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RELIGIÃO: ARTES E VOZES

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PROVIDENCE IN ST. ALBERT THE GREAT

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ABSTRACT

In these pages, we expose the main traits of St. Albert the Great's doctrine of providence and fate, considered by Palazzo the keystone of his philosophical system. To describe it we examine his systematic works, primarily his Summa of Theology. His discussion follows clearly the guidelines of the Summa of Alexander of Hales, in order to delve into the set of problems faced over the centuries by theological tradition. Albert also restates the reflections of different authors like Boethius or Saint John of Damascus but, in his Summa he incorporates to his reflections also the noteworthy book of Nemesius of Emesa, De natura hominis, which includes some pages on providence. Albert gives his personal solution to the complex questions of providence, destiny and contingency of the world. His conception of providence is developed in the frame of the creative power of the almighty God. God's knowledge is necessary and inerrant and his providential purposes are infallible, but that does not mean that every event is necessary. He does not communicate His own proprieties to the creatures. In order to understand this problem, Albert recalls the notion of hypothetical necessity coined by Boethius in an Aristotelian framework and the difference between necessitas consequentis and necessitas consequentiae proposed by Alexander of Hales. He also develops his account of providence, closely linked to the topic of fate. However, it would be exaggerated to deem his position deterministic.

KEYWORDS

Causality. Evil. Free will. Fate. Contingency and necessity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance for the present of the theme of providence has been highlighted by the philosopher and medievalist Rémi Brague (2009). He finds in the medieval conception of this concept a valuable proposal to guide us in the confusion of the contemporary world:

> One way to render intelligible the content of the medieval image of the books would be to take the idea of providence seriously. Not as it is too often imagined these days, as God putting himself in our place, in order to grasp us by the suspenders. But rather as it was conceived by people of the Middle Ages. Someday I hope to write a book on the subject, for which I already have at least a title: *À chacun selon ses besoins* (To each according to his needs). The medieval conception of providence supposes a God who gives. And without expecting anything in return, for what would God need? He does not give something supplementary to things that are already made. His gift coincides with the very nature of each created thing, the nature that is granted to it.
>
> God gives to every creature, according to its own nature, what it needs in order to attain the good. He does not take the place of the creature in making its good. And the higher on the scale from the mineral to the vegetal, the animal, and the human, the more God delegates; the more he grants the creature care of itself. When his providence is granted to man, it becomes, in a conscious play on words, prudence; not the simple fact of watching out for what lies ahead, but all of the practical wisdom that Aristotle called *phronesis*. This is where the wisdom of God and the wisdom of man come together (BRAGUE, 2009, p. 13).

In an earlier article I have shown that, for St. Thomas Aquinas the work of providence was indeed characterized not by ordering a previously given world, but by offering to each of the creatures an intelligently and compassionately determined nature[1]. In this work I intend to go back to the famous teacher

[1] "*Cette disposition divine se reflète dans la nature des choses faites par Lui. La constitution même des choses et leurs énergies innées constituent une organisation divine […] l'orientation*

of Aquinas who previously dealt with this subject and continued to do so after the death of the Angelic Doctor. Although it seems to me that the analyses of Aquinas are deeper than those of Albert, one should notice that Albert's doctrine "represents a crucial episode" in the longstanding debate about fate and freedom of will (PALAZZO, 2011, p. 65). On the other hand, as Palazzo stated, Albert's discussion on fate brings us into the heart of his thought: "Albert's teaching on fate is the keystone of his philosophical project" (PALAZZO, 2005, p. 77). This state of things is not strange since – according to Albert – the concept of "providence," intimately linked to that of "fate," constitutes the core of the meaning of the very term "God"[2].

Such a privileged position in the frame of Albert's thought explains why he gave such importance to this teaching. As Anzulewicz has pointed out,

> [...] one can recognize that he does not attribute to this question a marginal significance, because he has not only discussed it in some digressions, but he has also exposed it extensively in two specific investigations[3].

In fact, there are enough places that we could list where Albert devotes his attention to this subject[4]. There are a number of publications that carefully studied some of these passages[5], although the more extensive developments in Albert's

providentielle de toutes les choses vers leur propre fin inclut également la nature même qui caractérise chacune d'elles, elle n'est seulement l'organisation d'une suite d'entités présupposées par le plan lui-même" (BRUNIER-COULIN, 2016, p. 296).

2 See *Sent.*, I, d, 2, a. 11, ed. Borgnet, p. 64-67.

3 "*Daß er dieser Frage nicht bloß eine marginale Bedeutung beimaß, läßt sich daraus ersehen, daß er sie neben einigen Digressionen zweimal in speziellen Untersuchungen ausführlich erörterte*" (ANZULEWICZ, 2001, p. 509).

4 See *De natura boni*, §125; *S. de creaturis* (*De IV coaequaevis*), tr. 3, q. 18, a. 1; *Sent.*, I, dd. 35-36, 38-41; II, d. 15, aa. 4-5; *De div. nom.*, c. 4, §§223-225; c. 7, §§1-4; *Phys.*, l. 2, tr. 2, cc. 19-20; *De interpr.*, l. 2, tr. 2, cc. 1-6; *De fato*; *De animalibus*, l. 20, tr. 2, c. 2; *Eth.*, l. 1, tr. 7, c. 6; l. 3, tr. 1, c. 17; *De causis*, l. 1, tr. 4, c. 6; *De XV probl.*, p. 3-4; *STh.*, I, tr. 15, q. 61; tr. 16, q. 63; tr. 17. Some of these passages are indirectly linked with the question of fate and providence; for instance the ones that deal with divine foreknowledge and predestination.

5 See: Price (1980, p. 155-185), Anzulewicz (1999, p. 263-277), Anzulewicz (2000, p. 141-152; p. 507-534), Palazzo (2005, p. 55-78), Baldner (2013, p. 173-188) e Rutkin (2013, p. 476-483).

systematic works have received less attention[6]. For this reason, I will focus on these texts, which I consider quite important.

2. THE COMMENTARY ON *SENTENCES*

The study of providence in Albert's commentary on *Sentences* is limited to the slight appearance that the thematic of providence has in the work of Peter Lombard, as a chapter of the question on the knowledge of God. First, he deals with divine "foreknowledge" (*prescientia*: *Sent.*, I, dd. 35, 38), a term that designates the divine knowledge of future events. When he asks whether God knows contingent things (*Sent.*, I, d. 36, a. 7), he quotes the Pseudo-Dionysius to affirm that God knows these things in a *necessary* way. It is an aspect of the doctrine on providence stated by Proclus, who was under this aspect conditioned by Iamblichus. This point was integrated by Pseudo-Dionysius. Boethius also knows the doctrine of Proclus and tries to explain that the definite knowledge of God about future contingents does not necessitate them[7].

Boethius is quoted in another article in which Albert asks whether divine foreknowledge is the cause of all events (d. 38, a. 1). In this article, Albert provides three reasons against its imposition of necessity of future contingents[8]. The first one is that the cause must be either mutable or immutable. If it is an immutable cause, it produces immutably all that it produces, then there would be nothing contingent. Therefore, divine science is not an immutable cause of the contingent. The second one is that, as it has been shown above, in divine science there are some things that God could do but He will never do. Then not all divine knowledge necessitates things. According to Albert, the third argument is stronger: if something precedes

6 Exception made of the Goergen's monograph, which one ought to read in order to introduce himself in this issue: see Josef Goergen (1932). More recently but in less detail, Palazzo has examined fate and providence in the systematic works of St. Albert in his study "Albert the Great's doctrine of fate" (2005, p. 65-95).

