the same as ars for there are good craftsmen who are nevertheless negligent and lacking in providence.124

The distinction between providence and art is an important device for Auriol in developing his own theory of providence. He points out several ways in which providence differs from art in order to illuminate his understanding of providence. The first criterion is that unlike art, providence is concerned

grounds, whereas in Auriol’s theory the basis for distinction is logical and purely mental. The formalities distinguished by the formal distinction have a real (although diminished) being, whereas connotative distinctions between the divine attributes only refer to human ideas, without any correspondence to distinctions within the absolutely indistinct divine essence.

122 Schabel 2000, 102.

123 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 915a, F–915b, A: “Propterea dixerunt alii quod providentia est idem quod scientia practica in Deo, quod patet tum quia secundum Boethium providentia est divina ratio quae cuncta disposit, dispositio autem pertinet ad scientiam practicam: tum quia prudentia, cuius pars est providentia, est habitus activus secundum Philosophum 6 Ethicorum, et per consequens erit scientia practica; tum quia primo Metaphysicae dicit Avicenna quod scientiae practicae sunt de rebus quae sunt opera nostra, providentia autem Dei est respectu creaturarum, quae sunt opera eius.”

124 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 915b, B: “si scientia practica et providentia essent idem, sequeretur quod providentia esset annexa omni arti; sed nullus dicit quod omnis bonus artifex sit providus artifex, immo sunt multi boni artifices improvidi et negligentes; ergo providentia aliquid addit ad scientiam practicam.”
with ordering things and not with making them.125 Interestingly, Auriol argues
that providence stands for (supponit) care and solicitude and thus must be
concerned with contingent things as it would be in vain to have care and
solicitude for things that are necessarily what they are.126 There is a highly
interesting break with the earlier tradition here. As seen, diverse earlier
authors, including, for example, Thomas Aquinas, John of Paris and Durand
of St. Pourçain, had argued that providence is concerned with necessary things
too, since they are also contingent from the viewpoint of divine providence.
For Aquinas, necessary things receive their necessity through divine
providence and thus necessary things could not even exist without the work of
providence.

What makes Auriol think that providence is only concerned with
contingent things? The very distinction between providence and art seems to
be the reason why Auriol argues that providence is not concerned with
necessary things. As noted in Auriol’s first criterion for the distinction between
providence and art, providence has to do with the order of things, which
presupposes their existence. Because God is the creator of necessary as well as
contingent things, all things fall under God’s creative causality. Providence,
however, is concerned with things already in existence. Once they are given
existence, the naturally necessary created things cannot fail to achieve their
end and thus do not need to be provided for. This is the reason why for Auriol
providence is concerned only with contingent things.

Aquinas would probably have refuted Auriol’s argumentation by replying
that divine providence gives created causes their modal statuses and therefore
necessary things could not even exist without the work of providence. Auriol
does not give providence the task of granting created things their modal
statuses, and this leads him to argue that providence is concerned exclusively
with contingent things.

3.7.2 CONTINGENCY AND FREE WILL
Given the major differences between Auriol and Aquinas that have been
pointed out so far, Auriol’s reconciliation between free will, contingency and
providence will also take a very different direction from Aquinas. Auriol’s ideas
are founded upon his original and controversial theories of divine

125 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 916a, E–F: “Prima quidem quod supponit curam et
solicitudinem rei illius, cui providetur et secundum hoc supponit rem illam existere. Unde non est notitia
rei quantum ad esse, sed potius eorum quae conuerunt ad esse et bene esse. Ars autem est notitia dirigens
in factionem rei quantum ad esse, et ideo faber facit martellum et alia instrumenta quantum ad
substantis eorum.”

126 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 916a, F: “Secunda vero est, quod supposita cura et sollicitudine,
non est de secundis perfectionibus nisi sint contingentes, et possibles aliter se habere; frustra enim
dicitur quis sollicitari de hiis quae impossibilia sunt aliter se habere.”
foreknowledge and divine will. I will discuss his views of providence and contingency in relation to these more foundational ideas.

In his relatively short discussion of the reconcilability of providence and contingency, Auriol takes Aquinas again as his main opponent. Auriol describes Aquinas’s understanding of providence as based on divine providence, giving a contingent status to some causes and a necessary status to others in order to achieve the maximum diversity and perfection of the universe. Providence itself is immutable and infallible, but this does not stop the lower effects from happening either necessarily or contingently in accordance with the modal statuses of their proximate causes.  

Auriol finds Aquinas’s view problematic to say the least. Auriol argues that the problem with Aquinas is that according to his view all the lower effects, including contingent effects, are certain with respect to divine providence as their remote cause, and yet these effects remain contingent. Auriol had systematically identified immutability with necessity and notes that there is no difference between things taking place infallibly or immutably. Thus, the certainty of divine providence requires that all effects under the order of divine providence take place infallibly even if they are contingent. If this was not the case, the certainty and infallibility of providence would be cancelled. Therefore, for Auriol, the certainty of providence in Aquinas’s theory leads to contingent effects taking place immutably, that is, necessarily, which is, of course, contradictory. Auriol’s and Aquinas’s disagreement is ultimately

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127 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 4, 931a, C–D: “Prima quidem de providentia, et dixerunt aliqui quod quibusdam rebus necessitatem imponit, non autem omnibus, cuius ratio est quia ad providentiam pertinet ordinatio rerum in finem; finis autem et bonum universi separatum est bonitas divina. Coniunctum vero est perfectio universi, perfectio autem non esset nisi omnis gradus essendi inveniretur in rebus. Et ideo ad divinam providentiam pertinet quibusdam effectibus causas necessarias praeparare, ut necessario evenirent; quibusdam vero causas contingentes ut evenirent contingenter secundum conditionem proximarum causarum. Est tamen scierendum quo indissolubilitas et immutabilitas providentiae quam Boetius tangit quarto De consolatione pertinet ad certitudinem providentiae quae non deficit a suo effectu et a modo eveniendi quem providit, non autem pertinet ad necessitatem effectuum provisorum.”

128 Here Auriol is clearly at odds with Scotus, who had claimed that one cannot infer necessity from immutability. For Auriol’s identification between immutability and necessity, see Schabel 2000, 67–87.

founded upon their differing understandings of modality. For Aquinas, the modality of things can be considered on either the level of proximate or higher causes. An effect in the sublunar world can be necessary with respect to divine providence and still remain contingent with regard to its proximate cause. Auriol denies this in stressing the sameness of immutability and necessity: if any effect happens certainly and infallibly with respect to providence, it is really necessary. Auriol’s criticism of Aquinas is reminiscent of Siger of Brabant, who had stressed that if some lower causes are to be contingent then they cannot be necessary with respect to the First Cause.

For Auriol, Aquinas’s idea that providence gives some effects a necessary and others a contingent cause is of no help. In Aquinas’s theory even the effects brought about by contingent proximate causes remain equally necessary with respect to divine providence. Auriol notes that effects that are necessary with regard to an infallible cause are brought about infallibly and not contingently. Therefore, in Aquinas’s theory, even the effects of contingent lower causes would happen immutably.130

After criticizing Aquinas, Auriol offers his own reconciliation of providence and contingency and free will. He points out that if providence necessitates things coming under its order it must either be because of divine foreknowledge or the divine will of operation, because both of these are included in divine providence.131 Auriol had developed a controversial theory of divine foreknowledge according to which God knows future contingents indistinctly, and not as the future.132 Here he simply refers the reader to this solution that was developed in depth in the previous distinction. Similarly, with respect to the divine will, Auriol states that he has already explained in

130 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 4, 931a, F–931b, A: “Praeterea: quamvis divina providentia praeparet causas necessarias effectibus quibusdam et aliis contingentes, tamen illi effectus causarum contingentium subsunt divinae providentiae quae infallibilis est et certa, et per consequens non sunt casuales nec contingentes in ordine ad divinam providentiam, quamvis per respectum ad causas proximas sint contingentes. Sed quod non est contingens sed immutabile per respectum ad causam infallibilem, infallibiliter est, non contingens; ergo effectus contingentium immutabiliter et infallibiliter evenient et contingent.” In distinction 39 of the Scriptum, Auriol had similarly argued that the views of his opponents, including e.g. Aquinas, Bonaventure, Scotus and Durand, led to determinism and thus did away with the need for human counselor. Schabel 2000, 82–85.

131 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 4, 931b, A–B: “Restat igitur nunc dicere quod videtur. Unde considerandum quod divina providentia includit praescientiam omnium secundarum perfectionum creaturarum et voluntatem operationis mediatam vel immediatam respectu earum, us superius dicebatur; si ergo necessitatum aut eventum immutabilem rebus imponeret, hoc esset vel ratione praescientiae aut ratione voluntatis et curae quam includit.”

132 Auriol probably realized that his theory was, conceptually speaking, quite close to Aquinas’s solution, in which the eternal God knows future contingents when their being is present to eternity. For a description and assessment of Auriol’s theory, see Schabel 2000, 88–105, esp. 99–101.
more depth how his theory of the divine will avoids determinism. In order to fully understand Auriol’s position that neither the divine will, nor divine foreknowledge, impose necessity upon the creation, a brief look at his theories concerning divine foreknowledge and willing is crucial. These topics have been well-documented in the secondary literature and my assessment will be based on the previous work of Schabel and Halverson.

3.7.3 FOREKNOWLEDGE

As already noted, Auriol denied any distinction between immutability and necessity. For this reason, divine foreknowledge posed a special problem for him: if God foreknew all future contingent propositions in an immutable way, the future would have been entirely necessitated by divine knowledge. After all, the divine essence is absolutely necessary and on the grounds of divine simplicity this necessity had to transfer to divine knowledge too. By definition, immutable knowledge must be true, and by Auriol’s identification between immutability and necessity it must be true necessarily. Thus, if God foreknew that any future proposition $p$ is true and not-$p$ is false, then $p$ would come to be necessarily true and likewise for all future contingent propositions. Instead of qualifying the necessity of divine knowledge, Auriol’s strategy was to deny that divine knowledge was foreknowledge, strictly speaking.

Auriol criticized Henry of Ghent’s and John Duns Scotus’s theories of God’s foreknowledge. Both Henry and Scotus assert that God’s foreknowledge is

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133 With regard to the divine will, Auriol is in this context content with simply repeating that divine will, taken as an intrinsic act of God, is pleased with both sides of all given contradictions and does not choose one over the other. On the other hand, divine will understood as an operation that is voluntas signi, is concerned with creatures but does not necessitate future effects as it is not concerned with the future as such. Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 4, 931b, B-D: “Restat igitur nunc dicere quod videtur. Unde considerandum quod divina providentia includit praescientiam omnium secundarum perfectionum creaturarum et voluntatem operationis mediatam vel immediatam respectu earum, ut superius dicebatur; si ergo necessitatem aut eventum immutabilem rebus imponeret, hoc esset vel ratione praescientiae aut ratione voluntatis et curae quam includit. Sed manifestum est quod non ratione praescientiae, quia illa non attingit rem ut futuram, sed sub illa determinacione quam contrahit ipsa res ex sua actuali positione, ut superius dicebatur; actualis autem positio non dedit tempori praecedenti determinationem aliquam aut quod esset determinate verum quod eveniret immutabiliter, immo nec absolute fuit verum aut falsum dicere quod eveniret, similiter etiam nec voluntas aut cura tribuit rebus provisio quod debant immutabiliter evenire. Non enim est in Deo voluntas aut cura nominans actum intrinsecum respectu alterius parti contradictionis, quia in qualibet complacet, ut superius dictum est, et in tractatu de voluntate patebit; unde nulla voluntas respicit existentias creaturarum, nisi voluntas signi, scilicet operatio. Deus autem non operatur res quae in postremo futurae sunt, quia operatio actualis ponit in actu suum effectum, ex quo patet quod providentia prout includit voluntatem et curam divinam, nullam immutabilitatem rei futurae imponit.”

134 Schabel 2000, 76–79.
based on the determinations of the divine will. Put briefly, Henry and Scotus held that God was able to have certain knowledge of future contingent propositions by knowing the determinations of his own will that in effect determined the truth values of these propositions. Auriol argued that God cannot know human sins through knowledge of his own will, because human sins were in no way willed by God. Scotus had been, of course, aware of this problem. Scotus distinguished between divine determination and divine permission in the 47th distinction of his commentary on the first book of the Sentences. While God did not actively determine the created will to sin, he still permitted it to act freely in either a laudable or a peccable way. Auriol found Scotus’s solution insufficient. If God merely permitted human sins, he would not be able to have certain knowledge of the actual outcomes, given that the human will remained a contingent and free cause, as Scotus himself had held. On the other hand, if the divine will contributed to the human decision even as a co-operating or partial cause, God would become an author of sin, which was, of course, unacceptable in light of God’s perfect goodness. Therefore, in Auriol’s view Scotus’s theory was unable to safeguard both divine foreknowledge and God’s perfect goodness.

With the will ruled out as the medium of divine foreknowledge, Auriol held that God had to know future contingents through knowing his own essence, which was a perfect exemplar and similitude of all created things. While future contingent events are actual only at a given time, God was their similitude unchangingly from all eternity. To explain how God could know at what time the future contingents were actualized, Auriol referred to his original idea of the indistance of God’s knowledge and the future contingents in temporal succession. For Auriol, God’s knowledge of the future is not properly speaking foreknowledge. Instead, God’s knowledge is temporally indistant from all future contingents.

Auriol did not, however, accept Aquinas’s view based on the eternal presence of God as the basis of divine foreknowledge, although his theory comes closer to the view of Aquinas rather than that of Scotus. For Aquinas, God was simultaneous with all instances of time in a positive way. Auriol, on the other hand, considered temporal indistance as a negative relation to all instances of time. For Auriol, God is not distant from either past, present or future instances of time. Noting the irony, Schabel considers Auriol’s negative notion of indistance as the main positive feature of his theory of divine foreknowledge.

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135 Söder has criticized this traditional understanding of Scotus’s view. Söder 1999.
137 Schabel 2000, 96–98.
In connection with propositions concerning future contingent events, Auriol rejected the principle of bivalence and defended the view that future contingent propositions do not have determinate truth values in the temporal instants before their actualization. Thus, when considering future contingents strictly *qua* future, even God does not know whether they will be actualized or not. Things that are neither true nor false cannot be known even by an omniscient intellect. However, because of his temporal indistance, God can abstract from the futurition of the things and have determinate and certain knowledge of these things. It is in this sense that for Auriol, foreknowledge is not really foreknowledge from God’s perspective, even though from the human viewpoint God appears to be knowing about the future. There is no future or past in the timelessness of God, and thus our temporal concepts simply do not transfer to God without modification. Schabel notes that distinguishing between God’s knowledge of future *qua* future and future *qua* indistant allows Auriol to both retain the concept of divine foreknowledge and yet avoid determinism that certain knowledge of future contingents *qua* future would have in his interpretation led to.\(^{140}\)

Auriol’s theory of God’s knowledge of future contingents was highly original in its historical context. Yet, as original philosophical theories tend to do, it presented problems as well. To account for prophetic knowledge, Auriol had to redefine the concept of prophecy to a certain extent. After all, for a prophecy to be true, it would seem to require a divinely infused knowledge about future contingents. How could God give the prophet such information if the mode of divine knowledge is completely devoid of any temporality? For Auriol, certain knowledge of future contingent propositions was simply not possible because, again, future contingent propositions had no truth values whatsoever. Therefore, for Auriol the question of difference between true and false prophets had to be put rather in terms of the origin of the prophecy than whether the prophecy came to be actualized. True prophecies had their origins in the human intellect being moved by God rather than in the vanity of men. Because prophets are human beings, they need to talk about the events they proclaim in some temporal tense, although God’s knowledge is wholly devoid of any temporal tenses. Such considerations lead Auriol to describe divine knowledge as “ineffable and inexpressible through any proposition”.\(^{141}\) All in all, and what is important for our purposes here, Auriol was adamant in stressing that God’s knowledge does not necessitate the future. And why would it, as God’s knowledge does not have any temporal mode at all? God’s knowledge remains a mystery for human beings because human beings simply cannot assume the non-temporal mode that divine intellection has even when concerned with temporal affairs. What Auriol has strived for, is to spell out what exactly is mysterious about God’s knowledge for human beings, and to


\(^{141}\) Schabel 2000, 116–123.
explain why, in his theory, God’s knowledge does not necessitate the future as perceived from the human perspective.

3.7.4 WILL
Like the mainstream of the scholastic tradition, Auriol claims that despite divine omnipotence, the divine will does not necessitate the creation. Given Auriol’s stress on divine simplicity and immutability, and his identification of immutability and necessity, Auriol needed to develop a detailed theory of how God can have volitions ad extra without cancelling the contingency of the created objects of the divine will. A crucial element of Auriol’s discussion of this problem is the distinction between God’s intrinsic and extrinsic will.\(^{142}\) The intrinsic will of God is identical to the divine essence and is thus entirely necessary. Hence, if God had volitions towards the created world through his intrinsic will, the objects of these volitions would be predetermined and their contingency would be cancelled. If God could by his intrinsic will either will or not will, potentiality would be introduced in God. Auriol believed such potentiality to be in contradiction with divine perfection. In order to avoid determinism and at the same time not introduce any potentiality to God, Auriol claimed that God, by his intrinsic will, has full complacency on either side of every single contradiction concerning the created world. That is to say, God is equally pleased with “It will rain tomorrow in Finland” as well as with “It will not rain tomorrow in Finland” and likewise for any pair of contradictory statements. By his intrinsic will, God does not actively will anything other than himself, for he has perfect delight in his own being and goodness.\(^{143}\) Auriol maintained a strong link between complacency and freedom.\(^{144}\) Whatever an intellectual agent does complacently, positively accepting its own action, it does freely. Thus, God’s perfect complacency on either side of contradictions concerning the created world guaranteed divine freedom.\(^{145}\)

Auriol cannot stop here, however, since the faith requires that God has particular determinate volitions as well. According to the Christian faith, God must have, for example, willed the creation of the world. It is clear that the divine will understood as intrinsic perfect delight is not sufficient, however, to explain particular volitions that God has towards the creation. For this reason, Auriol invokes God’s extrinsic will, also called the will of the sign (\textit{voluntas signi}).\(^ {146}\) Auriol writes that God’s extrinsic will is always wholly free to choose

\(^{142}\) Halverson 1998, 43.

\(^{143}\) Halverson 1998, 45–49; Schabel 2000, 125–126.

\(^{144}\) On Auriol’s theory of free will, see Hoffmann 2015.

\(^{145}\) Schabel 2000, 126.

\(^{146}\) While Auriol’s theory of the divine will was both original and controversial, the term \textit{voluntas signi} was entirely traditional and predated Auriol’s discussion.
between either side of a contradiction because there is nothing whatsoever that would determine the extrinsic will towards either side. In order to be able to have different volitions at different times, the extrinsic will of God has to be in some way separated from the divine essence, because otherwise all that God willed extrinsically would become necessary due to divine necessity and simplicity.  

Auriol’s theory of the divine will is somewhat puzzling. Regardless of Auriol’s serious attempt to preserve God’s essential simplicity, the concept of extrinsic divine will nevertheless appears to compromise divine simplicity. The existence of the extrinsic will as such is not the problem, since after all Auriol stresses that it is extrinsic to the divine essence. The question is rather, what moves the extrinsic will to either side of a contradiction? If it is moved by God, positing the extrinsic will is of no help for the problem and simply moves the same problem one step further. On the other hand, if it is not moved by God but rather by something else, the question arises why speak of the extrinsic will as the will of God at all?  

As noted above, Auriol argues that divine providence does not necessitate future events any more than divine foreknowledge or divine will, both of which are included in divine providence. What exactly does Auriol mean by this? Auriol refers to the idea of God’s temporal indistance that was an important part of his theory of divine foreknowledge. Since providence is not concerned with things as future it does not impose any necessity on them. As noted, Auriol writes that divine providence includes foreknowledge and the divine will of operation.  

Interestingly, Auriol has nothing else to say about providence and determinism. When saying that divine providence is the sum of divine foreknowledge with divine will, Auriol really means this. After having separately reconciled divine foreknowledge and divine will with contingency, nothing more remains to be said about divine providence.

### 3.7.5 EVILS

Auriol reconciles created evils in perfect accordance with the accidental strategy and explicitly rejects the main premise of the instrumental strategy, i.e. that human evils would be in some sense preordained by God. As already noted, Auriol was highly critical of Scotus’s idea that human sins were in some sense permitted by God. To safeguard divine goodness and perfection, Auriol

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148 The distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic will was considered problematic by several authors responding to Auriol’s ideas including e.g. Landulph Caracciolo. Schabel 2000, 138–149.

149 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 4, 931b, A–B: “Unde considerandum quod divina providentia includit praescientiam omnium secundarum perfectionum creaturarum et voluntatem operationis mediatam vel immediatam respectu earum, ut superius dicebatur”
was adamant that the divine will could in no way act as the complete or even partial cause of human evils. Therefore, Auriol shows awareness of the mutual incompatibility of these two solutions that many of the earlier authors studied so far (e.g. John of Paris and Richard of Middleton) had lacked. Auriol aims to tackle the problem of reconciling evils with divine providence by employing a distinction between divine providence understood as executive and directive. The former is subordinated to the latter. Auriol writes that God has no executive providence over any generable and corruptible things, with the exception of human beings. On the other hand, when taken as directive, everything falls under the influence of divine providence. Auriol writes that directive providence is like the providence of a king who has a servant (exequens) who carries out the actual tasks. Even in this sense, however, not everything is provided for in the same way. Evil things such as human sins fall under directive providence only accidentally and not per se. This is because sins do not flow from providence in any direct sense, but rather take place outside the providential order and come within it through punishments that are part of the providential order. Auriol’s position is that while the punishments that human beings receive for their sins are chosen by God, the actual sins are outside the providential order. By demonstrating a clear preference for the accidental strategy, Auriol is set apart from a number of other authors (e.g. Richard of Middleton, John of Paris and Matthew of Aquasparta), studied in this chapter, who had employed accidental and instrumental strategies side by side.

150 Schabel 2000, 89.
151 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 2, 918b, F-919a, B: “Tertia quoque propositio est quod universa comparari possunt ad divinam providentiam accipiendo eam vel executive, sicut exequens dicitur providere; vel directive sicut regens exequentem dicitur providere. Accipiendo ergo providentiam executive subterfugien-divinam providentiam omnia illa quibus immediate non providet exequendo et secundum hoc omnia generabilia et corruptibilia, excepto homine, subterfugien-divinam providentiam quia nec alicuius operatur circa illa immediate, nisi forte manutenentiam, quamvis alique dicant quod Deus coagit actionibus omnium de quo amplius apparebit inferiorius. Accipiendo vero providentiam directivam a quocumque exequito fiat, sic omnia providentiae Dei sunt subjecta. Quaedam quidem tanquam ea quibus providetur et ista sunt substantiae et creaturae subsistentes; quaedam vero tamquam ea de quibus fit proviso, cuiusmodi sunt actiones rerum et secundae perfectiones; quaedam vero tanquam ea quae per accidens concomitantur et nihilominus per providentiam post modum regulantur, sicut mala et peccata, quae licet non subsint providentiae per se tamquam provisa; sequuntur tamen libertatem et conditionem rerum provisam et deinde rectificantur per poenam; quaedam vero subduntur tamquam per quae rectificat providentia, sicut sunt mala poenae."
152 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 920a, E: “Sed manifestum est quod non solum secundum usum hominum dicuntur esse fatata quae sunt praevisa a Deo fieri et per ipsius operationem, immo vitia hominum et peccata quae sunt tantum praefisa, et non praedisposita et praedoxinata. Igitur fatum se habet in plus quam provisum, aqueatur enim praescito.”
Auriol’s views on the relationship between divine providence and evil are closely related to his theory of fate. Auriol begins his treatment of fate by introducing and criticizing Aquinas’s theory of fate. For Aquinas, fate is only conditionally necessary since divine providence has disposed the created causes in a certain way that gives rise to fate. Auriol’s criticism is that if the condition, i.e. divine providence, is immutable then everything will happen in a predetermined way even if it remains contingent in an absolute sense. This, according to Auriol, would cancel the need for any deliberation or effort on the part of humans. Even if human actions are necessitated by only a conditional necessity, they are still necessitated. Auriol himself argues that fate is identical with divine foreknowledge and thus, again, does not necessitate future events any more than foreknowledge.153

Auriol comes back to the theme of reconciling divine providence with evils in his discussion of fate. Auriol first presents the position of some (aliqui) that fate is a disposition of secondary causes provided by God. Auriol’s rebuttal of this position again reveals a strong distinction between providence and foreknowledge in his thought. According to him, even sinners and thieves are said to be fated as sinners and thieves. Such states of matters may not, however, be said to proceed from divine providence since this would make God the author of sin. Rather, these people are just foreseen by God to become sinners.154 Auriol’s own position concerning fate consists of two parts. The first part is that things fated are the same as (idem quod) things foreseen. The second part is that providence is the combination of divine foreknowledge and the divine will. While all things fall under divine foreknowledge (i.e. fate), not everything falls under divine providence, which is a combination of

153 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 4, 932a, D: “[...]cum fatum idem sit quod praescitum seu praelocutum verbo mentali, non plus assert difficultatis fatum quam praescientia” See Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 4, 931b, F–932a, D for Aquinas’s description of Auriol’s position and Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 4, 932a, D–932b, A for Auriol’s own position.

154 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 919a, F–919b, B: “Dixerunt autem aliqui quod fatum non est alius quam disposito causarum secundarum providarum a Deo, sic quod ipsa providentia praeordinat seriem seu dispositionem causarum secundarum in ordine ad effectum; et talis dispositio immobile est secundum quod subest divinae providentiae, non quidem absolu necessitate, sed conditionata, quia stante immutabilitate divinae providentiae. Sic ergo talis ordo et series causarum praeordita dicitur ordo fatalis, quem definit Boetius 4 De consolatione dicens: ‘quod fatum est inhaerens rebus mobilibus dispositio, per quam providentia suas caque nectit ordinibus.’ Sed hic modus dicendius in hoc videtur deficere quam fatum reducit ad divinam providentiam et non potius ad praescientiam. Certum est enim quod mores hominum non solum virtuositi, sed etiam vitiosi, secundum usum loquendi dicuntur cadere sub fatu; unde et fures et ebriosos consueverunt homines dicere sic esse fatatos. Sed constat quod Dei providentia non ordinat homines istos ad huimusmodi vitae, sed tantum praerogov ea. Ergo fatum non est aliquid pertinentis ad Dei providentiam, sed tantum ad praevisionem et praescientiam.”
foreknowledge and divine will.155 Whereas Siger of Brabant had held that providence, fate and connexio causarum are indistinct, for Auriol fate and foreknowledge are identical, but distinct from providence that in addition to foreknowledge includes the divine will. The distinction between providence and fate allows Auriol to on the one hand argue that divine foreknowledge is infallible, while at the same time avoiding making God the author of human sins.

Auriol writes in a way reminiscent of Moses Maimonides that providence extends to all creation, but in a most perfect mode to the human species. The non-human species are simply conserved in existence but there is no special providence concerning their individual actions. Auriol does not mention Maimonides by name, but rather refers to Averroes, who had attributed prophetic dreams to the first principle, and to Augustine, who wrote in the 5th book of De civitate Dei that God governs human regimes. A counter argument to the idea that providence is concerned with human beings in a more special way is drawn from the words of Christ in the gospels. In the 10th chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, Christ is quoted as saying that not one sparrow falls to the ground contrary to the will of God. Thus, it seems that executive providence extends to non-human species as well.156 Auriol solves this

155 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 3, 919b, E–920a, F: “Prima quidem quod fatatum idem est quod praescitum sive praevisum, quamvis aliqua talia sint provisa; et fatum idem est quod ordo praevisorum et aliquotiens praevisorum; unde fatum in sua generalitate aequatur praevidentiae et est in plus quam providentia [...] Praeterea: providentia addit ad praescientiam actum aliquam voluntatis quia sollicitudinem vel curam rei illius, cui providetur, unde prudentia cuius pars est providentia, prae susceptum electionem finis, ut Philosophus dicit in 6 Ethicorum; iste autem finis non est alius quam bonum et perfectio rei, cui prudens intendit [...] Est autem sic quod cura praecedit providentiam et non sequitur eam; praesupponit enim prudentia electionem finis. Constat autem quod operatio divina non praecedet realizitionem providentiam cum illa sit ex tempore et ista ab aeterno; potest tamen ipsum praecedere ut praevisa et ita providentia non est alius quam notitia transiens super ordinem partium universi, qui consurgit ex actionibus seu perfectionibus secundis. Unde aeterna praesvisio omnium istorum dicitur providentia, supposita cura, quae non est alius quam divina operatio immediata vel mediata praevisa, ut causans huiusmodi perfectiones. Et secundum hoc praevisa nihil alius est quam praevisum a Deo, ut fiendum per suam operationem vel alterius a se directi. Et ita patet quod mala et peccata, et si sint praesita, non sunt tamen provisa ferior operatione divina aut aliquius alterius in hoc a Deo directi. Sed manisfcest est quod non solum secundum usum hominum dicuntur esse fatata quae sunt praevisa a Deo ferior et per ipsius operationem, immo vitia hominum et peccata quae sunt tantam praevisa, et non prae disposita et praecordinata. Igitur fatum se habet in plus quam provisum, aequatur enim praecito. Et si dicatur quod mala non subter fugiunt divinam providentiam et sic alqualiter sunt provisa, non valet quidem quia non sunt provisa fieri, sed provisa rectificari et regulari per poenam.”

156 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 917a, F–917b, C: "Nihil autem Deus operatur circa res iam factas, nisi quod eas manutenet et conservet in naturis suis nec eam immutat, nisi in ordine ad hominem circa quem multa immutat et etiam circa res in ordine ad ipsum, sicut patet in operibus miraculorum per quae naturae immutantur. Ergo unico actu providentiae divinae, relucente tantummodo circa alias
counter-argument by appealing to a distinction between providence in the most proper sense and the extrinsic acts of providence: governance (gubernatio) and ruling (regere). Auriol further distinguishes between executive, imperative and directive ruling. The first of these is like the ruling of a servant, the second like the ruling of a king, and the third like the ruling of an adviser. Auriol notes that according to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* the first way of ruling is attributed by Aristotle to the celestial bodies and the second to the movers of the orbs, whereas the First Principle exercises directive ruling. Auriol notes that by arguing that God does not exercise efficient but rather final and directive causality, Aristotle was able to attribute solicitude and care to the First Principle. Furthermore, directive governance uses intermediaries to reach its ends. In the case of God, these intermediaries are the celestial bodies that God first moves as a final cause.157 Thus, in the Aristotelian model

creaturas, scilicet conservatione et manutenentia, multiplices actus relucen circa homines, et per consequens maxime proprie divina providentia se extendit ad speciem humanam. Hiis tamen obviare videtur quod salvator ait Matth X quod ‘nec unus passer sine patre caelesti cadit super terram’; et illud luctae XII ‘Considerate volucres caeli quia non seminant neque metunt et Deus pacit illas’; et illud Augustini quinto De civitate Dei dicentis quod ‘Deus non solum caelum et terram, nec angelum et hominem, sed nec etiam exigu et contemptibilis animantis viscere nec avis pennulam nec herbæ flosculum nec arboris folium sine suarum partium conveniencia derelinquit. Sed haec non essent vera si solummodo Deus naturam quam condidit, conservaret, et non regeret speciali modo aves et caetera naturalia etiam contra cursum corporum caelestium et naturae.’ Ergo videtur quod non solum conservatio et manutenentia sint actus providentiae divinae circa res huiusmodi, immo videntur et alii actus esse, declarientes curam divinam in speciali.”

157 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 2, 918a, A–D: “Alio modo sumitur providentia distinguendo eam simpliciter ab arte, et tunc consistit in aliquo regimen vel sui vel subiectorum. Unde tunc gubernare et regere est actus extrinsecus ipsius providentiae, attribuitur autem alicui regimen tripliciter. Primo quidem executive sicut servus dictur regere; secundo vero imperative sicut Dominus regit; tertio vero directive, sicut consiliarius regit. Et secundum hoc Philosophi attribuerunt regimen generabilium et corruptibilium, executive quidem corporibus caelestibus, imperative vero motoribus orbium qui suo appetitu et imperio movent orbes secundum eos, directive vero primo principio, sive arti divinae; motores enim intelligendo artem divinam movent caelos ad varios effectus, relucentes in ea; et sic dictur Deus habere curam de omnibus sicut Commentator dicit XII Metaphysicae commento XXXVI. Ait enim quod primum caelum movetur a primo motore, secundum desiderium ut assimiletur ei secundum suum posse, sicut amans movetur ut assimiletur suo amato; alia autem corpora caelestia movetur secundum desiderium et ad motum primit corporis, et ideo planetae habent duplicem motum, ea autem quae sunt sub istis moventur mediantibus istis motibus secundum generationem et corruptionem quam faciunt duplices motus oppositi; continuationem vero unus motus aternus. Et ex hoc videtur Deus habere curam circa omnia entia. Hec Commentator. Unde Patet quod exclusa activa causaleitate a primo principio, adhuc salvant Philosophi divinam providentiam et sollicitudinem ipsius et curam, non quidem executive, sed exemplariter et directive et per modum finis. Et ideo XII Metaphysicae Philosophus dicit bonum universi non solum consistere in ordine ubi relucet providentia, immo et in quodam separato qui dictur providere per modum ducis et principis ad quem ordinatur universum tamquam ad bonum subsistens.”
God does not provide for the sparrows mentioned in the gospel of Matthew immediately, but rather through the movement of celestial bodies that remain in movement because of God’s directive causality.\textsuperscript{158} After describing what he takes to be Aristotle’s theory, Auriol presents his own views on executive and directive providence that do not significantly deviate from the Aristotelian model. He attributes the governance (\textit{gubernatio}) of the universe to the celestial spheres. This governance does not follow from divine providence as an efficient, but rather as an exemplary cause, because God moves the spheres only as an exemplary cause.\textsuperscript{159} Divine providence thus extends to non-rational creatures only through the mediation of the spheres.