7 See Robert Sharples (2009, p. 216). About the importance of Proclus for the Pseudo-Dionysius, see Inglis Patrick Sheldon-Williams (1967, p. 457).

8 See *Sent.*, I, d. 38, a. 1, s.c., ed. Borgnet, p. 280.

something else but it does not give to it anything of its own, then it is not its cause; this is proved by considering that the necessary cause makes the effect necessary and the contingent cause makes it contingent. Secondly, divine foreknowledge precedes future contingents, but these do not have anything which belongs to divine science, for they are, in effect, contingent and temporal, not immutable and eternal, as the divine science.

In the body of the article, he distinguishes between certain future contingents caused by divine science and others that are not its effects. However, he does not approve of the subterfuge employed by some scholars to explain this (in fact, it is a distinction of Peter Lombard himself), namely, to speak about a "simple notice" different from "foreknowledge" as such[9]. It is better to admit only one kind of knowledge; now, this foreknowledge or prescience would not be the cause of everything that happens, for it is not the cause of evil. In addition, even if it is a cause of the contingent as much as the necessary, it uses proximate causes that determine the contingent or necessary nature of its effects. In the answers to the objections, he explains that in order to be a cause of something, temporal antecedence of the cause and a certain proportion between cause and effect are not enough, but there should be a true efficacy between them; however, this does not happen in the case of the divine foreknowledge (ad 1). It is true that God, as creator, is the cause of all being, but He is not the cause of evil as such, since it is due to a defect of a second cause, not to the divine purpose (ad 2). Likewise, the foreknowledge of God does not provide to things all the traits that characterize such knowledge, because they are not capable of receiving them as well as because these things depend on other causes; even the necessary causes do not always succeed in causing their effects because they can be hindered by other proximate causes (ad 5).

Furthermore, he asks whether divine prescience necessitates the things known by it, since it is never wrong (*Sent.*, I, d. 38, a. 4). Albert himself acknowledges that the sources that provide him with guidance in this problem are Ambrose and Boethius (sol.). He quotes literally a passage

[9] This doctrine was previously enunciated in *Sent.*, I, d. 36, a. 11.

from *Consolation of Philosophy*[10], where Boethius makes the distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity: if one is a man, then he is necessarily mortal; however, in the field of knowledge, if someone sees somebody walking, that is because that person walks. The proposition "that person is walking" is necessary, *if* the proposition about the vision of the observer is true. Now, this does not mean that he is walking *in a necessary way*. In fact, he walks freely, on a contingent basis. Then, Boethius affirms that, although God in His eternity knows with certainty every future event, His knowledge does not necessitate future events more than does the observer who contemplates someone walking. In this sense, according to Albert it is possible to affirm that, if God foresees that something contingent will happen, this will *necessarily* happen, but only with conditional necessity; if intended as absolute necessity, that statement is false.

Later, he quotes St. Anselm in his *Concord between free will and providence*[11], where he appeals to the inner necessity of things which does not necessitate them intrinsically: future events will happen, but this does not mean that they will happen in a necessary way. It is, Albert says, the "necessity" of the nature of past or present things. It is a necessity that emanates from the supposition of the existence of each entity. This is the sense intended by the unnamed *magistri*, to whom he attributes a later popular distinction between *necessitas consequentis* and *necessitas consequentiae*[12]. Albert agrees with

[10] See *De consol.*, l. 5, c. 6, 27, CC 94, p. 104, v. 91 – p. 105, v. 105.

[11] See Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, 2-3, ed. Schmitt, p. 250, v. 9-14.

[12] Who are the *magistri* intended by Albert? The expression *necessitas consequentiae* appears already in Boethius (*De syllogismis hypoteticis*, PL 64, 843C) and it will be used from time to time by Abelard. In Grosseteste we see an analogous distinction attributed to St. Anselm and related to the distinction of Boethius between an absolute necessity and a conditional one. In addition, Grosseteste uses the expression *necessitas consequentis* (GROSSETESTE, p. 159, v. 16-17). However, I have not found the very opposition between *necessitas consequentis* and *necessitas consequentiae* in any author previous to Alexander of Hales, who uses it expressly (*Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 1, ad 1, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 270); however, Alexander is neither quoted by Wilfried Kühn 1984, col. 959-960) nor by the editors of Albert in a parallel passage: see Albertus (p. 52, v. 21) and note ad loc.

this distinction since divine foreknowledge necessitates the proposition but not the future events.

Subsequently, Albert recalls that God does not transmit the perfection of His causality to creatures, so that they can be contingent, while divine omnipotence allows God to know how they will act, because it embraces everything. Even though the science of God knows contingent events from the present or the future, nevertheless they remain contingent. For these events, divine knowledge only adds a relative necessity, *secundum quid*. In a similar way, he will solve the problems on predestination of the following articles.

Before studying the treatment of providence in the *Summa*, we must refer to the paraphrase to Aristotle's *Physics*, which is an important milestone in the development of this doctrine in Albert's thought. There, he introduces the question of fate with the main objective of harmonizing its existence with providence following Boethius, whose doctrines he will resume in the *Summa*[13]. He dedicates two "digressions" to this subject by explaining that fate is the embodiment of the designs of providence in creation (*Phys.*, l. 2, tr. 2, cc. 19-20). The divine plan of providence would be "explained" in fate, the simple nature of providence becomes manifold in the fate.

3. THE *SUMMA*

In the *Sum of the admirable science of God*, Albert deals with the problematic connected with providence in different places and even dedicates, for the first time, a question to the notion of "providence" as such. The subject appears already by studying the science of God and dealing specifically with the notion of "foreknowledge." There it is reflected again within the frame drawn up by Peter Lombard and even the questions opening the articles are similar to those of the commentary to

[13] "Boethius's treatment of fate, which provides a thorough analysis of that relationship and a definition of fate including providence as an essential part, is crucial to the discussion in the *Physica*" (PALAZZO, 2005, p. 57). This same author also affirms that, from this writing, Ptolemy – already mentioned in previous works – becomes crucial to understand the subject of fate: see Palazzo (2011, p. 73).

the *Sentences*. Likewise, St. Anselm is important for the discussion. However, the *Summa* of Alexander of Hales is the closest referent and, as Goergen has shown, St. Albert will be guided by it to study providence in his own *Summa*[14]. However, in the commentary to the *Sentences* we have already noticed the influence of the Irrefragable Doctor.

In that question on foreknowledge, he asks whether it can necessitate things (*STh.*, I, tr. 15, q. 61, m. 2, ed Borgnet, p. 621). God knows all future things but only approves the good ones; He is not, therefore, responsible for the evil ones (sol.). Albert solves those objections using the difference between the *necessitas consequentis* and *necessitas consequentiae*; the *necessitas consequentiae* does not necessitate future events, but only declares that the act of knowing and the fact in question – both contingent – are *incompossibilia*, i.e. none of them can remain a mere unverified possibility once the other is given, because they then become impossible.

In his treatment of the question of whether divine prescience necessitates contingent events (m. 5), Albert reflects an extension in the sources that allows him to approach the question. He does not merely use the *Consolation of Philosophy* and St. Anselm, but one can perceive also a revision of the corresponding pages of the treatise *On interpretation* by Aristotle and perhaps its commentary by Boethius. In addition, for the first time in this context he refers to the book attributed to Aristotle *On fortune*, which is a translation of some fragments taken from *Ethics to Eudemus* and *Magna moralia*[15].

In this place, Albert sentences that the denial of divine foreknowledge is so contrary to the Catholic faith as to say that it prevents things from being contingent and, consequently, that it makes free will impossible. Therefore, recalling the treatise of St. Anselm, he affirms that the foreknowledge of God is neither the cause of future things, nor does it remove the condition of

[14] See Goergen (1932, p. 11-21).