Auriol returns to the distinction between formal and objective providence in noting that providence can be understood either as the act of knowledge of the provider, or through the ratio of the provided object (\textit{pro ratione provisa obiective}) or as execution. In the first sense, providence reaches to all things through divine omniscience and in the second sense, too, God, in knowing all things, knows the actions of those things and the order that results from those actions. In the third sense, on the other hand, divine providence extends to non-rational created things only through the means of conservation but to human beings and other rational creatures divine providence is extended in a more perfect and multiform way.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{158} Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 2, 918b, A–B: “Non procedunt ergo instantiae. Prima si quidem non, qua non dicuntur aves a Deo nutriti quasi immediate eis de cibo provideat aut aliquid aliud operetur nisi manutenendo virtutes corporum caelestium. Nihilominus quia ordo iste virtutum caelestium et omnium naturalium provisus est a Deo; idcirco dicuntur subiacere suae providentiae et arti practicae suae, ultra quam addit providentia modum perfectum, non subsunt tamen illi providentiae distante contra artem quae consistit in regimine rei habentis actiones voluntarias et ad utrumlibet.”

\textsuperscript{159} Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 2, 919a, B–C: “Ex his autem apparat quod gubernatio universi non est effectus providentiae, accipiendo effectum causae efficientis, cum motus caelestium non sit effective immediate a Deo, nec regimen sphaerae activae et passivae; sed est effectus potius causae exemplaris et directivae. Unde exclusa efficientia primi principii, adhuc Deus diceretur regere universum et mundus gubernaretur ratione divina, secundum mentem philosophantium. Et ideo non est verum quod aliqui dicunt gubernationem esse effectum divinae providentiae, effectum inequam causae efficientis, nam providentia habet se potius directive quam effective sive elicitive.”

\textsuperscript{160} Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 2, 918b, C–D: “Sic igitur patet quod providentia potest accipi vel pro actu notitiae providentis vel pro ratione provisio obiective vel pro executione ipsius; et primo quidem modo Deus omnibus rebus providet attendendo ad actiones carum et ad perfectiones superadditas, quia de illis providit Deus rebus et ita subsunt actui providentis. Secundo etiam modo subsunt immediate omnes res divinae providentiae, in quantum deitate cognita, immediate cognitae sunt actions omnium rerum in quibus consistit ordo et connexiono universi et de quibus etiam providetur rebus. Tertio vero modo exequutive solum providet Deus alis rebus per actum conservationis et manutenentie, hominibus autem et rationalibus creaturis providet excellentius et perfectius, multa opera exequendo et exercendo immediate circa ipsos.”
3.8 Robert Holkot

The deuterocanonical Book of Wisdom contains some of the few occurrences of the term providentia attributed to God, within the Latin Vulgate. Robert Holkot (d. 1349) wrote an extensive commentary on the Book of Wisdom. Holkot’s commentary was immensely popular in the late Middle Ages and survives in at least 175 manuscripts. Gelber has pointed out that while Holkot did not employ the term providence in his other works, his commentary on the Book of Wisdom contains an original treatment of providence. In his voluminous commentary, Holkot proceeds by providing direct exposition of the text of the Book of Wisdom. In addition, he asks more specific questions concerning the themes brought up in the text.

Holkot’s theory of providence is largely based on his covenantal theological ideas. According to 14th-century covenantal theologians (of which Holkot is probably the best-known) the moral order is based on a covenant between God and Christians. In giving his commandments, God is not bound by any goodness external to himself. Rather, any given action is good only because God has chosen to command it instead of something else. In turn, the actions of human beings are not intrinsically meritorious, but rather receive their goodness from being in accordance with the divine commandments. This covenant, to which God has freely committed himself, is knowable to human beings through divine revelation. The whole covenant and all of its contents are entirely contingent and could be other than what they are. In fact, the covenant has changed in the actual salvation history, when the Old Law was superseded by the New Law. Holkot believed that in the final analysis God was not in any way obliged nor forced to give salvation even to those human beings who perfectly followed the commandments given by God. As the lawgiver, God remained free to replace the current covenant with a new covenant consisting of a different set of rules and commandments. Yet, Holkot claimed, human beings should not despair because of the radical contingency of the covenant. The Christians who do their best to follow and uphold the covenant, should still have faith in being saved by God. This faith could not amount to certain knowledge, however.

As noted earlier, Matthew of Aquasparta’s theory of divine providence was deeply informed by a covenantal understanding of providence. Aquasparta referred to divinely given laws and commandments that God had providentially given to Christians. Salvation was attainable to them through following these laws. Holkot also puts forth a legalistic or covenantal model of

162 Gelber 2009, 769.
163 Hester Gelber has written extensively of Holkot’s covenantal theological ideas. See e.g. Gelber 2009 769–770; Gelber 2013 and Gelber 2004, 191–222 for a more extended discussion of Holkot’s and some other Dominican theologians’ covenantal ideas.
divine providence. The conceptual task of the covenantal model of providence is especially to avoid the problem of causal determinism that Holkot thought Aquinas’s theory of providence faces, as I will argue below. The fact that both Aquasparta and Holkot formulate a covenantal model of divine providence is an interesting parallel between Aquasparta and Holkot. Holkot’s theory of providence goes further in the direction that Aquasparta’s model points to, however. Because of Holkot’s different view of divine foreknowledge and God’s relation to time, no other option remains for Holkot but to adopt a comprehensively covenantal theory of divine providence. Aquasparta, on the other hand, had developed a covenantal model of providence side by side with a more traditional view of providence based on modal analysis, more reminiscent of Aquinas.¹⁶⁴ I will next briefly discuss Holkot’s theory of divine foreknowledge before moving on to his ideas on divine providence.

Holkot is known for his broad discussion of the question of God’s knowledge of future contingent propositions. This theme has been treated in depth in earlier secondary literature.¹⁶⁵ An important feature of Holkot’s theory of divine foreknowledge is that if any future-tensed proposition were known certainly or revealed infallibly, it could not remain contingent. Instead, according to Holkot, a necessarily foreknown future event would have had to take place necessarily. Thus, all contingency would have been destroyed if God had infallible foreknowledge of future qua future.¹⁶⁶ Holkot’s basic stance was instead that God knows the truth values of future-tensed propositions correctly, albeit contingently. That is, although God does not in practice fail in his knowledge of the future, nevertheless every single proposition in the divine knowledge could still fail.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Gelber sums up the development of the doctrine of providence from Alexander of Hales to Holkot as follows: “Where Aquasparta had connected providence with the order evident in the natural world, and he, Alexander and Aquinas had tied it to Aristotelian causality, Holcot turns the discussion back to revelation as the source for God’s instructions to human beings about what he expects of them.” Gelber 2009, 770. Although Gelber’s summary is valid from a general perspective, one might point out that later in his commentary on Wisdom, Holkot too analyses the relationship of chance events and divine governance employing Aristotelian causal theory. Furthermore, the concept of order is central not only for Aquasparta, but also for Aquinas’s theory of providence as has been noted above.

¹⁶⁵ For an introduction to Holkot’s theory of divine foreknowledge, see also Gelber 2013 and chapter 4 “God, Creation and the Future” in Slotemaker & Witt 2016.

¹⁶⁶ Tachau 1995, 49. For the same reason prophecies, too, remained contingent after being revealed. Although faith can give believers relative certainty of the truth of future-tensed prophecies, absolutely speaking they could still be otherwise and no strictly scientific demonstration of them is possible. Incandela 1994, 173–177.

¹⁶⁷ In this respect Holkot’s theory is reminiscent of Ockham. For a brief comparison between Ockham’s and Holkot’s positions, see Gelber 2013, c. 6. Cf. Kennedy 1993, 49–63 for a critical assessment of Holkot’s view that God knows contingent events contingently.
Holkot’s ideas led him to numerous controversial statements concerning the possibility of e.g. divine deception, the possibility of Christ being deceived and the possibility of Biblical prophecies, including the resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Christ, being false. At the root of Holkot’s ideas is his refusal to accept the Boethian and Thomistic idea of God knowing the future as present. For Holkot, the future was knowable only as the future for any rational agent, including God. And since he was most convinced of the contingency of the future, the future could be known only contingently.

Holkot’s ideas on divine foreknowledge clearly influenced Holkot’s view on divine providence. Holkot could not have accepted any variation of a Thomistic theory of providence which held that the future contingent events were necessary with respect to God, but aimed to avoid causal determinism by treating God’s knowledge of future as present. As noted, for Holkot knowledge of the future as present was simply not possible, not even for God. I believe these major philosophical differences in Holkot’s and Aquinas’s systems made Holkot turn to a covenental understanding of divine providence that had been developed in some depth by Matthew of Aquasparta roughly a generation earlier.

In his commentary to the Book of Wisdom, Holkot presents a theory of fourfold providence. Holkot’s distinction does not have a parallel in any of the authors discussed so far, although overall Holkot’s ideas are reminiscent of Matthew of Aquasparta. The four different providences Holkot distinguishes are the providence of legal statutes (legalium statutorum), temporal treasures (temporalium thesaurorum), personal merits (personalium meritorum) and responses to given rules (regularium responsorum). What is common to all four is that the focus is on human action understood as a response to the covenant with God, rather than providential action on the part of God. This clearly sets Holkot’s fourfold distinction apart from, for example, the distinction between general and special providence employed by Henry of Ghent. Henry distinguished between two different types of divine providential action towards the created world, while Holkot’s focus is on the human response on divine commandments. What makes these four types of human action providence is that they are, or at least they ought to be, grounded on what has been provided and commanded by God.

The first type, the providence of legal statutes, consists in decreeing the body of laws by human kings, princes and prelates. Holkot emphasizes that these laws must be based on the Holy Scriptures in order to be valid and binding, and that their existence is a prerequisite for the conservation of peace amongst humankind.

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168 Slotemaker & Witt 2016, 95–100; Gelber 2013, 5.2.
169 Holkot, Sapientia c. 6, l. 83, a. 1 p. 155b: “Explicatur prima pars, quod ad perfectum regimen humanae vitae sit necessaria providentia legalium statutorum. Et hanc providentiam tenentur facere reges, principes, et praelati, eorumque consiliarum, et principales ministri, qui debent laborare, ut
especially attributed to the prelates of the church whose task it is to take care of the poor, using the temporal wealth of the church. Holkot notes that in addition to the prelates, all wealthy Christians are obliged to demonstrate Christian charity in their lives by helping the poor with their temporal treasures.\textsuperscript{170} The third providence is the providence of personal merits. Holkot writes that all human beings are obliged by this providence so long as they remain in the temporal world. He refers to Paul’s letter to Romans 12.17, where Paul asks his readers not to pay evil back with evil but rather to focus on what is good in the eyes of God and people. The Latin translation used by Holkot employs here the participle perfect \textit{providentes}, which allows him to draw the connection to providence on scriptural grounds.\textsuperscript{171} Holkot’s interpretation of Paul is that the Apostle refers here to virtues and good works, such as the giving of alms and fasting, which God values more than any temporal riches.\textsuperscript{172}

The fourth providence is named the providence of response to given rules. Holkot argues that all human beings are obliged to remain responsible for their own actions before the supreme judge. If Christians kept in mind the trial that awaits them after their earthly life, they would refrain from sinning.\textsuperscript{173}
In his treatment of this fourfold distinction of providence, Holkot does not explicitly state what makes legal statutes, the use of temporal treasures, personal merits and responses to given rules providence, nor does he say what they share in common. As Gelber has pointed out, the key to understanding Holkot’s description of fourfold providence is his covenantal theology.¹⁷⁴ For Holkot, a defining characteristic of human willing and activity is its autonomy and freedom for opposites. Holkot’s voluntarism leaves no room for divine providence predisposing all lower contingent causes in a certain way. As noted, in Holkot’s view the existence of this kind of power would make the contingency of the lower causes vanish. In his fourfold distinction the divine part of providence is limited to the fact that God has originally provided the contents of the covenant to human beings. The question of how human beings respond to it remains quite simply their own business. Holkot’s covenantal model of providence thus goes further than Aquasparta’s in treating providence exclusively as a human response to a covenant given by God, and accessible to human beings mainly through the Scriptures.

Holkot returns to the theme of God’s providential control of the world, and divine governance (gubernatio) especially in a later passage in his commentary on The Book of Wisdom. In the beginning of the eighth chapter of the Book of Wisdom, wisdom is described as strongly (fortiter) reaching everywhere in the world and governing all things pleasantly (suaviter).¹⁷⁵ Holkot takes fortiter to refer to the omnipotence of divine Wisdom and suaviter to refer to divine mercy and the divine allowing of all beings to act in accordance with their proper natures.¹⁷⁶ Concerning this passage, Holkot asks a relatively brief question: Does everything fall under divine governance?¹⁷⁷ Holkot answers the question in the affirmative, providing arguments for his answer that are much more traditional than his fourfold distinction of providence. Holkot argues that divine governance rules everything, but not directly but rather through secondary mediating causes. Holkot defines governance as directing things towards ends. According to Holkot, everything is ruled by divine governance

¹⁷⁴ Gelber 2009, 769–770.
¹⁷⁵ The Vulgate translation of Wisdom 8:1 reads: “Attingit ergo a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suaviter.”
¹⁷⁶ Holkot, Sapientia c. 11, l. 105, p. 185b: “In hoc textu ponit Salomon quandam conclusionem ex praecedentibus illatam, hoc modo: Sapientia ita potens est, ut omnia gubernet. Et ita suavis est et benigna, ut actum bonum bene faciendi non prohibeat, sed potius promoteat (ut patet ex Cap. praecedenti). Ergo sapientia conformiter ad suam bonitatem regit hoc universum fortiter (cum potentiae eius nihil possit resistere) et suaviter seu misericorditer, et conformiter ad cuiuscumque naturam. Ergo attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnis suaviter. Puta concurrendo cum causis liberis libere, et cum causis necessariis necessario, ita ut ex parte causarum neecessariarum non sit aliqua libertas.”
¹⁷⁷ Holkot, Sapientia c. 11, l. 105, a. 1, p. 186a–187a: “Utrum omnia subdantur gubernationi divinae.”
because God directs all things to their respective ends, the ultimate end of all things being God himself. This traditional idea is familiar from Aquinas. Holkot also writes that divine governance is mediated by creatures. Echoing Aquinas and Aquasparta he notes that God rules sublunary things through the celestial bodies, and the celestial bodies through the angels. Like Aquinas, Holkot argues that God’s causality is more perfect when he communicates some of his causality to the lower causes and therefore God allows some governance to the lower causes.

Within the scope of the same question, Holkot treats two smaller questions presented in the form of counter-arguments that an imaginary opponent might present. The first question concerns the reconciliation of providence and evil and the second the compatibility of providence and chance events. With regard to evil, Holkot’s treatment is again based largely on his covenantal theology. Holkot notes first that without creaturely mediation of divine governance, evil would not exist. If God did everything himself there would be no room nor need for any defects. Yet effects come from both God and the rational creature, with God as the universal and primary cause and the creature as the particular and secondary cause. Thus, the same effect can be good with respect to God and evil with respect to the rational creature. Interestingly, Holkot’s idea is very different, however, from the Scotistic theory of causal concurrency or Aquinas’s idea of God and the rational creature working for the same effect as the universal and the proximate cause. Holkot mainly thinks of God as contributing to the outcome as the lawgiver or instructor and the rational creature as the executor who has the choice of acting in accordance with the divine precept or as violating it. God also cooperates in the sinful human action through conserving the human being in existence and as a co-cause of the sinful action. These two aspects of divine causality are, however, required for all causal effects in the created world and are not as such blameworthy to any extent. Rather, the culpability of the sinful

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178 Holkot, Sapientia c. 11, l. 105, a. 1, p. 186a–186b: “Dico: Deus est gubernator omnium, mediantibus tamen causis secundis. Probatur prima pars. Quia gubernare nihil aliud est, quam nos dirigere in finem intentum. Sed Deus, qui est principium et causa omnium rerum, easdem etiam dirigit ad se ipsum tanquam ad finem (omnia enim propter semetipsum et propter suum honorem operatus est Dominus, qui de se ipso dicit, Gloriam meam alteri non dabo). Ergo Deus gubernat omnia etc.”

179 Holkot, Sapientia c. 11, l. 105, a. 1, p. 186b: “Probatur et explicatur secunda pars, quod Deus mediantibus causis secundis omnia gubernet. Nam corpora grossiora et corruptibilia gubernat per corpora caelestia et incorruptibilia. Corpora autem caelestia gubernat per angelos sive per intelligentias angelicas. Quia signum maioris bonitatis est, si suprema causa gubernans, et efficiens causalitatem gubernandi et efficiendi, etiam alii sibi subordinatis communicet, quam si omnia immediate per se ipsum gubernet. Et ideo ad ostendendam suam perfectionem in causando, et bonitatem in communicando tribuit quibusdam creaturis dignioribus veluti suis ministris principalibus, quod alias sibi inferiores gubernet. Ita tamen ut hae ipsae creaturae digniores in gubernando, a Deo tanquam a supremo et primario gubernatore dependeant.”
human action entirely resides in the human agent. God is said to govern the sinful actions of human beings only in the sense that he has in the first place given the laws that have not been obeyed.180

The second smaller question concerns divine governance and chance events. Holkot’s formulation of this traditional problem is that if God governs everything then nothing happens by chance. But both according to common experience and Aristotle’s authority in the second book of Physics, things happen by chance and therefore it seems that God cannot govern everything. This is the case because if he did govern everything nothing would happen against his intention (propositum) and according to Aristotle’s definition of chance nothing that happens in accordance with the intention of a rational agent happens by chance.181 Holkot starts off by simply repeating Aquinas’s argument of a master and two servants. A master may send two servants to meet in the same place and time so that it appears entirely chance from the viewpoint of the servants, but at the same time it is entirely planned and intentional from the master’s point of view. Similarly, nothing is chance or unexpected from the divine point of view even though the concurrence of two independent causes may lead to an outcome that is random and unintentional with respect to these causes. Then Holkot refers the reader to Aristotle’s well-known definition of chance and Boethius’s point that the same effect may be the per se effect of one cause and at the same time accidental with respect to another cause.182 Rather surprisingly, it may be thus noted that Holkot’s

180 Holkot, Sapientia c. 11, l. 105, a. 1, p. 186b: “Dices primo: si Deus omnia gubernaret, sequeretur quod nihil mali fieret in hoc universo. Sed hoc est falsum. Ergo et id unde sequitur. Sequela probatur: quia Deus est summe bonus et summe potens. Ergo. Respondetur, quod si Deus immediate se solo omnia gubernaret et ageret, nihil mali fieret. Modo autem idem effectus fit quidem a Deo sicut a causa primaria, ac principalissima et universali, sed tamen etiam sit a creatura rationali, sicut a causa particulari. Et ideo contingit, quod idem effectus fit a Deo bene et ab homine male. Huius rei exemplum est in aliquo Domino, qui dicit servo suo, trahamus istam cordam leniter, ita ut illam non frangamus. Tunc si servus ruditer trahens frangat cordam, ista fractio soli servo non autem domino imputatur, et tractio cordae sit tam a domino quam a servo. Sic etiam Deus statuit, quod creaturae velit cooperari in suis operationibus, ita ut cursus naturae maneat, quem instituit; sine quo nulla potest aliquid agere, nec per momentum existere, nisi ipse rem tamem conservaret. Quando ergo creatura rationalis facit contra legem sibi positam a Deo, tunc inquam, et creatura rationalis a Deo gubernatur et Deus eidem generaliter cooperatur, sicut cooperatur igni comburendo, et soli lucendo. Creatura rationalis tamen male facit legem Dei transgrediendo, non autem dominus qui sic facit, sicut lex sua statuit.”


182 Holkot, Sapientia c. 11, l. 105, a. 1, p. 186b–187a: “Respondetur quod idem effectus dicatur esse a casu, et praeter propositum respectu unius causae, et non a casu respectu alterius causae. Sicut ponitur exemplum de Domino, qui mittit duos famulos in suis negotiis, ordinans, ipsis insciis, ut unus alteri certo
response to this problem is entirely traditional although the covenantal model of divine providence Holkot presents in his commentary to *Wisdom* is highly original overall.

### 3.9 Thomas Bradwardine

In his *De causa Dei*, Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1295–1349) presented a systematic defence of divine omnipotence and freedom. Bradwardine was vehemently opposed to the voluntaristic theories of human freedom presented in 14th century Oxford and saw them in contradiction with God’s omnipotence and the doctrines of providence, predestination and grace. Throughout his *De causa Dei*, Bradwardine attacks theories that, in his judgement, have given too much value and causal independence to the human will in theological matters. Bradwardine does not name his opponents, nor does he always treat the earlier theories in enough detail, so that the reader could identify who exactly is being opposed. Consequently, one of the central aims in historical scholarship on *De causa Dei* has been to identify Bradwardine’s unnamed opponents. Most 20th-century scholars have agreed that authors such as William Ockham, Robert Holkot, Adam Wodeham and Peter Auriol were among the authors Bradwardine wrote against. What is typical of Bradwardines’s own doctrine, is that divine causality and power are strongly emphasized at the expense of human agency. Although Bradwardine repeatedly affirms that human beings have free choice, he has often been considered the archetypical causal determinist among medieval theologians.

Bradwardine makes distinctions between types of necessity that are important to take into account in appraising whether his theological views amount to determinism. Precedent necessity (*necessitas praecedens*) is the

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183 On the topic of predestination, see Halverson 1998, 129–133; on grace, see Aers 2009, 55–81.
184 See e.g. the classic studies Oberman 1957 and Leff 1957. Courtenay has questioned the traditional view and argues instead that *De causa Dei* was written against those theologians in Oxford who had criticized Bradwardine’s *Quaestio de futuris contingentibus* after 1335. Thomas Buckingham was the most notable of these critics. Courtenay 1990, 157. On the relationship between Bradwardine and Buckingham, see De la Torre 1987 & Genest 1992. On Bradwardine’s modal theory, see Frost 2012.
term Bradwardine prefers for what earlier authors had also called antecedent necessity (necessitas antecedens). Precedent necessity does not amount to absolute necessity. Rather, in De la Torre’s words, it “refers not to the impossibility of a thing being otherwise, but to the agent which produces such a state”. Precedent necessity is the necessity imposed by the actual cause of any given effect. On the other hand, subsequent necessity (necessitas sequens sive concomitans) does not refer to an agent producing an effect, but rather to the effect once it has been actualized. As Aristotle’s principle of necessity of the present asserts: given an actually existing state of affairs, it is necessary that it exists when it exists.

An important feature of Bradwardine’s system is that God is not subject to any predetermination whatsoever. The absolute freedom of God is one of the central tenets in De causa Dei. Bradwardine argued that all the events taking place in the created world are based on an immutable determination of the divine will. What sets Bradwardine apart from most of his predecessors is that for him the past, the present and the future are all equally necessary, given the all-reaching divine intellect and the equally all-reaching determinations of God’s omnipotent will. Bradwardine’s theory of God’s intellect and will are clearly influenced by Scotus. Like Scotus, he stresses that God’s knowledge of created things cannot be caused by created things themselves, as this would make the immutable divine intellect dependent on something created. Rather, created things must be entirely caused by God. While God’s knowledge is not causal as such, God is omniscient by knowing the determinations of his own will. God’s intellect first considers all the possibilities that are, or are not, going to be actualized. Then the divine will realizes a certain set of these possibilities in an immutable and unpreventable way. Bradwardine stresses that this initial divine choice reaches to all of creation, including the smallest details. There is no created being, cause or effect, that is not chosen and predetermined by God. The necessity imposed to the created will by God’s knowledge and will does not amount to an absolute, but only to what Bradwardine names relative precedent necessity. That is to say, in relation to the first causes, God’s intellect and will, all the effects in the created world are necessary and could not be otherwise. At the same time, the past, present and future are all equally contingent because of the freedom of God’s will. In this sense Bradwardine is

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185 Bradwardine’s precedent necessity reminds one of Avicenna’s understanding of the relationship between a cause and its effect. For Avicenna, given that an actual cause of a given effect is present, the effect follows necessarily. Averroes had favoured a different kind of model. For him, the relationship between an actual cause and its effect may remain contingent if the cause in question is contingent. I treat the differences between Avicenna’s and Averroes’s models in more detail in chapter 2.2 of this work. Bradwardine’s distinctions between different types of necessity are influenced by Anselm. Knuuttila 2005, 120–121.

186 De la Torre 1987, 92–93.
not a causal determinist, strictly speaking. As the highest cause, God is not bound by any preceding causes.\footnote{Schabel 2000, 253–258; Gelber 2004, 264–266.}

Bradwardine explicitly states that there is no way whatsoever, in which a human being could choose or act against divine predetermination. Thus, it is easy to see how Bradwardine’s doctrine appears as a type of causal determinism, considered from the perspective of human beings. Nevertheless, Bradwardine claims that his ideas do not amount to determinism either from the divine or the created perspective. From the divine perspective, there is no necessity, since God’s will is entirely free and not coerced by anything external to it. Once God has immutably chosen to realize a certain subset of possibilities, creation, providence and predestination become necessary by both precedent and subsequent necessity but not by absolute necessity. Bradwardine admits that once the divine choice has been made, it cannot change because of divine immutability. Given that God wills what he wills, he necessarily wills it. Yet, initially this volition is spontaneous and free.\footnote{De la Torre 1987, 95–99}

What about the created perspective? Is not the creation necessitated by God’s initial choice? If God has immutably chosen to actualize a certain set of possibilities that, given the divine choice, could not be otherwise, how can created things remain contingent? Bradwardine’s view is that a created cause is contingent if it is undetermined by secondary causes. Rational souls, capable of free choice, are contingent if there are no secondary causes that would causally predetermine them. This contingency does not reach to the created will’s relationship to God, however. For Bradwardine, each and every volition of any created will is completely predetermined by the divine will, just like all the effects in the created world are. Bradwardine points out that no created free will could even exist without having been first created by God. Therefore, God’s will does not destroy, but rather allows the existence of created free wills. God gives the created will its contingency, but only in relation to other secondary causes. In relation to the divine will itself, no lower being is contingent nor spontaneous.\footnote{De la Torre 1987, 97–98.} For Bradwardine, the causal relation between the divine will and created effects is procedently and subsequently necessary. Given that the cause of a given effect is actual, the effects follow necessarily.\footnote{De la Torre 1987, 92–93.} Absolutely speaking, they too remain contingent because God could have predetermined them differently.\footnote{Gelber 2004, 265.}

As the reader might expect, several of Bradwardine’s contemporaries did not accept his claim that the created will is contingent even though it is completely predetermined by God. Fourteenth-century authors familiar with Bradwardine’s work, including Richard Kilvington (1302–1361) and Henry of
Oyta (d. 1397), claimed that in Bradwardine’s opinion all things happened out of necessity.\textsuperscript{192}

Bradwardine offers an extended discussion of divine providence, fate and related themes in depth in the first book of \textit{De causa Dei}. Bradwardine argues that everything comes about because of divine providence and there is no lower cause that would not be preordained by providence. This can be inferred from Bradwardine’s more foundational theories regarding the divine intellect and the divine will.\textsuperscript{193} The divine intellect is unchangeable, reaches to all things and is the cause of all things. Similarly, the divine will is all-reaching, immutable and cannot be frustrated. Therefore, all things happen because of divine providence.\textsuperscript{194}

Bradwardine employs the traditional argument of the relationship between \textit{paterfamilias} and his household. A good \textit{paterfamilias} provides and cares for everything he can in his household. Since God’s relationship to the creation is like that of a \textit{paterfamilias} to his household, he must have perfect providence and care over everything. If there was any limitation to God’s providence, it would have to be because of ignorance, impotence, wickedness or negligence. Obviously, none of these attributes can be given to God.\textsuperscript{195}

Bradwardine’s doctrine of providence, as well as the arguments he presents for the existence of providence are traditional as such. All the theologians I have studied would have accepted that God can be seen as an all-powerful \textit{paterfamilias} of the universe and that his providence extends to the smallest details of the created world. Likewise, the Augustinian idea Bradwardine cites, that fate can be understood as the cause of all things as long as fate is taken to

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\item \textsuperscript{192} Hoenen 1993, 219.
\item \textsuperscript{193} This reminds the reader of Peter Auriol, who had rather similarly argued that divine providence is the sum of divine intellect and the divine will. This allowed Auriol to claim that since either the divine intellect or the divine will do not necessitate the creation, neither does divine providence.
\item \textsuperscript{194} Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 27 (p. 261, E): “Deus autem habet scientiam omnium, sicut capitulum sextum docet, et illa est quaedam causa cuiuslibet rei factae, 17 attestante. Habet quoque Deus volutionem ad omnia, sicut 8. 9. et 22. ostendunt, et neutra harum est noua per vicesimum tertium. Et volutio Dei est efficax nec potest frustrari per 10. Patet ergo omnia quae eueniunt a diuina prouidentia euenire.”
\item \textsuperscript{195} Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 27 (p. 262, A–B): “Item, bonus paterfamilias omnia eum concernentia curat, et prouidet quantum scit et potest, nec quicquam relinquit inordinatum in domo, sed omnia suis locis et temporibus ordinat curiose [...] Quanto magis ille magnus Paterfamilias, cuius magnitudinis non est finis, et sapientiae eius non est numerus, cuius et bonitas est immensa, totam magnam domum suam, cum omnibus eius contentis, omni tempore prouide gubernabit? Unde Matth. 20. Simile est regnum Coelorum homini Patrifamilias, ubi Chrysostomus, homo Paterfamilias Christus est, cui coelum et terra quasi una domus est; familia autem coelestium, terrestrialium, et inferarum creaturarum. Item si Deus non omnia prouideret, hoc videretur imperitiae, impotentiae, malitiae, vel negligentiae, quae omnia longissime sunt a Deo. Imo tam Deum quam alia magis decet, ut per ipsum omnia prouide gubernetur.”
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refer to God’s will, is familiar from a number of previous medieval authors.\textsuperscript{196} Bradwardine also offers a treatment of chance, which is mainly built upon lengthy quotations from Augustine and Boethius to the effect that although many things happen by chance on the lower levels of causation, with respect to God nothing is chance. Employing \textit{Liber de bona fortuna}, Bradwardine argues that this was also the position of Aristotle.\textsuperscript{197}

An interesting feature about Bradwardine’s compatibilism, in the particular context of this study, is that at first sight Bradwardine’s formulations concerning providence and creaturely freedom are not very different from Thomas Aquinas’s late theory. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Aquinas held that contingent causes are entirely contingent in relation to their proximate causes, but remain necessary in relation to the First Cause. Aquinas explicitly wrote that everything is necessary in relation to divine providence.\textsuperscript{198}

Nevertheless, I would like to focus on an important respect, on which Bradwardine differs sharply from the earlier tradition. That is, his reduction of divine permission to active causation and his ideas on the reconciliation of divine providence and creaturely evils. Bradwardine argues that for every single effect $e$ that takes place in the created world, God has an actual volition for $e$. For him, this follows from his doctrine on universal divine providence. No effect in the lower world escapes God’s active direction. Thus, it would be wrong to think that God solely permits the effects brought about by the lower causes. Rather, God’s causality regarding them is all-reaching, active and cannot be frustrated.\textsuperscript{199}

\textsuperscript{196} Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 28 (p. 265, D): “Omnia enim quaecunque voluit, fecit, quia voluntas eius perfecta. Istud autem fatum diuinum est maxime voluntatis diuinae, quae est efficax rerum causa sicut praecedentia docuerunt. Hae autem distinctio patet per Augustinum 5 de Civitate Dei”

\textsuperscript{197} Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 29 (p. 269, B): “Vnus autem asseritur mos optimus bonae fortunae, qui amatores Dei sunt, et habent se ad diuinum aliqualiter credentes propter facta bona a fortuna, sed quare hoc, nisi Deus esset autor fortunae?” Previous scholars have paid little attention to Bradwardine’s use of \textit{LDBF}. In Aquinas’s footsteps, Bradwardine argues that \textit{LDBF} shows that for Aristotle all chance causation is reducible to God. Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 29 (p. 267–269). Bradwardine does not enter the philosophically interesting discussions concerning e.g. the compatibility of the doctrines of the eternity of the world and continuous good fortune, nor the relationship between Aristotle’s concept of accidental good fortune, found in \textit{Physics} II and continuous good fortune, developed in \textit{LDBF}.

\textsuperscript{198} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa theologiae}, 1\textsuperscript{a} q. 22 a. 2 ad 4: “Sed quia ipse actus liberi arbitrii reductur in Deum sicut in causam, necesse est ut ea quae ex libero arbitrio fiunt, divinae providentiae subdantur, providentia enim hominis continetur sub providentia Dei, sicut causa particularis sub causa universali.”

\textsuperscript{199} Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 32 (p. 282, C–D): “Iam restat ostendere omnia prouenire a prouidentia actuali praecipuia, seu etiam positiua, quae scilicet ponit actualem voluntatem in Deo.
Because of Bradwardine’s stress on God’s omnicausality, it is not surprising that he is in difficulties explaining how God does not become the author of sin. In fact, in Paris in 1347 the proposition that God is the cause of sin was condemned. Hoenen notes that the proposition was derived from John of Mirecourt’s writings. It is interesting to note that although Bradwardine may not have been a direct aim of the condemnation, in the middle of the 14th century some theories on divine causality and evil were seen as coming too close to the notion that God would be the author of sin. In fact, a later author, Jean Gerson, attributed to Bradwardine the view that God is the cause of sin and wants human beings to sin when they are committing a sin.200

In a chapter titled “Whether and how God wills and does not will sin”, Bradwardine acknowledges that the principles regarding divine causality he has established earlier in *De causa Dei* lead to the conclusion that God must be the cause of sinful human acts. After all, the secondary causes cause their effects in virtue of the First Cause and therefore God is the first cause of all existing things. However, Bradwardine takes note of the Augustinian idea of sin as a privation of goodness. While the sinful act is an existing thing, the sinfulness of the act in question is nothing more than a privation of goodness in it.201

He proceeds to present traditional arguments of how sin, too, can be profitable for the whole universe. He approvingly cites Aristotle’s idea that contrary things or principles can assist each other to become more clearly visible. Bradwardine lists various ways in which the existence of contrary

Hoc autem similibus rationibus ostendetur, quibus superiora capitula sunt ostensa, maxime quia capitula loquentia de scientia et voluntate divina, per quae probatur vniversalis prouidentia, loquuntur de scientia et volutione Dei actuali et positiva, non tantummodo permissiua.” Aers, too, has stressed Bradwardine’s stress on the immediacy of divine action and Bradwardine’s lack of concern about any creaturely mediation of divine agency. Aers 2009, 77. Aers describes Bradwardine’s account of the conversion of a human being as follows: “A strange model of conversion is entailed in which the person seems absent his or her own conversion. God’s causality, God’s agency, seems to be envisaged as divine unicausality in competition with a human agency that must be abolished if divine sovereignty is to be affirmed.”Aers 2009, 81.

200 Hoenen 1993, 222–223.


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principles in, for example, music, art and language can act to perfect these phenomena. Similarly, sin can make the good in the universe appear more beautiful.\textsuperscript{202} Following Augustine, he points out that already in creating intellectual beings capable of evil, God foreknows their sins but also how he is able to turn these sins for the best of the universe.\textsuperscript{203}

De la Torre explains that for Bradwardine God’s action is entirely devoid of sin, because he causes only the positive being in the sinful human acts, whereas the privation of goodness in these acts is attributed to the human being. Bradwardine stresses that the human being is free in relation to the secondary causes, and therefore remains responsible for the sinfulness of an evil act by voluntarily embracing it. Meanwhile, God disposes the sins of human beings in a way that advances the overall goodness of the universe.\textsuperscript{204}

Bradwardine’s reconciliation of divine providence and human evil is therefore a prime example of the instrumental strategy. For Bradwardine, God is in perfect control of each and every particular sinful human action. Bradwardine’s way of taking away the blame from God is based on the traditional Augustinian idea of sin as a privation of goodness, as well as his own radical analysis of human freedom understood as freedom of coercion only in relation to the secondary causes. While the free human being is uncoerced by the secondary causes, his relation to the First Cause contains no contingency whatsoever on the human part.

In conclusion, all the medieval theologians studied in this work, including Bradwardine, were opposed to the idea that God would be the author of sin. Although Bradwardine admitted that God caused the sinful human act, he argued that there was nothing culpable about God’s action. This was because God only caused the sinful action insofar as it had positive being. The sinfulness of the act had no positive being as such, but rather consisted in being deprived of goodness. This privation he attributed to the human beings, who were in Bradwardine’s view entirely blameworthy for any sins that they committed.

Authors earlier than Bradwardine had, for example, distinguished between God’s providence of approval and God’s providence of permission, and


\textsuperscript{203} Thomas Bradwardine, \textit{De causa Dei} I, c. 34 (p. 296, B): “Dicitque Augustinus 11. De Civitate Dei 18. Nullum Deus angelorum vel hominum creasset, quem malum futurum esse praescisset, nisi pariter nosset, quibus eos honorum visibus commodaret, atque ita ordinem saeculorum, tanquam pulcherrimum carmen ex quibusdam quasi antithesis honestraret.”

\textsuperscript{204} De la Torre 1987, 98–99.
attributed human sins exclusively to the latter. In their view, God did not approve of sin, but merely permitted it. A related strategy was to highlight the spontaneous freedom of created beings. God could allow some evils to ensue from human freedom, because the value of human freedom as such outweighed these evils. In the accidental strategy of reconciling divine providence and evil, human sins as such were considered condemnable, but were accepted and permitted by God as accidental outcomes in the overall causal network. In his reconciliation of divine providence and human evils, Bradwardine undermines these earlier strategies based on the notion of the divine permission of evil. He builds his own solution by exclusively employing the instrumental strategy. Interestingly, one generation earlier in Paris, Peter Auriol had championed the opposite accidental strategy. Auriol denied any divine causal involvement in human sin whatsoever. Earlier in the 13th century, authors as diverse as Thomas Aquinas, John of Paris, Richard Middleton and Matthew of Aquasparta had employed the accidental and instrumental strategies together, sometimes even within a single question. My reading of Bradwardine and Auriol shows that coming to the 14th century, the two strategies concerning the reconciliation of divine providence and evil were beginning to be seen as less compatible with each other.
4 LIBER DE BONA FORTUNA – NEW PERSPECTIVES ON PROVIDENCE

4.1 Introduction

A small book that came to have a highly interesting part to play in the development of the doctrine of divine providence in the years leading to and following the condemnations of 1277 was the pseudo-Aristotelian Liber de bona fortuna (below abbreviated as LDBF). The Aristotelian corpus as we know it today was translated into Latin mainly in an approximately hundred-year span between 1150 and 1250.¹ In this period several Pseudo-Aristotelian works also began to circulate. LDBF was one such work. Despite its popularity in the late Middle Ages, it remains today unedited and largely unknown.²

As its title implies, LDBF is concerned with the phenomenon of good fortune. The concept of fortune had gained popularity already in the 12th century. The main work behind the reintroduction of fortune and the pagan personification of fortune, Fortuna, in western intellectual discourse in the Middle Ages was of course Boethius’s Consolatio philosophiae, but fortune featured also, for example, in the literary works of Ovid and Horace that were also read by the medievals.³ Despite Boethius’s influence, the medieval authors treated in this study in general preferred to speak of fortune as a natural phenomenon. Following Augustine, they did not employ the goddess Fortuna in their writings, even in a figurative sense. In Augustine’s footsteps fortune was often defined in relation to divine providence and seen as subordinated to all-reaching providence. Augustine had challenged the notion that fortune would be an independently existing cause. Instead, Augustine reduced all the seemingly fortuitous effects to God’s providence. Nevertheless, he still granted that the concept of fortune could be employed in everyday language for events coming about from unknown causes. Another strategy was to define fortune in relation to nature, as Aristotle had done in Physics II.⁴ One might characterize the difference between the Augustinian and the Aristotelian theory found in Physics II as a disagreement over the intentionality and end-directedness of fortune. For Augustine, the events that

¹ Several of Aristotle’s logical works were, however, already available since the 6th century. See Dod 1982 on the history of the medieval Latin translations of Aristotle.
² This situation will hopefully change, as Valérie Cordonier is currently working on a critical edition of the Liber de bona fortuna. The edition is to be published in the Aristoteles Latinus series. My references to the Latin text of LDBF are based on a transcription of the text found in Cordonier 2010, 759–770.
³ Lehtonen 1996, 73.
⁴ Lehtonen 1996, 77–78, 86.
appear fortuitous are in the final analysis reducible to a divine plan and intention. Aristotle, however, treats fortune as a purely accidental cause that lacks any final cause.\(^5\)

Against this background, LDBF is clearly a highly interesting work. Unlike Physics II, LDBF explicitly connects the concept of good fortune to the idea of divine care of the world. This is not the only way in which the concept of good fortune presented in LDBF is different from that found in Physics II. The medieval readers of LDBF were quick to notice that unlike in Physics, Aristotle appears in LDBF to consider fortune as a more or less ordered and end-directed cause. As has been noted above, Aristotle was an important author for the medieval treatments of divine providence. Most medieval authors following an ancient line of interpretation took it for granted that in Metaphysics XII, Aristotle himself had attributed a type of providence or care based in its final causality to the Unmoved Mover. The end-directedness of nature in Physics II was also seen as compatible with all-reaching divine providence by most notably Thomas Aquinas.

The concept of continuous good fortune (bona fortuna continua) is crucial in LDBF. Continuous good fortune refers to the phenomenon when a person has surprising good fortune time after time in all or most of his activities. Rather surprisingly, the medieval authors took the existence and reality of continuous good fortune as granted. Having continuous good fortune does not imply intellectual superiority in the subject. On the contrary, following Aristotle, the continuously fortunate human beings were often seen as foolish. Their success was based on luck and not on rational deliberation. In addition, continuous good fortune was not dependent on the moral disposition of the agent, nor vice versa. Rather, having continuous good fortune only caused the agent to succeed, avoid failure, or receive some entirely unintended good, repeatedly because of factors that were not dependent on himself.

The so-called Aristotelian theory of divine providence as interpreted by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes had become controversial in the second half of the 13th century.\(^6\) In reading LDBF the medievals came to ask

\(^5\) Alexander Murray has interestingly noted that the more active character which the pagan Fortuna receives in the medieval tradition is also reflected in the numerous illustrations of the wheel of fortune. In the earlier images Fortuna is depicted as rotating with the wheel, whereas in the medieval images Fortuna is actively rotating the wheel. Murray 1978/2002, 98–101. Lehtonen considers Murray’s thesis persuasive, although lacking in documentation. Lehtonen 1996, 74.

\(^6\) Cordonier 2011. Speer, too, has noted that much of the 13th-century debate on free will and providence was centred around the validity of Averroes’s interpretation of the so-called Aristotelian doctrine of providence. Speer 2014, 519. The notion of good fortune also featured in some of the propositions condemned in 1277. There are two propositions in the list of condemned propositions of 1277 that are concerned with the notion of fortune. Proposition number 170 (212) “Quod pauper bonis fortune non potest bene agere in moralibus” (Piché 1999, 130) claims that morally laudable behaviour is not possible without good fortune. Most of the authors discussed below keep their moral philosophical
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whether Aristotle had taught a doctrine of particular providence. By particular providence I refer to the view that God has direct care and concern over individuals in addition to providing for the species in a more general manner. Most of Aristotle’s ancient and medieval commentators held that Aristotle believed that the First Cause could act on the lower world only through the mediation of intermediary causes. The celestial spheres had direct effects in the sublunar world, but the First Cause only influenced the sublunar world by influencing the celestial spheres as their final cause. As will next be seen, some medieval readers of LDBF believed that in this little book Aristotle claimed that the First Cause can immediately and directly influence individual beings in the sublunar world. This kind of reading of Aristotle would of course have had a notable impact on any interpretation of Aristotle’s theology, cosmology and metaphysics. Not all the readers of LDBF were willing to go this far, however.

The medieval questions on LDBF form a fascinating piece of history on the development and interpretation of the Aristotelian theory of providence, the development of which started already in the ancient commentators of Aristotle. In addition, the medieval authors used LDBF as a source for developing their own theories of providence, both through means of criticism as well as adaptation. Thomas Aquinas was the first medieval author to argue that LDBF demonstrated that Aristotle thought God had providence for particular beings. Thomas’s close contemporary Giles of Rome understood LDBF mostly in natural terms and preferred to omit a discussion of revealed theology in his treatment of LDBF. In contrast, Henry of Ghent presented his main discussion of divine providence and God’s relationship to accidental causality in the created world in the context of commenting on LDBF. Henry had little to say on providence outside the particular context of good fortune. John Duns Scotus, too, explicitly treated providence only in a quodlibetal

ideas separate from the phenomenon of good fortune. It may be that the condemnation of this proposition aimed to promote the idea that intention rather than outcome is what makes human actions morally good or bad. When an act is carried out with a righteous intention it is morally laudable, even if lack of good fortune leads the agent to fail in executing the act in question. If this interpretation is valid, the compilers of the list want to argue that even someone who time after time unluckily loses his wallet before managing to give alms to the poor is acting morally well. The other condemned proposition having to do with fortune, number 206 (106) “Quod sanitatem, infirmitatem, vitam et mortem attribuit positioni siderum et aspectui fortune, dicens quod si eum aspexerit fortuna, vivet; si non aspexerit, morietur” (Piché 1999, 142) argues that the well-being of human beings is not dependent on the stellar constellations or fortune. This theme of criticizing causal (such as astral) determinism is a notable undercurrent in the whole list of the condemned propositions.

7 The question of whether Aristotle held that providence extended to particulars was still discussed in the 15th century in the works of Denys the Carthusian (1402–1471). Denys himself admitted that Aristotle’s position was not entirely clear, although personally he believed that the philosopher did believe in particular providence. Emery 2014, 629.
question concerning good fortune. Scotus’s question is mostly concerned with commenting on and criticizing Henry’s on good fortune. For such reasons, LDBF must be viewed as an important but largely neglected source for the development of the doctrine of divine providence in the late Middle Ages. The discussions concerning LDBF provide the historian an important perspective to history of the doctrine of divine providence in medieval philosophical theology, in addition to the sources studied in the two previous chapters of this work.

4.2 Liber de bona fortuna: Aristotle’s later theory of good fortune?

I will next introduce the contents of LDBF. Commentators have noted that the highly fragmentary and corrupted nature of the original Greek text requires a careful reading, so that the actual positions taken by Aristotle in the book can be determined. Yet it will be clear that the theory of good fortune discovered in Physics II went through major modifications in the later parts of Aristotle’s career. Aristotle returned to the topic of good fortune in Ethica Eudemia and Magna Moralia. John Dudley in his recent book, Aristotle’s Concept of Chance, considers that both Ethica Eudemia and Magna Moralia are more mature works than most of Physics II. For the sake of clarity, I will follow the medieval practice of referring to LDBF as a book written by Aristotle, although it actually consists of two originally separate chapters of Aristotelian works.

After discussing the contents of LDBF, I will move to discuss the medieval discussions concerning LDBF and divine providence. The central question in LDBF is why is it that some people prosper in good fortune and seem to succeed accidentally in everything they initiate. The question whether continuous good fortune (bona fortuna continua) might be caused by active divine guidance is raised already in LDBF. Aristotle and his commentators consider it obvious that there are some people who may be called well-fortuned (bene fortunati). One swallow does not make a summer, and thus such people have to be fortunate always or in most cases. In Aristotelian causal theory, such states of affairs require a per se cause. From this viewpoint, good fortune too would have to have a proper cause. On the other hand, in Physics II Aristotle had defined fortune as something indeterminate and unknowable.

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9 Dudley argues for the relative chronology of Physics II, 4–5 being the earliest, followed by Ethica Eudemia, Physics II, 6 and Magna Moralia. See Dudley 2012, 236–257, (esp. 257) for a number of arguments for this chronology. Here it shall suffice to note that the theory of chance in Physics II is likely to be earlier and less developed than that found in LDBF.
Chapter four

that happens only rarely.\textsuperscript{10} The tension between these two texts was treated in one way or another by most of the medieval commentators of \textit{LDBF}.

Cordonier has argued in detail that \textit{LDBF} was a Latin creation since its birth. That is, in addition to not being written by Aristotle, it was neither written in Greek nor in the ancient period. Rather, \textit{LDBF} was compiled in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century with the possible aim of defending Aristotle’s orthodoxy in questions pertaining to divine providence. According to Cordonier, William of Moerbeke was originally responsible for the compilation and the literal translation of \textit{LDBF} from the excerpts of \textit{Magna Moralia} 1206b30–1207b19 and \textit{Ethica Eudemia} 1246b37–1248b11 that dealt with the notion of good fortune (\textit{bona fortuna}).\textsuperscript{11} One might ask why Aristotle treats the phenomenon of fortune in the ethical works in particular. The answer is that the aim of Aristotle’s ethics is to discover the way to achieve happiness. Dudley notes that in Aristotle’s time it was common to speak of the fortunate as being happy. This led Aristotle to inquire into the reason for good fortune.\textsuperscript{12}

In the first part of \textit{LDBF} (\textit{Magna Moralia} 1206b30–1207b19) Aristotle asks what is the cause of good fortune. He considers three possible options. Good fortune could be caused by 1) nature,\textsuperscript{13} 2) intellect or 3) divine care (\textit{cura divina}) – a list of options Aristotle and his commentators considered

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{10}] Yet the idea of fortune as an indeterminate accidental cause is also mentioned in \textit{LDBF}. Aristotle, \textit{Liber de bona fortuna}, c. 1 (\textit{Magna Moralia}), 1207a18–1207a20: “Est autem bona fortuna et fortuna in hiis que non in nobis existunt, non autem quorum ipsi domini sumus et potentes operari.” Neither Aristotle nor any of his medieval commentators seriously considered the option that continuous good fortune would simply be the sum of many accidental instances of good fortune. All human beings are fortunate sometimes \textit{per accidens}. Why could not some man or woman, in a group of millions of human beings, have good fortune all the time simply by chance? Instead of assuming this kind of approach, Aristotle and the medieval authors argued that continuous good fortune (and any effect that takes place always or in most cases) requires a \textit{per se} cause.
  \item[\textsuperscript{11}] For the sake of convenience, I will refer to \textit{LDBF} as an Aristotelian work in the rest of this study. It is noteworthy that \textit{LDBF} consists entirely of authentic Aristotelian material. The compilation of the two, originally separate, chapters written by Aristotle was, however, a medieval innovation. Both the relative chronology of Aristotle’s ethical works as well as the authenticity of \textit{Magna Moralia} are debated. Dudley treats \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} as the oldest of Aristotle’s ethical works, followed first by \textit{Ethica Eudemia} and then lastly \textit{Magna Moralia}. He considers \textit{Magna Moralia} authentic. Dudley 2012, 237. For references to scholarship on the authenticity of \textit{Magna Moralia}, see especially fn. 2 in Dudley 2012, 237.
  \item[\textsuperscript{12}] Dudley 2012, 238. Cf. Aristotle, \textit{Liber de bona fortuna}, c. 1 (\textit{Magna Moralia}), 1207b16–07b19: “Quoniam igitur est felicitas non sine exterioribus bonis, hac autem fiunt ex bona fortuna, sicut satis diximus, cooperatiua utique erit felicitati. De bona quidem igitur fortuna dicta sunt hec.”
  \item[\textsuperscript{13}] Dudley explains that what Aristotle means by nature here is synonymous to pure, inexplicable chance. That is, if good fortune were to be caused by nature, then it would be something that simply happens to be so. Dudley 2012, 238.
\end{itemize}
exhaustive. However, all the three options have serious problems. If good fortune was a product of nature, it would seem fitting that it would take place in all or most cases (*semper vel ut in pluribus*), as this is the way nature functions as a cause. Good fortune, however, works exactly in the opposite way, typically bringing about wholly unexpected effects. A similar argument can be raised against the option that good fortune would be produced by intellect. The randomness of good fortune seems to be opposed to the orderly nature of an intellectual cause. The third option remains then that good fortune should be attributed to divine providence and guidance. Aristotle does not find this solution unproblematic either. The objection is that fortune often brings profitable outcomes to evil men and harmful outcomes to good men. Aristotle points out that attributing such effects to god would make god an unjust or incapable judge. After consideration of these arguments, Aristotle seemingly concludes that nature is still the likeliest cause of good fortune. For some men are well-born and thus fortunate, and others repeatedly achieve something good beyond their rational consideration. In *Magna Moralia*, Aristotle then defines good fortune as “a natural instinct, not guided by reason” (*sine ratione natura*).
This definition assumes a central place in the later debates and it is thus important to unpack it here. Amongst the medieval commentators, *sine ratione natura* was typically referred to as the definition of good fortune. I believe it is more illuminating to understand it as a rather broad characterization of some aspects of good fortune rather than as a comprehensive definition. The medieval authors took *sine ratione natura* to mean that continuous good fortune is a natural feature of human beings that is more prominent in some individuals and less prominent in others. Furthermore, it functions entirely independently of rational consideration so that in practice foolish human beings might be better disposed for good luck than the wise. Thus, we can see that *sine ratione natura* is not really a definition, strictly speaking. After all, it does not explicitly point out that continuous good fortune is a phenomenon that makes some people accidentally succeed and receive surprising outcomes time after time.

The fortunate man is defined as “he who has an unreasoning impulse (*impetus*) towards good things, and moreover obtains them”.\(^\text{17}\) For Aristotle, this impulse is a natural feature of some human beings that directs the well-fortuned again and again towards their own good, regardless of their use of reason. They have the ability to will for the right thing at the right time without any rational deliberation. This impulse to will the right thing at the right time is what makes them well-fortuned. Aristotle draws a comparison to divinely inspired men who act in a certain way because of an impulse that is not based on the use of reason.\(^\text{18}\) In the context of *LDBF* the impulse refers to a feature some human beings have since birth. This impulse to good leads them, time after time, to make choices that have unanticipated positive outcomes for the

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\(^{17}\) I will follow the practice of e.g. Wilson 2014 and translate *impetus* as impulse.

\(^{18}\) Aristotle, *Liber de bona fortuna* (*Magna Moralia*), c. 1, 1207a36–07b05: “Bene fortunatus est enim sine racione habens impetum ad bona, et hec adipiscens, hoc autem est nature. In anima enim inest natura tale quo impetu ferimur sine racione ad que utique bene habebimus. Et si quis interroget sic habentem, ‘propter quid hoc placet tibi operari’, ‘Nesco’, inquid, ‘sed placet mihi’, simile paciens hiis qui a deo aguntur. Et enim a deo uecti sine racione impetum habent ad operari aliquid.” Dudley 2012, 241; 251. The phrase of “willing for the right thing at the right time” is based on H. Rackham’s translation of *Ethica Eudemia* 1247b23–47b26 that Rackham translates as “and without the aid of reason have an impulse in the direction of the natural order of things and desire the right thing in the right way at the right time, these men will succeed even although they are in fact foolish and irrational, just as the others will sing well although unable to teach singing.” It is noteworthy that in this context desiring “for the right thing in the right way at the right time” does not refer to morally relevant choices, but rather to desires that surprisingly bring forth good fortune.
subject. It is important to note that in this context, the term impulse refers to a continuous tendency to a certain kind of action.

The second part of LDBF (Ethica Eudemia 1246b37–1248b11) returns to the question of whether fortune could be caused by nature even though nature should always act uniformly, unlike fortune.\(^9\) Here Aristotle is again drawn toward the conclusion that good fortune is a product of nature and comes about without rational deliberation.\(^20\) A new philosophical problem, not mentioned in the first part (Magna Moralia 1206b30–1207b19), is that if good fortune is natural to some men, then the cause of the good luck of these people seems to be nature rather than fortune, and therefore fortune appears to be eliminated completely. Aristotle insists, however, that fortune exists and is a cause, for otherwise it would be pointless to say that fortune caused something for someone.\(^21\)

The most fundamental difference between the theory of good fortune in LDBF and the theory presented in Physics II is the introduction of the theory of continuous good fortune.\(^22\) Having continuous good fortune makes some

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\(^9\) Aristotle, Liber de bona fortuna (Ethica Eudemia), c. 2, 47a09–47a15: “Nunc quidem enim sic putant ut, natura quibusdam existentibus, natura autem quales quosdam facit, et confestim a natuuite dierunt, quemadmodum hii quidem glauci, hii autem nigriorum oculos eo quod tale secundum esse tale oportet et habere, sic et bene fortunati et infortunati. Quod quidem enim non prudencia dirigunt, manifestum: non enim sine racione prudencia, sed habet racionem propter quid quid operetur, hii autem non habebunt utique dicere propter quid dirigunt (ars enim utique esset).”

\(^20\) Aristotle, Liber de bona fortuna (Ethica Eudemia), c. 2, 47a29–47a30: “Si itaque nesse aut natura aut intellectu aut cura quadam dirigencia aut non sunt, natura utique erunt bene fortunati.”

\(^21\) This inference might seem a little circular to the reader, but is in accordance with Aristotle’s philosophical method of having the common linguistic usage of his time as the starting point of his philosophical enquiry. Dudley 2012, 240. Aristotle, Liber de bona fortuna (Ethica Eudemia), c. 2, 47a31–47b03: “At uero natura quidem causa aut eius quod est semper similiter aut eius quod ut in pluribus, fortuna autem contraria. Si quidem igitur quod preter racionem adipsicitur fortune uidetur esse (qui autem propter fortunam bene fortunatus), non utique uidibitur talis esse causa semper eiusdem aut ut in pluribus. Adhuc si, quia talis, oportet accidere sicut, quia glaucus, non acute uidet, non fortuna causa, sed natura; non igitur est bene fortunatus, sed uelut bene naturatus. Quare hoc utique erit dicendum, quia quos dicimus bene fortunatos, non propter fortunam sunt. Non igitur sunt bene fortunati. Fortunati enim, quorumcumque causa fortuna bona bonorum. Si autem sic, utrum aut erit fortuna omnino, aut erit quidem, sed non amplius. Sed nesse et esse, et causam esse.”

\(^22\) Aristotle, Liber de bona fortuna (Ethica Eudemia), c. 2, 1248b06-07: “Manifestum itaque quoniam due sunt species bone fortune, hec quidem diuina (propter quod et uidentur bene fortunati propter deum dirigere). Iste autem est qui secundum impetum directius, alius autem qui preter impetum; sine racione autem ambo. Et hec quidem continua bona fortuna magis, hec autem non continua.” Amongst the medieval commentators, Gilles of Rome was the first to draw attention to the difference between the continuous and accidental types of good fortune. Gilles of Rome, Sententia de bona fortuna, T. 31. 57–65 (p. 145–146): “Est igitur bona fortuna in eo quod bonum aliquid existit preter rationem, etc.’ Postquam philosophus uenatus est partes diffinitionis bone fortune, in parte ista
human beings fortunate always or in most cases. And for something to happen always or in most cases, a cause *per se* must be posited. As noted, in *Magna Moralia* Aristotle defined the fortunate person as “he who has an unreasoning impulse towards good things, and moreover obtains them”. That is, someone who has continuous good fortune is disposed to achieve things which are good for himself, without any rational understanding of the particular causes of his good luck. For Aristotle, this impulse leading the agent to achieve good things is a natural feature of some people, directing them again and again towards their own good, regardless of their use of reason. These people have the ability to will for the right thing at the right time without any rational deliberation.\(^{23}\) The impulse to will the right thing at the right time is what makes them well-fortuned. This doctrine is essentially the same in both *Magna Moralia* and *Ethica Eudemia*.\(^{24}\)

In *Ethica Eudemia* VIII, 2, This leads Aristotle to a problem, however. If the inner impulse directs the well-fortuned men to form certain desires, continuously leading to a surprising good outcome, will not fortune become the cause of all of their willing? The other option available is that the reason for their thinking and deliberation would be a previous deliberation. This solution seems unsatisfactory as well, since it would lead to infinite regress.\(^{25}\) This leads Aristotle to discuss the cause of the first movements of intellection and willing in human psychology. His conclusion is that in order to avoid infinite regress, the grounds for the acts of human thinking and willing must

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\(^{23}\) Aristotle, *Liber de bona fortuna (Ethica Eudemia)*, c. 2, 1247b21-28: “Si itaque quidam sunt bene nati (quemadmodum indociti non scientes quae oportet), sic bene nati sunt et sine racione impetum faciunt, secundum quod natura apta nata est, et concupiscunt et hoc et tunc et sic ut oportet et quod oportet, et quando isti dirigent, et si contingat insipientes existentes et sine racione (quemadmodum et bene erunt non docibiles existentes), tales autem bene fortunati, quicumque sine racione dirigunt ut in pluribus.”

\(^{24}\) Dudley 2012, 241; 251–252.

be something other and nobler than the rational soul. In this search for the starting point of motion in the human soul, Aristotle comes to the conclusion that everything that is moved in the human soul must be first moved by god, referring to the Unmoved Mover.26 This conclusion is quite surprising, but yet analogous to Aristotle’s conclusion in Physics that everything which is moved in the universe must first be moved by the final causality of the Unmoved Mover.27

Yet, we have seen that Aristotle first refuted divine providence as the source of good fortune, because good fortune often brings good outcomes to bad people, and god could not be such an unjust or incapable judge. In Dudley’s interpretation, Aristotle did indeed hold that God could not be the cause of good fortune as an efficient cause. When Aristotle argues that good fortune is ultimately caused by the Unmoved Mover moving the human soul, he has in mind the final and not the efficient causality of God. Therefore, Aristotle’s idea would be that like the Unmoved Mover moves the universe as the ultimate final cause, so it also moves the soul of man to good fortune as a final cause.28

At the end of LDBF, Aristotle distinguishes more carefully between continuous and non-continuous good fortune. The first is of divine origin and falls upon those who act in accordance with their divinely infused impulse, and thus are fortunate always or in most cases. Non-continuous good fortune, on the other hand, arises when someone acts independently of this impulse, but surprisingly still succeeds. This type of fortune does not fall upon someone repeatedly, but rather only on rare occasions. The concept of continuous good fortune refers to action arising from an inner impulse of divine origin to a certain kind of action with good results. It was later to become one of the central points of focus for medieval commentators.

The topic of good fortune had been briefly touched upon in Physics II as well. There Aristotle simply notes that the notion of good luck is used when chance events bring about something good to someone more than once. Due to the unpredictable nature of chance, good fortune too is unpredictable and may not be anyone’s attribute always or in most cases. In Physics, fortune is treated exclusively as an accidental cause, and the topic of continuous good fortune is not discussed.

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fortune is not brought up.\textsuperscript{29} According to Dudley, this development in the doctrine of good fortune is evidence for the relative chronology that the fourth and fifth chapters of \textit{Physics} II represent Aristotle’s earlier ideas on good fortune, whereas both parts of \textit{LDBF} have been composed at a later date.\textsuperscript{30}

To sum up, in \textit{LDBF}, Aristotle argues that continuous good fortune is of divine origin and falls upon those who will for the right thing at the right time, that is, act in accordance with their divinely infused impulse and are thus fortunate always or in most cases. This type of good fortune is explicitly contrasted to the other, accidental, type of good fortune discussed in \textit{Physics}. This type of good fortune is entirely random and thus cannot be permanent. Accidental good fortune is not based on following one’s impulse, but rather on pure inexplicable chance, that happens to have a good outcome for the subject.

This brief look at \textit{LDBF} shows that it was no coincidence that several medieval theologians became interested in the questions raised by the text. The relationship between good fortune and divine providence is, of course, highly relevant in the Christian context. Several biblical books, most notably the book of Job, attribute men’s fortunes and misfortunes to God.\textsuperscript{31} I will next study the treatments of \textit{LDBF} by Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Richard of Middleton, John Duns Scotus, Peter Auriol and an anonymous author who may have been Francis Caracciolo. Two questions were of particular interest for the theologians commenting on \textit{LDBF}: first, whether good fortune is of natural or divine origin, and second, starting with Henry of Ghent, whether the Aristotelian doctrines of good fortune and the eternity of the world were compatible.

### 4.3 Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas was the first scholastic theologian who read together the two chapters from \textit{Magna Moralia} and \textit{Ethica Eudemia} that formed \textit{LDBF}. This can be seen in the third book of \textit{Summa contra gentiles} where Aquinas refers to \textit{Ethica Eudemia} in the 89\textsuperscript{th} chapter and then soon after, in the 92\textsuperscript{nd} chapter, to \textit{Magna Moralia}. Cordonier points out that this is the only reference in Thomas’s works to \textit{Magna Moralia}.\textsuperscript{32} I will return to these references in more detail below. In addition to the references found in \textit{Summa contra gentiles},

\textsuperscript{29} Aristotle, \textit{Physics} II c. 5.
\textsuperscript{30} Dudley 2012, 240; 249; 257.
\textsuperscript{31} Farrell notes that \textit{LDBF} is ambiguous as to whether providence is the cause of good fortune or not. Farrell 1984, 157–158.
\textsuperscript{32} Cordonier 201b4, 91–92.
Aquinas explicitly refers to *LDBF* in a later work, *De malo*.\(^{33}\) I will next discuss Aquinas’s interpretation of Aristotle’s ideas on divine providence on singular beings, and then present Aquinas’s views on *LDBF*, focusing on the relationship between good fortune and divine providence.

Cordonier has pointed out in a number of recent articles that Aquinas was a key figure in the medieval development of the view of the “Aristotelian theory of providence”.\(^ {34}\) The common interpretation in the early 13\(^{th}\) century, going back to the Church Fathers such as Ambrose, was that according to Aristotle there was no divine providence for the sublunary world.\(^ {35}\) Aquinas used *LDBF* to argue that Aristotle’s view of providence was not limited either to the things above the moon nor to just the species. Thus, for Aquinas, Aristotle’s view did not have to be seen as heretical from the Christian point of view. Rather, using *LDBF*, Aquinas argued that Aristotle had taught that divine providence is extended to individuals *qua* individuals as well.

In his treatments of the topic, Aquinas draws a stark contrast between what he considers to be Aristotle’s authentic theory of providence, and Averroes’s interpretation of this theory. Aquinas finds Averroes’s interpretation, based on the idea that divine providence only concerns species of beings, a deviation from the Aristotelian theory. Thus, with the use of *LDBF* Aquinas goes against a strong current of Peripatetic interpretation which has its roots in Alexander of Aphrodisias and beyond. 13\(^{th}\)-century translations of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* as well as Averroes’s *Physics* and *Metaphysics* were strong witnesses of this tradition of interpretation.\(^ {36}\)

Thomas cites Averroes’s commentary on *Metaphysics* XII in his discussion of divine providence in his commentary on *Sentences*. The main feature of Averroes’s theory was that divine providence was concerned with species of beings, instead of particular beings. Interestingly, Aquinas omits Averroes’s qualification that although providence is only concerned with species, it is nevertheless concerned with the individual insofar as this individual participates in a species. Cordonier’s interpretation is that, in his commentary on *Sentences*, Aquinas presents Averroes’s theory of providence as a more radical form of the theory of Alexander of Aphrodisias than what Averroes’s

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\(^{33}\) Thomas Aquinas, *De malo*, q. 6 co: “Relinquitur ergo, sicut concludit Aristoteles in cap. de bona fortuna, quod id quod primo movet voluntatem et intellectum, sit aliquid supra voluntatem et intellectum, scilicet Deus.”

\(^{34}\) See the background chapter for the ancient development of this view.

\(^{35}\) Cordonier 2014a, 496.

\(^{36}\) Cordonier 2014a, 495–500. Interestingly, Aquinas’s contemporary Bonaventure, wrote in a late work *Collationes in hexaemeron*, finished in 1273, that Aristotle fell into numerous errors after condemning Plato’s Ideas. Amongst Aristotle’s errors are a denial of God’s knowledge of things other than himself and the resultant view of denying divine foreknowledge and providence. This shows a clear disagreement between Bonaventure and Aquinas on Aristotle’s views. Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron* VI, 2-4 (Opera omnia V; Quaracchi 1891, p. 360–361.)
text actually suggests. This allows Thomas to further underline that Averroes’s straightforwardly heretical ideas may not have actually been what Aristotle held.37 I agree with Cordonier’s contention that Aquinas directly contradicts Averroes’s heretical teaching with Aristotle. The latter’s text for Thomas remaining open to heretical and orthodox interpretations. It seems, however, that even if Aquinas did not omit Averroes’s “insofar as they fall under a species” clause on individual providence, the problem would persist. Human beings are intellectual agents, unlike spiders that Averroes and Aquinas use as an example in their discussions of providence restricted to species. Thus, if God knew human individuals insofar as they participate in the human species, he would still lack any knowledge of the particular choices of these particular human beings. For Aquinas, divine omniscience would be severely limited in the case of free human actions if the theory of Averroes was accepted.