[15] See *STh.*, I, tr. 15, q. 61, m. 5, ed. Borgnet, p. 628. He seems refer to *Eth. Eud.*, VIII, 2, 1247b6-8. According to Cordonier, Albert is aware of the treatise before the definitive translation, but in any case the text must have been composed after 1268, that is, when the *Liber de bona fortuna* was already circulating in Paris: see Valérie Cordonier (2011, p. 76-83, 104-107, 111-114).

cause belonging to the second causes[16]. The reason of this is that divine intelligence penetrates with its knowledge things in themselves and in their causes, even in their proximate causes. Likewise, it embraces both the necessary and the contingent.

To argue his position, he appeals again to the double distinction between *necessitas consequentis* and *necessitas consequentiae* (this time he ascribes that distinction to Aristotle[17]). The *necessitas consequentis* occurs when a proposition follows the antecedent not only according to the *being* but also according to the *cause*. Thus, starting from the propositions "every mortal rational animal is a man" and "this is a mortal rational animal," the subsequent affirmation would follow, according to being: "this is a man." This proposition follows from the other two with absolute necessity. On the other hand, the necessity according to the cause no longer appeals only to the logical order between propositions but to the ontological dependence. For example: if the sun is necessarily moving today in a circle just as it does, then it will be necessary that tomorrow there will be a morning. In contrast, *necessitas consequentiae* occurs when the hypothesis from which we start is not a necessary fact (like the example of the sun) but a contingent one, that is, something that could not be; the necessity of the consequence is therefore that, given *this* specific contingent fact, the opposite of the consequence cannot be given at the same time. He illustrates this with the example of Boethius, according to which if one

16 "[…] *praescientia Dei ita est super res futuras, quod non est causa earum, nec tollit a causis secundis propriam rationem causalitatis earum, ut dicit Anselmus*" (*STh.*, I, tr. 15, q. 61, m. 5, sol., ed. Borgnet, p. 627).

17 See ibid., p. 627-628; in addition, he assimilates the *necessitas consequentiae* to the *necessitas positionis* attributed by him to Boethius (who rather speaks of *necessitas condicionis*: *De consol.*, l. 5, c. 6, CC 94, p. 104, v. 91-92; Albert mentions *necessitas suppositionis* in *STh.*, l. 1, p. 1, tr. 7, q. 30, c. 3, Ed. Colon., p. 237, v. 34-35); he also compares it with the *necessitas ordinis* which he attributes to St. Anselm. However, these words actually constitute an interpretation of Alexander of Hales on the text of Anselm's treatise *De concordia*: see Alexander de Hales, *Glossa*, l. 1, d. 38, n. 10, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 392, v. 21-28; *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 1, c. 4, ad 3, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 270. The same two names for "necessity" attributed to the same two authors are also in Albertus, *Quaestio de prophetia*, §1, Ed. Colon., p. 52, v. 18-22; nevertheless, the distinction between *necessitas consequentiae* and *necessitas consequentis* is there attributed, as we saw earlier in the commentary on the *Sentences*, to the *magistri* – and not directly to Aristotle.

sees another walking, then the other will be "necessarily" walking.[18] In effect, this consequence becomes "necessary" to a certain extent, while we admit that the eventuality expressed in the preceding proposition happens. Surely that person might not walk, but of course it would be impossible for him to rest while the observer sees him walking. In short, if this necessity is given, the reality of which we speak can remain contingent in an unqualified sense and would only be necessary in a certain sense, namely, under the aspect of the logical inference of propositions; on the contrary, the necessity of the first type would be an absolute necessity. For this reason, even if they are contingent things, divine foreknowledge neither necessitates them nor prevents them from being such as they are. Therefore, even admitting the power of divine intelligence, we do not must to say that things *can* happen differently than God foresees them. If divine knowledge is so powerful as to penetrate all beings past, present, and future, then it would be foolish to say that things could happen differently than He foresees them as to say that one thing could be white and black at the same time. Certainly, a white thing *can* become black and *can* contingently have that colour, but, while it is white, it *cannot* be black at that very moment.

In the next part of the same question (*STh.*, I, tr. 15, q. 61, m. 6), Albert affirms the same regarding the "immutability" of divine knowledge. The divine prescience is immutable, but it does not make those things that it knows immutable. It does not eliminate the contingency that characterizes some of them. Ultimately, he remains in the same argumentative line of the commentary on the *Sentences*. In the next part (m. 7) he refers again to the double necessity, which Albert finds in the doctrine of Aristotle and other authors. Therefore, divine foreknowledge, thought immutable and perfect, does not remove free will from intelligent creatures.

The most interesting treatise for us in the first part of the *Summa* is the 17th, where the question of providence, followed by questions about fate and the book of life, first appears. The treatment of providence is linked to Boethius'

[18] "*[…] ut si aliquem ambulare scias eum ambulare necesse est*" (*De consol.*, l. 5, c. 6, CC 94, p. 104, v. 93-94).

approach in the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Albert starts from the position of those who deny providence, like Cicero and Empedocles. All of them look at the confusion of the things on Earth and the suffering of the righteous man. Thus, there are several authorities of the Scriptures and in particular the book of Job: "In the whole book of Job there is no other question but fate, that is, which justice rules human life, which is subjected to so many confusions and disorders"[19]. The main problem discussed by Albert is not primarily cosmic but rather anthropological. The very concept of providence became especially problematic in the face of the injustices suffered by the righteous people while the most unworthy enjoy goods:

> All these [sc. the saints and the philosophers] wonder: how can God's providence, given with the best order of wisdom and justice, allow so much disorder and iniquity in the world that it rules and governs; this cannot be due to an impotence which would make Him incapable to correct them, or to an insipience which would make Him unknowing to correct them, or to a malevolence which would make Him unwilling to correct them, whereas a powerful, wise and benevolent king on earth does not allow such things in his kingdom[20].

The characteristic issues on providence are present. Against the epicureans' denial of it, various authors affirmed the knowledge, power and goodness of God, who would behave as a good ruler. According to Albert, the challenging presence of evil in the world raises the surprise and anguish of the saints and prompts philosophers to believe that everything happens by fate. Albert's response is that the provident government of the world must be asserted from both a philosophical and a

19 "*In toto enim libro Job nihil aliud quaeritur, nisi an fato, vel qua justitia vita regatur humana, quae tot confusionibus subjacet et inordinationibus*" (STh., I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 675).

20 "*Omnes enim isti mirantur, si providentia Dei quae cum optimo ordine sapientiae est et justitiae, tantam in mundo quem regit et gubernat, permittit inordinationem et iniquitatem: hoc enim non potest esse ex impotentia qua corrigere non possit, nec insipientia qua corrigere nesciat, nec ex malevolentia qua corrigere non velit, cum rex terrenus potens et sapiens et benevolus nil talium in regno suo permittat*" (STh., I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 675).

theological point of view[21]. Albert claims that in nature we find a single force that manages to form the body of the animals generated and, at the same time, governs the living beings. In this way, it orders the body and works in each of the organs according to their own function. Similarly, divine power operates in the whole universe, so that a single power makes the world and its influence reach all beings, by directing them towards their own ends and taking care of each one of them.