In chapters 64–100 of the third book of Summa contra gentiles, Aquinas discusses questions related to divine providence at length. It is in this context where Aquinas develops his interpretation of the Aristotelian theory of providence further, attributing a positive doctrine of divine providence on singular beings to Aristotle, whereas in the commentary on Sentences he had been content with simply stating that Aristotle may not have been as heretical as he appears to be in Averroes’s interpretation.

The 92nd chapter “In what sense someone is said to be well fortuned (bene fortunatus) and in how is the man aided by superior causes” is Aquinas’s most important discussion of the relation between divine providence and good fortune.38 In this chapter, Aquinas begins by repeating the familiar definition from Physics II that fortuitous effects are unintentional outcomes arising from the actions of an intentional agent. He points out, however, that a fortuitous effect is fortuitous and per accidens in relation to lower causes, but at the same time it may be intentional and per se in comparison to a superior cause. Aquinas refers to an example of two servants sent to the same place by their master. Their meeting will be accidental from the viewpoint of the servants, but wholly intended by the master.39 As already seen in the second chapter of

37 Thomas Aquinas, Super Sent. l. 1, d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 co. “Quaedam enim positio est, quod providentia Dei non se extendit nisi ad species, et non ad individua, nisi quae necessaria sunt; eo quod ponebant, illud quod exit cursum suum, providentiae legibus non subjacere; et ideo ea quae frequenter deficiunt a cursu ordinato, non sunt provisa, sicut particularia corruptibilia et generabilia; et ista opinio imponitur Aristotel: quamvis ex verbis suis expresse habe frustra non possit, sed Commentator suus expresse ponit eam in 11 Metaph.” Cordonier 2014a, 500.

38 Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles III c. 92: Quomodo dicitur aliquis bene fortunatus, et quomodo adiuventur homin ex superioribus causis.

39 This example is Aquinas’s own, and is not found in Aristotle. Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles III, c. 92, n. 2: “Dicitur enim aliqui homini bene secundum fortunam contingere, quando aliquod bonum accidit sibi praeter intentionem: sicut cum aliqua, fodiens in agro, inventi thesaurum, quem non quaeret. Contingit autem aliquem operantem praeter intentionem operari propriam, non tamen
this work, these superior causes may in Aquinas’s hierarchical cosmology be either 1) celestial bodies 2) the angels or 3) the universal cause, God. All these three types of causes have special features in relation to human beings and exert causality upon human beings in different ways. Man falls under the influence of the celestial bodies as a corporeal being, under the angels as an intellectual being and under God as a willing being. Because of this, the celestial bodies exert an influence over man’s decisions only by disposing the will through causing bodily passions, and the angels only through intellectual persuasion. God, however, is through his providence able to move the human will in a way that may not be resisted. In *Summa theologiae* Aquinas explains that the divine moving of the created will does not amount to coercion, since a central feature of divine providence is its ability to retain the contingency of the causes falling under its influence. Aquinas writes that being well-fortuned (*bene fortunatus*) consists exactly in being repeatedly lead into action, having surprising good consequences for the agent, by superior causes, without rationally recognizing the connection between the action and the surprising good consequences. But since divine providence is an all-reaching and universal cause, nothing can be fortuitous with regards to God. That is to say, every outcome that is accidental and fortuitous with respect to the human being, is nevertheless intended *per se* by divine providence.
Like Aristotle in *LDBF*, Aquinas is interested in determining the cause of the continuous good luck of some human beings. Aquinas’s main objection against the view that good fortune would have a natural cause is developed from Aristotle’s argument in *LDBF*: natural causes tend to cause uniform effects. For this reason, it is impossible that someone would be fortunate always or for the most part due to the influence of natural causes, such as celestial bodies, which have no capability of using reason. Aristotle had pointed out in his analysis of fortuitous effects in *Physics* II that the number of causes joining together to produce good fortune can be indefinite. Connecting such causes in a way that would lead to someone having continuous good fortune is therefore possible only to an intellectual agent, capable of disposing the indefinite number of concurrent causes in the required way. For Aquinas, the only intellectual agent that has the capacity to dispose all the relevant causes like this is God. This idea was to become influential for the later treatments of *LDBF*. Aquinas notes that even though no effect that is fortuitous from the human perspective retains its fortuitous nature (*rationem fortuiti*) from the divine perspective, such events are still fortuitous in comparison to the celestial bodies. The reason for this is in the fact that as natural causes, the celestial bodies aim only for one effect and cannot choose between different ends. Whenever the celestial bodies cause something other than their natural effect, they must be regarded as purely accidental causes with respect to that effect. Aquinas refers to Aristotle’s example of a treasure chest found by a digger. The connection between the act of digging a grave and finding a treasure chest is purely accidental and cannot thus be intended by any natural cause that has only one end for its action. As an omniscient agent, God may, however, direct the man to dig the grave in the place where the treasure lies and thus, again,

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autem praeter divinam providentiam, quae est gubernativa sicut et factiva entis inquantum est ens, unde oportet quod omnia sub se contineat. Sic ergo aliquid fortuitum bonum vel malum potest contingere homini et per comparisonem ad ipsum; et per comparisonem ad caelestia corpora; et per comparisonem ad Angelos; non autem per comparisonem ad Deum. Nam per comparisonem ad ipsum, non solum in rebus humanis, sed nec in aliqua re potest esse aliquid casuale et improvisum.”

45 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* III, c. 92, n. 13: “Per eandem etiam rationem apparat quod homo non potest esse bene fortunatus universaliter ex virtute corporis caelestis, sed solum quantum ad hoc vel illud. Dico autem universaliter, ut aliquis homo habeat in natura sua, ex impressione caelestis corporis, ut eligat semper, vel in pluribus, aliqua quibus sint coniuncta per accidens aliqua commoda vel incommoda. Natura enim non ordinatur nisi ad unum. Ea autem secundum quae homini accidit bene vel male secundum fortunam, non sunt reducibilia in aliquid unum, sed sunt indeterminata et infinita: ut philosophus docet in II Phys., et ad sensum patet. Non est ergo possibile quod aliquis habeat in natura sua eligere semper ea ad quae etiam per accidens sequuntur aliqua commoda. Sed potest esse quod ex inclinatione caelesti inclinatione ad elidendum aliquid cui coniungitur per accidens aliquod commodum; et ex alia inclinatione alitud; et ex tertia tertium; non autem ita quod ex una inclinatione ad omnia. Ex una autem divina dispositione potest homo ad omnia dirigı.”
the outcome is in no way fortuitous with respect to God. Thus, for Aquinas, a human being can have good fortune every now and then, but having continuous good luck is not possible without the help of divine providence.

Aquinas also points out in the same chapter that nobody can be said to be well-fortuned in things having to do with morals, because the order of morals is based on free choice (electio) unlike fortune that by definition takes place outside the intention of man's free choice. This brief remark by Aquinas is worth noting since the theory of good fortune developed by Aquinas's near contemporary Henry of Ghent is largely founded around the close relationship between good and bad fortune and moral merits and demerits.

A look into the other texts of Aquinas concerned with the notion of bona fortuna and LDBF show that Aquinas's interest in LDBF was largely based on its remarks on the need for a principle of willing outside the human being and a “starting point of motion in the spirit”. Aquinas wholeheartedly accepted

46 Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles III, c. 92, n. 12: “Oportet autem et aliud considerare circa ea quae praedicta sunt. Dictum est enim quod ad hoc quod homini aliquid bene contingat vel male secundum fortunam, et ex Deo est, et ex corpore caelesti esse potest: inquantum homo a Deo inclinatur ad eligendum aliquid cui coniunctum est aliquod commodum vel incommodum quod eligens non praeconsiderat; et inquantum a corpore caelesti ad tale aliquid eligendum disponitur. Hoc autem commodum vel incommodum quidem, relatum ad electionem hominis, est fortuitum; relatum ad Deum, rationem amittit fortuiti; non autem relatum ad corpus caeleste. Quod sic patet. Non enim aliquis eventus amittit rationem fortuiti nisi reductur in causam per se. Virtus autem caelestis corporis est causa agens, non per modum intellectus et electionis, sed per modum naturae. Naturae autem est proprium tendere ad unum. Si ergo aliquis effectus non est unus, non potest per se esse causa eius aliqua virtus naturalis. Cum autem aliqua duo sibi per accidentem coniunguntur, non sunt vere unum, sed solum per accidentem. Unde huius coniunctionis nulla causa naturalis per se esse potest. Sit ergo quod iste homo ex impressione caelestis corporis instigetur, per modum passionis, ut dictum est, ad fodiendum sepulcrum. Sepulcrum autem, et locus thesauri, non sunt unum nisi per accidentem: quia non habent aliquem ordinem ad invicem. Unde virtus caelestis corporis non potest per se inclinare ad hoc totum, quod iste fodiat sepulcrum et locum ubi est thesaurus. Sed aliquis per intellectum agens potest esse causa inclinationis in hoc totum: quia intelligentis est multa ordinare in unum. Patet etiam quod etiam homo qui sciret thesaurum esse ibi, posset alium ignorantem mittere ad fodiendum sepulcrum in loco eodem, ut, praeter intentionem suam, inveniret thesaurum. Sic ergo huiusmodi fortuiti eventus, reducti in causam divinam, amittunt rationem fortuiti: reducti vero in causam caelestem, nequaquam.”

47 Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles III, c. 92, n. 7.

48 Farrell lists the following passages in Aquinas's writings as referring to LDBF. (Farrell does not distinguish between references to Magna Moralia, Ethica Eudemia and Liber de bona fortuna.) Summa contra gentiles III, c. 89; c. 92; De malo, q. 3 a. 3; q. 6, a.1; Summa theologicae, Ia, q. 82, a.4; Quaestiones de quodlibet, Ia. 7; Summa theologicae, Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4; q. 68 a. 1; q. 80, a. 1; q. 109, a.2; De sortibus, 4. Farrell 1984, 161–162, 166. Cordonier writes that this passage of LDBF made Aquinas think that not only of one's faculties but also the movements of the will were caused by the First Cause. Cordonier 2014a, 507-508. As will be seen this passage of LDBF was seen as important by most of the other authors discussing the text as well. It may be noted that for example Thomas Wylton (d. c. 1327) too in his only
the line of argumentation in *LDBF* that God is required as an exterior principle moving the human will in order to avoid infinite regress in the explanation of the first movements of the soul.  

For example, in the 89th chapter of the third book of *Summa contra gentiles*, Aquinas argues that God is the first mover of the human will, referring to Aristotle’s argument in the second part of *LDBF*. Cordonier notes that this was the first time in the history of scholasticism when someone claimed that the acts of human will were dependent on a divine initiative. The idea of God as the first mover of the will fits well into Aquinas’s overall theory of divine providence, according to which, God has the ability to provide contingent causal powers to some created causes and necessary causal powers to others.

### 4.4 Giles of Rome

Giles of Rome’s *Sententia de bona fortuna* is the earliest surviving complete commentary on the *LDBF*. Giles’s commentary survived in some Renaissance editions and manuscripts until the recent edition of large parts of the *LDBF* mentioned this very passage. Interestingly, Wylton too thought that *LDBF* witnessed that Aristotle believed in God’s ability to immediately cause new effects in the sublunary world. Thomas Wylton, On the Intellectual Soul, 161 (Ed. Nielsen & Trifogli p. 98–100): “Sed est istud dubium, quia in fine libelli *De fortuna* videtur ex verbis Philosophi quod bona fortuna sit a Deo immediate, homine nihil ad hoc per consilium rationis coagente.”

49 See further Speer 2014, 527–528 drawing attention to a similar passage in *De malo*, where Aquinas also refers to *Eudemian ethics*.


51 Cordonier 2014b, 91.
commentary as an appendix of a recent article by Cordonier.\footnote{Cordonier 2014b, 144–155. See Cordonier 2014b, 155–160 for more information about the surviving manuscripts and earlier editions of the work.} In this article, Cordonier argued that Henry of Ghent’s lengthy quodlibetal question on good fortune is a critical reaction to Giles’s commentary.\footnote{Cordonier 2014b.} This had gone entirely unnoticed in previous scholarship on Henry. In addition to being highly illuminating for the context of Henry’s important discussion of good fortune and providence, Giles’s commentary is an interesting piece on the history of \textit{LDBF} and its relationship to the discussions on divine providence in its own right. Giles interprets Aristotle’s theory of continuous good fortune in a rather naturalistic manner. This is a clear difference between Giles and Aquinas.

Giles’s commentary consists of a close exegesis of the \textit{LDBF} that he considered an authentic Aristotelian work. Giles recognizes more clearly than Thomas before him that there are two different types of fortune distinguished by Aristotle. \textit{LDBF} is mainly concerned with the type that is “as it were continuous and divine, not that which is completely accidental and chance”. The latter refers, of course, to the type of fortune discussed in \textit{Physics} II, which is of less importance in both \textit{LDBF} and Giles’s commentary\footnote{Giles of Rome, \textit{Sententia de bona fortuna}, T. 3, l. 60–62 (p. 145): “sciendum quod bona fortuna de qua hic principaliter intenditur, est illa que est quasi continua et diuina, non illa que est omino per accidens et ex eventu rerum.” On Giles’s interpretation of continuous good fortune, see also Cordonier, forthcoming.}

Giles pays special attention to the question of the cause of continuous good fortune. The question whether good fortune is caused by nature, intellect or divine benevolence had, of course, been central in \textit{LDBF}, too. Giles’s aim is, however, to present what he takes to be Aristotle’s conclusion in a more systematic and consistent manner. Giles begins his discussion by pointing out that Aristotle argued in the beginning of \textit{LDBF} that good fortune is not nature. As already noted, the reason for this is that according to Aristotle any given nature causes its effects in most cases and in a uniform manner, whereas fortune tends to cause inordinate effects and must be classified as a \textit{causa ut in raro} cause instead of a \textit{causa ut in pluribus}.\footnote{Giles of Rome, \textit{Sententia de bona fortuna}, T. 1, l. 17–24 (p. 144): “Dicit ergo quod primum quidem igitur quis ueniens et considerans super hoc – id est super bona fortuna – dubitabit utique de ea quid sit, quia neque utique quis dicet fortunam esse idem quod est natura, quia natura semper huius cuius est causa est ut in pluribus aut similiter est factiua, fortuna autem nunquam est ut in pluribus nec est similiter et ordinate, sed magis habet esse inordinate et ut accidit. Propter quod fortuna in talibus est ponenda que semper sic inordinate existunt, quare non est idem quod natura.”} This seems problematic, however, since in \textit{LDBF} Aristotle mainly discusses continuous good fortune, which indeed does cause its effects \textit{ut in pluribus}. Therefore, Giles concludes
that when Aristotle first writes that good fortune is not nature, he is perhaps simply expressing doubts and not putting forth his actual conclusion. 56

He does not seem entirely satisfied with this solution, however, and returns to the same problem later in his commentary. Giles aims to reconcile Aristotle’s seemingly contradictory statements regarding whether good fortune is nature or not by distinguishing between two senses of *natura*. The first sense is indeed that to which Aristotle referred in denying that fortune could be nature. In this sense, something is called nature when it is sufficient for bringing about its effect in all or most cases. The classical example would be that fire acts in accordance with its nature when it burns something. 57 The second sense is that something is called natural because human beings have a natural impulse towards it. In this sense being a political animal or acting virtuously is natural to a human being. It is in this sense that good fortune can be called natural. 58 Something that is natural in the first sense must happen always or in most cases, but in the second sense it may happen only rarely, without any contradiction. 59 Giles concludes that Aristotle’s definition of good

56 Giles of Rome, *Sententia de bona fortuna*, T. 1, l. 25–32 (p. 144): “Dubitaret forte aliquis quia videtur falsum esse quod philosophus innuit, uidelicet quod fortuna non sit ut in pluribus. Nam ut dictetur circa finem huius libelli, duplex est bona fortuna, quedam continua, quedam non continua et, ut infra patebit, hic principalius intenditur de bona fortuna continua quam de non continua. Igitur bona fortuna de qua hic intenditur non est ut in paucioribus sed ut in pluribus.Dicendum quod, ut diximus supra, philosophus hic agit de bona fortuna dubitando, non veritatem determinando.”


58 Giles of Rome, *Sententia de bona fortuna*, Text 3, l. 87–94 (p. 146–147): “Alio modo dicitur esse aliquid quid naturale, non quia natura sufficienter illud efficiat, sed quia habemus naturalem impetum ut illud fiat, et sic esse animal ciule est homini naturale, quia ut dicitur primo Politicorum, natura quidem impetus inest omnibus hominibus ad talem communitem, sic etiam esse virtuosum est homini naturale non quia uirtutes secundum esse perfectum insunt nobis a natura, sed quia sumus apti nati ad illas et per rationem nobis naturaliter inditam habemus naturalem impetum ad uiiuentum secundum eas.”

59 Giles of Rome, *Sententia de bona fortuna*, T. 3, l. 97–106 (p. 147): “Quod autem sic est naturale non est inconueniens esse ut in paucioribus, quia etsi naturae est homini esse virtuosum, ut plurimum tamen homines secuntr bona sensibilia et sunt uitiosi. Hoc uiso, facile est respondere ad quesitum, nam bona fortuna non est natura (ut supra negatur) et est natura (ut hic dicitur). Nam non est natura quod natura eam sufficienter efficiat, ideo non oportet eam esse similiter et ut in pluribus. Est tamen natura, quia aliqui homines habent naturalem impetum ut sint fortunati, et quia quod sic est natura non oportet ipsum esse ut in pluribus, non est inconuenies bonam fortunam sic existentem naturam non esse ut in pluribus, sed ut in paucioribus.”
fortune in *LDBF* is that good fortune is “nature without reason” (*sine ratione natura*). Giles thinks that Aristotle does not contradict himself in defining good fortune as nature without reason, after first denying that good fortune is nature. Fortune is nature in the second sense but not in the first sense. This definition of fortune assumes a central role in Giles’s discussion. Giles accepts the definition and finds it illuminating, whereas Henry of Ghent, as will be shortly seen, severely criticizes it due to its inability to accommodate the theological themes that Henry found important in his discussion of good fortune.

Giles notes that the continuous good fortune that Aristotle discusses in *LDBF* is also characterized as in some way divine (*quodammodo divina*) and for this reason it ought to be reduced to divine benevolence in one way or another. The theory Giles presents about the divinity of good fortune is highly original, although it certainly has its roots in Aristotle’s discussion. Giles argues that God moves the whole of nature and human souls towards good, always in accordance with his own essential goodness. Those human beings who follow this divine impulse are the fortunate and will not be able to provide a reason for their fortuitous actions, as they are based on a divine and not a rational impulse. They are moved to good outcomes by the divine impulse without any rational consideration. Furthermore, the reason why some human beings are more fortunate than others is not in the causality of God, which is wholly invariable with respect to the created objects, but rather in the recipients of this causality. The human beings that are correctly disposed and have the right kind of nature to act in accordance with the divine impulse are the fortunate. In this context Giles, stresses that he is simply putting forth the position of Aristotle and will refrain from treating the question from the viewpoint of faith. Instead of offering a theological analysis of God’s freedom

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to do otherwise, he simply notes that such questions ought to be discussed in a different context.\textsuperscript{63} This way of proceeding was to be seriously challenged by Henry of Ghent in his quodlibetal question on good fortune, as will be explained in more depth below. Discussing good fortune in relation to the movement of the whole nature, Giles connects the topic of fortune to physics. This original tendency is mostly absent in the other authors studied in this chapter.

Giles next asks whether one should attribute the effects of good fortune to God rather than to the fortunate human being. He stresses that in Aristotle’s view God’s action is completely uniform and thus any variation in the effects must be based on the recipient or intermediary causes. The particular and proper cause of good fortune is the impulse even though the universal cause, that is, God moving the whole of nature, is also referred to in Aristotle’s explanation of good fortune. All this makes it clear that in Giles’s commentary on \textit{LDBF} Aristotle’s theology is understood as being in perfect accordance with the “\textit{ab uno} principle”.\textsuperscript{64} Giles notes that this is in keeping with the Aristotelian

\textsuperscript{63} Giles of Rome, \textit{Sententia de bona fortuna}, T. 4, l. 140–148 (p. 148): “Quantum est ergo ex parte dei, bene fortunati sunt simile patientes omnibus aliis qui aguntur et qui mouentur a deo quia, ut dictum est, secundum istum ordinem quem uidemus, deus omnes, tam bene fortunatos quam alios, similiter agit siue agitat et mouet. Tamen non omnes similiter aguntur et mouentur, sed qui habent naturam talem et sic dispositam quod impetu dei aguntur, hii secundum sententiam philosophi bene fortunati sunt. Utrum autem deus posset facere preter istum ordinem et posset quantum est de se dissimilier mouere, non est presentis speculationis.” This is exactly the view of providence that we will see Henry of Ghent criticizing below. For Henry, God’s special providence must be taken into account in addition to the general providence discussed by Giles in this passage. Cordonier has pointed out that Giles had developed a similar idea of God’s invariable causality in other works as well. Cordonier 2014b, 118–119; On the history of this doctrine, see Pini 2001, also referred to in Cordonier, forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{64} Giles of Rome, \textit{Sententia de bona fortuna}, T. 4, l. 153–170 (p. 148–149): “Dubitaret forte aliquis, cum bona fortuna de qua hic principaliter intenditur sit a deo mouente et ab aptitudine naturali secundum quam percipere possimus motionem illam et agere secundum eam, quare philosophus magis attribuit bonam fortunam ipsi nature uel ipsi dispositioni naturali quam beniuolentie diuine. Videtur autem eam magis attribuendam esse beniuolentie diuine, quia effectus magis attribuendus est principiali agenti quam instrumentalii. Dicendum quod secundum sententiam philosophi, deus, quantum est de se, uniformiter agit et non diuersificatur actio sua nisi propter diuersitatem recipientium uel propter secunda agentia. Id ergo quod in effectibus est uniforme non uariatum secundum philosophum attribuendum est prime cause uniformiter agenti et mouenti; quod uero diuersificatur in entibus attribuendum est diuersitati recipientium uel agentibus secundis. Quare cum non omnes sint bene fortunati, immo in hoc sit maxima diuersitas, quia aliqui sunt bene fortunati, aliqui male, et unus et idem uno tempore fortunate agit qui alio tempore infortunate operatur, ideo philosophus bonam fortunam, licet referat ipsam in dei beniuolentiam et in deum mouentem naturam totam tamquam in causam universalem, attribuit tamen ipsam naturali impetu tamquam cause particulari et proprie.” The same idea of unchanging causality bringing forth different effects due to different recipients comes up later in
principle of proportionality between causes and effects: universal effects are attributed to universal causes, whereas particular effects (such as good fortune) must be attributed to particular causes (the impulse). For example, the cause of burning is said to be fire as the particular cause, and not the universal cause such as a celestial intellect moving a sphere.65

Towards the end of the commentary, Giles presents some interesting points on the passage where Aristotle argues that the Unmoved Mover must be the first mover of the soul. According to Giles, human reason can be understood either as reason or as a part of the whole of nature (ratio considerari potest uel ut ratio est, uel ut est natura quedam). The same applies to the will, which can also be thought of as a part of the whole of nature. For this reason, God also moves individual human rational souls in moving the whole of nature. This is, Giles thinks, the reason why Aristotle writes that the principle or the beginning (principium) of the movement of reason is not reason itself, but rather something greater (melius) than reason.66 Giles next distinguishes between two possible ways human reason may be moved. When reason moves itself to a conclusion, it is called reason as reason (ratio ut ratio), whereas if God moves reason as a part of the whole created nature, it is more properly called reason as nature (ratio ut natura). Again, in this distinction Giles’s tendency to interpret Aristotle’s theology in the light of the “ab uno principle” comes to the fore. Giles argues that nature is normally directed towards one goal and therefore reason as nature, (i.e. reason moved by God) always moves towards the good, whereas reason as reason is not determinately directed


65 Giles of Rome, Sententia de bona fortuna, T. 4, l. 171–184 (p. 149): “Quod uero additur (attribuendum esse effectum agenti principali, non instrumentali) uerum est reseruata proportione inter effectum et causam, ut effectus uniuersalis magis attribuendus est agenti uniuersali quam organo, et effectus particularis magis attribuendus est agenti particulari principali quam organo, tamen si effectus sit proprius et particularis, attribuuit agenti secundo et particulari, ut calefacere, licet sit ab igne et ab intelligentia mouente orbeb et a deo, attribuuit tamen quidam tamquam proprio et particulari agenti (agit enim deus plus et intimius in quolibet opere nature quam ipsa nature). Tamen, ut proprii et particulariores effectus reducantur in proprias et particulares causas, attribuimus effectus naturales naturalibus agentibus et dicimus bonam fortumam esse a naturali impetu, nonobstante quod omnes huiusmodi effectus sint a deo tamquam a principalis causa mouente naturam totam.”

66 Giles of Rome, Sententia de bona fortuna, T. 7, l. 297–306 (p. 152). “Dicendum quod ratio considerari potest uel ut ratio est, uel ut est natura quedam, et uoluntas, ut uoluntas est, uel ut est natura quedam. Sic enim imaginari debemos quod cum deus moueat naturam totam, mouere habet uoluntatem et intellectum nostrum. Principium enim et primum motiuum uoluntatis et intellectus nostri est deus ipse, cum ipse sit primus motor, et omne mouens moueat in uirtute eius. Ideo infra philosophus dicet quod principium rationis non est ratio, sed aliquid ratione melius. Nam, ut ait, quemadmodum in toto uniuerso est deus mouens, et sicut ipse aliquo modo mouet omnia, sic mouet illud diuinum quod est in nobis, id est mouet intellectum et rationem nostram que quidem diuinum dici potest.”
towards the good. In other words, as moved by God, Giles thinks the human reason is determinately directed towards one end. It would seem that no spontaneity or freedom for opposites on the part of God remain. This is another part of Giles’s exposition that Henry of Ghent found highly problematic.

Giles’s theory of the divine movement of the human reason and will allows him to argue that insofar as the rational impulse towards good is caused by God, it is actually natural and not rational. Giles’s idea is that if the impulse were born of human reason itself, it would have to be a rational impulse, but as it is caused by God moving the intellect (ratio ut natura), it is a natural impulse. Therefore, Aristotle’s definition of good fortune as sine ratione natura is valid. Giles thus understands this definition to imply that the impulse to good fortune is without any rational deliberation on the part of human beings. It is a rational impulse in the trivial sense that it emerges in human reason, although reason itself does not form it. Rather, it is formed by God moving the whole of nature including the human reason (ratio ut natura).

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67 Giles of Rome, Sententia de bona fortuna, T. 7, l. 307–326 (p. 153). “Dicamus ergo quod cum omne mouens et omne agens agat et moueat ut est in actu, ratio nostra dupliciter moueri poterit: primo ab eo qui est omnino in actu (ut ab ipso deo qui est actus purus cui non est admixta potentia), secundo moueri poterit a seipsa (ut cum ratio nostra facta est in actu per principia, mouet seipsam ad intelligendum conclusiones). Ratio autem sic et sic mota non eodem modo se habet. Nam ut est mota a seipsa, magis est ratio ut ratio, quia hoc modo a seipsa mouetur inquantum ratiocinando et discurrendo a principiis ad conclusiones tendit, sed ut mouetur a deo, magis est ratio ut natura. Mouetur enim ratio nostra a deo ut est natura quedam. Nam tota natura et omnes res naturales dependent ab hoc principio quod est deus, juxta illud xii Metaphysicorum: “ab hoc enim principio dependet celum et natura”. Ipse enim deus qui naturas alias condidit nobis naturaliter rationem indidit, propter quod ipse qui mouet naturas singulas mouet nostram rationem nobis naturaliter inditam. Cum ergo differentia sit inter potentias naturales et rationales et, ut tradit ix Metaphysicorum quod naturales sunt magis determinate ad unum, rationales uero ad opposita, in promptu est et dubitationem habere non potest quare ratio mota a seipsa dicta est ratio ut ratio, mota uero a deo dicta est ratio ut natura. Nam ut mouetur a deo magis determinate et directe tendit in bonum, sed ut mouetur a seipsa non determinate tendit in bonum.”

68 It is typical of Giles’s philosophical method as a whole to refuse to treat theological questions in Aristotelian commentaries. As has been shown in the previous chapter, Giles included a theological treatment of providence in his commentary on Sentences.

69 Giles of Rome, Sententia de bona fortuna, T. 7, l. 327–335 (p. 153): “Cum ergo queritur utrum impetus rationales dici possint naturales, dici debet quod impetus facti a ratione ut est ratio et ut mouetur a seipsa sunt solum rationales, et secundum tales impetus non contingit esse fortunam. Propter huiusmodi ergo impetus dicendum est quod ‘ubi plurimus intellectus et ratio, ibi et minima fortuna’. Sed impetus facti a ratione non ut est ratio et ut mouetur a seipsa, sed ut est natura quedam et ut mouetur a deo dici possunt naturales, et secundum hos impetus fieri habet bona fortuna. Nam cum deus semper ad bonum dirigat, sequentes tales impetus dirigimur ut oportet et consequimus bonum finem.”
The same applies to the will. Will understood as the will itself (*voluntas ut voluntas*) is not determined to one end, but will be understood as a part of the whole nature (*voluntas ut natura*), that is the will as moved by God, is determined to good. So, when the impulse infused by God in the will of the human being leads the person towards good, this is properly called good fortune.\(^7^0\)

To conclude, in Giles’s interpretation, there are both natural and non-natural impulses in the human intellect and will. The natural impulses are those that bring about continuous good fortune and explain why some human beings have good fortune always or in most cases. They are caused by God as a universal cause leading the whole of creation towards good. The non-natural impulses, that is, the impulses caused by will understood as the will itself and reason understood as the reason itself, can also lead to good fortune, but only in an accidental way. This is the case, for example, in the oft-repeated example of a digger who accidently discovers a treasure chest in his garden.

### 4.5 Henry of Ghent

Henry of Ghent’s quodlibetal question “Whether good fortune is natural to men” is an extended discussion of good fortune and divine providence taking up approximately forty pages in the critical edition.\(^7^1\) The question was written in either 1281 or 1282 and is divided into two parts. In the first part, Henry aims to present and analyse the position taken by Aristotle in *LDBF*, and then in the second part his intention is to express how the question ought to be answered in accordance with the Catholic faith. Henry’s treatment of good fortune is characterized by his stress on divine control of good fortune and accidental causation. He believes that good fortune cannot be properly understood without taking divine providence into account. Henry also makes an explicit connection between an agents’ moral disposition and continuous good fortune that is absent in the other authors studied in this chapter. Unlike

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\(^7^0\) Giles of Rome, *Sententia de bona fortuna*, T. 7, l. 343–353 (p. 154): “Rursus, sicut ratio nostra mouetur a deo, sic et voluntas nostra a deo moueri potest. Quare sicut est considerare rationem ut ratio (ut cum mouetur a seipsa), et rationem ut natura (ut cum mouetur a deo), sic est considerare voluntatem ut est voluntas ut mouetur a seipsa et voluntatem ut est natura et ut mouetur a deo. Dicitur enim voluntas ut voluntas ut mouetur a seipsa, et ut natura ut mouetur a deo quia ut mouetur a seipsa, non sic determinatur ad unum et ad bonum sicut prout mouetur a deo. Erunt itaque quidam impetus voluntarii ut voluntarii, et secundum tales non est bona fortuna; sunt tamen alii impetus in voluntate non ut volutas est, sed ut natura et ut mouetur a deo, et secundum tales habet esse bona fortuna.”

\(^7^1\) Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 *Utrum bona fortuna sit homini naturalis*. Leuven: Leuven University Press. 87–127.
Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome, Henry interestingly expresses doubt whether *LDBF* is to be taken as an authentic Aristotelian work or not.72 Henry starts by bringing to mind the definition given by Aristotle in *Physics* II that fortuitous effects are unintended effects caused by an intentional agent. In this sense, fortune is an accidental cause. Henry points out, however, that he is not interested in good fortune as a cause *per accidens* but rather as a cause *per se*. Henry asks what this type of fortune is like if it can be shown to exist.73 Like Giles before him, Henry thus notes that Aristotle had distinguished between two types of fortune. What is common to both types is that they are classified as accidental causes arising from a choice (*propositum*). The first type, discussed in II *Physics*, is without a preceding impulse, whereas the second type, coming from a preceding divine impulse, is not mentioned in *Physics*, but is discussed in detail in *LDBF*. Henry wants to draw his attention exclusively to the second type of good fortune that appears to be something like a *per se* cause and comes about continuously through acting on a divine impulse.74 Like Giles, Henry thinks that when Aristotle first appears to argue in *LDBF* that good fortune is neither nature, intellect nor

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73 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 88–89): “Fortuna vero quae dicit modum causae, duplex est: quaedam quae dicit causam per se quoquo modo, ut patebit iam; quaedam vero quae dicit causam per accidens omnino. De illa quae est tantum per accidens causa, determinat Philosophus in II Physicorum. De qua dicit ibidem: “Est causa sicut accidens fortuna, sicut autem nullius simpliciter. Neque enim sicut semper possibile est esse quae a fortuna sunt, sed in his quae simpliciter propter aliquid fiunt, cum aliquid alius ex illis accidit, illud dicitur a fortuna fieri.” Et tunc illud quod est per se causa respectu illius quod intenditur, puta voluntas sive propositum, est causa eundi ad forum. Cum incidit alius, ut accipere pecuniam obviando debitori, si hoc non propositum, illud idem causa est per accidens illius, et fortuna dicitur eadem voluntas. Ut fortuna quae est causa per accidens, nihil alius sit quam propositum per cuius factum ob alius intentum inducitur effectus, quem non intendit ab initio. Et de bona fortuna secundum istum modum adhuc nihil ad propositum, sed de illa quae est causa per se quoquo modo et saltem in tali qui secundum eam dicitur bene fortunatus, ut iam patebit. Quae quolibet suo motu seu impetu quid determinatum bonum intendit, quod, cum aut semper aut frequentter consequitur, dicitur bona fortuna, et ille cui tale quid contingit, dicitur bene fortunatus. De qua quae sit quaestio proposita, quid sit.”