Albert goes on by quoting the book of *Wisdom* where these ideas are exposed, although the comparison with the soul evokes the *Timaeus*, whose translation by Calcidius was known to Albert, and to the treatise *On the world* that he should have read in the version of Apuleius, which also speaks about a "divine power" that embraces the universe[22]. In any case, the

[21] "*Dicendum, quod absque dubio providentia est tam secundum fidem Catholicam, quam etiam secundum philosophiam*" (*STh.*, ibid.). *Pace* Serge-Thomas Bonino, "Le contexte Historico-Doctrinal," in Thomas d'Aquin, *De la Vérité ou La science en Dieu* (Fribourg/Paris: Éditions Universitaires/Cerf, 1996), p. 92: "Ils [sc. les philosophes] en déduisent logiquement que sa connaissance le sera aussi [sc. partielle] et que, par conséquent, la providence divine ne s'étendra qu'aux choses nécessaires. | Saint Albert sait qu'une telle position est hérétique aux yeux de l'orthodoxie chrétienne, mais il est impressionné par la cohérence du système philosophique. Il semble même penser que la ' philosophie ' comme telle – et pas seulement en ses réalisations historiques – ne peut aller au-delà. Seule la foi peut ouvrir un autre chemin." Of course, in order to admit that God is provident, as Albert affirms here, one should ascribe Him the knowledge and power which, according to Bonino's interpretation of Albert's thought, one would ascribe Him only by faith. In any case, if one reads more carefully the text quoted by Bonino (*De div. nom.*, c. 7, §3, Ed. Colon., p. 339, v. 44), he will see that the faith only moves Albert to perfect a reasoning which, after all, is philosophical and based on the philosophical theory of artificial activity; he does require that the divine craftsman – in opposition to the conventional one – would be also designer of matter and not only of form: see ibid., v. 50-51; see also ibid., §2, Ed. Colon., p. 338, v. 61-74; §4, Ed. Colon., p. 340, v. 14-15.

[22] Albert writes: "*Sicut enim in naturis una et eadem virtus est quae formativa est in semine, et factiva sive generativa nati, quae efficitur regitiva ejus quod natum est: eo quod influit unicuique membro particulariter et toti simul nato talem dispositionem, per quam unumquodque ad suum ordinem deducitur, et singula in toto suis nectuntur ordinibus naturalibus: sic est in totius mundi factore, quod eadem virtute facit mundum, influens unicuique dispositionem qua ad proprium finem deducitur, et gubernans et curans de omnibus, ut quaeque ordinibus suis connectantur*" (*STh.*, ibíd). Now let we read Apuleius' translation of *De mundo*: "*Qua[m]re[m] rectius est atque honestius sic arbitrari: summam illam potestatem, sacratam caeli penetralibus, et illis, qui lingissime separentur, et proximis una et eadem ratione et per se et per alios opem salutis afferre*" (c. 25). "*De inferiore licet imagine*

source quoted by Albert is St. John of Damascus, who demands unity between the creator of all things and the one who must provide for their good[23]. The reason for the existence of this providence lies in the present order among the different entities in the world. If each of them occupies its place following a disposition, it is necessary to affirm the existence of some reality more perfect than they that should be capable of order them.

The next authority mentioned by Albert are the *Economics* attributed to Aristotle. In this way, he illustrates the comparison between the divine government of the world and the work of a householder who manages his house. This allegory refers to a thought of Aristotle himself (*Metaph.*, 10, 1075 a 15-23), who also spoke of a family to explain that, under the rule of a single principle, there may be various orders of things subjected to it in different ways. Now, to develop this comparison, Albert exposes the four prerogatives of the *paterfamilias* in the government of the home. First, there is the care of the woman (*facultas uxoria*), then that of the children (*filiali*), then there is the science that must deal with the servants (*despotica*) and, finally, the science that rules the goods (*chrysmatica* – he must mean *chrematistica* – *sive thesaurizativa*)[24]. All these faculties are ordered to the common good of the home. For this reason, Albert says, they do not attend to the particulars of each individual, but above all they contribute to the most beneficial goal for the home as a whole. Likewise, if there is any disorder in any of these areas, the correction to be carried out by the family father does not only serve the private good of each one, but above all the common

capiamus exempla. Anima in homine non uidetur et tamen fateantur omnes necesse est huius opera omnia quae per hominem praeclara fiunt prouenire nec ipsius animae qualitatem ac figuram oculis occurrere, sed momentis ab ea gestarum rerum intellegi, qualis et quanta sit" (c. 31). In both texts the unity of power as well as the analogy with the soul appear. Palazzo observed the presence of *De mundo* in the doctrine of fate of Albert: see Palazzo (2011, p. 88).

23 "*Necesse est eumdem esse factorem eorum quae sunt, et provisorem*" (Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 29, ed. Kotter, c. 43, v. 6-7; trans. Burgundius, ed. Buytaert, p. 155, v. 8-9; quoted by Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 1, c, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 281). The doctrine of John of Damascus has been taken from Nemesius Emesenus, *De nat. hom.*, 42, ed. Morani, p. 123, v. 20-21.

24 Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 676. These four fields of action are referred in the first book of the *Economics* of Pseudo-Aristotle.

good. Albert assumes that punishment does not always have a retributive value of guilt. It is also exemplary; therefore, it is sometimes necessary to punish with some vehemence those who have not acted too badly, in order to instil fear in others. In this way God would work in the world. Thus, Albert continues with an argument influenced by stoic philosophy, by showing how good can come out of evil. He uses the example of the clouds, whose collision causes the serenity of the climate; something similar happens in the mixed body, where diverse substances converge to produce another in which the conflict between them is no longer given. Also, through wars the good of peace is achieved; for this reason, they are not only called "evils" but also "small goods". This provides an answer to the problem provoked by the discussion: the disorder of things that we find in the world originates a higher order, it is ordered to a common good. It is an ordering of immense wisdom and justice. Thus, it is suitable that the righteous suffers without deserving it, because, in this way, some necessary goods are obtained for the community: for instance, purification and teaching. However, it is true that not everyone will suffer to the same extent, because the ruler intends the common good and not only the good of each individual. We can use the same reasoning for the abundance of the unjust man, who does not suffer the punishment that he deserves. Thus, the condemnation of such people will be more justly appreciated, since they will merit it more clearly because of their ingratitude.

We can return to the motives of perplexity of the saints and the criticisms of the philosophers. The saints were surprised by certain choking cases taken separately, but nevertheless they recognized the author of the whole order. The philosophers, on the other hand, did not always grasp the notion of providence in an adequate way, and thus they hoped that the ruler should pay each one according to his individual merits with sensible goods. His heart darkened in such a way that they eventually denied providence. These apparent anomalies, however, are not due to divine impotence, insipience or malevolence, but on the contrary to His great wisdom. If God allows such evils, this is undoubtedly since they are necessary for the government of

the whole. They are needed to highlight and test the virtue, and to instruct men about good. For this purpose, Albert quotes Augustine: "The good God would not allow evils if He did not know, in virtue of the order of His wisdom, how to raise good from evil"[25].

The second part of the question (m. 2) seeks to provide a definition of the notion of providence. Albert begins with two definitions of John of Damascus: "Providence is the care of everything that comes from God to existence"[26] and "providence is the will of God by which all things that exist are properly conducted"[27]. Then Albert discusses these definitions so as to verify whether they are completely accurate or if they require some rectification.

[25] "*Deus bonus numquam permitteret fieri mala, nisi sciret bona ex malis ordine sapientiae eliceret*" (Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 677; see ibid., m. 3, p. 682-683). I cannot find these words in St. Augustine even though the idea of "raising goods from evils" appears several times in his works. Alain de Lille attributes to Augustine some words much more similar to those cited by Albert: "[…] *unde Augustinus: Qui summe bonus est nunquam malos esse sineret, nisi ex malis bona eliceret*" (*Distinctiones dictionum theologicalium*, PL 210, 721C; see id. *Theologicae regulae*, 49, PL 210, 656B). In his edition of this work, P. Glorieux (*Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen Âge* 27 [1952], p. 332) quotes *Enchiridion*, 96, PL 40, 276 (CC 46, p. 99-100), but there are not these words even if the idea is similar. They resemble more to these others of the same work: "*Neque enim deus omnipotens […], cum summe bonus sit, ullo modo sineret mali esse aliquid in operibus suis nisi usque adeo esset omnipotens et bonus ut bene faceret et de malo*" (Enchiridion, 11, CC 46, p. 53, v. 29-34; PL 40, 236; this passage is quoted by Alexander of Hales in his Summa Theologica, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 4, q. 1, m. 2, c. 1, contra 3, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 205; ibid., tr. 6, q. 4, c. 1, ad 1, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 401).