74 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 94): “Appellando igitur fortunam propositum, ut est causa per accidens effectus fortuiti, fortuna ponenda est esse et causa, sed per accidens, et hoc dupliciter: vel ex impetu aliquo ad motum praevieniente rationem ad prosequendum illud fortuitum, aut non ex tali impetu. Secundo modo est illa fortuna de qua determinat Philosophus in II Physicorum, primo modo est fortuna de qua hic intendit, ut dictum est, secundum quod dicit Philosophus in fine tractatus De bona fortuna ‘Duae sunt species bene fortunatorum. Iste autem est secundum impetum directivus, alius autem qui praeter impetum; sine ratione autem ambo’, selicet dirigente et ratiocinante, et ita absque proposito. Et circa medium dicit, ‘Multipliciter dicitur bona fortuna: haec quidem operantur ab impetu et praeliquidibus, haec autem non, sed contrarie’, etc.”
divine care, he is using the term good fortune in an equivocal sense. Aristotle’s actual position, according to Henry, is also that good fortune is some kind of nature.\footnote{Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 89–90): “Et aequivoce accipiendo bonam fortunam pro causa per accidens de qua determinatur in II Physicorum, arguit quod ‘non est natura aut propositum, quia quae ab illis fiunt, ordinate fiunt et semper aut frequenter, non sic autem quae fiunt a fortuna’ Et non sit cura divina arguit, quia ‘bona fortuna indignis saepe contingit.’ Et determinando intentum repellit omnino voluntatem sive propositum secundum rationem et intellectum tamquam omnino extraneum a bona fortuna, quia, ut dicit, ‘ubi plurimus intellectus et ratio, ibi minima fortuna, ubi autem plurima fortuna, ibi minus intellectus.’ Contingit autem quod ‘convenientissimum bonae fortunae est natura, quia ipsa est in his quae non in nobis existunt, neque quorum ipsi domini sumus, etenim cui praeter cogitationem accidit bonum, operari bene fortunatum aimus. Est enim bona fortuna, ut dicit, in \textit{eo} quod \textit{est} bonum aliquod, existere, et in \textit{eo} quod est malum, non sumere praeter rationem’. Ex quo concludit quasi definitionem bonae fortunae, quod scilicet ‘est sine ratione natura, in anima enim est natura tale, quo bene fortunati impetu feruntur sine ratione.’}

Henry notes that some pagans had thought that fortune was a separately existing goddess, responsible for all the fortuitous effects. Following Augustine, Henry argues that good fortune is certainly not a separate nature nor a cause that is not reducible to any other existing natures.\footnote{Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10, (ed. Wilson p. 91–92): “Est enim intelligendum quod, si fortuna intelligatur esse aliqua alia causa in rerum natura existens praeter principium agens quod est natura aut voluntas, quae nec ad aliquid horum reducitur, aut quod sit aliquid quod fiat a tali causa, hoc modo fortuna non est aliquid omnino in rerum natura, neque causa neque effectus, nisi secundum falsam opinionem paganorum, qui posuerunt fortunam esse deum quandam a qua, secundum eos, fiunt omnes effectus quos appellamus fortuitos, secundum quod de istis dicit Philosophus quod ‘ponunt causam sine ratione humanae ratiocinationi, tamquam existente quadam natura’, scilicet alia et seperata ab ipsa, et hoc praeter generalem curam Dei, cuiusmodi erat dea quaedam.”}

Henry agrees with Augustine, who had reduced all the fortuitous effects under the providence of God. Thus, from the viewpoint of creatures, many effects may be accidental while at the same time from the viewpoint of divine providence they are intentional, as nothing is fortuitous for God. Fortuitous and accidental effects may happen to all created agents, but not to God.\footnote{Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 92–93): “Et hoc modo desistatur Augustinus nomen fortunae, reducendo omnia fortuita ad generalem providentiam divinam et sub illa tamquam ad causas proximas, ad naturam et voluntatem, a quibus multa fiunt et possunt fieri praeter intentionem, quae ab eis in quantum huissimodi non fiunt tamquam a causa per se, quia non est causa per se nisi determinate intendens effectum. [...] Et secundum hoc fortuna potest appellari ipse effectus fortuitus, et similiter ipsum propositum, ut est causa per accidens, sicut dictum est. Nec obstat quod omnia haec habeant causam generalis providentiae determinatam et intendentem, quia respectu eius nihil fit casu aut fortuna, sed solum respectu causae proximae. Unde aspiciendo ad illam causam dicit Plato: ‘Nihil est cuius causa, etc.’ Et similiter Augustinus quod: ‘nihil dicitur casu fieri, nisi cuius causa occulta.’” This had been the standard view in the Christian tradition since Augustine. In the late-medieval Aristotelian framework, the treatments of Henry and others highlight that a fortuitous effect is by definition...}
Augustinian insight Henry concludes that while someone may have good fortune occasionally because of an impulse (*impetus*) given by, for example, an angel or another human being, continuous good fortune is possible only through an impulse of divine origin. This is because only the omniscient God is able to foreknow all the innumerable contingent causes and effects having to do with good fortune.78 Henry’s ideas concerning divine providence and fortune thus clearly have Augustinian origins. Henry develops the theme in much greater detail than Augustine, as will be seen in what follows.

Henry next turns his attention towards the impulse. The first question is then whether such an impulse actually exists that is prior to reason and natural to men in the sense that some have it since birth. Henry considers two arguments against the existence of such an impulse. The first argument is that if the impulse is naturally sufficient to lead the fortunate human being to strive for good (in the way a stone, for example, falls naturally), it follows that no freedom remains for the fortunate human being and he will be led by the impulse instead.79 The second argument is that if such an impulse exists, it would appear to be an absolute and *per se* cause that is in contradiction with Aristotle’s definition in *Physics* II of fortuitous effects as something arising *per accidens* from the action of intentional agents.80

Henry solves these arguments by explaining that Aristotle’s view is that such an impulse does not need to be natural in the sense that all beings within the same species, such as all individual human beings, would have it equally. Rather, some individuals may be naturally inclined to have it to a greater degree than others, just like some men have better hearing than others. Here

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78 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 94): “Quare cum fortuitum secundum bonam fortunam non potest esse fortuitum respectu primi impellentis praevenientis rationem, quia ipse est causa illius per se et intendens illud, igitur patet quod ex solius Dei impulsum, qui potest solus omnia accidentalia praevidere, homo solummodo potest esse universaliter fortunatus, licet respectu alicuius specialis commodi potest esse fortunatus ex impulsum vel angeli vel corporis caelestis, vel etiam alterius hominis, qui sciens thesaurum absconditum excitat alterum ad fodiendum illuc, ut fodiens praeter suam intentionem inveniat thesaurum.”

79 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 95): “Et est scienendum quod, si appelleetur natura principium impellens in motum ex se et sufficienter, quemadmodum in gravi est principium quod est natura inclinandi deorsum, sic procul dubio non est in homine tale principium quod est natura, quia sic semper dirigeret in bonum nisi impediretur ab aliquo extra, sicut grave semper et necessario non impeditum descendit, nec esset in homine libera electio.”

80 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 95): “Praeterea nec tale principium posset dici fortuna, sed potius absolutae et per se causa. Unde, de tali natura loquitur Philosophus cum arguit quod ‘fortuna bona non est natura, quia natura semper vel in pluribus est similiter factiva, fortuna autem nequaquam’.”

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Henry in essence agrees with Giles’s interpretation that some human beings may be naturally better disposed to receive the impulse.\textsuperscript{81} Henry stresses that the effects brought about by the impulse do not need to be necessary in any way. Henry draws an analogy to a dice in which one side is larger than the others. Such a dice will more often fall to the larger side, but this does not imply the presence of any necessity – it is simply more likely, statistically speaking. Even if someone always acted in accordance with the \textit{impetus}, it would not have to be necessary.\textsuperscript{82} This idea of a contingent cause, functioning always in a uniform way, was radical in the Aristotelian tradition that had traditionally identified perfect statistical regularity with necessity. Henry stressed, however, that in order to satisfy the definition of fortune the impulse must depend on the action of a willing agent, since a natural cause striving for one end would have nothing to do with fortune.\textsuperscript{83} The reason for this is the Aristotelian idea of nature as a cause directed towards only one end. When, for example, firewood burns in accordance with its nature, it would not make sense to speak of fortune. A properly fortuitous effect must be an unintentional side effect of intentional action and thus based on the action of some voluntary instead of some natural cause.

\textsuperscript{81} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 95–96): “Alio modo appellatur naturalis inclinatione ab bonum secundum quod bonum, et hoc non secundum communem cursum naturae in eadem specie, sed super ceteros eiusdem speciei, quae non est nisi in paucioribus. Sed non sufficit natura illa ad faciendum impetum ex se sine alio principio movente, cuiusmodi est motor universalis, qui licet quantum est de se, uniformiter omnium animas impellit et movet ad bonum, ut infra dictur, propter tamen naturalis principii maiorem habilitatem in uno quam in altero fortius illo impetu movetur unus quam alter, et sic, quia universalis virtus determinatur per inclinativum particulare, ideo Philosophus istum impetum isti particulari cause tribuit.”

\textsuperscript{82} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 96–97): “Et hoc est quod dicit Philosophus, quo dissolvuntur omnes rationes quibus ipse probat quod bona fortuna non sit natura. ‘Quid igitur’ inquit, ‘prohibet accidere aliqui deinceps talia multoties?’ Id est tales impetus quales aliquoties contingunt. Quasi dicit: nihil? Et exponit quo modo subdendis: ‘Non quia hos oportet, sed quale utique erit cubos semper longa iacere’. Quasi dicit: re vera nihil prohibet. Et hoc, non quia oportet sicut semper dirigere secundum hos impetus, ipsos de necessitate sequendo, sed tale contingit secundum hos motus, quale contingit circa cubos, id est corpora cubica habentia quaedam latera longiora et latiora aliiis: sic enim nihil prohibet ipsa super longiora latera saepius cadere, nulla tamen necessitate cadunt super illa, licet aptiora sint, ut super illa cadat, sic in proposito nihil prohibet secundum illos impetus semper agere, numquam tamen necessario, sed pluribus contingentibus, potest deficiere actum. Et si nuncum deficerent, nihilominus respectu boni contingentis ipse agens impulsionis, cuius haec est natura, quia non intendit illud ex suo actu, est agens per accidens, propter quod et illa natura, quae est in ipso principio huius actionis, ut tendit in illum iuxta praedeterminata, dicitur fortuna.”

\textsuperscript{83} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 97): “Quae tamen non diceretur fortuna, nisi sua actio sic dependeret a voluntate habentis naturam, et per hoc est pure voluntaria, non naturalis. Si enim esset naturalis pure, principium illud non diceretur agens per accidens neque fortuna, sed agens per se, nec esset consecutio illius bona fortuna, sed solum a natura intenta”
Henry points out that Aristotle’s opinion is not that those more apt to obey the impulse would have nobler souls, but rather the opposite: their intellects are naturally disposed to follow the impulse moving their wills without any rational consideration or understanding.\textsuperscript{84} This leads Henry to consider the central psychological problem regarding the first movements of the human soul raised in \textit{LDBF}. If the impulse is responsible for the first movements of the will, does not the impulse become the reason for all human willing?\textsuperscript{85} Henry follows Aquinas in his interpretation that the first mover of the human will must be something other than and nobler than the human rational soul. This cannot be anything other than God acting through his providence. Henry comments that this passage is both the most valuable and the most difficult to grasp (\textit{optimus et difficilius}) in the whole \textit{LDBF}.	extsuperscript{86} Thus, Henry argues, fortuitous effects should be attributed to God rather than a human being, since with effects that have to do with good fortune man remains more passive and God more active. Henry notes that this goes against the understanding of the philosophers, who had held that all effects should be attributed to proximate causes rather than the First Cause. Yet, Henry argues that although Aristotle had come to the conclusion in \textit{LDBF} that good fortune is to be identified with nature (instead of intellect or divine care), he nevertheless understands this nature as coming from divine providence as can be seen in the end of \textit{LDBF}.

\textsuperscript{84} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 97): “Ex parte animae hoc non potest poni in substantialibus, nisi ponendo gradus in animabus, ut bene fortunatus sortiatur meliore et nobiliore animam, alia aut forte simpliciorem, propter hoc quod dicit in fine: ‘videtur principium amissa ratione magis valere, quemadmodum caeci memorantur magis, amissisque his qui ad visibilitatem virtuosius esse, quod memorantur’ scilicet, contingit. Non ergo vult quod natura bene fortunati sit ex rationis nobilitate, sed ex defectu, et hoc non naturali secundum gradum naturae, sed accidental, qui possit ei contingere, quemadmodum contingit homini caecitas.”

\textsuperscript{85} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. (ed. Wilson p. 98): “Unde quaerit Philosophus, utrum ‘fortuna sit causa huius, quod est concupiscere quod oportet et quando oportet’, et respondens dicit: ‘Aut quidem omnium erit’. Quod re vera sequitur, quia si esset prima ‘causa eius quod est concupiscere’, ut natura illa ex se moveret voluntatem ad actum volendi, tunc intellectum, qui non potest esse sibi primum movens, etiam moveret fortuna, mediante illo actu in eo scilicet quod actus ille esset obiectum intellectus. Quare, cum omnia quae fiunt ab homine, vel ab intellectu vel a voluntate vel ab utroque fiunt, omnia ergo quae fierent ab homine, fierent a fortuna.”

\textsuperscript{86} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 98–99): “Ex quo contingit quod sit aliquod principium quod est extra, quod est principium motus in anima illius scilicet, qui est ‘concupiscere quod oportet’, ut sic necesse habeamus ponere quod primum movens voluntatem nostram, sive in fuga mali, in quo per accidens consistit eufortunium sive in aedipe et prosecutione boni, in quo per se constat eufortunium, sit ipse Deus, qui suo motu praevenit omnem motum alium ex se vel a ratione ad bonum cognitum in ratione, ita etiam quod sine illius motu primo moveri non posset ad actum volendi a bono cognito. Et sic primus motus voluntatis non est a se ipso, sed a principio quod est supra, quod semper est in actu volens, et hoc est quod dicit: ‘Etenim eius quod est intelligere’. etc. Et est melius et difficileius omnium quae continet tractatus.”
Thus, Aristotle does not in the end contradict himself in his answer to the question whether good fortune is nature, intellect or divine care: the proximate cause of good fortune is the impulse of an individual nature, but each such impulse may be reduced to divine providence as the remote cause.87

In this context, Henry also invokes the authority of Anselm, who had in Henry’s interpretation held in his De casu diaboli that God is the cause of the first movements of the will.88 Henry does not spend much time discussing Anselm’s views. This reference is, nevertheless, worth noting, as it was later picked up by Scotus, who disagreed with Henry about the origin of the first movements of the will.

After critically presenting Aristotle’s position, Henry moves to discuss his own ideas on good fortune. Henry’s own theory of good fortune according to the Catholic faith is based on a highly interesting threefold distinction between general providence (providentia generalis), special providence (providentia specialis) and universal providence (providentia universalis), containing the general and special providences.89 By his general providence God provides for

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87 Henry of Ghent, Quodlibet VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 99): “Unde, quia in tali impulso movens et impellens non est nisi Deus, respectu cuius nihil dicitur fortuitum, sed ille, respectu cuius effectus contingens dicitur fortuitus, non est nisi volens et prosequens impulsum, cui non attribuitur actio nisi sicut principio passivo et non activo, semper autem principalius debet effectus attribui principio activo quam passivo vel efficienti instrumentalii, igitur effectus talis potius debet attribui Deo tamquam praevius, quam homini tamquam fortuitus, licet philosophi effectus omnes solent attribuere causis proximis et non primis. Propret quod huicusmodi effectus fortuitus esse dicebat. Dicebat etiam quod ‘fortuna bona esset natura’, non autem cura seu providentia divina, licet illam naturam in fine tractatus reducit ad divinam providentiam ut ad causam primam, et secundum hoc in nullo est sibi contrarius.”

88 Henry of Ghent, Quodlibet VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 99): “In eo quidem dicit de motu voluntatis, concordat Anselmus, secundum hoc quod determinat De casu diaboli, capitulo 12, ut patet insipienti.”

89 Henry of Ghent, Quodlibet VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 106): “Ad cuius intellectum scienctum est quod circa creaturam intellectualem triplex est providentia divina: quaedam generalis et quaedam specialis, quae inter se sunt diversae, et quaedam universalis, quae continet ambas.” The distinction between providentia generalis and providentia specialis goes back to Augustine’s commentary on Genesis ad litteram. Henry is the first scholastic theologian that I know of who developed this distinction at length. The distinction also features in an earlier work of Henry, Summa art. 3 q. 5. On the other hand, a distinction between providence as properly relating to the human species and on a more general level relating to the other species reminds one of Moses Maimonides’s theory of divine providence in The Guide for the Perplexed XVII. Maimonides writes that with regard to all the other species providence, is not concerned with individuals. In relation to human species, however, divine providence extends to each individual. Maimonides grounds his view on numerous Biblical quotations, where special divine interventions only occur when mankind is concerned. Maimonides considers his theory to be the same as Aristotle’s with regard to non-human species. In an unpublished article, Wilson has drawn attention to an interesting passage in Henry’s Summa a. 61 q. 2., currently in the process of being edited. In this passage, he refers to “tractatu[s] De providentia Dei et gubernatione creaturarum”. No such tractate
distinct species in distinct ways. Meanwhile, for different individuals within
the same species, God’s general providence is uniform. If any differences
between two members of the same species, say, two human beings, should
arise within the context of general providence, it must be due to different
natural dispositions between these individuals that incline them to receive the
divine impulse in greater or lesser quantity.\textsuperscript{90}

Henry’s idea seems to be that within the scope of the general providence of
God, the divine impulse is like sunshine, which with regard to the sun comes
equally to all men, but in practice the ones who are not standing in the shade
are better disposed to receive it. Similarly, some human beings are more
inclined to receive the divine impulse. Henry writes that when it comes to
general divine providence, Aristotle’s theory in \textit{LDBF} is wholly valid from the
Catholic perspective. Singular beings receive existence from God and are
conserved in existence by God, but they also receive what is required for living
a good life (\textit{necessariis ad esse et ad bene esse}).\textsuperscript{91}

Henry next moves to discuss the special providence of God. The special
providence is based on merits and grace so that the good and the bad are

\textsuperscript{90} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 106–107): “Providentia generalis respicit
naturam absolutam, et secundum istam Deus diversimode providet diversum diversitatem
naturarum in gradu et specie […] Eis autem quae sunt in eadem specie, quantum est ex se et quantum
est ex parte provisionis Dei generalis, aequaliter et in eisdem et eodem modo providet, et movet impulsu
primo semper voluntatem in omnibus quae restant agenda ad melius. Et si in hoc contingit diversitas,
hoc procedit ex diversa dispositione naturali individuorum sub specie, propter quod unus magis
disponitur ad recipiendum divinos impulsus et superius habitam. Et in hoc sitit determinatio
Philosophi, nec ponit Philosophus aliquam ulteriorem providentiam a Deo, et ponit quaecumque fiunt a
divina provisione in Deo naturaliter fieri, quantum est ex parte Dei et etiam ex parte rerum.”

\textsuperscript{91} Henry of Ghent, \textit{Quodlibet} VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 104–105): “Unde generalis providentia divina
sic providet singulis, quantum est ex dispositione naturarum et quantum est ex parte providentiae
generalis ut generalis est, ut instinctu quodam et primo motu, voluntatem cuiuslibet moveat in singulis
agendis quae sua actio potest attingere, ad id quod melius est illi, licet diversimode secundum gradus et
ordinem rerum, iuxta illud quod dicit beatus Dionysius cap. 5. De divinis nominibus ‘Super reliqua
existencia, quae magis sunt circa optimum, abundantius ipsius participantes sunt, et plura et maiora ex
eo donationes accipientes’ Et quod hoc in nullo, ut apparent, contrariatur dicta determinatio secundum
mentem Philosophi veritati fidei. Singulis enim, ut tenet fides, providet, non solum in dando esse et
conservando, sed etiam in necessariis ad esse et ad bene esse providendo, iuxta illud verbum Dionysii
De divinis nominibus ca. 4: ‘Omnia divinia iustitia ordinat et, unusuisque cognata, omnibus
existentibus donat’, sed hoc iuxta proportiones et gradus rerum.” It should be noted that the analogy
with the sun does not appear in Henry, but is later employed by John Duns Scotus in his 21\textsuperscript{st} quodlibetal
question.
provided for in different ways. Henry writes that special providence follows the order of grace rather than nature. Thus, while the different species of beings receive the general providence differently, the distribution of special providence is instead based on the moral differences between individual beings within the same species of beings. Individuals using their free will in a laudable way receive different things from special providence than individuals who commit sins.92 Quite strikingly, Henry writes that by his special providence, God often reverses the order of general providence so that those disposed for good by general providence and natural disposition always or often (semper aut in pluribus) receive misfortunes through the special providence of God.93 Towards the end of the question, Henry also describes universal providence, introduced earlier as containing the general and special providences, in a little more detail. The main conceptual task of universal providence appears to be the avoidance of positing really contradictory motives to God. Henry writes that in the end both the general and the special providence work together in the given effects that are always in accordance with divine justice.94 Because of these considerations, Henry defines good

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fortune as a certain kind of divine care together with merits and demerits. He finds Giles’s definition “nature without reason” lacking, as it does not take into account the special providence of God.95

Henry writes that there is no question about the fact that some are always or in most cases prosperous in good fortune, while others are not. Like Thomas and Giles before him, he believes that it is empirically evident that continuous good fortune exists. Aristotle had considered this solely the effect of different natural dispositions. Henry argues strongly against Aristotle (“Sed ista suppositio [Aristotelis] falsa est et haeretica”) that in addition to different natural dispositions a special order of providence based on grace and merits must be posited. Furthermore, Henry proceeds to point out that according to the Catholic understanding of God, not only the voluntary aspect of providence (providentia specialis) but also the natural aspect of providence (providentia generalis) are based on divine choice. Henry’s idea is that even the natural order, proceeding from God’s general providence, and the natural necessities are ultimately based on the determinations of the divine will. Thus, no part of the creation is absolutely necessary in relation to God. The point of theological interest in Henry’s disagreement with Aristotle lies in the question whether the First Cause is to be considered a natural cause like the sun that may not choose to prevent its rays from falling upon men or a voluntary cause that has the ability to act otherwise. According to Henry, the main error of the philosophers, Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes, had thus been that while they took note of the general providence falling equally to members of the same species, they failed to see that in addition to the order of nature there is an order of grace based on special divine providence. For this reason, Henry considers Aristotle’s theory insufficient. In addition, he finds it vain and erroneous since it makes good fortune a natural necessity both from the viewpoint of its divine source and its human recipient. In Henry’s reading, Aristotle’s theory of general providence leaves God no choice regarding the good fortunes that men receive. In addition, no rational deliberation on the part of human beings makes a real difference, for the well-fortuned man is compared to a blind or a foolish person, whose good luck may be impeded only through accidental occurrences which are outside his own powers.96 Unlike

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95 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 122): “Verius est ergo dicere, licet nomen non congruat, quod bona fortuna est cura quaedam Dei cum merito aut demerito, quam quod sit natura sine ratione”

Aquinas, who had defended Aristotle’s understanding of providence against the unauthentic interpretations of later philosophers such as Averroes, Henry treats the “philosophers” as a uniform group in stark contrast to the Catholic faith. Here we can also note the clear differences between the treatments of LDBF of Giles and Henry. Giles had been content with introducing the doctrine of Aristotle, and did not wish to enter into a discussion about God’s freedom to do otherwise in the context of an Aristotelian commentary. Henry, on the other hand, makes his criticism of Aristotle’s theological determinism the centrepiece of his discussion of LDBF. For Henry, Aristotle’s theory of good fortune, while acceptable on the topic of general divine providence, remains decidedly insufficient and erroneous from the Catholic perspective.

Henry stresses that fortuitous effects are not only foreseen but also intended by God. Fortuitous effects could not have celestial bodies as their per se causes, since celestial bodies are natural causes and thus strive only for one effect. Henry’s argument is based on the idea that natural causes, such as

erroneum, quidquid Philosophus determinat de bona fortuna. Non quin secundum cursum naturae et generalem providentiam ita oporteret poni ut ipse determinat, si non esset providentia specialis, sed quia nihil tangit de dicta providentia speciali, ideo insufficiens est quod dicit. Vanum autem est et erroneum, quia quasi negando illam providentiam ponit bonam fortunam et dispensationem omnem a Deo circa creaturas fieri necessitate naturae, et ex parte Dei et ex parte rerum ita quod non posset alter fieri ut semper vel frequenter, nisi impedimentum aliquod adhiberet hominis liberum arbitrium propria electione et consiliatione, quam tamen consiliationem denegat bene fortunatis, quia quoad actum consiliandi vult eos esse sine ratione, quemadmodum caecus est sine vi visiva, et sic quasi ommino naturali necessitate quantum est ex parte Dei et quantum est ex parte hominis, ponit aliquos esse bene fortunatos, ita quod non posset euafortunium impediri in eis nisi ab aliquo extrinsecus contingente.” As Wilson has noted, Henry did not, however, consider the doctrine of LDBF completely deterministic, as human beings still retained the freedom to impede the effects of good fortune through the use of free choice. Wilson 2014, 596–598. As seen in the background chapter, Nemesius had already claimed that for Aristotle there was no special providence, but only general providence.

97 Henry of Ghent, Quodlibet VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 107): “Et in hoc sistit determinatio Philosophi, nec ponit quacumque Philosophus aliquam ulteriori providentiam a Deo, et ponit quacumque fiunt a divina provisione in Deo naturaliter fieri, quantum est ex parte Dei et etiam ex parte rerum, licet in rationabilibus eius executio per rationem et liberum arbitrium possit impediri, ut habitum est. [...] Unde Avicenna IX Metaphysicae dicit sic: “Causae superiores non conceduntur operari propter nos nec intendere aliquid propter nos, nec accidit eis electio.” Janssens argues that the main difference between the theological system of Henry and Avicenna is exactly in the contingency of divine will with respect to actually existing things. This tenet, which was central to Henry, had no place in Avicenna’s thought.

98 Henry of Ghent, Quodlibet VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 112): “Quod ita sit ex parte corporum caelestium et astrorum, patet ex hoc, quia agunt per modum naturae in haec inferiora, cuius non est per se intendere nisi ad unum, et nullo modo ad plura, nisi per quandam naturalem et per se connexionem se habeat ad invicem, per quam fiunt quodam modo unum.”
celestial bodies, cannot be the *per se* causes of anything more than their natural effects. In the case that a person has good fortune always or in most cases by accident, the celestial bodies must be ruled out as causes. Intentionally connecting several causes in order to cause a certain effect is impossible for natural causes. Therefore, an agent with intellect and will, i.e. God, must be posited in order to explain such phenomena.\(^99\) Continuous good fortune cannot be caused by angels either since they too fail to have foreknowledge and control over the infinity of causes relating to fortuitous events.\(^100\) Moreover, Henry does not consider the possibility that someone would have good fortune always or in most cases due to pure inexplicable chance as worthy of consideration. After all, Aristotle himself had written in *Physics* II and *Metaphysics* VI that a cause *per se* must be posited for effects that take place always or usually.\(^101\) Henry’s view that only God can make someone continuously fortunate shows very clearly that the “*ab uno* principle” has no place in Henry’s treatment of providence. If God as an entirely simple being was capable of causing only one effect, the surprising effects on the lower levels of causation leading to continuous good fortune would have to be entirely accidental with respect to God. This is something that Henry explicitly denies.\(^102\)

Due to his view that the celestial bodies could not possibly make someone universally fortunate, Henry is in a position to criticize Aristotle for holding contradictory principles in *LDBF* and the 8th book of *Physics*. In *LDBF*

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\(^99\) Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 117): “Licet autem agens per intellectum et voluntatem sic potest coniungere quaedam inconnexa, ut quosdam effectus per accidens respectu alterius effectui per se eiusdem, qui tamen ambo sunt intenti ab ipso coniungente, ut patet in exemplo iam posito, quia tamen uni effectui per se intento ab aliquo infiniti aliis possunt esse coniuncti accidentaliter et inconnexi eidem, qui per se possunt ei connecti per agens per se praevindicet et intendens utrumque, cum omne agens per accidens reductibile est ad tale per se agens, sicut dictum est, infinita accidentaliter connexa praevidere, sive circa unum effectum per se intentum ab aliquo sive circa plures, et per se illa connectere non potest nisi agens providentiae sive praevindicet in infiniti, cuiusmodi non est nisi solus Deus, cuius virtus est universalis et per se respectu omnium effectuum generaliter” Wilson 1983, 247.

\(^100\) Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 118): “Nec mediante creatura intellectuali, quia licet potest plures tales connectere et eos intendede per se, et <tanto> plures angelus quam homo, quanto superior est in gradu naturae, non tamen potest praevide re infinitos tales, ut connectat et intendat eos.”

\(^101\) Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 120): “Verumtamen cum alia, qualia tractatus iste ponit fieri secundum bonam fortunam, contingent semper aut frequentem, necesse habet ponere aliquam causam talia determinate intendentem, secundum quod ipse determinat in VI Metaphysicae et in II Physicorum et in pluribus aliis locis.”

\(^102\) Henry’s solution was approvingly quoted by Denys the Carthusian, writing in the 15th century. Denys pointed out that many of the Peripatetic philosophers had failed to see that God is a free cause, capable of causing multiple things simultaneously. Instead, they held erroneously that God can only immediately cause one effect. Emery 2014, 631–632.
Aristotle had assumed that someone could be continuously fortunate only with the help of a divinely infused impulse. Yet, in the 8th book of *Physics*, Henry writes, Aristotle had clearly thought (*plane sentit*) that God only practices causality towards the world through the mediation of celestial bodies. Henry suggests that the existence of well-fortuned men is more evident than the assumption that God influences the world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies. Therefore, the theory assuming that God influences the world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies must be dismissed.\(^{103}\)

Henry thus takes a very critical stance towards the Aristotelian idea that the First Cause exercises causality towards the lower world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies.\(^{104}\) This is notable as we have seen that with Albert the Great in the previous generation of Scholastics, the idea of the First Cause influencing the lower world through a mediation of lower causes seemed to present no problem at all. While this idea is not completely rejected by Henry, its plausibility is questioned in clear terms. For Henry, the “*ab uno* principle” was valid for natural but not for voluntary causes. God was for him, of course, a voluntary cause *par excellence*. Henry thus rejected and criticized the “*ab uno* principle” in his theological thought. Not only was it unacceptable from a theological point of view, but in his interpretation, it was also contradictory within the context of Aristotelian philosophy as the existence of continuous good fortune was for Henry an evident fact.

In conclusion, I would like to argue that Henry’s question on good fortune can be read as an attempt to discover a synthesis between the “philosophers” understanding of providence as limited to species of beings and a more traditional Augustinian view of providence as divine care extending to the smaller details of created causal chains. The general providence described by Henry corresponds with Averroes’s understanding of providence as extending to individuals only *qua* members of a given species. In accordance with a longstanding tradition, Henry too held that this had been the view of Aristotle as well. This doctrine became highly controversial in the latter half of the 13th century in the University of Paris, as seen in the doctrinal condemnations of 1270 and 1277, the latter of which Henry was involved in compiling. Instead of rejecting Averroes’s theory, Henry attempted to retain it in a theologically orthodox framework by complementing it with the idea of special providence, which is not so much concerned with the species of beings and the natural

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\(^{104}\) The question of whether God causes effects immediately in the sublunary world was also picked up by Scotus in his quodlibetal question 21, which is discussed in more detail below.
world, but rather with individuals, salvation and the moral order. Furthermore, for Henry, general providence worked through the mediation of the celestial bodies, whereas the special providence of God was immediate. For someone to have continuous good fortune, immediate divine interventions and special providence are required. Therefore, continuous good fortune was impossible from a purely natural starting point. The success of Henry’s solution can be seen in the fact that John Duns Scotus uncritically accepted Henry’s distinction between general and special providences (without actually naming Henry) in his 21st quodlibetal question. Yet in the same question, Scotus was highly critical towards several other ideas put forth by Henry, as will be shortly seen.

4.6 Richard of Middleton

Richard of Middleton produced three sets of quodlibetal questions. His third quodlibet, written in 1286–1287 contains a relatively brief quodlibetal question on good fortune. Chronologically, Richard’s question is later than Henry’s question but earlier than Scotus’s question. Indeed, Richard’s treatment clearly shows Henry’s influence. The question Richard asks is whether good fortune can be natural to some men – almost the same wording as Henry had used. The contents of the question are for the most part rather straightforward. Richard starts off by repeating the definition of good fortune put forward by Aristotle in *Physics* II. He then denies that anyone could be fortunate always through natural causes alone. According to Richard, nature can be understood in various different senses: 1. as nature outside the human being, the heavenly spheres for example, or 2. nature within the human being.

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105 Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* VI q. 10 (ed. Wilson p. 122): “Ita quod, si istud quod contingit saepius reductur in causam per se intendentem et impellentem propter hoc, hoc non est nisi in Deum immediate agentem sive impellentem, et hoc, tam ex eius providentia generali mediata secundum dispositionem impressam a caelo, quam ex eius providentia speciali etiam immediata secundum dispositionem meritorum vel demeritorum” See also Wilson 2014, 599.

106 Also e.g. John of Paris briefly refers to this distinction, although it is difficult to say whether John was directly influenced by Henry. John of Paris, *Commentary on the Sentences* I, d. 39 q. 2, l. 133–135 (ed. Müller, p. 424).


108 Richard of Middleton, *Quodlibetum* III, q. 7, 94b–95a: “Unde secundum Philosophum 2 Physicorum, fortuna est causa secundum accidens in his, quae in minori secundum propositum eorum quae propter hoc sunt. [...] ex quo potest patere faciliter, quid est bona fortuna et quid est mala. Quia si supradicta causa, quam dixi esse fortunam, fit respectu mali effectus, tunc est mala fortuna. Si autem fit respectu boni effectus, tunc est bona fortuna, secundum quod potest trahi ex dictis Philosophum 2 Physicorum.”
The latter may be further distinguished as, 2a. the nature that all living beings share, and 2b. the nature that is more exclusive to human beings, meaning reason (ratio). The simple reason Richard provides as to why nature cannot make anyone continuously fortunate is that nature understood in any of the three possible senses separately, or all of them together, remains susceptible to the intervention of concurring causes that may bring about accidental effects. Given that regular causation requires a cause per se, Richard considers it obvious that such random outcomes could not always cause good fortune to the agent in question. Thus, Richard comes to the same conclusion as Henry before him: if someone is fortunate always, it may be only due to divine providence having disposed the relevant causes, including accidental causes, in the required way. Since no cause or effect is accidental from the divine point of view, divine providence is able to arrange the complete causal network in this way.

Close to the end of the question, Richard treats the definition of good fortune found in LDBF, that is, nature without reason (sine ratione natura). He argues that good fortune in the sense described in Physics II (an accidental cause leading to a surprising positive outcome) can be caused by nature in a disposing, but not coercive way. When human actions lead to fortunate accidental outcomes, the actions are naturally inclined by rational judgment.

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109 Richard of Middleton, Quodlibetum III, q. 7, 95b–96a: “Tripliciter enim ad praesens possimus accipere naturam creatam. Scilicet pro natura extra hominem, sicut de naturali influentia coeli et elementorum. Alio modo pro natura in ipso homine. Et hoc dicitur uno modo secundum quod natura aliqua communis est homo et bruto, de qua natura dicitur in Institutionibus. Ius naturale est quod natura omnia animalia docuit. Alio modo dicitur natura in homine ipsa ratio, ut naturaliter mota. Hoc est ipsa ratio, quantum ad naturale suum iudicium, et sic accipiendo naturam dicitur in Institutionibus de iure naturali sic quod vero naturalis ratio inter homines constituit idem, apud omnes populos per eque custoditur, vocaturque ius gentium et hoc est ius naturale.”

110 Richard of Middleton, Quodlibetum III, q. 7, 96a: “Si autem reducamus ad memoriam distinctionem suppositam de bene fortunato universaliter et hanc distinctionem de natura possimus videre nullum hominem bene fortunatum universaliter per naturam. Quia naturale rationis judicium per se, neque natura influentiae coeli vel elementorum per se, neque natura communis homini et bruto, neque omnes simul possunt determinare hominem ad hoc, quod quodlibet opus emanans ab homine a proposito tale sit, quod numquam ad aliquod istorum operum sequatur aliquod malum non intentum, quod non est natum sequi nisi raro. Quare si aliquod opus debeat esse tale, maxime hoc esset opus ordinatissime factum secundum rectum rationis iudicium. Sed videmus, quantumcumque opus sit secundum rectum rationis iudicium, contingit quandoque ex aliqua causa concurrente prouenire homini aliquod temporale malum. Ergo ille solus apud quem nihil accidit neque a casu, neque a fortuna, potest sic facta hominis dispositione, ut nunquam per opus bonum, quo facit proveniat sibi aliquod malum. Unde si aliquis homo esset bene fortunatus universaliter, non debemus dicere quod hoc esset per naturam, sed per divinam providentiam. Quamvis illi homini effectus essent fortuii per comparationem ad aliquam causam creatam, nullo modo tamen esset per comparationem ad divinam providentiam, quae omnia circumspicit, omnia faciens secundum rectam rationem disponit.”
(naturalis iudicio rationis), the senses (naturalis motu sensualitatis) or the influence of the heavens affecting the human soul through the mediation of the body.\footnote{Richard of Middleton, Quodlibetum III, q. 7, 96b: “Bona fortuna est sine ratione natura, non propter hoc, quod illa causa, quae dicitur fortuna fit aliqua naturalis inclinatione naturae. Sed quia quandoque emanat tale, quid a nobis, vel est in nobis ex naturali iudicio rationis dispositive, vel ex naturali motu sensualitatis, quae etiam habet inclinatione ad aliquid agendum, vel per aliquam naturalem inclinationem coeli, quae mediante corporali transmutatione potest nos ad diversa opera inclinare non cogere. Sic ergo potest dici, quod fortuna dicitur natura, quandoque ex aliqua influentia naturali dispositive.”} These three options correspond with the three senses of nature distinguished by Richard. The main point of Richard is, however, that good fortune is not natural in the sense of causal invariance. The sun, for example, is a natural cause, whereas good fortune described in the terms of Physics II is an accidental cause, and accidental causes are never natural causes when a natural cause is understood as a cause that brings about its effect always or in most cases.

Finally, Richard describes the working of the impulse (impetus) leading a subject to continuous good fortune, without any rational consideration, and notes that in Aristotle’s view someone with continuous good luck is moved by a higher principle than the intellect, which cannot be anything other than God himself. In this sense, Aristotle’s definition of good fortune as nature without reason is valid. For in his view there is a principle higher than the human reason moving the reason like nature, understood in the sense of causal invariance. After this, the question abruptly ends, with Richard commenting that this is all that is to be said about the question without asserting anything obstinately.\footnote{Richard of Middleton, Quodlibetum III, q. 7, 96b–97a: “Posset tamen dici, quod Philosophus ibi loquebatur de bona fortuna appellando bonam fortunam in nobis quodam impetum ad aliquid faciendum, non provenientem ex dictamine rationis nostrae, sed quondam divinum instinc tum, ad quem impetum mediante opera, ad quod habemus istum impetum provenit nobis aliquod bonum non intention. Quia ergo ille impetus est in nobis, non ex dictamine rationis nostrae, sed sine dispositione secundum quem modum videtur operari natura, ideo dicit quod est natura sine ratione. Cum tamen velit, quia tunc movetur homo ab altiori principio quam sit ratio, et quaecunque natura creat, quia ab ipso Deo. Qua propter vult Philosophus, quod ibi quandoque nocet consiliari. Eo quod illa motio est ab altiori principio, quam sit ratio nostra consiliari. Et haec de praedicta quaestione sine praediucio et sine pertinaci assertione dicta sint.”} As will be shortly seen, the ending of Richard’s question is reminiscent of an anonymous commentary on LDBF. Due to problems in dating the anonymous commentary, it remains difficult to say whether the anonymous commentary was influenced by Richard of Middleton’s question or the other way around.
4.7 John Duns Scotus

Hester Gelber wrote in a recent article that Scotus decided to omit the term providentia in his writings. While this might be true for the different versions of Scotus’s commentary on Sentences, Scotus does, however, make explicit remarks on divine providence in his 21st quodlibetal question.\(^{113}\) For this reason, Scotus’s 21st quodlibetal question “Can one who admits that the world is eternal defend the position that anyone could always be fortunate”\(^{114}\) is all the more interesting. Just like Aquinas and Henry, Scotus discusses the Aristotelian idea of good fortune explicitly in relation to divine providence in this question.\(^{115}\) The 21st question only exists partially in the Ordinatio version of the Quodlibeta.\(^{116}\) For this reason, my discussion is mostly based on the Reportatio version of the question.

Wilson has rightly pointed out that Scotus’s 21st quodlibetal question is closely engaged on Henry of Ghent’s quodlibetal question on good fortune, discussed above.\(^{117}\) Scotus’s question is centred on the observation first made by Henry that the idea of continuous good fortune seems to contradict another idea of Aristotle: that the world is eternal and thus even God cannot produce anything wholly new. The translators of Scotus’s Quodlibetal questions interpret the 21st question as “concerning the possibility of reconciling divine providence in man’s regard with the Aristotelian conception of the eternity of

\(^{113}\) Gelber writes, “Providence – not an idea that Scotus seems to have addressed using that very term, but which he in effect discusses under the heading of divine willing.” Gelber 2010, 768

\(^{114}\) John Duns Scotus, Quodlibet, q. 21 “Utrum ponens mundi aeternitatem possit sustinere aliquem esse universaliter bene fortunatum.” John Duns Scotus, Opera omnia 26, 332–345. John Duns Scotus, God and Creatures, 469–484. My references to Scotus will mention both the English translation of the Quodlibetal questions by Alluntis & Wolter and the Wadding version of Scotus’s Opera omnia from 1639, reprinted by Georg Olms in 1968. The problem with the Wadding version is that it is a combination of the incomplete Reportatio text and the more complete Ordinatio text. The same problem applies to Alluntis’s critical edition of the Quodlibetal questions printed in 1963.

\(^{115}\) Alluntis and Wolter write that it was not uncommon in quodlibetal disputes that masters were asked to treat topics that they did not deal with in any other works. Alluntis & Wolter 1975, xxvi. This must also have been the case with Scotus and the topic of divine providence.

\(^{116}\) For more information about the manuscripts preserving the text of Scotus’s 21st quodlibetal question in various different versions, see: Noone & Roberts 2007, 140–143; Alluntis & Wolter 1975, xxxiii.

\(^{117}\) Wilson 1998, 41. Wilson writes in the beginning of his article that “he [Scotus] attacks a certain ‘aliquis’ – unidentified to date – this paper will identify the ‘aliquis’ mentioned by Scotus as Henry of Ghent.” However, in the Wadding edition from 1639 of Scotus’s quodlibetal questions, Henry of Ghent is identified in the gloss and the commentary added to the text. “Hic doctor primo recitat unam opinionem, quae est Henrici quodlib. 6. quaest. 19. quam non tenet.” This passage can be discovered in John Duns Scotus, Opera omnia 26, 341b. The reference to question 19 is plainly erroneous. Scotus clearly refers to the 10th question of Henry’s 6th quodlibet, treated previously in this chapter.
the world”. Scotus’s question is primarily dedicated to refuting Henry’s claim that Aristotle held contradictory principles in *LDBF* and *Physics* VIII. Unlike Henry, Scotus is not so much concerned with presenting an original theory of good fortune. On the contrary, his question can be described as exegetical in nature.

Interestingly, Scotus points out in the beginning of the *rerportatio* version that there are many theologians who accepted the existence of fortunate people as well as the possibility of an eternal world. Thus, a better formulation of the question would have been: “Could one who admits that nothing new can be produced immediately by an immutable God, still admit that good fortune exists or that someone is fortunate?” It is not so much the doctrine of the eternity of the world that Scotus finds problematic, but rather the idea that God cannot immediately cause any new effects that seem to be required for the theory of good fortune found in *LDBF*.

But why does Scotus think that the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity of the world implies that God cannot produce anything new? In the *Ordinatio* version, Scotus explains that in the 8th book of *Physics*, Aristotle writes that the Unmoved Mover can influence terrestrial beings only through the mediation of the celestial bodies that are material substances and cannot therefore influence immaterial human souls. Scotus points out that the question is not about the reconciliation of continuous good fortune and the view that the world is eternal in general, but rather about the particular way in which Aristotle thought the world was eternal. The problem is then to explain

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118 Alluntis & Wolter 1975, xxxi.

119 John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. 21. The passage, I refer to, is not found in the Wadding-Vivès edition nor in Alluntis’s edition of Scotus’s Quodlibetal questions. See John Duns Scotus, *God and Creatures*, 474 for an English translation of the passage in question. Scotus does not name any such theologians, but Aquinas may have well been one of the theologians in his mind. Aquinas, of course, did not accept the eternity of the world, since he regarded the creation of the world as a central tenet of the Christian faith. Yet, Aquinas thought the world *could* have been eternal and also accepted the existence of continuous good fortune of some men. On Aquinas’s views, see Dales 1990, 86–108. As Wilson has noted, Bonaventure had already claimed that Aristotle’s view that the world is eternal leads to a denial of divine providence. Bonaventure did not explain this connection in any more detail. Scotus’s as well as Henry’s questions on good fortune can be considered more detailed studies of *how* exactly these two views are related. Wilson 2014, 600–602.


121 John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. 21. The passage I refer to is not found in the Wadding-Vivès edition nor in Alluntis’s edition of Scotus’s Quodlibetal questions. See John Duns Scotus, *God and Creatures*, 469 for an English translation of the passage in question. The idea that God cannot influence the human soul except by the mediation of the celestial bodies is, of course, derived from the “*ab uno* principle”.

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how may the doctrine of continuous good fortune discovered in *LDBF*, implying that God directly causes the impulse leading to good fortune in human souls, be reconciled with the principles found in *Physics* VIII. Here it may be noted that Scotus’s way of understanding the question is closely dependent on Henry of Ghent, who had first noted the tension between Aristotle’s views in *Physics* VIII and *LDBF*. Henry had opted for rejecting the principles of *Physics* VIII. Scotus took a different strategy in solving the problem, as will next be seen.

Scotus starts the question off by analysing the Aristotelian notion of good fortune. Like the other authors studied so far, Scotus first explains Aristotle’s definition of fortune found in *Physics* II that fortuitous effects are unintentional effects arising from intentional action. He agrees with the standard view, shared by Aquinas and Henry, for example, that nothing is caused fortuitously in relation to the First Cause since there is no causality whatsoever that would not be subjected to the infinite per se causality of the First Cause.\(^{122}\) Scotus formulates this idea in a strong way. It is not only the per se causality of God that extends to every single effect. Even for the non-actual but possible effects, if they were to happen, they would be intended per se by God. Although Scotus does not treat the problem of evil with respect to God’s causality here, it may be noted that it presented problems to him in his other works, given the stress on the all-pervasiveness of divine causality.\(^{123}\)

Scotus writes briefly that there are people who are fortunate in most cases, but the fact that someone is fortunate in all cases would require a special divine intervention.\(^{124}\) While some theologians have claimed that someone can be fortunate because God disposes the concurring causes in a way that leads to

\(^{122}\) John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. 21. The passage, I refer to, is not found in the Wadding-Vivès edition nor in Allantus’s edition of Scotus’s Quodlibetal questions. See John Duns Scotus, *God and Creatures*, 475 for an English translation of the passage in question. Scotus also refers to nothing being chance with respect to the First Cause in *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* l. IX, q. 9 (ed. Wolter p. 226, n. 9): “Ad primum argumentum patet ex dictis in VI libro in quaestione ‘De ente per accidens’. Nihil enim est casuale respectu unius causae naturalis quin sit intentum ab alia, nihilque omnino casuale aut fortuitum quod non sit per se terminus potentiae divinae.”

\(^{123}\) On the closely related topic of God’s knowledge of sins, see Frost 2010.

\(^{124}\) John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. 21: “et credo quod neutro modo aliquis dicitur universaliter bene fortunatus sine miraculo speciali quia nullus potest esse quin in actione sua, aliis causis contingentibus concurrentibus, possit aliquid malum per accidens concurrere, quia in potestate sua non est concursus aliarum causarum, scilicet ut fodiens fodiat ad bufonem, vel ad serpentem, nisi Deus faceret ex miraculo concursum causarum speciālem ad hoc. Sed ut in pluribus potest aliquis esse bene fortunatus, et hoc aliquando, quantum ad bona similia conjuncta similibus propositis, ut quando eventit victoria conjuncta voluntati bellandi. Aliquando quantum ad dissimilia bona dissimilibus propositis. Aliquando e converso, quantum ad dissimilia bona dissimilia similibus propositis, et sic est possibile aliquem ut in pluribus esse bene fortunatum ut patet per experientiam.” John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia* 26, 337b; *God and Creatures*, 475.
good luck to the human agent, Aristotle did not think this would be the case. Scotus proceeds to ask, why is it according to Aristotle that some people are more often fortunate than others and concludes that the reason given in \textit{LDBF} is the impulse (\textit{impetus}). Being disposed to act in accordance with the impulse is a natural feature of some men that leads them to surprising positive outcomes beyond their rational consideration. Like Giles and Henry, Scotus notes that the impulse cannot be natural in the sense that all men would have it equally, but rather it must be an individual property that some human beings have to a greater degree. This is clear from the simple observation that some men are often fortunate while others are not.\footnote{John Duns Scotus, \textit{Quodlibet}, q. 21: “Sed quae est causa essendi bene fortunatum, quod est secundum principale in primo articulo principali et hoc de bona fortuna improprie dicta, quae non est in potestate nostra. Non invenio aliquid intrinsecum in homine, propter quod debeat dici bene fortunatus isto modo. Sed hoc accidit sibi ex concursu causarum extrinsecarum, qui potest esse ex Deo disponente secundum Theologos licet non secundum Aristotelem, sicut si aurum sit ibi, et aliquis intendens fodere ipsum inveniat, hoc est ex concursu causarum extrinsecarum et non est alia causa nisi ipse est magis dispositus, ut causa universalis moveat ipsum ad hunc locum magis quam ad alium. Sed tamen quare ad propositum illius sequitur bonum et non ad propositum alterius? Aristoteles in libello De bona fortuna, inquirit causam intrinsecam quam dixit esse impetum.” John Duns Scotus, \textit{Opera omnia} 26, 338a–338b; \textit{God and Creatures}, 476.}

Scotus then enters into an extended critical discussion with Henry of Ghent about the impulse and its relationship to the intellect and will. Scotus first introduces Henry’s view, shared by Aquinas too, that the first intellections and volitions of intellectual beings must be caused directly by God in order to avoid the infinite regress caused by each movement of the soul being caused by a previous movement of the soul. Scotus disagrees.\footnote{John Duns Scotus, \textit{Quodlibet}, q. 21: “Vult dicere [Aristoteles], quod aliqui habent velle, ad quod sequitur bonum aliquod praeter intentum ex impetu et sine ratione et causa hujus impetus est natura. Et diversitatem hominum accipit Aristoteles per experientiam, quod enim iste impellatur et iste non, cum sine ratione ejus qui impellitur hoc accidit, non potest esse ratio; ergo causa est natura. Sed illa differentia vel diversitas non ponit differentiam specificam in natura sed individualem. Quod enim agens extrinsecum uniformiter agentem moveat istum ad bonum et non alium, ejusdem rationis existentes, non potest esse nisi propter aliquod intrinsecum in uno quod non est in alio. Hoc autem non potest esse ratio ut dictum est nec aliquid consequens speciem, quia illud uniformiter cuilibet inest. Est ergo aliquid pertinens ad individuum. Quod autem non sit ratio, patet, quia \textit{ubi pluribus intellectus et ratio, ibi minimus fortuna}, \textit{ubi autem plurima fortuna, ibi minimus intellectus}, secundum Aristotelem. Nec etiam voluntas, quia similis potest esse actus voluntatis in utroque, et tamen unus assequitur effectum fortuitum, et alius non assequitur. Ergo illud intrinsecum est impetus a natura proveniens, ideo dicit bene fortunatum bene natum, qua in eo est dispositio, qua a superiore motore impellitur ad propositum, secundum quod eveniunt sibi commoda.” John Duns Scotus, \textit{Opera omnia} 26, 338b–339a; \textit{God and Creatures}, 477–478.}

Surprisingly, Scotus does not seem to feel any need to comment further on his disagreement with the passage from Anselm that Henry had invoked: “[...]dicit praedictus Doctor, quod haec est sententia
first movements of the will are wholly caused by the willing agent and no direct intervention of God is required for these first movements to arise. Instead, all that is needed for an act of willing, according to Scotus, is a faculty of will and a (naturally, not temporally\textsuperscript{128}) prior act of intellection. This prior act of intellection does not need to be caused directly by God either. Scotus avoids the problem of infinite regress by denying that the first act of intellection would need to be caused by a prior act of intellection. Rather, Scotus approvingly refers to Augustine’s view that the first intellection in the soul must be a somehow fortuitous and chance event. In this way Scotus counters the argument of infinite regress: the first intellection “just happens” and does not require a prior act of will or intellection. Once the first intellection has taken place, the will as a self-mover is completely free to either will or will-against the object presented by the intellect.\textsuperscript{129} This debate between Henry and Scotus shows that Scotus, unlike Aquinas and Henry, wants to avoid a psychological theory where the active intervention of God is needed to bring about the first movements of the will and the intellect.\textsuperscript{130}

Near the end of his treatment, Scotus surprisingly expresses doubts on whether there are fortuitous effects in the will that would not be willed per se by the will itself. Scotus considers two possible interpretations of Aristotle. The first interpretation he offers is that the accidental cause of the fortuitous effects in the will are the celestial bodies that are moved by the celestial intelligence immediately, and by the Unmoved Mover mediately. According to this interpretation, the Unmoved Mover would be the cause of the fortuitous

\textsuperscript{128} The phrase “naturally prior” has a technical meaning in Scotus’s usage. Scotus thought that each single temporal instant could be divided into several instances of nature. This move allowed Scotus to talk of logical priority and posteriority in a single instant of time. The theory was useful, for example, in the context of Trinitarian theology, where the persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit had to be considered somehow posterior to the person of the Father. This posteriority could not have been temporal as everything internal to God was eternal according to the faith of the church. On Scotus’s Trinitarian theology, see e.g. Friedman 2012a, 341-416 & Cross 2005.

\textsuperscript{129} Scotus points out that even though the first intellection is a chance event, the first volition remains within human power. If the first volition was not voluntary, but rather caused by intellect as its sufficient cause, freedom of will was cancelled and “man would not be human but a brute”. John Duns Scotus, \textit{Opera omnia} 26, 340b; \textit{God and Creatures}, 479–481.

\textsuperscript{130} This is part of a broader trend in Scotus’s philosophical psychology. Scotus argued against the earlier theories of divine illumination that human beings can achieve certain knowledge of, for example, self-evident propositions as well as facts known from experience without the need of active divine intervention. On the medieval theories of divine illumination and Scotus’s criticism of them, see Pasnau 2015.
volitions but only mediately through the celestial bodies. The second possible interpretation Scotus considers is that there are fortuitous effects in the will that bring about continuous good fortune. Such a state of affairs can only be brought about by God’s all-reaching providence, having the ability to dispose the secondary causes in the required way to cause the continuous good fortune of some persons. No cause lower than God could have the ability to dispose all the causes in the required way.

Scotus’s aim is next to show that Aristotle may not be accused of holding contradictory principles, no matter which one of these two interpretations one follows. In other words, Scotus disagrees with Henry, who had considered Aristotle’s theory of continuous good fortune and the theory of the eternity of the world, implying that God cannot cause anything new, as incompatible. If one follows the first interpretation, tracing back the fortuitous effects in the will to the celestial bodies, no problems with regard to divine action arise: God is the cause of good fortune only mediately through the celestial spheres, and one is not required to attribute any new effects to God.

But what about the second interpretation that attributes continuous good fortune to God, whose providence may dispose all the secondary causes to bring forth good fortune to some? Aristotle had thought that the First Principle was entirely immutable and because of its immutability could not cause anything wholly new, for an agent causing new effects assumes a different kind of existence through its causation. Scotus reinterprets the “ab uno principle” and points out that Aristotle’s actual idea is not that the First Principle cannot cause a multitude of different effects, but rather that it can only do so if some proximate active or passive causes intervene. For this reason, Aristotle does

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131 John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. 21: “Et si dicetur, et forte verum est, quod nullus effectus fortuitus est in voluntate et conjunctus volitioni per accidens, sed tamen causalitas coeli ad omnia alia se extendit et sic non oportet aliam causam extrinsecam ponere, nisi coelum, et Intelligentiam moventem coelum, et Deum moventem mediate, ita quod si Aristoteles videtur dicere, quod tale principium sit Deus, debet glossari verum est mediate.” John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia* 26, 343b; *God and Creatures*, 482.

132 John Duns Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. 21: “Si autem aliquis effectus fortuitus ponatur in voluntate, cum coelum non possit talem effectum attingere, nec causas ad causandum ipsum conjungere, nec aliqua Intelligentia creata, tunc oportet effectus fortuitos in Deum reducere, qui omnia providet et conjungit causas medias ad effectus tales fortuitos causandos.” John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia* 26, 343b; *God and Creatures*, 482.


not contradict himself in assuming that God could cause various new effects leading to, for example, the continuous good fortune of some. An immutable cause may cause different kinds of effects with the assistance of mediating causes that are differently disposed. According to Scotus, this saves Aristotle’s doctrines of the eternity of the world and the reality of good fortune of divine origin from contradiction. For Scotus, Aristotle’s God is like the sun that always sends its rays in a uniform way. Regardless of the invariability of this causality on the part of the sun, different objects are differently disposed to receive these rays: identical rays of the sun cause ice to melt and mud to harden. In Scotus’s interpretation of Aristotle, divine causality similarly radiates from God in a uniform way, but different human beings receive it in different ways according to their individual differences. This clearly shows that Scotus’s main aim in the 21st quodlibet is to criticize Henry’s claim that Aristotle contradicted himself in LDBF and Physics VIII. Nevertheless, as we have seen, in doing so he presents a number of interesting points regarding divine providence too.

conclusio potest dependere a tribus principiis. Primo propter immutabilitatem primum principii, quia primum est omnino immutabile. Ideo nullum motum nec mobile potest immediate de novo producere, quia aliter se habet nunc quam prius [...] Agens omnino immutabile non potest causare immediate aliquid novum alterius rationis, nulla posita diversitate in mediis causis activis vel receptivis, aliter non habet propositio Aristotelis veritatem. Si enim cause intermediae activae sint diversae dispositionis in agendo, vel passivae diversae dispositionis in recipiendo, potest esse diversitas effectuum, dato quod in causa prima nulla sit mutabilitas vel novitas aliquo modo.” John Duns Scotus, Opera omnia 26, 343b–344a; God and Creatures, 482–483.

135 John Duns Scotus, Quodlibet, q. 21: “Dicendum quod immutabilitas agentis, excluding causas activas intermedias vel receptivas, concluditur secundum Aristotelem, quon non possit fieri aliquid novum alterius rationis. Sed si una conditio defecerit, scilicet quando causae intermediae activae vel passivae diversimode se habent in causando, potest causare de novo aliquid alterius rationis. Si etiam effectus causandus sit ejusdem rationis, potest Deus ipsum causare immediate, nulla posita novitate in eo, propter diversitatem causarum receptivarum, sicut sol immediate solvit glaciem et coagulat lutum, nulla posita novitate in eo. Ita secundum Aristotelem hoc corpore organizato, Deus necessitate immutabilitatis causat hanc animam et prius non, quia materia non erat disposita. Sicut nec Sol causat alium et alium radium in aere et in aqua, nisi propter diversitatem recipientium. Sic in proposito Deus influit uniformiter in quodlibet inquantum potest, secundum Aristotelem, et quia iste est dispositus, ille non, ideo Deus impellit istum ad tale propositum, ad quod consequitur commodum, illum autem non impellit, quia non invenit in eo dispositionem illam, quam diximus prius. Et ipsa positio Aristotelis De bona fortuna stat cum positione sua 8. Physicorum scilicet quod Deus non potest causare novum mundum vel novum coelum, et novum motum secundum suam causalitatem.” John Duns Scotus, Opera omnia 26, 344b–345a; God and Creatures, 483–484. As the reader may note, Scotus’s understanding of the dispensation of good fortune is not unlike Giles of Rome’s interpretation of LDBF. While Scotus’s dependence on Henry of Ghent is entirely clear, it is more difficult to assess whether Scotus had access to Giles’s Sententia de bona fortuna or not.
All in all, Scotus’s interpretation of the causal order of good fortune in *LDBF* is as follows:
1) God’s causality towards the world is simple and unchanging.
2) Different men receive this divine causality in different ways due to natural individual differences between them.
3) Receiving this causality brings up an impulse to certain kinds of action, accidentally leading to good luck in the minority of well fortuned people.
4) These well fortuned people follow this impulse regardless of their rational considerations and act in a way that makes good things outside their intention befall upon them.

Like Henry, Scotus ends the question by pointing out how divine providence must be understood in light of the Catholic faith. Overall, Scotus’s question is most clearly focused on the Aristotelian exegesis and the short epilogue on how the question ought to be answered in accordance with the faith contains less original content. Without explicitly naming Henry, Scotus adopts his distinction concerning divine providence and points out that “according to the faith and truth of matter” God rules all things by his general providence and special providence. Scotus does not say much more about divine providence at the ending of his question. He briefly describes general providence in terms reminiscent of Henry and notes that special providence is in accordance with the present and future merits of men that may be unknown to us but are always present to God. Overall, he seems to settle for answering the question about the compatibility of the Aristotelian ideas of good fortune and the eternity of the world. After refuting, to his own satisfaction, the view of Henry that these two ideas are contradictory, Scotus does not see the need to discuss divine providence further. The theologically important remark that the Christian God is a free and voluntary cause in opposition to the Aristotelian God is mentioned only in passing. Scotus must have thought that he had treated this question in sufficient detail elsewhere in his works. To end his question, Scotus concludes that while we admit the existence of continuously fortunate people, this does not lead to us positing anything new in God. This gives the reader the impression that although Scotus’s main aim is clearly to criticize Henry’s interpretation of Aristotle, he also held that from the Catholic perspective the acceptance of continuous good fortune does not imply any mutability or change in God.\(^{136}\) The non-temporal language used by Scotus is

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in accordance with his well-known theory of God’s knowledge of future contingents based on the determinations of his own will. Although Scotus does not explicitly state it in this context, he must have thought that in the eternal instant of divine willing, God also immutably determines the conditions having to do with good fortune.

4.8 The Anonymous Commentator of LDBF

An anonymous set of questions on the LDBF was printed as a part of John of Jandun’s commentary on the Parva naturalia in 1557. Scholars have agreed that these questions were most probably not written by Jandun. One of the two extant manuscripts attribute them to an otherwise little-known author named Francis Caracciolo of Naples. This attribution has not been confirmed either. At any rate, the questions are certainly from a later date than 1306, as the author is familiar with John Duns Scotus’s 21st quodlibetal question, as well as Henry of Ghent’s ideas on LDBF. In the following, I will refer to this author as Anonymous.

Anonymous’s commentary on the LDBF is highly interesting for a study of divine providence. He discusses, for example, the compatibility between divine providence and the “ab uno principle” and offers comments on the relationship between divine providence and the efficient and final causality of God. For my study, the most relevant questions of the commentary are the fourth question asking, whether good fortune is really something (aliquid) and the seventh question, whether good fortune is caused by God.

In the fourth question of his commentary, Anonymous aims to explain how good fortune can co-exist with divine providence and God’s necessary knowledge, even though in relation to divine providence and knowledge nothing is accidental or chance. He uses a similar argument that was employed

hoc nihil novum ponimus in Deo, ut dictum est.” John Duns Scotus, Opera omnia 26, 345a–345b; God and Creatures, 484.

137 For bibliographical information see “Anonymous” in the list of sources used.

138 Cordonier 2010, 749–750. For more information on Francis Caracciolo’s life and works, see Courtenay 2013.

139 For a reference to Scotus’s question, without an explicit mention of Scotus, see e.g. Anonymous, Quaesitones super libro de Bona Fortuna, q. 7, 79ra–b: “Alii vero contradictionem istam vitare studentes dicunt omnem effectum fortuitum, maxime si nullus talis effectus in voluntate fit, ut eis videtur, causalitas celi se extendit. Vel si oporteat aliquos tales effectus nouos non immediate in Deum reducere, ad haec non contradicit sibi Philosophus hic et in 8 Physicorum. Nam constat per Aristoteles secundum principia animam intellectuam esse a Deo immediate et de nouo cum ipsa sit immortalis. Adeo quod ad hoc potest attingere ratio naturalis et hoc dico nulla posita in Deo nuidatatem secundum diuersitatem solummodo ex parte recipientium.” For the dating of Scotus’s quodlibetal questions, see Williams 2003, 12.
by Siger of Brabant. There are both accidental beings and accidental causes. As divine providence is by definition the cause of all being, it must certainly be the cause of both accidental beings and causes. Thus, the existence of divine providence as such may not rule out the existence of accidental causation or good fortune. He also raises an argument that divine providence requires that things are ordered to certain ends (such as divine goodness), making divine providence a final cause. Yet, as Aristotle has shown, things sometimes fail to reach their ends, allowing for chance and fortuitous events to arise. Thus, in Aristotle’s view, a denial of chance and fortune would make all the causes act necessarily. Chance and fortune naturally follow from the existence of final causality and a denial of their reality would amount to a denial of final causality and in turn to a denial of divine providence.

In the seventh and last question of his commentary, *utrum bona fortuna sit a Deo*, Anonymous treats in detail the question whether the Peripatetic philosophers (i.e. Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes) held that God is the efficient cause of anything at all. His method is to first find out whether God can be shown to be the efficient cause of anything at all. After this, it is possible to find out whether God may be the efficient cause of good fortune as well. A point of special interest for Anonymous is whether God is the efficient cause of some eternal things, such as the celestial spheres. Interestingly, this question had been treated by the authentic John of Jandun as well.

140 Anonymous, *Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna*, q. 4, 74vb: “Nunc tertio restat ostendere, quod tam fortuna quam bona fortuna stant cum diuina prouidentia et eius necessaria scientia. Licet nihil ad eius relatam scientiam et prouidentiam casuale et fortuitum dici possit, quia est omnia disponens et ordinans. Quod autem prouidentia diuina casum et fortunam non excludat, patet sic primo. Prouidentia Dei non excludit causas per accidens. Ipsa enim cum sit causa totius esse, vt patet 1. Coeli et mundi commento 100. Ubi dicitur, quod ab ente primo derivatum est esse his quidem clarius, his autem obscurius, est causa modorum entis, quae sunt per se et per accidens, vt patet 5. et 6. Metaphysicae. Sed entis per accidens est causa per accidens, sicut et entis per se est causa per se, vt patet 1. et 2. Physicorum. Sicut ergo prouidentia non excludit entia per accidens, sic neque causas per accidens. Causas vero per accidens dicimus fortunam et casum. Fortunam in agentibus a proposito, casum vero in agentibus a natura. Fortuna ergo et casus stant cum prouidentia.”