[26] "[…] '*providentia est ea quae ex Deo ad existentia fit cura*'. Alia translatio, diligentia" (Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 2, ed. Borgnet, p. 677). John of Damascus writes: Πρόνοια τοίνυν ἐστὶν ἐκ θεοῦ εἰς τὰ ὄντα γινομένη ἐπιμέλεια (Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 29, ed. Kotter, c. 43, v. 2; trans. Burgundius, ed. Buytaert, p. 155, v. 3; quoted by Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 2, I.a, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 285). John of Damascus takes his definition from Nemesius Emesenus, *De nat. hom.*, 42, ed. Morani, p. 125, v. 4-5.

[27] "*Providentia est voluntas Dei, per quam omnia quae sunt, convenientem deductionem suscipiunt*" (Albertus, ibid.). Πρόνοιά ἐστι βούλησις θεοῦ, δι' ἣν πάντα τὰ ὄντα τὴν πρόσφορον διεξαγωγὴν λαμβάνει (Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 29, ed. Kotter, c. 43, v. 3-4; trans. Burgundius, ed. Buytaert, p. 155, v. 4-5; quoted by Alexander de Hales, ibid., II.a). The words used by John of Damascus are taken from Nemesius, ibid., p. 125, v. 6-7.

To this end, Albert brings up the definition of providence coined by Cicero as the part of prudence that concerns the future, whereas the memory of the past and the intelligence of the present would be its other two parts[28]. On the other hand, by taking in mind the Aristotelian division of the intellectual virtues (*Eth. Nic.*, VI), if providence is to be conceived as a part of prudence, then it would be different from science and wisdom. In this way, both Cicero and Aristotle, together with Peter Lombard and Boethius, would recognize the very nature of providence in the utility of things and neither in their production nor in their being as such[29].

Against the conception of providence as prudence that seeks utility, the authority of John of Damascus and Boethius rises. St. John of Damascus asserts that the works of providence are the fruit of an incomprehensible and divine wisdom which man is not always capable of grasping[30]. Similarly, Albert quotes Boethius, who insists on the immutable nature of the providential plan[31]. All these authoritative testimonies give Albert the opportunity to formulate a personal definition of providence:

> It seems that providence is nothing else than the habit – or quasi habit – eternal, immobile and simple, exemplarily described in the divine mind, by which God considers and provides the things to be done, administered and that which is

[28] Albert is referring to this text: "*Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malarum neutrarumque scientia. partes eius: memoria, intellegentia, providentia. memoria est, per quam animus repetit illa, quae fuerunt; intellegentia, per quam ea perspicit, quae sunt; providentia, per quam futurum aliquid videtur ante quam factum est*" (Cicero, *De inventione*, II, 53, ed. Stroebel, p. 160, v. 1-6).

[29] See Albertus, ibid., p. 677-678.

[30] "*Ut sapiens optime eorum quae sunt, curam habet […] incognoscibilis et incomprehensibilis est Dei providentia*" (Albertus, ibid., p. 678; see Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 29, ed. Kotter, c. 43, v. 20.23-24; trans. Burgundius, ed. Buytaert, p. 156, v. 22-23).

[31] "*Providentia est forma ex qua disponuntur res fiendae*" (Albertus, ibid.). Although Albert refers to these words as if they were part of the text of Boethius, they actually constitute an interpretation of Alexander of Hales from these other words of Boethius, which Albert quotes following them: "[…] *manifestum est immobilem simplicemque gerendarum formam rerum esse prouidentiam*" (*De consol.*, l. 4, c. 6, CC 94, p. 80, v. 48-50). See Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 2, I.c, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 285.

> convenient for the utility of all; by such habit, He also leads each thing to its proper and convenient end[32].

Somewhat later, he will detail this definition by speaking of an "exemplary form and reason"[33] – instead of "habit or quasi habit". Regarding the activities governed by it, in another passage he will call providence "the form of the order of all things that must be done, so that they may be made, exist, be preserved and be brought to their due end"[34]. However, according to Albert, all these tasks, would, in principle, belong to wisdom rather than to prudence.

Against these positions is the second definition of the providence formulated by St. John of Damascus. If providence is the will of God, it cannot belong to His wisdom. Indeed, Boethius seems to understand that it is a type of "disposition" (*dispositio quaedam*)[35], so that it would include the will and not merely a sort of knowledge. To remedy this difficulty, Albert recalls Boethius[36], who brings light to it by providing the

[32] "*Ex hoc videtur, quod providentia nihil aliud sit, nisi aeternus et immobilis et simplex habitus, vel quasi habitus exemplariter in mente divina descriptus, quo et facienda et gerenda utiliter omnibus prospicit et providet Deus convenientia, et unumquodque ad proprium et convenientem deducit finem: et hoc totum sapientiae est*" (Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 2, ed. Borgnet, p. 678).

[33] "*Dicendum, quod providentia procul dubio quantum ad essentialem definitionem ejus et quidditatem, forma est et ratio exemplaris in mente divina unite et simpliciter consistens, qua omnia gerenda ad suos fines convenientes accipiunt gubernationem, ex qua […] unicuique secundum ordinem suum completentia procurantur*" (ibid., p. 679).

[34] "*Providentia autem per modum significandi designat ut formam ordinis omnium agendorum ad fieri, ad esse, ad conservationem, et ad ea per quae res ad debitum deducitur finem*" (ibid., m. 3, ed. Borgnet, p. 685). The main function of providence is to bring the things to their own end, but it also includes to put them into existence and to preserve them: see ibid., m. 4, a. 3, ed. Borgnet, p. 689.

[35] Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 2, ed. Borgnet, p. 678; there is quoted the first part of the following lines: "[…] *nam prouidentia est ipsa illa diuina ratio in summo omnium principe constituta quae cuncta disponit, fatum uero inhaerens rebus mobilibus dispositio per quam prouidentia suis quaeque nectit ordinibus*" (Boethius, *De consol.*, l. 4, c. 6, CC 94, p. 80, v. 27-30). Alexander of Hales quotes these same lines and also concludes: "Ergo providentia est dispositio" (*Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 2, IV.1, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 286).

[36] "[…] *quicquid aliquo mouetur modo causas, ordinem, formas ex diuinae mentis stabilitate sortitur. Haec in suae simplicitatis arce composita multiplicem rebus gerendis modum statuit. Qui modus cum in ipsa diuinae intellegentiae puritate conspicitur, prouidentia nominatur;*

distinction between "providence" and "fate": providence would be the exemplary mode or the defined reason in the divine mind from which creatures are made; on the contrary, fate would be the influence of the providential disposition on things.

To refine the definition, Albert wonders whether providence should be considered eternal or temporary, since, although an "eternal habit" was mentioned earlier, the things cared for are temporary. One can also ask whether it is simple or composed. In fact, it consists of many elements that are put in order; however, Albert's definition included "simplicity" among the features of providence. Finally, providence seems to be part of the divine omnipotence since it depends on the being of creatures.