141 Anonymous, *Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna*, q. 4, 74vb: “Item de ratione diuinae prouidentiae et sapientiae est, quod causae secundae agant propter finem. Immo sapientis est ordinare in finem, secundum Philosophum prooemio Metaphysicae, est etiam de ratione perfectionis et ordinis vniuersi aliquas causas in agendo propter finem ab intento fine quaedoque deficiere et alium non intentum consequi. Aliter omnes causae necessario agerent et necessario singula evenirent, quid est contra Philosophum 12. Metaphysicae in fine. Cum ergo fortuna et casus accident ex eo, quod agentia propter finem quandoque ab intento deficiunt, quandoque etiam cum intento aliquid aliud non intentum consequuntur, patet aperte quod prouidentia casum et fortunam non tollit. Immo casum et fortunam negare est omnino, vt videtur, prouidentiam tollere.”

142 This question, *Utrum aeternis repugnet habere causam efficientem* has been edited by Armand Maurer in 1990. Maurer 1990, 294–308.
notes that in a way typical of the Averroists, John of Jandun devotes more time
to setting forth the authentic position of the philosophers than in answering to
the question in accordance with the faith.143 This is also quite true in the
question of Anonymous, although he does offer a brief discussion of the
question from the viewpoint of the faith too.144

Anonymous points out in the initial arguments that God does not seem to
be the efficient cause of anything at all, since according to Al-Ghazali that
which acts as an efficient cause always strives for something it is currently
lacking. Thus, efficient causality implies some imperfection in the agent which
is repugnant to divine perfection.145 This leads Anonymous into an extended
discussion of whether God is an efficient and a final cause of some effects
according to Aristotle and Averroes. Anonymous’s interpretation is that for
Aristotle and Averroes, God is the first efficient and final cause of everything.
One argument raised for this position is that God must be an efficient cause,
since in the Aristotelian system there has to be a first cause in every chain of
causes. This first cause may not be a celestial body, composed of matter and
form, for again according to Aristotle, the first cause must be absolutely
simple.146 Although Aristotle writes in *Metaphysics* XII that God is the final

143 Maurer 1990, 276.
144 See, for example, the following passage, where Anonymous states what is required to answer the
question whether good fortune is from God. Anonymous, *Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna*, q.
7, 77vb: “In haec quaestione primo videndum est, utrum Deus sit causa efficiens alicuius secundum
mentem et intentionem Philosophi et secundo dato quod sit, utrum sit causa efficiens alicuius de nouo
et immediate secundum eundem. His enim visis statim apparebit, quid de quaestione dicendum sit.”
145 Anonymous, *Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna*, q. 7, 77vb: “Deus nullius est causa
efficiens, quod probatur quia omne efficiens in agendo aliquid intendit et maxime habens intellectum,
cuiusmodi est Deus. Est enim intelligentis et sapientis ordinare in finem, ut patet prooemio
Metaphysicae et per finem intendere. Sed agens propter intentionem aliquam est imperfectum. Agit
enim propter aliquid boni quod non habet, dicente Algazele in tractatum suae Metaphysicae, quod
quiquis agit propter intentionem aliquam imperfectus est.”
146 Anonymous, *Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna*, q. 7, 78ra: “in omni genere causae est
dare aliquod primum simpliciter. Ergo et in genere efficientis, sed hic non est nisi Deus. Ergo Deus est
causa efficiens. Antecedens patet per Philosophum, 2. Metaphysicae et consequentia tenet per locum a
toto in quantitate. Sed consequens probatur, quia secundum adversarios, si Deus non est primum
efficiens, hoc est quia celum est efficiens primum omnium generabilium et corruptibilium, quorum
tantum est habere causam efficientem, cum in intelligentiarum, quae etere sunt, natura sit causa
productiva vel efficientis. Culum autem nullo modo potest esse primum simpliciter in genere efficiencium,
nam prima in genere causarum secundum Aristotelem debent esse omnino simplicia et nullo modo
compositionis composita. Quod patet tum inducendo in genere causae materialis, formalis, et finalis
esset secundum eos, tum etiam per hoc, quod omne compositum est multum et per consequens
reducible in aliquod unum simplex. Sed constat celum esse compositum, vel ex materia proprie et forma
secundum aliquos magnos, vel saltem ex subiecto et accidente et ex motore et moto secundum
Commentatorem et Philosophum ipsum. Ergo ulterior reducibile est in aliud efficiens omnino simplex,
cause of separate substances, Anonymous argues on the authority of Averroes that there is no distinction between the final and the efficient cause of the celestial bodies.\textsuperscript{147}

After he has shown to his own satisfaction that God is an efficient cause of at least some things according to the philosophers, Anonymous moves to ask whether God is the efficient and the immediate cause of good fortune. He brings up Avicenna’s metaphysics of emanation and the “\textit{ab uno} principle” that we previously saw Henry criticizing. If “\textit{ab uno} principle” was valid, God would be the immediate efficient cause of only the first intelligence and nothing else. Thus, Anonymous writes that the “\textit{ab uno} principle” is against the faith, but also against the intention of Aristotle, who in Anonymous’s interpretation held that God must be the immediate and efficient cause of all eternal things.\textsuperscript{148} He also refers to Averroes, who had argued that a metaphysically simple agent that acts through the intellect can both understand and cause several things.\textsuperscript{149}

Anonymous also points out that according to the Catholic faith, God must be able to cause immediately any effects that may be caused by secondary agents. After all, the secondary agents have their being and causal powers only through the causality of the First Cause. This point was, of course, stressed in the Parisian condemnation of 1277 that had condemned the view that God could not immediately cause the effects caused by the secondary causes. Anonymous clearly had this proposition in mind while writing the question.\textsuperscript{150}
Another argument Anonymous considers for the position that God can cause new effects immediately, is that whatever can affect something in a total duration of time can have the same effect in a part of that duration. God can cause effects in the total duration of time according to the philosophers and therefore he can cause effects in a part of that duration too. Causing effects in a part of some given duration of course amounts to causing new effects.\textsuperscript{151} Anonymous criticizes the solutions of both Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus. Henry had claimed that Aristotle held contradictory principles in \textit{LDBF} and \textit{Physics} VIII. It was central to Henry’s reading of \textit{LDBF} that Aristotle claimed that God could immediately cause good fortune. Yet in \textit{Physics} VIII he held that God has causal effects towards the lower world only through the mediation of the heavens, which as natural agents are only determined to one end. As such, they are unable to connect and dispose several secondary causes to cause fortuitous effects to some. Anonymous replies to Henry that although in Aristotle’s philosophy the heavens are substantially unchanging, they still go through local motion and therefore are perfectly able to cause various different effects. Even though in the philosophers’ view the First Mover cannot cause new effects, this limitation does not apply to the heavens that are moving and thus accidentally changing.\textsuperscript{152} Anonymous

\begin{flushright}
On the principle that God can immediately cause any effects that are caused by the secondary causes, see Gelber 2004, 306–307.
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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{151} Anonymous, \textit{Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna}, q. 7, 79ra: “ut illud quod est per se intelligentia et intellectum, sit causa plurium entium secundum quod ex eo intelliguntur multi modi esse. Et circa praedictum articulum opinio modernorum dicitur secundum nostrae fidei veritatem Deum esse causam immediatam et de novo bonae fortunae, sicut et aliorum multorum, ex eo quod potest immediate et de nouo animabus nostris influere. Quod probant primo, quod haec agens quod agit in tota duratione, potest agere in parte durationis illius. Quod patet, quia da quod non possit agere in parte, non poterit agere in tota duratione, cuius oppositum ponitur. Sed Deus tota temporis duratione potest agere etiam secundum Philosophum, cum sit causa simpliciter prima, et per consequens magis ad quemlibet effectum producendum concurreat, quam quaevis secunda causa, sicut patet ex prima propositione de causa, cum esset nulla duratio entis ab eius influentia positis solvi. Ergo potest agere in parte durationis temporis. Sed agere in parte durationis temporis est ipsum de novo agere. Potest ergo Deus alicuius de novo esse causa et sic per consequens bonae fortunae.”

\textsuperscript{152} Anonymous, \textit{Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna}, q. 7, 79rb–79va: “videntur deficere tam primi quam secundi [opinio]. Primi quidem quia ponunt Aristotelem inter duo perplexum sibi contradictorium. De quo tamen dicit Commentator in principio secundi Caeli et mundi auctoritatis Alexandri, nos non sumus sustenari super scientiam istus hominis inter omnes alios, nisi quia vidimus ipsam minoris ambiguotatis et remotiorem a contradictione, tum quia concedunt Aristoteles secundum sua principia necessario debere concedere, quod Deus sit immediate causa et de novo respectu aliquorum effectuum bonae fortunae. Quod non est verum, tum quia dicunt quod celum est agens per naturam, et ideo solum determinatur ad unum. Hoc non cogit, quia celum licet sit agens per naturam, est tamen agens universale, et licet sit simplex secundum sui naturam et perpetuum quantum ad sui substantiam. Et non sit innovatum substantialiter, cum careat materia quae est ratio propter quam res
appears to believe that to refute Henry’s criticism of Aristotle, it is enough that he has shown that the heavens can cause more than one effect. This conclusion seems quite premature, however. As we have seen, Henry’s criticism was that the heavens lack the power to intentionally dispose several different causes time and time again to cause continuous good fortune to some. Even though Anonymous has shown that the heavens can cause several different effects, he has not in any way responded to Henry’s concern regarding the lack of intention in the effects caused by the celestial spheres.

Anonymous also criticizes the position of Scotus, namely that although Aristotle held that the First Mover cannot immediately cause new effects independently, the First Mover can still cause new effects when the recipients of its causality are disposed in different ways. Analogously, the sun can cause the melting of ice and the hardening of mud because of the different dispositions of the recipients, even though the causality of the sun considered in itself remains unchanged. Anonymous argues that Scotus’s analogy to the sun is irrelevant in the case under consideration. He repeats the same idea that the sun goes through local motion, which can explain the different kinds of effects of the sun. The First Mover, however, is entirely unchanging. This criticism is not sufficient in itself, since Scotus had argued that just like in the case of the mud and the ice, the novelty in the different effects of divine providence is to be attributed to the differently disposed recipients of divine causality, not to the First Mover himself. Anonymous argues that this idea is in contradiction with Aristotelian principles, however. If the novelty in the effect is to be completely attributed to the effect and not to the cause, it seems that the cause in question is not an actual cause of the observed change. The only other options remaining, either that the effect is uncaused or that the effect is caused by itself, are obviously absurd. For this reason, Scotus’s theory, too, must be refuted.

potest esse et non esse, ex septimo Metaphysicae innovatum est tamen, quantum ad sua accidentia, quia variatur secundum motum et situm. Et sic, ut inquit Commentator in 8 Physicorum, posuerunt Peripateticci a voluntate antiqua mediante aliquo eterno uno modo et innovato alio modo provenire effectus novos in istis inferioribus. Sed quod immediate effectus a causa prima proveniat, hoc non est possibile, quia omnis novitas, quae est in effectu, habet reduci ad aliquam novitatem in causa. Et ita primus motor haberet aliquam novitatem in se et esset motor in potentia et multa alia, quae deducit ibi Commentator. Dico igitur, quod celum cum agens sit universale et habeat varias dispositiones in suis motibus, et in coniunctionibus solis et planetarum, et in mensuris caloris et luminis, ut declarat Commentator 12 Metaphysicae commento 18, potest esse causa immediata istorum effectuum.”

553 Anonymous, Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna. q. 7, 79vv: “Secunda etiam opinio non est de intentione Aristotelis neque Commentatoris, quod aliquod novum eiusmodem rationis a Deo immediate provenire possit. Et ratio, ut dictum est, quia non potest esse aliqua novitas in effectu sine aliqua novitate in causa […] Quod etiam adducunt de sole non est ad propositum, quia licet in sole non sit novitas quantum ad substantia. Est tamen bene novitas quantum ad motum. Potest enim reddi ratio, quare sol nunc illuminat medium et prius non. Sed in Deo glorioso, si ab ipso aliquod novum immediate
Anonymous’s actual reply to the question whether good fortune comes from God contains some striking features. He stresses that for Aristotle, good fortune is not a separate per se cause, but must rather be defined as identical to the desirable outcome that came about by chance (bonus effectus fortuitus). Here the description of good fortune is clearly based on the definition of good fortune found in the 2nd book of Physics, that is, accidental good fortune. At the same time, the theory of continuous good fortune discussed by Aristotle in great detail in LDBF is largely ignored and no explanation is provided about why someone has good fortune always or for the most part. This is very surprising considering that the work in question is a commentary on LDBF. Anonymous writes that for Aristotle good fortune can be said to be caused by the First Cause only in a mediate, but not in an immediate sense. Having established that God is for Aristotle the first efficient cause, God can be said to concur with all the effects caused by secondary causes in the sublunary world, including the effects that accidentally lead to good fortune for some human beings. In Anonymous’s interpretation, only in this very restricted and non-immediate sense is God the cause of good fortune for Aristotle. But for the philosophers, as has been already noted, it would be unthinkable that God would cause good fortune immediately, for every new effect requires something new in the cause too.154

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154 Anonymous, Quaestiones super libro de Bona Fortuna, q. 7, 79va–b: “Ex his igitur patet quid sit dicendum ad quaestionem, quod videlicet bona fortuna non est immediate a Deo. Pro quo notandum est, quod fortuna non est aliqua causa per se distincta ab intellectu et a natura sive proposito, sicut aliqui pueriliter imaginant fortunam esse quandam Deam separatam habentem duas facies, quarum una est bona et benefactiva hominibus, alia vero est mala et malefactiva. Sed intelligo, quod fortuna est idem secundum substantiam et secundum subiectum cum intellectu practico. Et similiter casus est idem subiecto cum agente naturali. Tamen diversimode, quia illud idem quod dicitur intellectus practicus per comparationem ad effectum praecognitum et appetitum et per se dicitur fortuna in respectu ad effectum, qui non fuit primo intentus, ut intellectus fodients, qui dicitur intellectus practicus per comparationem ad possessione naturae, dicitur fortuna in comparationem ad inventionem thesauri. Bona autem fortuna idem est, quod bonus effectus fortuitus. Talis autem bona fortuna a Philosophi in isto libello distinguatur penes ea, in quibus consistit dupliciter et est prima distinctio ista. Fortuna bona est penes ea, quae non in nobis existunt, hoc est, quorum non sumus domini, sicut inquit nobiliben bene fortunatum dicimus et totaliter, cui talia existunt, quorum non dominus est. Alio modo bona fortuna est in his, quae sunt in nobis. Et enim cui praeter cogitationem acciderit bene operari aliquod bonum bene fortunatum dicimus. Sine ratione enim habens impetum ad bonum et hoc adpiscens, dicitur bene fortunatus, vel planius intendens unum et in exequendo adipiscens alius non intentum et tamen bonum,
In conclusion, Anonymous agrees with Henry of Ghent that the two following ideas are contradictory:

1) God influences the world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies, and

2) God is the immediate source of good fortune.

Henry’s solution was to reject 1) and opt for the possibility of God immediately causing new effects, including those leading to the continuous good fortune of some. Anonymous, on the other hand, in his exposition of Aristotle, does not question 1), but rather dismisses 2). In order to do this, he describes Aristotle’s theory of good fortune according to the formulations found in the 2nd book of *Physics* and mostly leaves aside the remarks of *LDBF*, implying that God directly causes the impulse to good fortune in fortunate people. Anonymous argues against Henry that although the celestial bodies are immutable substantially, they constantly change locally, which allows them to cause a multitude of different effects. Meanwhile, the philosophers’ God is entirely immutable and therefore cannot cause more than one effect immediately.

Henry had held that because the celestial bodies are natural causes, they cannot intentionally dispose several causes to cause continuous good fortune to some. Anonymous’s reply to Henry is that although they cannot dispose the lower causes intentionally, they can dispose them accidentally and this sometimes leads accidentally to the good fortune of some people. Henry would have probably agreed with this, but pointed out quickly that what is really at stake is continuous and not accidental good fortune. Thus, from Henry’s perspective Anonymous’s theory would have been quite irrelevant considering the actual problem, that is, the cause of continuous good fortune.

dicitur in hoc habere bonam fortunam. Ista distinctio bonae fortunae penes effectus videtur esse in illud, quod est proprie tale, et in illud quod est communiter minus proprie tale. Nam proprie bona fortuna videtur esse illorum, quae sunt in potestate nostra, sicut et absolute fortuna. Et hoc sic ingelligendo et licet fortuitum non sit per se sive primo in potestate voluntatis, quia non evenit ex intentione eius, tamen est in potestate eius per accidens et quasi secundario, ut annexum per se intento respectu autem illorum, quae nec sic, nec sic sunt in nostra potestate. Et per consequens accidunt nobis non inquantum agentibus a proposito non est proprie fortuna sed casus, sicut patet 2 Physicorum commento 61 et inde. [...] His igitur stantibus cum bona fortuna, ut dictum est, nihil aliud sit nisi bonus eventus fortuitus, iste immediate sine aliqua causa media non est a Deo. Quia ut dictum est, ab ente omnino immobili in istis inferioribus nihil immediate provenire potest secundum fundamenta Philosophorum. Tamen cum Deus concurrat ad quemlibet effectum hic inferius existentem mediantibus causis secundis, sic dicendum est bonam fortunam mediate esse a Deo.” Italics mine.
4.9 Peter Auriol

Peter Auriol’s broad discussion of divine providence found in his commentary on Sentences also contains a thorough treatment of LDBF. In the previous chapter, it was seen that in Auriol’s interpretation Aristotle held that God does not have special care for all the particular beings and events of the lower world. Rather, God moves the celestial spheres as an exemplary cause and through the movement of the spheres rules the sublunary world in a directive way. Interestingly, in addition to this basic model of Aristotelian providence, Auriol notes that Aristotle also posited a special providence for human beings in LDBF.155 Thus, Auriol in essence accepts Henry’s distinction between general and special providence, but unlike Henry, argues that Aristotle too held that God had both general and special providence for the lower world. As will be shown below, Auriol mainly interprets LDBF in a naturalistic and psychologizing manner, however.

As already noted, a central part of Auriol’s doctrine of providence is that divine providence has more concern towards human beings than other created things. With respect to irrational created things, divine providence is limited to conserving the things in existence and allowing them to act according to their given natures. For human beings, God has special providence that is seen especially in good fortune (bona fortuna) and premonitions (vera somnia).

LDBF is of great relevance for Auriol’s views on what he calls executive providence. As seen in the previous chapter, Auriol distinguishes between directive providence, which is mainly carried out through God’s final causality, and executive providence, which corresponds mainly with God’s efficient causality. Auriol quotes Averroes to the effect that in Aristotle’s philosophy, God has care of everything through being the final cause of celestial movement.156 Yet Auriol believes that in addition to this general care

155 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 918a, D–F: “Ultra autem istam sollicitudinem generalem, posuerunt propriam sollicitudinem erga homines, sicut patet in libello De bona fortuna, ubi dicit Philosophus impulsum bene fortunati hominis ad aliquod bonum esse a Deo; et primo Ethicorum dicit quod si est aliquod donum in nobis a Deo maxime videtur quod hoc sit felicitas et beatitudo. Et Commentator dicit secundo Caeli et mundi commento xxxvii quod corpora caelestia habent propriam sollicitudinem erga nos; et in De somno et vigilia dicit quod veritas somniorum est ex perfecta sollicitudine Dei circa nos; et ibidem declarat quomodo intelligentia agens dat notitias illas in quibus consistit veritas somniorum.”

156 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 2, 918a, B–E: “directive [regimen attribuitur] vero primo principio, sive arte divine. Motores enim, intelligendo artem divinam movent caelos ad varios effectus, relucentes in ea: et sic dicitur Deus habere curam de omnibus, sicut Commentator dicit xii Metaphysicae. Ait enim quod primum caelum movetur a primo motore, secundum desiderium ut assimiletur ei secundum suum posse, sicut amans movetur ut assimiletur suo amato; alia autem corpora caelestia moventur secundum desiderium et ad motum primo corporis, et ideo planetae habent duplicem motum, ea autem quae sunt sub istis moventur mediantibus istis motibus secundum generationem et
(sollicitudo generalis) Aristotle held that God has special care for human beings (sollicitudo propria). This is shown to be the case especially through Auriol’s discussion of LDBF. Interestingly reminding one of Aquinas, whose theories Auriol criticizes time after time in the same distinction and numerous other distinctions in his commentary, Auriol thus argues that LDBF contains Aristotle’s theory of special providence.

Auriol first treats the contents of LDBF and his predecessors’ views on it. He summarizes Aristotle’s theory of good fortune in LDBF as follows: divine and continuous good fortune is nature without reason (sine ratione natura) that inclines man to following a divine impulse, which makes him attain things which are good for him and avoid things which are bad for him. Unlike Anonymous, Auriol clearly distinguishes between accidental good fortune discussed in Physics II and the continuous good fortune described in LDBF. The first is wholly accidental and lacking a per se cause, whereas the latter must have a per se cause, for it takes place in most cases (ut in pluribus). In his exposition of the theory of good fortune in LDBF, Auriol points out that good fortune cannot be wholly divine in origin for Aristotle, since in Aristotle’s view God is a natural and necessary agent. Thus, God could not affect different men differently without some natural differences in the recipients of divine causality. Rather, different men are differently disposed to receive the impulse to good fortune and these different dispositions must be caused by nature. On the other hand, the impulse that brings about continuous good fortune is divine in origin. Therefore, continuous good fortune is natural in the sense that some men have it since their birth. It is not natural, however, in the sense that most human beings would have it. In addition, it is not based either on a rational or natural, but on a divine impulse, which is another sense in which good fortune is not natural. To sum up, some men are naturally disposed to receive an impulse that is not natural, but divine in origin.158 Interestingly,
already in his exposition of Aristotle’s theory, Auriol argues that since God has infallible knowledge of all past, present and future affairs, the human beings acting in accordance with their divine impulse often receive more good than the intelligent and the prudent.\(^{159}\)

Auriol argues that there is no contradiction in Aristotle’s claims that the world is eternal and that God moves other things only through final causality, unlike an anonymous author has claimed. Auriol explains that the Unmoved Mover acts as the object of desire of the movers of the celestial spheres. The celestial spheres then in turn move the lower things as efficient causes. Auriol is here simply describing the basic Aristotelian cosmological scheme of movement, starting with the Unmoved Mover acting as the final cause of lower things.\(^{160}\) Although Henry of Ghent is not identified in the gloss of *Scriptum*, it is quite clear that Henry is the author Auriol has in mind here. Henry had argued that Aristotle held contradictory principles since, on the one hand, he believed that someone could have continuous good fortune, and, on the other, that God could cause new effects only through the mediation of the celestial bodies because the world is eternal. The core element of Henry’s criticism of Aristotle, the fact that Aristotle thinks that some human beings have continuous good fortune that seems to require direct divine intervention is not mentioned explicitly by Auriol. Yet, as will be shortly seen, Auriol himself thought that in most cases immediate divine action was not required for the providence. Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 921b, C–D: “unde necesse est quod moveat quod est in nobis melius et divinum, videlicet voluntatem et intellectum, quod ergo magis moveat hominem unum quam alium; non potest sumi ratio ex parte Dei qui est motor universalis, sed oportet quod sumatur ex diversa dispositione naturae. Tum quia Deus agit immutabiliter et necessitate naturae secundum Philosophum, et ideo diversitas ad divinos impulsus oportet quod ortum habeat in hominibus ex varia dispositione naturae. Tum quia fortunatos dicimus bene natos: et videtur sequi complexionem quam quis consequitur ex influentia varia constellationum; hoc autem non esset nisi poneretur aliqua dispositio naturalis inclinans ad actus bona fortunae.”

\(^{159}\) Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 921b, F–922a, A: “Tum quia consuevit dici communiter quod bona fortuna excedit sapientiam et prudentiam, quia melius vaticinantur de fine quam sapientes, et prudentes; hoc autem non esset nisi moveretur a Deo qui bene novit praesens et futurum et quod praeterit, unde quod sapientes vel prudentes prescient et consuetudinem quandam attingent bene fortunati per divinum impulsum.”

\(^{160}\) Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 922a, D-E: “Nec contradicit sibi, sicut imponunt aliqui, ponendo aeternitate mundi, et quod primum principium non movet, nisi per modum finis. Primum quidem principium causat desiderium in motoribus orbium, sicut Commentator exponit; isti autem motores ex appetitu primi principii movent orbit, sic quod motor potissimus, qui movet omnes orbit ab oriente in occidentem, tamquam unum mobile, quamvis sua operatio magis attribuatur primo mobili, ubi magis relucet. Sic igitur iste motor ex desiderio primi principii movent totum caelum, et universum, excepta terra, quae immobiles est. Unde motus cometarum, qui sunt in aere subjectivae, et moventur ab oriente in occidentem, attribuatur isti motor.”
continuous good fortune of some. This allowed Auriol to criticize Henry’s claim that Aristotle contradicted himself.

As was shown in the previous chapter, Auriol criticized Aquinas’s theory of providence for being incompatible with divine simplicity and the contingency found in the created world. In the same distinction, Auriol also criticized Aquinas’s theory of good fortune. Auriol’s exposition of Aquinas’s theory, and the criticism he presents against it, contain some rather surprising features. Auriol’s description of Aquinas’s theory of good fortune is based on the 92nd chapter of the third book of *Summa contra gentiles*, which was discussed earlier in reference to Aquinas’s ideas of *LDBF*. Auriol quotes numerous passages from Aquinas’s text *verbatim*. Surprisingly, his criticism of Aquinas’s theory of good fortune focuses exclusively on Aquinas’s views of angelic protection (*custodia angelorum*). While angelic protection is certainly a part of Aquinas’s theory, it in no way constitutes the actual core of Aquinas’s discussion of the aid offered by the superior causes to human beings. All four arguments that Auriol raises against Aquinas’s theory are centred on the role of angels in the disposal of good luck. Auriol argues, for example, that a luxurious life typically associated with being fortunate often leads men to sin. Yet good angels would rather lead men to live a life that would not expose them to sin. It is surprising that Auriol decided to focus entirely on this part of Aquinas’s theory, especially since even in his own description of Aquinas’s theory angelic protection does not receive a central role. The criticism Auriol presented against Aquinas’s views concerning providence and contingency that I treated in the previous chapter is clearly based on a good understanding of Aquinas’s theory. But when it comes to Auriol’s criticism of Aquinas’s ideas

161 Aquinas mainly notes in the 92nd chapter that angels dispose and intellectually persuade human beings towards certain choices. This kind of persuasion cannot coerce its subject to any given choice. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles III*, c. 92 n. 4 “Rursus, attendenda est circa hoc alia differentia. Nam operatio Angeli, et corporis caelestis, est solum sicut disponens ad electionem: operatio autem Dei est sicut periciens. Cum autem dispositio quae est ex corporis qualitate, vel intellectus persuasione, necessitatem ad eligendum non inducat, non semper homo eligat illud quod Angelus custodii intendent, neque illud ad quod corpus caeleste inclinat. Semper tamen hoc homo eligat secundum quod Deus operatur in eius voluntate. Unde custodia Angelorum interdum cassatur, secundum illud Jerem. 51-9: curavimus Babylonem, et non est curata; et multo magis inclinatio caelestium corporum; divina vero providentia semper est firma.”

162 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 926b, A: “Praeterea: boni angeli magis videntur suadere hominibus paupertatem quam prosperitatem; videmus etiam quod in actibus illis qui attribuuntur bonae fortunae, frequenter committititur peccatum, modus enim acquirendi divitias, aut principatus et statum sublimem, frequenter malus est et cum peccato; et tamen sic acquirentes dici mus bene fortunatos. Sed constat quod angeli boni non dirigunt in tales actus in quibus est peccatum. Ergo id quod prius.”
concerning angelic protection, it is difficult to say why Auriol chose to focus on this exact, rather minor, aspect of Aquinas’s ideas.\footnote{There has been relatively significant philosophical interest towards medieval theories of angels in the recent scholarship. See, Iribarren & Lenz 2008 & Hoffmann 2012.}

Auriol’s criticism against Henry of Ghent’s understanding of good fortune is of great interest for Auriol’s views on divine providence. Auriol describes Henry’s theory briefly but accurately, noting that Henry finds Aristotle’s theory erroneous, since in his reading of Aristotle, good fortune comes from God in a naturally necessary way. To avoid Aristotle’s error, the impulse for continuous good fortune must, according to Henry, be reduced to God, because only God as an omnipotent and omniscient being has the ability to dispose all the innumerous causes and effects required to bring about good fortune to some human beings continuously. This is not based on the natural, but rather on the moral differences between humans. For this reason, good fortune must be attributed to God’s special providence, which Aristotle ignored entirely in his discussion of good fortune.\footnote{Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 3, 925b, A–C: “Dixerunt autem alii quod quidquid Aristoteles dicit de bona fortune, erroneum est pro eo quod ponit eam a Deo fieri secundum providentiam generalem et necessitate naturae; ita quod non potest aliter evenire. Dixerunt ergo isti quod impulsus bene fortunati non possunt reduci in corpus caeleste nec etiam ad aliquam impressionem factam in corpore hominis a caelo, quia effectus fortuiti sunt infiniti et varii, qui non possunt connecti nec etiam intenti nisi a Deo infinito. Nec reduci possunt in angelos, quamvis enim angelus possit plures tales effectus providere quam homo, non tamen potest infinitos providere, ut eos connectat et ad eos moveat eodem impulsu. Sed talis impulsus bonae fortune universalis debet reduci in Deum qui providet hominibus prospera et adversa, non secundum dispositionem naturae eorum, sed magis secundum eorum merita vel demerita. Secundum hoc ergo melius definiretur bona fortuna quod est quaedam cura Dei secundum meritum vel demeritit quam quod sit sine ratione naturae. Prosperitas enim et adversitas hominum universalis, sic quod omnia homini cedant in bonum, non potest reduci nisi in divinam providentiam specialem. Et idem etiam dici possit de somniis.”}

In his criticism of Henry’s position, Auriol points out that no contradiction arises from reducing the continuous good luck of some to natural causes. He writes that often after a comet is seen in the sky, something notable, or something notably fortunate, takes place. The things we see happening to the continuously fortunate people are no more extraordinary than the sight of the shooting star. Since it would be irrational to attribute individual sights of shooting stars to God’s special providence, similarly the continuous good fortune of some does not need to be reduced to God’s special divine providence.\footnote{Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum} d. 40, a. 3, 926b, D–E: “Sed non videtur impossibile quod reductur ad aliquod principium naturale id quod videmus in bene fortunatis, aequae enim mirabile est de apparitione unius cometae designantis aliquod magnum. Constat enim quod ut in pluribus cernimus aliquod notable fieri post apparitionem huiusmodi, nec tamen rationabile videtur quod Deus immediate faciat illam stellam vel potius impressionem igneam quae appareat in stella; ergo nec rationabile videtur quod...”} According to Auriol, if it is possible that nature may receive...
some active power (*virtus activa*), then divine goodness would be reduced if God did not give the power in question to nature, but rather kept the power to himself. This would imply some kind of jealousness on the divine part. Auriol makes it clear that such imperfections, of course, may not be attributed to God.\(^\text{166}\)

Auriol also notes that good fortune is clearly found equally amongst believers and infidels. He does not see the possibility of God continuously and actively causing good fortune for infidels as worthy of consideration.\(^\text{167}\)

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\(^{166}\) Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 926b, B–C: “Ulterius non videtur rationabile quod hoc reducatur in Deum providentem secundum merita vel demerita quodam regimine speciali; illud enim quod est possibile reduci in principia naturalia, ridiculosum est reducere immediate ad Deum. Unde subtrahentes actiones corporibus naturalibus ut dignificent Deum tamquam immediate omnia facientem non habent cerebrum naturaliter habile ad bonum, ut Commentator dicit IX Metaphysicae commento VII, ymmo si natura potest recipere talem virtutem activam, videtur quod drogoet divinae bonitati, si non communicaverit eam, ut quasi invidus, velit omnia facere per se ipsum.” Auriol refers to Averroes, who had employed a similar argument in his commentary on *Metaphysics*. Averroes, In Met. IX, c. 7 (ed. Bürke, p. 37, l. 30–p. 38, l. 45): “Id est: Manifestum est igitur, quod nulla actio provenit ab aliquo quod non habet potentiam ad illam actionem. […] Et intendit, quod quaerendum est a negantibus potentiam praecedere actionem, scilicet: quando aliquis agit aliquam actionem, utrum agat illud ad quod habebat potentiam ante actionem aut ad quod non habebat potentiam. Si ad hoc quod non habebat potentiam, ergo agit impossibile sibi. Et si illud ad quod potest, ergo concedunt potentiam praecedere actionem. Moderni autem ponunt unum agens omnia entia sine medio, scilicet deum. Et contingit istis, ut nullum ens habeat actionem propriam naturaliter. Et cum entia non habuerint actiones proprias, non habebant essentias proprias. Actiones enim non diversantur nisi per essentias diversas. Et ista opinio est valide extranea a natura hominis. Et qui recipiunt hoc, non habent cerebrum habile naturaliter ad bonum.” Unlike Auriol, Averroes does not bring up the problem of divine jealousness. This aspect of Auriol’s argument reminds one of Plato’s well-known argument in *Timaios* 29d–30a. Plato writes that God is wholly devoid of envy and thus wanted to create everything as close to his own perfection as possible. In the Middle Ages, Peter Abelard (1079–1142) made this argument one of the centrepieces of his theological system. Auriol most likely did not, however, directly know much about Abelard’s work. Abelard’s views were condemned on many occasions during and after his life. They continued to exert an influence mainly through Peter Lombard, who in his *Sententiae* supported some of Abelard’s ideas and attacked others – without ever mentioning Abelard’s name. For a thorough discussion of Abelard’s philosophical and theological ideas and their influence, see Marenbon 2013.