Finally, Albert returns to his definition of providence as an exemplary form of the works of God and explains that it partly resembles a cognitive content, and partly a practical act. Therefore Boethius already compared providence with an artistic skill in which those characteristics reside that must be adopted in the execution of the work of art[37]. In divine providence, therefore, there is science and wisdom about the things of the world, but, after all, it is a practical habit; in fact, such things are not considered by God in a "theoretical" way – as if He would learn from the world – but, rather, inasmuch as He is their origin, the knowledge about them is the result of the divine decision to create the world in the way as it is arranged by Him.

In the answers, Albert explains that the notion of "care" (*cura*) also integrates science and wisdom and not only will,

cum uero ad ea quae mouet atque disponit refertur, fatum a ueteribus appellatum est" (Boethius, ibid., v. 20-26; quoted by Alexander de Hales, ibid., V.a). See also the previous note, where the text that follows these lines appears.

37 "*Hujus simile est, ut dicit Boetius, in mente artificis, qui ex habitu artis providet quid in tota domo et in partibus domus utiliter faciendum vel destruendum sit, quid et qualiter ad finem domus in toto et partibus utiliter disponatur*" (Albertus, ibid., sol., ed. Borgnet, p. 679). The text of Boethius referred to is: "*Sicut enim artifex faciendae rei formam mente praecipiens mouet operis effectum et quod simpliciter praesentarieque prospexerat per temporales ordines ducit, ita deus prouidentia quidem singulariter stabiliterque facienda disponit*" (*De consol.*, l. 4, c. 6, CC 94, p. 80, v. 39-42). This text is quoted by Alexander of Hales, who reports the beginning of the text as follows: "Sicut artifex, faciendae domus vel rei formam…" (*Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 3, a. 2, ad 1, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 289; ibid., a. 3, sol. I-II, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 290).

since will is linked to intellect which is the subject of science and wisdom. Moreover, this care, as every productive activity, has three aspects: to seek the useful to produce something, to keep it in existence and to order it according to its own end. Such are the activities included in divine providential care. In this sense, it does not deal with non-beings as such, as it had been objected to at the beginning, but with things that may not yet be but which are to be brought into being. For this very reason, it can be understood within prudence insofar as it regards future things in the aspect of utility.

The relation of providence to wisdom is resolved by recalling Peter Lombard's distinction between *scientia simplicis visionis* and *scientia beneplaciti*[38]. Providence is a type of science which also includes the inclination of the divine will. Now, as this will belongs to the highest of causes, the knowledge of this science is the most profound wisdom. For this reason, even though the actions of the second causes may be obscure, the action of a very high wisdom and goodness must be recognized in them. In short, in the notion of providence two aspects can be distinguished: as an exemplar within the divine mind used by it to rule the world, it can be called science or wisdom; as a universal cause, it is related to the will.

To decide on the eternal or temporal condition of providence, Albert resorts to the distinction between providence as a "habit" or as an "act." As a habit of the divine mind, providence is an eternal disposition, but as an act by which it guides the course of the world, it is as temporal as the latter is. In this way, the inclusion in the providence of both knowledge and will, as well as of the plan and its execution let us notice that

[38] "*Providentia enim habet aliquid quod est sapientiae: eo quod ipsa est aliquid scientiae beneplacitii, et non scientiae quae simplex visio sit*" (Albertus, ibid., ad obj. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 680). Peter Lombard speaks of the divine science as something simple (*scientia simplex*) which receives different names – *praescientia*, *dispositio*, *providentia*… – due to its relation to creation (Petrus Abelardus, *Sententiae*, I, d. 35, c. 2, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 254, v. 24 – p. 255, v. 3); but above all he distinguishes in some places between what God knows with a *notitia sola* or a *scientia sola* and what He knows also with His approval (*beneplacito*): "[…] *quodam modo cognoscit Deus bona, quo non cognoscit mala. Pariter quidem utraque eodem modo noscit quantum ad notitiam, sed bona etiam approbatione et beneplacito cognoscit*" (ibid., d. 36, c. 2, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 261, v. 6-8). See a more extensive exposition of this distinction in ibid., d. 38, c. 1, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 277, v. 24 – p. 278, v. 23.

Albert does not distinguish between providence and government of the world, as his disciple Thomas Aquinas does[39]. However, since he notes that the different modes of causality involved in world's government may require different names, Albert points out that the efficient causality of creation and conservation of the world belong to omnipotence, whereas providence would properly exercise the function of exemplary formal cause.

In the next part of the question (*STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 3), Albert discusses the difficult problem of compatibility between chance, luck, free will and providence. In principle, it seems that both chance and luck, as explained by Aristotle, suppose that something happens despite the primary "intention" of the efficient cause that produced it (that is, the own end of that cause is not to produce such an effect but a different one); this is due to the concurrence of various causes. However, providence can harmonize diverse causal orders that are not connected on their own. Similarly, free will seems to put man in a situation of exception, because he is lord of his acts as God is lord of irrational nature. However, God knows everything, and man's decisions are under his eyes too.

Moreover, it seems that Scripture and some authority like Jerome[40] disdain the importance of small details of the life of the irrational animals, like the flight of a fly and similar things. It would be unworthy of God to care about such events. This would seem to favour the Averroist interpretation of providence, for, according to Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes, God would deal only with genera and species but not with singulars[41].

[39] "[…] *ad curam duo pertinent, scilicet ratio ordinis, quae dicitur providentia et dispositio; et executio ordinis, quae dicitur gubernatio. Quorum primum est aeternum, secundum temporale*" (Thomas Aquinatis, *STh.*, I, q. 22, a. 1, ad 2). The lack of this distinction in Albert convinces to Goergen of the null influence of the *Summa* of Thomas on this part of the work of Albert: see Goergen, *Des hl. Albertus Magnus Lehre von der göttlichen Vorsehung und dem Fatum…*, p. 30-31.

[40] Hieronymus, *In Abacuc*, I, 15, CC 76A, p. 593, v. 479-487. Quoted by Petrus Lombardus, l. 1, d. 39, c. 4, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 282, v. 23 – p. 283, v. 4. He is also quoted by Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 4, a. 4, contra 3, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 295; Alexander of Hales also refers to the response of the Master of Sentences to the problem aroused by Jerome in ibid., Sol. 3.

[41] Albert could have taken notice about Alexander thanks to Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer (Skokie: Varda Books, 2002), p. 281-283.

However, Scripture attributes to God a knowledge about absolutely *all* things. To conclude, he mentions the other famously problematic object of providence: evils. How could the wisdom and goodness of God be their cause?

Of course, Albert states that all things are subject to divine providence, including evils, because just as God seeks to bring good things to his perfection, evil is also the object of His providence in order to punish the guilty[42]. In the same way, the casual and fortuitous can be integrated into an order arranged by providence.

To make providence compatible with free will, Albert introduces a distinction between two forms of action of providence. He speaks of a *providentia praedeterminans* and a *providentia secundum concessionem*. The first would produce the essential and proximate causes of the things that happen; providence acts in this mode when it determines the necessary entities, which do not suffer anything by chance or in a contingent way. The second providence takes its name from St. John of Damascus[43]. It is given when the proximate causes of events have not received an irresistible necessity; nevertheless, divine wisdom is capable of checking the different results of the action of such free causes, providing a proper government to each one of them. Albert recalls his comments on *Metaphysics* to affirm that what happens always governs what happens frequently and this, in turn, governs what happens a few times[44]. He is thinking in the heavens, which work with perfect constancy and govern the sublunary natures, whose regularity is somewhat fewer; these are the ones that experiment chance from time to time. If there were no subordination of some things to others, the cosmos would dissolve into chaos.

For the thesis of Averroes, see for instance *In Metaph.*, comm. 1607; *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics. A translation with introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's* Metaphysics*, Book Lâm*, ed. Hans Daiber, vol. 1, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), p. 155. Albert refers to this thesis for example in *De div. nom.*, c. 7, §3 Ed. Colon., p. 339, v. 3.

42 See Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 3, ed. Borgnet, p. 684.

43 Joannes Damascenus, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 29, ed. Kotter, c. 43, v. 30; trans. Burgundius, ed. Buytaert, p. 157, v. 30-31; quoted by Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 4, a. 3, sol., Ed. Quaracchi, p. 294.

44 See Albertus, *Metaph.*, l. 6, tr. 2, c. 6, Ed. Colon., p. 312, v. 4-32.

Providence does not govern everything in the same way, because intelligent beings are able to understand what is the best for them. Therefore, they are governed by laws and taught by mandates and advices that illustrate the will of the ruler. So, when Scripture and Jerome seem to say that God does not deal with brutes, they really want to express only that He does not deal with them as He does with rational beings. Aristotle does not mean that God ignores the smallest things because that would mean an occupation unworthy of Him; such conclusion would be true if He would have to receive information about them, but in reality God knows only inasmuch as He is the cause and origin of everything, even of the smallest things, and He knows them in Himself.

Evil can also be ordered by providence even if it does not participate in divine goodness in all aspects, because the evil of pain can be disposed as retribution for the evil of fault. In this sense, evils are in some way good for some particular subject since they provide an occasion for some goods that would not occur, if such evils do not were given[45]. Just as in medicine, surgical interventions are necessary, which are bad as they suppose cuts and ablations – but they are good for restoring the health of a person – so also in divine government the evils become good thanks to the order disposed by God. In the same way, it happens in the government of a town: it is good to hang the murderers, at least as soon as the others learn what the bad deserve. However, such a good would not occur without be preceded by the evil of murder.

Next, Albert wonders whether providence can be considered a "cause" (m. 4, a. 1). The answer is that it is found in the three main modes of causes; he excludes, of course, the material cause. For this purpose, he proposes two etymologies of the term *providentia*: *procul videntia*, that is, "seeing from

[45] "[…] *licet mala bona non sint, tamen quaedam mala alicui sunt bona, quia occasiones sunt bonorum, sicut ustio et sectio bona est membri putrescentis, ne totum corpus putrescat: et sic Deo ordinante mala bona sunt, quia ex eis elicit boni perfectum, et mali impedimentum: sicut furis suspendium bonum est, quia ex eo eruditur populus quid secundum justitiam debeatur iniquitati, et quid innocentiae: et hoc bonum non esset si furtum non esset, ut terrerentur etiam alii ne similia faciant ut non similia patiantur*" (Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 3, ad obj. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 686).

afar"[46], or *pro aliis videntia*, that is, "seeing for the good of others". Therefore, as a type of vision, it is a primary exemplary form. Now, because of its activity of taking care of others, in this notion the agreement of the will is included and, in that sense, is an efficient cause. Finally, since it constitutes the first good and is the source of all goods, it is also a final cause.

Then, Albert asks whether providence necessitates its effects (m. 4, a. 2). Once again he asserts that providence cannot dissolve either the contingent or the free will, because, if that were the case, the reward and punishment which belong to the providential disposition would lose their meaning. The solution is that providence is a first cause and not a second one. Although the first cause has more influence on the being of the effect than the second one – by appealing at the beginning of the book *De causis* – Albert says that the second cause has more influence on the dispositions of the effect. In this way, the ability to cause of the second cause is received from the first one and sometimes it fails. Although things caused by a necessary second cause are also necessary, things caused by a first cause, which is necessary, are not always necessary, for not all second causes are capable of acting so perfectly. Thus, when the second cause fails to carry out its activity, this failure is known by the first cause. Also, the artist knows the defects in which his own art can incur. Therefore, the first cause does not cancel the type of causation of the second cause, but, on the contrary, the second cause receives its own type of causation from the first one. Thus, when the effects are contingent, they are contingently produced. This does not prevent God from knowing these effects in an unchangeable and necessary way.

Albert (m. 4, a. 4, sol.) recalls Boethius' definition of providence again as a simple and immutable form of the things

[46] St. Thomas attributes this etymology to Boethius' exposition: see *Super Sent.*, I, d. 38, q. 1, a. 5, co.; *De ver.*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 4. In fact, although he does not use the term *procul*, Boethius expresses himself in this way: "*Itaque si praeuidentiam pensare uelis qua cuncta dinoscit, non esse praescientiam quasi futuri sed scientiam numquam deficientis instantiae rectius aestimabis. Vnde non praeuidentia sed prouidentia potius dicitur, quod porro a rebus infimis constituta quasi ab excelso rerum cacumine cuncta prospiciat*" (*De consol.*, l. 5, c. 6, CC 94, p. 103, v. 59-64).

that will be produced by God[47]. This form commands the care that God takes for each one of the beings regarding their production, conservation and guidance to its proper end. This aspect of providence is different from the actual disposition embodied in the thing by which each entity is governed according to its own way of being. Now, such disposition changes in the different beings and adjusts itself to them depending on their respective capacity to receive. In this way, it must provide different things to each one, i.e. to vegetables, animals, men…, and even it should treat honest men in a way and the dissipated or the avaricious in another one. For this reason, to do the good, sometimes God must use not only goods but also evils.

After this, Albert (m. 4, a. 5) takes up the two modes of providence in accordance with the teaching of St. John of Damascus[48]. The first of these is the "providence of acceptance" (*secundum acceptationem*) by which God wants things that are good without any imperfection, such as the goods of grace. Second, there is the "providence of dispensation" or "permissive" (*secundum concessionem sive permissionem*). This second mode of providence occurs in seven different ways. First, when it is allowed that someone righteous suffers a great evil to set an example of his virtue. The paradigmatic case of this case is the suffering of the righteous Job. Second, when a common good is obtained from a great evil, as the torment of the Cross is the cause of salvation for the whole world. Third, when the sufferings of certain evils contribute to the preservation of virtue in the affected, as is the case with temptations. The fourth way is the example that is given to several people when they see someone suffering, since they become sympathetic. Fifth, when the suffering of a man contributes to the glory of God when He alleviates his sufferings. Sixth, when, by the example of patience of someone, another one is encouraged to suffer. Seventh, when a person

47 See *De consol.*, l. 4, c. 6, CC 94, p. 80, v. 48-50.

48 See *De fide orthodoxa*, II, c. 29, ed. Kotter, c. 43, v. 30ss.; trans. Burgundius, ed. Buytaert, p. 157, v. 30ss. Just as we see that Albert is doing here, so did also Alexander of Hales, who dedicated a chapter of his study of providence to talk about *de modis providentiae* following St. John of Damascus: see *Summa Theologica*, p. 1, inq. 1, tr. 5, sect. 2, q. 3, tit. 1, c. 6, Ed. Quaracchi, p. 298.

does not use correctly his virtues, so that he falls into some great sin; so, his weakness is humiliated and he can start again with more energy. In short, these modes of providence indicate that God is able to obtain spiritual and pure goods, either from evils of fault or evils of pain. If these goods do not beneficiate the same person who suffers, they can beneficiate another or the whole body of the Church.

In the next question (q. 68) the subject of fate is studied in detail. Here is incorporated into the systematic discussion a work which did not appear in the commentary to the *Sentences*: the treatise *De natura hominis* of Nemesius of Emesa that – as his contemporaries – Albert attributes to Gregory of Nyssa. According to Nemesius and, as we have seen, to Boethius, Albert admits the affirmation of existence of fate so long as it does not interfere with the existence of providence. If providence is the exemplary form within the divine mind, fate would be the same form embodied in creatures. In consequence, he defines fate as "the disposition exemplified by providence, which is infused and imprinted in created things pursuant to the whole order of natural and voluntary causes, a disposition that inheres in things and is, in a certain way, imprinted and embodied in created things"[49]. Thus, providence is compared with fate as the exemplar with the exemplified, as the cause with the form infused by the cause. This does not imply, as the Chaldeans have thought, that fate necessitates all things and so it makes free will impossible. On the contrary, the Catholic faith teaches that man has been created in the image of God and is, therefore, sovereign of his own acts and free[50].