\(^{167}\) Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 926b, E–F: “Praeterea: prosperitas fortunae videtur esse absque meritis et demeritis, indifferenter ex industria aut quadam aptitudine naturali. Quod apparat quia et inter infideles inveniuntur bene et male fortunati, sicut inter fideles; et idem homo nune bonae vitae, nunc malae permanebit uniformiter bene fortunatus vel male; unde et ex naturali conditione videtur inesse, sicut glaucedo oculorum et nigredo secundum Philosophum. Ergo non apparat quod istud debeat reduci in Deum secundum merita vel demerita providentem, unde recurrere ad miraculum in
idea that anything that may be reduced to natural principles must not be reduced to God as a cause makes the differences between the two authors on this topic quite explicit. Thus, to Auriol it would be irrational to reduce the good and bad fortunes of human beings to God’s special providence. This shows clearly that Auriol seriously wants to restrict the number of divine interventions in the created world in comparison to Henry. On these grounds, Auriol also denies any special relationship between virtuous or sinful human actions and good fortune.

While claiming that good fortune should be reduced in most cases to natural principles and not to God’s special providence, Auriol does not, however, assume the position criticized by Henry of Ghent that the celestial bodies would be the cause of good fortune. Auriol refers to an anonymous and unidentified author representing this position. In his criticism of this anonymous author, Auriol makes use of the argument already employed by Thomas Aquinas and Henry. He writes that the celestial bodies cannot be the per se reason of premonitions for the realization of future events seen in dreams usually requires an accidental concurrence between acts of free will and natural states of affairs. As natural causes, the celestial bodies do not have the capacity to act as the per se cause of such accidentally connected events, and this rules out the possibility that good fortune or premonitions would be reduced to the causality of celestial bodies.

168 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 925b, D–F: “Dixerunt vero alii quod impetus bene fortunatorum reduci habent in stellarum influxus et varias constellationes. Quod quidem rationabile videtur, tum quia futurorum eventus iudicatur ex constallationibus a peritis Astrologis, unde coniunctio Iovis et Saturni significat depopulationem regnorum et apparitio cometarum significat mortes magnatum vel aliiquid huiusmodi. Semper enim videmus aliquid magnum fieri post talium apparitionem, ex quo igitur sidera designant talia et ducunt in notitiam futurorum arguitive, non videtur impossibile quod possint imprimere aliquas motiones in appetitu sensitivo vel imaginatione ex quibus cor hominis immutetur, dum aliquid nocivum aut aliiquid utile sibi debet accidere. Tum quia caelestia corpora movent aves et animalia ad miras operationes, utpote formicam ad levandum granum in altum cum debet esse pluvia et ad deponendum in cavernulis terrae, dum debet esse siccitas et serenitas similiter et gallum movent ad distinguendum horas et canendum in certis horis. Unde inconveniens non videtur quod hoc modo moveant hominem ad aliquas stupendas apprehensiones quibus dirigatur in notitiam futurorum utilium vel nocivorum, et eodem modo contingit in somniis quod movetur homo a corporibus caelestibus ad videndum aliqua vera, utilia, vel nociva.”

After criticizing the previous views concerning LDBF, Auriol presents his own theory of continuous good fortune. Auriol’s interpretation of LDBF is highly original. It is largely based on the concepts of skill in conjecture (eustochia) and deliberative excellence (eubulia) he finds in the 6th book of Nicomachean Ethics. As far as I can tell, Auriol is the first and perhaps only scholastic author to employ these concepts in his theory of continuous good fortune.

Auriol describes deliberative excellence as a part of, and an act of, the practical reason (prudentia), which has the task of considering all the intermediate steps to the wanted end. For this reason, prudence acts with maturity rather than suddenly. Skill in conjecture, on the contrary, is the opposite of deliberative excellence, because it acts suddenly and without reason. Skill in conjecture is something that diverse human beings may have in different areas of life: some may have skill in conjecture with respect to healing and others with respect to fighting. Thus, they may be called fortunate (bene fortunati) in these fields of life as their conjectures are sudden and are not based on the use of reason. For the most part, good fortune may be reduced to this natural skill that various human beings have in varying degrees.

Unde istius totius vel istius connexionis caelum non potest esse causa, alioquin esset aliquid per se et per se unum.”

170 In my estimation, Auriol’s discussion of LDBF is the most interesting part of his treatise on divine providence (Scriptum d. 40, a. 2–4). As was shown in the previous chapter, Auriol’s reconciliation between divine providence and human freedom, for example, was mostly based on his more foundational theories concerning divine intellect and will. Auriol uses the Latinized versions of the Greek terms euboulia and eustokhia. I follow Rackham’s English translation of these terms as “deliberative excellence” and “skill in conjecture”, respectively. See Nicomachean Ethics VI, 1142a35–1142b5. Another passage where Aristotle discusses these terms is Posterior analytics I.34, 89b10–15.

171 Peter Auriol, Scriptum d. 40, a. 3. 927a, F–927b, B: “Secunda vero propositio est quod prosperitas sive bona fortuna quae videtur quibusdam hominibus naturalis reduci debet ut in pluribus in quandam occultam industiam quam habent diversi homines in diversis quae appellatur a Philosopho in VI Ethicorum eustochia seu bona conjectura et in libello De bona fortuna appellatur virtus divinativa. Ubi considerandum quod eustochia differt ab eubula quae est pars prudentiae cuius actus est bene consiliari secundum Philosophum in VI Ethicorum. Nam prudentia consiliativa est cum ratione, et consideratione circumstantiarum et omnium mediiorum quae perducent ad finem; unde inventio consili in est ex deliberatione, et certa causa et iterum consiliativa prudentia non operatur subito, sed cum maturitate; oportet enim consiliari tarde, et morose, operari velociter, ut dicitur ibidem. Eustochia vero, quod interpretatur bona conjecturatio per oppositum assumit iudicium de aliquo agendo absque omni ratione et subito ut Philosophus dicit ibidem. Sic igitur diversi homines habent tales industrias et subitas conjecturas, aliqvi quidem respectu mercationum, aliui vero respectu armorum, aliui autem respectu convictus et promotionum, alii quoque respectu aegritudinum et infirmitatum, ita quod sunt stupendi medici et prenosticantes, ubi etiam sapientiores attingere non possunt. Et secundum hoc dicuntur isti bene fortunati in hoc isti in illo; appellatur enim talis actus fortuitus quia subitus et absque ratione.”
Auriol writes that the existence of such non-reasoning talent in some men is self-evident by experience.\textsuperscript{172} Having an end in mind and knowing the conclusion of the practical syllogism, without knowing the minor premise, nor being able to tell why the given action will be advantageous for the given end, is something that happens time after time to human beings who have a non-reasoning talent for some given skill. He also points out that some men have talents that may seem supernatural, but still remain entirely natural abilities. Auriol notes that as sometimes happens in speculative matters (\textit{speculabilibus}) as well as in practical syllogisms, sometimes one can discover the minor premise suddenly and simultaneously with the conclusion without being able to clearly distinguish the minor premise from the conclusion at that time.\textsuperscript{173} Auriol seems to be thinking of situations where the agent, being for example in a state of hurry and stress, makes a quick and instinctive solution without having formulated any explicit rational grounds for it. Such a person may be judged to be foolish by others, but when it turns out that something good follows from his instinctive solution, others will consider it an instance of good fortune.

Similarly, in some cases some human beings may be able to avoid evils through good conjectures without explicitly recognizing the middle term of the practical syllogism. Therefore, there are some who are continuously able to achieve something good, and avoid something evil through a good conjecture that has no known rationally justified grounds. Auriol concludes that this skill for good conjecture, which is a natural feature of some human individuals,

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{172} Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum}, 927b, B–C: “Quod igitur tales industriae speciales et coniecturae sint inditae hominibus naturaliter et possibiles in esse probatur quia vanum est experientias negare, sed experimur quod homines habent aptitudines ad diversa: aliqui quidem ad lucrandum, alii vero ad pugnandum, alii autem ad convivendum, atque alii ad curandum et medicinas ministrandum.”

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{173} Peter Auriol, \textit{Scriptum}, d. 40, a. 3, 928a, B–E: “Ergo non est inconveniens quod sic sit de coniecturativis industriis fortunatorum hominum et habentium somnia vera, quamvis enim non habentibus aptitudines illas videatur esse quid admirabile et divinum et supra facultatem naturae, sunt nihilominus naturales. Est ergo sciemendum, quod sicut in speculabilibus aliquando quidem contingit quod videtur conclusio per medium distinctum, ita quod sciens et novit conclusionem et scit distinguere medium per quod venit in conclusionem. Aliquando vero contingit quod involvitur medium cum conclusione, ita quod aliqui reperiuntur qui proposito aliquo dubitabili, statim dicent hoc esse verum vel illud; nec tamen sciant distinguere medium nec exprimere propter quid, numquam tamen accidit quod cadant super conclusione sine medio vel distincto vel involuto et commixto. Sic in agibilibus contingit quod aliqui eligunt quid agendum per media distincta quae consiliando et ratiocinando inveniunt morose et deliberate et tales dicuntur prudentes: alii vero subito eligunt quid agendum sine medio distincto aut distinguiri possibili per eodem et tales subito eligunt et absque ratione quam exprimere possint; experiuntur tamen sic esse agendum, licet non distinguant quid movet eos et propter hoc videntur insipientes nec consiliat vivi; oritur autem hoc ex quadam aptitudine naturali et promptitudine imaginativae et virtutis aestimativae. Unde mirabiles industrias habet homo secundum diversitates complexionum.”
explains the phenomenon of continuous good fortune discussed by Aristotle in *LDBF*. Here we may note that Auriol’s point is perfectly in line with Aristotle’s idea of good fortune as a natural instinct which is not guided by reason (*sine ratione natura*). After all, the fact that good conjectures are not always based on rational deliberation and the ability to make good conjectures time after time is a natural feature of some individuals. Auriol notes that rational deliberation can often even be opposed to the skill of conjecture that leads to good fortune. An agent may give up following his intuitive conjecture as it seems irrational, only to later find out that following one’s intuition would have led to a more profitable outcome.

Auriol does, however, in the end say that sometimes God directly intervenes in the mostly natural functioning of good fortune, although for the most part good fortune is based on the conjectures of the people having the talent for them. God’s direct interventions can be seen, for example, in the biblical story of Job, where Job receives misfortunes time after time because of a special divine plan. Through his perfect knowledge of all the secondary causes, God is able to dispose them to cause good or bad fortune as he wishes to men. This part of Auriol’s question reminds one of the quodlibetal...

174 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 928a, E–928b, A: "Quod igitur huiusmodi industriis coniecturalibus attribuatur, ut in pluribus, prosperitas et bona fortunatio hominum aliquorum patet quia bona fortuna vel attenditur prout reperitur in artibus, utpote in mercationibus vel militari negotio, aut in alius actibus, utpote in aedepotione honorum quibus homo praefertur aliis; aut reperitur in hiis quae homo patitur aliunde non coagendo ut cum subito et ex insperato evitant bonam aliqui faciente; aut etiam cum evitantur mala. Sed in omnibus istis possunt tales industriae adiuvare, in operibus quidem quae reducantur ad artes hoc patet, quia in negotiationibus et mercationibus potest aliquid habere industriam et coniecturam subitam qua judicabit hoc esse emendum vel venendum et cor sibi dictabit; nec tamen distinguet medium propter quid, nec consiliati possent videre medium aut rationem et propter hoc ille videbitur insipiens et tamen erit fortunatus."

175 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 929a, B: "Tertia quoque propositio est quod per ista possunt salvari quae supra dixit Philosophus De bona fortuna; et primo quidem definitio quod est sine ratione natura quia talis coniecturalis potentia quae dicitur eustochia et esse sine ratione secundum eundem Philosophi in VI Ethicorum est illa natura quae ponitur in definitione bonae fortunae."

176 Peter Auriol, *Scriptum* d. 40, a. 3, 929a, D: “Adhuc apparet sexto quod ratio multitios impeditiva bona fortunae inquantum suadetur homini sic coniecturat, ne operetur secundum coniecturam, pro eo quod rationabile non apparat et tunc omittit operari, et postmodum apparat quod melius facisset.”

question of John Duns Scotus, treated above. Scotus ended his question by simply stating that God rules all creation through his general and special providences, without developing this idea any further. Auriol, on the other hand, briefly points out that God is omnipotent and has the power to influence the fortunes of men in any way he pleases. This is not the situation in most cases, however. The impulse for good fortune comes about from the fortunate person’s skill of conjecture. Since such a person’s good luck is continuous, it may seem that it is not natural, but rather that is directly caused by God. God does not, however, in most cases immediately move the fortunate to follow the impulse. Rather this happens through the individual natures that are given by God.\textsuperscript{178}

Aquinas’s treatment of good fortune in \textit{Summa contra gentiles} III c. 92 contains an interesting parallel to Auriol’s theory of good fortune. Aquinas writes that men can be aided by higher causes both in being directed to choose well, and being able to pursue the things already chosen. With respect to the latter, Aquinas argues that men can receive strength and efficiency not only from God and the angels but also from the celestial bodies, despite the fact that they are natural causes. Magnets attract iron and, according to Aquinas, they receive this power through the influence of celestial bodies. On these grounds, there is no reason to deny that the celestial bodies could also give some men the ability to be more efficient in their various actions, for example, in healing, farming or fighting.\textsuperscript{179} The similarity of this passage to Auriol’s ideas is clear. Auriol does not explicitly mention Aquinas in presenting his theory of good fortune. He does, however, quote Aquinas’s relevant passage in his introduction to Aquinas’s theory, which shows that Auriol was familiar with Aquinas’s idea of human talents having their grounds in some natural causes.
The differences between Auriol’s and Aquinas’s ideas must be noted as well, however. While both speak of natural causes, Aquinas refers to the causality of celestial bodies, whereas Auriol focuses on skill in conjecture, understood as a natural skill of some people. Also, in Aquinas’s theory the idea that the celestial bodies can make someone more efficient remains in a rather minor part, whereas Auriol gives skill in conjecture (eustochia) a central role in being the cause of good fortune. Despite these differences, it seems likely that Auriol’s theory may have been inspired by Aquinas’s discussion. The fact that Auriol repeats the examples given by Aquinas (a soldier being naturally efficient in fighting and a doctor having a natural talent for healing) is further evidence for Auriol having found inspiration for his theory in Aquinas’s Summa contra gentiles III c.92. In addition, as already seen, Auriol treats Summa contra gentiles III c. 92 in the same distinction, so we have clear evidence that Auriol was quite familiar with Aquinas’s text and had it at hand while writing his question on providence.

All in all, it is clear that Auriol’s original and detailed theory of continuous good fortune is developed in a highly naturalistic framework in comparison to the theories of, for example, Aquinas or Henry of Ghent. For Auriol, being well-fortuned is in most cases caused by a wholly natural skill of being able to guess well intuitively and achieve external goods through this skill. Thus, Auriol’s theory of good fortune greatly reduces the need for divine interventions in the created world. As seen above, in Henry’s view, God actively directs the fortunes of men in accordance with their merits and demerits. Auriol denies that God would dispense good and bad fortune in such an active way, but does say that, being omnipotent, God in principle could direct the fortunes of men, though it would nevertheless be unworthy of his power and dignity. In Auriol’s theory, God remains mostly indifferent to the good and bad fortunes of human individuals.
CONCLUSION

In this study I have traced the history of the concept of divine providence from the ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle to the end of the first half of the 14th century. My focus has been the 13th and 14th centuries. Although earlier scholars have rightly noted that divine providence was not a centrepiece of medieval theology, in this work it has been shown that the medieval discussions on providence were richer than general opinion has allowed.

This study started with Plato and Aristotle and noted that the two Greek philosophers did not see divine providence as a very important doctrine in their philosophical systems. Yet in the Hellenistic era, the followers of Plato and Aristotle attributed theories of providence to their teachers in order to find new solutions to the acute philosophical problems of their own era. In some sense, the history of Platonic and Aristotelian interpretation continued all the way up to the Middle Ages, although the scholastic authors were not always aware of their remote sources. As we have seen, the way providence came to be understood and conceptualized in the medieval Christian tradition, was mostly based on the writings of Augustine and Boethius. It is most clear that the ideas of divine providence presented by Augustine and Boethius had their roots in Middle and Neoplatonic thinkers. In addition, Boethius was highly interested in, and influenced by Aristotle’s thought. Philosophically speaking, the most important feature of Augustine’s view on providence that Augustine inherited from the Neoplatonic tradition was the idea of particular providence. By particular providence I refer to the view that God has care and concern for the lower beings in the created world, including the smallest particular animals, plants as well as human beings. The idea of particular providence was most clearly present in the Bible, albeit presented in a non-philosophical context. As I pointed out in the introduction, in the Middle Ages Biblical texts often acted as a source of philosophical reflection. The philosophical idea of particular providence presents another historical example of such reflection. From another perspective, for a student of the history of philosophy, the Christian idea of particular providence can also be viewed as an example of the Neoplatonic heritage of the late ancient and medieval Christian authors.

The Aristotelian theory of providence received its definitive early formulation in the works of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Alexander interpreted Aristotle’s cosmological theory and his theological remarks to build a clear-cut theory of providence, Alexander explicitly presenting the theory as Aristotle’s own theory of providence. The first important aspect of the Alexandrian theory were that providence was primarily concerned with sustaining the species of beings. It extended to individuals only insofar as they participated in their given species. The second important aspect was that providence influenced the lower sublunary world only through the mediation of the celestial bodies. The First Mover acted as the exemplar and the final end of the celestial bodies and
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made them rotate in imitation of his own perfect being. This rotating movement of the celestial spheres and the stars attached to them made the life and continuous sustenance of the lower species possible.

This “Aristotelian”, or more properly speaking Alexandrian, theory of providence was known in the Middle Ages through a combination of different sources. First, the medieval theologians had of course access to Aristotle’s own writings. Especially his *Metaphysics* contained Aristotle’s own account of his theological ideas, although it did not contain an explicit theory of divine providence in particular. Second, there was a number of Arabic Aristotelian works available to medieval authors. Especially the Latin translations of Avicenna and Averroes gave them access to a wide array of Aristotle’s ideas, often presented in a Neoplatonizing reading.¹ Averroes, especially, presented an explicit account of Aristotle’s theory of providence, but as we have seen, authors such as Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent raised doubts as to whether Averroes’s account of Aristotle’s theological ideas could be considered trustworthy. Third, the appearance of *Liber de bona fortuna* (*LDBF*) had a major influence on the medieval theologians’ views on the Aristotelian theory of providence. Thomas Aquinas, for example, held that *LDBF* demonstrated that Aristotle had believed in particular providence in addition to the providence of the species.

In the first chapter I introduced the historical development of the doctrine of providence beginning with Plato and Aristotle and ending with Augustine and Boethius. This brief look demonstrated that some of the central philosophical questions regarding providence remained unchanged from antiquity all the way up to the late Middle Ages. Some of the most important questions – whether freedom of the will and divine providence are reconcilable, whether providence extends to particular beings, and how can there be evil in a world governed by provident god(s) – all originated in ancient philosophy. A central difference between the ancient pagan philosophical and the medieval Christian tradition is that the latter remains more philosophically uniform. The Christian authors were adamant in either defending the human beings’ capacity to do otherwise regardless of divine providence or arguing that providential necessity was compatible with human freedom. They also unanimously stressed God’s providence for particular beings. In the ancient philosophical tradition, the Neoplatonic philosophers stood closest to the later Christian thinkers. They, too, endorsed particular providence and human beings’ freedom to choose between alternative possibilities. The Peripatetics on the other hand denied the former, while accepting the latter. Although the Stoics and the Epicureans had little direct influence on the medieval thinkers, their views remained known indirectly. The Stoics believed in an absolutely

¹ Another important example of the Latin translations of Arabic philosophical works in this era is *Liber de causis*, a work first attributed to Aristotle. *Liber de causis* is actually mostly based on Proclus’s *Elements of Theology*, although the real author of the work remains unknown.
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all-reaching providence, stretching to the smallest details in the universe, including singular beings and individual choices of human beings. They did endorse human moral responsibility, but did not think that human beings were free to choose in the modern libertarian sense. The Epicureans, on the other hand, denied divine providence altogether.

Augustine’s theory of divine providence was based on Biblical interpretation and mostly Neoplatonic philosophical insight. As was the case with his doctrine of creation, Augustine believed that the theories of the Platonists concerning providence were largely confirmed in the Bible. Augustine’s ideas of creation and providence were also connected by his adaptation of the Stoic theory of logoi spermatikoi, a type of non-physical seeds, planted in creation, that are realized over the course of time. Augustine thus held that the later unfolding of the providential plan was already contained in the creation. Unlike the Stoics, Augustine stressed that the creation was free and based on divine choice.

Augustine’s refutation of Cicero’s views on foreknowledge were highly influential in the Middle Ages. Cicero held that the gods could not have certain knowledge of future events, as this would have rendered human freedom impossible. Augustine argued against Cicero that God knew all future certainly but in a way that did not interfere with human freedom. Knowing that free agents did make certain free choices in the future, God would actually have been mistaken if these choices were not really free. Thus, instead of preventing human freedom, God’s foreknowledge made it possible. Augustine’s compatibilist solution on the relationship between divine foreknowledge and human freedom was adapted most notably by Thomas Aquinas in his theory of divine providence.

Augustine stressed that human beings were capable of performing morally liable and free choices, even though sin and evil were an integral part of fallen human existence. Despite the all-pervasiveness of divine providence, God was not to be held responsible for human evil. Augustine presented two kinds of arguments for this conclusion. His main strategy was to argue that since human beings are free to choose between alternatives, they can also choose evil. The creation of the faculty of free will is a good thing as such, although it can be used for evil. Yet, God has the ability to bring forth good even from evil human choices and all sins are ultimately rectified through just punishments. There is parallelism between this solution and the Middle Platonic theory of conditional fate. According to the theory of conditional fate, individual human choices are free from fate, whereas their consequences are fated. Similarly, in Augustine’s theory, actual human choices are free but the ultimate outcome of morally relevant choices, salvation or punishment, is predetermined by God.

Another strategy that Augustine employs to reconcile the existence of evil with the reality of all-reaching providence is to argue that evil deeds are like shadows in a painting. Considered outside their context, they are culpable. Yet in the overall picture, they contribute to the beauty of the universe. Both of these strategies of reconciling evil with divine providence were adopted and
developed by the medieval thinkers. Like Augustine, the medieval theologians often used both strategies side by side. Yet, some thinkers clearly had a preference for one or the other. Peter Auriol, for example, denied that particular evils could have been caused by God in any way.

In the second chapter, I studied a group of Christian authors who wrote their main works mostly during the first three quarters of the 13th century: Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Siger of Brabant. Albert the Great wrote extensively on providence both in a commentary to Aristotle’s *Physics* as well as in his *Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia Dei*. Interestingly, in the first work Albert presents an emanationist model of divine causality, closely reminiscent of the so-called “Aristotelian” theory of providence. In this model, God directly influences only the highest beings in the hierarchy, that is, the celestial spheres. Contingency starts appearing at the lower levels of causation, but God remains omniscient with regard to the sublunary world as he himself acts as the remote cause of the lower beings through the mediation of higher and intermediary causes. Yet in his *Summa theologiae*, Albert presents a more traditional Christian view of providence, in which God influences the particular beings of the lower spheres of being directly as well as through the mediation of higher causes. Apparently, Albert did not consider that his philosophical and theological accounts of providence were in any tension with each other.

Thomas Aquinas is without question the single most notable theorist of divine providence who lived in the medieval period. Aquinas offered numerous extensive treatments of virtually all of the philosophical and theological questions to do with providence that were discussed in his time. Aquinas’s way of reconciling human freedom and divine providence was based on Augustine’s ideas on divine foreknowledge and human freedom presented in the 5th book of *De civitate Dei*. Aquinas held that while predisposing all the created causes and their effects, God also predetermined the modal statuses of these causes. As divine providence made some of the lower causes contingent, they could not fail to be contingent. Aquinas considered this solution to avoid causal determinism. As the lower causes disposed by God were contingent, their effects could not have been necessary with regard to their proximate causes. At the same time with regard to their remote cause, God, the effects could not have been other than what they were. This necessity was not absolute, but rather conditional, as the whole providential plan of God was ultimately based on an entirely free and uncoerced divine choice. While the idea that all lower effects are necessary with respect to divine providence is affirmed in Aquinas’s later works, *Summa theologiae* and the commentary on *Metaphysics*, it is not explicitly contained in Aquinas’s earlier commentary on the *Sentences*.

Aquinas’s reconciliation of all-reaching divine providence and the existence of evil went through some subtle changes over the course of his career. In his early works, Aquinas mostly employs what I have named the accidental strategy of reconciling divine providence and worldly evil. In this
strategy, evil is seen as an accidental outcome of God’s creation of free intellectual agents. Although future human sins are foreknown by God, they are in no way intended by him. In his later works, Aquinas moved towards what I have named the instrumental strategy of reconciling providence with evil. In this strategy particular human evils are used instrumentally by God to achieve greater good for the universe. Thus, while these evils are in reality culpable on the lower levels of causation and also in God’s consideration of the sinner, from the perspective of divine causation they are not culpable. This idea is most clearly present in the argument that compares a universal and a particular provider. Whilst a provider of some particular realm does well in removing all evil from this realm, a universal provider should permit some particular evils for the sake of the universal good. Such a provider uses the particular evils as instruments in achieving the universal good. The idea of this argument is, of course, that God is the universal provider and may actively allow some evils without blame.

I proposed that the reason why Aquinas moved from employing the accidental strategy in his early works towards using the instrumental strategy in his later works is that he started to emphasize that all the effects taking place in the created world were necessary with regard to providence. His late view stressing divine omnipotence and the all-pervasiveness of divine providence was difficult to combine with the accidental strategy, in which human evil deeds remain completely outside divine intention.

Siger of Brabant argued that Aquinas’s mature theory of providence cannot avoid determinism. If all the effects in the created world are necessary with respect to providence, then they are necessary and not contingent. Siger thus denied the validity of Aquinas’s use of the distinction between remote and proximate causes. Siger himself held that divine providence, understood as the whole connection of causes, had to contain causes that were contingent simpliciter. This led him into difficulties in explaining how God could remain omniscient.

In the third chapter, I discussed the doctrinal condemnations of 1277 with particular reference to the doctrine of divine providence and treated a number of authors writing in the decades following these condemnations. Authors such as Giles of Rome, Richard of Middleton and John of Paris wrote relatively brief and traditional expositions of providence. The influence of Aquinas may be seen in all of them. Interestingly, Richard of Middleton and John of Paris both employ the accidental and instrumental strategies side by side in their brief questions on the topic of divine providence and the existence of evil.

Matthew of Aquasparta, on the other hand, wrote an extensive treatment of providence in his Quaestiones disputatae de productione rerum et de providentia. For my purposes, the most interesting aspect of his theory is his covenantal model of divine providence. Unlike Aquinas, Matthew does not stress that providence would determine the modal statuses of created causes. Rather, he highlights the freedom of rational human beings to either obey or disobey the divinely given laws. Obeying these laws results in salvation,
whereas neglecting leads to a punishment. One who obeys the laws is under the providential order willingly. Nevertheless, even those who act against the divine precepts come under the providential order through receiving punishments concomitant with such wickedness.

Peter Auriol presented a highly developed and complex theory of divine providence. Auriol distinguished formal and objective providence. The former basically refers to God as provident, whereas the second refers to the object of providence. Because of divine simplicity the object of providence is nothing other than divine essence. Auriol used this distinction to safeguard divine simplicity. The distinction is based on Auriol’s theory of apparent being (esse apparens) that he employs in a number of theological contexts. Auriol thinks that a cognized thing receives apparent being in the mind of the cognizer. The formation of concepts is based on the non-physical apparent being of the things that are perceived. Objective providence thus refers to divine essence having received apparent being in God’s cognition and connoting the order of created things to their end.

Auriol’s reconciliation between divine providence and contingency is based on his more foundational theories of divine foreknowledge and divine will. Despite their originality, both of these theories remain somewhat mysterious mostly due to Auriol’s great stress on divine simplicity. Auriol denied that God knew future contingents as the future. For Auriol, future contingent propositions could not have been foreknown, since they did not have any truth values whatsoever. For this reason, he claimed that God cognizes propositions, which are future from the human perspective, indistantly. When treating the relationship of contingency and divine providence, Auriol mainly repeats that neither divine foreknowledge nor divine will necessitate their objects. Therefore, providence (being the sum of divine foreknowledge and the divine will) also does not lead to determinism.

In his theory of providence, Robert Holkot takes the covenantal model first encountered in Matthew of Aquasparta a step further. I argued that Holkot was drawn towards a covenantal model of providence because in his philosophical system a Thomistic view of providence would have led to determinism. Holkot held that the future was knowable only as the future, and no intellectual agent, including God, could know the future as present. Thus, if future events were necessary in comparison to divine knowledge or divine providence, they could not have remained contingent. As we have seen, Aquinas believed that God, being outside time, knew future events as present and thus did not necessitate them with his knowledge.

Holkot presents a fourfold distinction of providence that has no clear parallel in the earlier authors discussed in this work. Holkot’s theory of providence is entirely covenantal. The four types of providence Holkot discusses are not types of divine action towards the world, but rather types of human action understood as responses to divinely ordained laws. Human beings remain entirely free to respond to the divinely ordained laws as they
please. Holkot’s voluntarism prevented him from adopting a theory in which
God would causally predetermine human choices.
In the fourth chapter, I treated the contents and the discussion inspired by
the book *LDBF*. *LDBF* consists of two chapters of Aristotle’s ethical works that
deal with the notion of good luck. The book is a Latin version of these two,
originally separate, chapters translated in the middle of the 13th century. The
first author who used *LDBF* was Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas had a highly
positive view of the book. In his interpretation, *LDBF* demonstrated that
Aristotle believed in the divine providence of particular things, in addition to
the divine providence of species. Aquinas wholeheartedly accepted what he
thought was Aristotle’s position in *LDBF*: some people are continuously
fortunate in all of their undertakings, and this could not be the case without
special divine aid.

With the exception of Cordonier’s recent pioneering articles, Giles of
Rome’s *Sententia de bona fortuna* is a little-known work even to specialists of
medieval philosophy. Giles’s method is to discuss good fortune exclusively
from a philosophical point of view and leave aside perspectives of revealed
theology. Giles writes that for Aristotle good fortune is nature without reason
(\textit{sine ratione natura}) and understands this to refer to a natural impulse in a
human being that functions regardless of reason. Yet Aristotle seems to speak
of good fortune as a phenomenon which is caused by God in some sense. Giles
explains that the impulse to good fortune does arise in the human faculty of
intellect, but only insofar as God is moving the whole of nature, including the
human intellects, towards good. Some human beings are naturally better
disposed to be moved towards good in this way and such people are actually
well-fortuned. Because the continuous good fortune of some human beings is
based on natural dispositions, outside their rational consideration, Aristotle’s
definition of good fortune as nature without reason is valid.

Henry of Ghent’s quodlibetal question on good fortune was largely written
to refute Giles’s theory. Henry held that instead of discussing good fortune
from a purely natural and philosophical viewpoint, it was vital to take
theological considerations into account as well. Henry’s own account of good
fortune is based on a distinction between general and special divine
providence and can be read as an attempt to discover a synthesis between the
so-called philosophers’ understanding of providence as limited to the species
of beings and the Catholic view of providence as divine care, extending to the
smallest details of particular causal chains. The general divine providence
described by Henry corresponds with Averroes’s understanding of providence as extending to individuals only as members of a given species. Instead of
simply rejecting the theory of Averroes, Henry tried to retain it in a
theologically orthodox framework by complementing it with the idea of special
providence. According to Henry, God’s special providence is not primarily
cconcerned with the species of beings and the natural world, but rather with
individuals, salvation and the moral order. For Henry, good fortune has its
foundation in God’s special providence. For this reason, he found the naturalistic view that Giles had attributed to Aristotle heretic and erroneous.

John Duns Scotus’s views on good fortune are presented in his 21st quodlibetal question. For a study of divine providence this question is noteworthy, since it remains the only text in which Scotus explicitly addressed divine providence. Scotus’s question is centred on a remark made by Henry. Henry had argued that Aristotle’s view of the eternity of the world and the view presented in LDBF that someone can be continuously fortunate are contradictory. This is because continuous good fortune could not be caused by pure chance, but would rather in Scotus’s and Henry’s opinion require special divine interventions. Aristotle’s doctrine of the eternity of the world implies, however, that God cannot undertake such interventions, but can rather act only as the source of one simple causal effect. Scotus argues against Henry that there is no contradiction in Aristotle’s two theories. Even if God’s causality was simple and invariable, God could still act as the source of various effects because of the different dispositions of the recipients of the divine causality. Therefore, the fact that only a small portion of humanity has continuous good fortune, could be based on individual natural differences between human beings. Like in Giles’s theory, some human beings could be naturally more apt to receive the divine impulse towards good than others.

Interestingly, Scotus briefly ends his question by stating that from the viewpoint of faith, God rules all things through his general and special providence. Clearly, Scotus must have settled on making a remark concerning the right interpretation of Aristotle, but was not interested in debating the theological aspects of the question.

Peter Auriol’s discussion of LDBF is highly original, offering a psychologizing reading of LDBF. He uses Aristotle’s concept of skill in conjecture (eustochia) to explain the continuous good fortune of some. For Auriol, continuous good fortune is a natural skill to suddenly infer or guess the profitable way of acting without actual rational consideration. Like Scotus, Auriol too confirms that God has the miraculous ability to turn around the fortunes of men. This becomes clear, for example, in the Biblical story of Job. In most cases, such special interventions are not needed, however, and the functioning of fortune can be explained on purely natural principles.

All in all, the discussions concerning LDBF offer the historian an interesting perspective on the medieval debates on providence. The discussions examined in the fourth chapter of my work are mostly concerned with the project of understanding and clearly analysing Aristotle’s view on good fortune and providence. Yet all the authors studied also react to Aristotle’s view and more or less contrast it with what they held to be the revealed truth regarding providence. The various treatises and articles on LDBF clearly form a separate discussion. The different authors critically refer and react explicitly and implicitly not only to LDBF, but also to the earlier and contemporary scholastic treatments of LDBF. Yet, when these texts are studied together with the more conventional questions concerning providence, mostly
found in the various commentaries on the *Sentences* and other theological works, a more complete and complex picture of medieval ideas on divine providence may emerge.
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