In the next part of the question, he offers another definition of fate: "Disposition inherent in causes and movable

[49] "*Et quando accipitur dispositio exemplata a providentia influxa et impressa rebus creatis secundum totum ordinem causarum naturalium et voluntariarum rebus inhaerens, et quasi impressa et incorporata rebus creatis, tunc vocatur fatum*" (Albertus, *STh.*, I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, ed. Borgnet, p. 695).

[50] Of course, for St. Albert, that fate does not determine free will is also a proven philosophical thesis: "*Das Fatum, welches durch die Konstellation verursacht wird, determiniere die Dinge nicht. Albert hält es für philosophisch durch Claudius Ptolomaeus hinreichend bewiesen, daß das Fatum […] keine Notwendigkeit im sublunaren Bereich erzeugt*" (Anzulewicz, "Alberts des Grossen Stellungnahme zur Frage nach Notwendigkeit, Schicksal und Vorsehung," p. 145).

effects, used as an instrument by providence so as to fix each of its orders"[51]. Fate is also compared with an instrument used by the main cause, which would be providence. For this reason, the scope of providence is wider than that of fate[52].

A more complete examination of the doctrine of fate in those questions of the *Summa* exceeds the purpose of these pages. We only remember now a couple of works in which this subject was studied with special attention and that, as we said at the beginning, have been attended by different studies. First, we must mention the first *Summa* written by Albert, where he addressed the effects of the movement of the heavens on the sublunary world[53]. It was a first treatment of the problem of fate, to which he will devote a separate question. Albert approaches this problematic by considering St. John of Damascus (*De fide orthodoxa*), St. Augustine (*De civ. Dei*), Ptolemy and the astrological conceptions defended by the Arabs[54]. Albert affirms that the stars provoke alterations in the human body and in the humours of the body, but, in accordance with John of Damascus, he denies they would be able to influence free will directly. Its influence does not suppress the chance or contingency from sublunary entities.

Many years after that early work, the disputed question *On fate* (1256)[55] brought Albert back to the problem of fate. There, he defends free will and contingency in the sublunary world. On the one hand, he acknowledges an important influence of the stars and, in this sense, he accepts a good part of astrological theories; but, on the other hand, he denies their main thesis, namely, that the stars can determine human life as far as to hinder freedom. This treaty will serve as a counterfeit for the elaboration of this doctrine in the *Sum of the admirable science of God*[56].

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51 "[…] *sic enim est inhaerens dispositio mobilibus causis et causatis, per quam sicut instrumentum providentia quaeque suis nectit ordinibus*" (Albertus, ibid., m. 2, ed. Borgnet, p. 700).

52 See Goergen, *Des hl. Albertus Magnus Lehre von der göttlichen Vorsehung und dem Fatum…*, p. 114-118.

53 See *S. de creaturis*, tr. 3, q. 18, a. 1.

54 See Anzulewicz, "*Fatum*: Das Phänomen des Schicksals und die Freiheit des Menschen nach Albertus Magnus," p. 516-517.

55 See Rutkin (p. 476-480).

56 See Anzulewicz (2001, p. 509) and note 7.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout these pages, we have seen the important contribution of Albert to the debate on fate and providence that had been prolonged since the patristic time and that had awakened again in the twelfth century to reach a new topicality with the Parisian condemnations of 1277. We find in Albert a balanced doctrine that seeks to do justice to both faith and reason, striving to grant the greatest possible relevance to natural causes (fate) in the conviction that their power does not diminish divine omnipotence at all, but it constitutes the most eloquent testimony in its favour.

Although it is true that "Albert was happy to consider the effects of the heavenly cycles in a way that Thomas and Alexander of Hales would not" (ELLIOT, 2015, p. 94), however Palazzo exaggerated the conflicts between free will and fate, which Albert allegedly would have tolerated in a persistent way; so he came to believe himself justified to attribute to him a "deterministic line of thought"[57]. On the contrary, the bishop of Regensburg recognizes the limitation of the power of human freedom, which can only achieve certain ends suitable for the nature of each person; the human will is determined by a series of conditions external to it which are designated "fate". But this limitation of human nature does not destroy free will. It remains a sign of the spiritual condition of the human soul and is completely devoid of any astral or deterministic interference in a strict sense. Will can be affected by fate as a faculty of a body that is subjected to it, but this type of "conditioning" will never constitute a "determination" in a strict sense.

In Albert the Great we have missed some distinctions that his disciple Aquinas already developed before he wrote his *Summa de mirabili scientia Dei*; however, we must say that

[57] For instance: "Nature and thus celestial influences determine everyone's inborn inclination towards specific skills. If men follow their natural inclinations by cultivating the skill for which they are talented, they succeed; if they practice other activities for which they have no gift, they never succeed because of their natural incapacity. This text is a very good example of *a deterministic line of thought*. Even though it identifies will as the cause of human action, its implication is that celestial influences affect men from birth so strongly as to have an impact on their entire lives" (PALAZZO, 2011, p. 79-80, my italics).

the teacher attended more widely to the place of natural factors in the constitution of natural processes. Although we have not explained it here as it deserves, his examination of the theory of fate is much more exhaustive than that of Aquinas, and so he gives a Christian answer to the lengthy treatment that this matter had received among Greeks and Arabs. On the other hand, the study of providence in the *Summa de mirabili scientia Dei* starts from the "existential" problem of the suffering of the righteous, which makes more significant for contemporary man the examination of these questions; however, to find similar explanations in Thomas, it would be necessary to go to other parts of his work, especially to his commentary on the book of Job.

PROVIDÊNCIA EM ALBERTO, O GRANDE

RESUMO

Nestas páginas, expomos os principais traços da doutrina da providência e destino de Santo Alberto Magno, considerada por Palazzo como a pedra angular de seu sistema filosófico. Para descrevê-lo, examinamos suas obras sistemáticas, principalmente a *Summa Theologiae*. Sua discussão segue claramente as diretrizes da Summa de Alexandre de Hales, para aprofundar o conjunto de problemas enfrentados ao longo dos séculos pela tradição teológica. Santo Alberto também considera as reflexões de diferentes autores como Boeio ou São João de Damasco, mas, em sua Summa, incorpora também as suas reflexões o livro notável de Nemesius de Emesa, *De natura hominis*, que inclui algumas páginas sobre a providência. Santo Alberto dá sua solução pessoal às questões complexas de providência, destino e contingência do mundo. Sua concepção de providência é desenvolvida no quadro do poder criativo do Deus Todo-Poderoso. O conhecimento de Deus é necessário e inerrante, e seus propósitos providenciais são infalíveis, mas isso não significa que todos os eventos sejam necessários. Ele não comunica suas próprias propriedades às criaturas. Para entender esse problema, Santo Alberto lembra a noção de necessidade hipotética inventada por Boécio em um quadro aristotélico e a diferença entre *necessitas consequentis* e *necessitas consequentiae* propostas por Alexandre de Hales. Ele também desenvolve sua quota de providência, intimamente ligada ao tema do destino. No entanto, seria exagerado julgar sua posição determinista.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Causalidade. Mal. Livre-arbítrio. Destino. Contingência e necessidade.

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Recebido em abril de 2017.
Aprovado em maio de 2017