

The Causality of the Unmoved Mover in Thomas Aquinas's *Commentary on Metaphysics XII*

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FOR SOME TIME now, Enrico Berti has been raising serious doubts about what he calls the “traditional” interpretation of the causality of the unmoved mover in Book XII of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.¹ Berti includes Thomas Aquinas within this tradition, and, at least with respect to the central point at issue, he seems to be quite right in doing so. Like virtually all of the previous interpreters, Thomas attributes to the unmoved mover the

¹ The original version of this essay, like those of Enrico Berti and Kevin Flannery appearing in this same issue of *Nova et Vetera*, was delivered in Italian at the conference *Fine del Dio di Aristotele*, organized by the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Sardinia, held May 5, 2009 in Cagliari. The conference proceedings have been published in *Humanitas* 66.4 (2011). Given the presence both of Berti’s own essay and of the fine summary of Berti’s position on the “traditional” interpretation that Flannery offers at the beginning of his, I have deemed it unnecessary to provide yet another summary. Here, however, are the pertinent writings by Berti that I have been able to take into consideration: Enrico Berti, “Da chi è amato il motore immobile? Su Aristotele, *Metaph.* XII.6–7,” *Méthexis* 10 (1997): 59–82; “De qui est fin le moteur immobile?” in *Essais sur la théologie d’Aristote*, ed. M. Bastit and J. Follon (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters, 1998), 5–28; “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia,” in *La filosofia in età imperiale*, ed. A. Brancacci (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2000), 227–43; “La causalità del motore immobile secondo Aristotele,” *Gregorianum* 83.4 (2002): 637–54; “Prefazione,” in Enrico Berti, *Nuovi Studi Aristotelici*, vol. 2 (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2005), 7–12; *Struttura e significato della Metafisica di Aristotele* (Rome: Edusc, 2006), 135–59; “Ancora sulla causalità del Motore immobile,” *Méthexis* 20 (2007): 7–28. Also pertinent would be “The Unmoved Mover as Efficient Cause in Aristotle’s *Metaph.* XII,” in *Aristotle on Metaphysics*, ed. T. Pentzopoulou-Valalas (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University, 1999), 73–81.

function of a final cause, and more precisely, final cause of the things that he moves.² Berti has strong reservations about this attribution. At the same time, as Berti himself has observed, Thomas's account of it proves to be somewhat original.³ His reading therefore invites separate consideration.

In this paper I shall mostly concentrate on three passages from Thomas's commentary on *Metaphysics* XII.⁴ In addition to their intrinsic interest, they have an obvious bearing on some of the problems raised by Berti concerning the traditional way of understanding the unmoved mover's final causality—especially his charges that this interpretation seems almost to neutralize or to set aside the *efficient* causality of the unmoved mover, and that it seems to depend upon certain notions of Platonic origin, such as imitation or participation, that do not fit well with Aristotle's views. However, I wish to stress that my immediate aim is simply to understand what Thomas's interpretation of the unmoved mover's causality is. I shall make a few remarks as to its correctness, but without offering any final judgment on this score.

I. The First Mover as Efficient Cause of the Motion of the First Celestial Sphere

The three passages that I propose to consider in detail all belong to the seventh *lectio* of Thomas's commentary on *Metaphysics* XII. First, however, I wish to signal a point that comes out in the fifth *lectio*, which concerns the first half of chapter 6 of *Metaphysics* XII. It is here that Aristotle begins to treat of the first mover, offering an argument for the mover's existence. In expounding this argument, Thomas is very clear about its being a question of a mover that moves in the manner of an *efficient* cause.

On Thomas's reading, the argument starts from the thesis, defended at length in the *Physics* and recapitulated here, that time and motion are

² Throughout this essay I use personal pronouns to refer to the first mover. As we will see, Thomas identifies the first mover with God. Berti, too, regards the first mover as a personal being, an individual substance and agent endowed with intellect and will. See Berti, *Struttura e significato della Metafisica*, 154; "Da chi è amato il motore immobile?" 72, 77–79.

³ Berti, "Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia," 241–43. On Berti's reading of Thomas, see below, nn. 54 and 65.

⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *In XII libros Metaphysicorum expositio* (= *In Meta.*), ed. M.-R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1950). There is general agreement that the commentary was written between 1270 and 1272; see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Initiation à saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires de Fribourg, 2003), 338–40. (Throughout this essay I rely on Torrell for the dating of Thomas's works.)

continuous and everlasting, without beginning or end.⁵ Of course not every motion is such. What is continuous and everlasting is circular local motion. (Later it becomes clear that he is referring to the rotation of the first celestial sphere.) Then, Thomas explains, Aristotle shows that in order to “sustain the everlastingness of motion,” there must be “an everlasting substance that is motive and effective” (*substantia motiva et effectiva sempiterna*).⁶ This substance is not merely capable (*potens*) of moving and effecting motion; it must also be “always moving and acting in act” (*moventem et agentem in actu semper*). Indeed its essence must be solely act (*actus tantum*).⁷ Thus Thomas repeatedly describes the first mover in terms that signify an efficient cause.

In the course of this discussion, Aristotle remarks that it is useless to posit everlasting substances such as the “forms”—in Thomas’s text, *species*—or any others that have no principle with power to effect change. Thomas sees here a reference to Platonic Ideas.⁸ The reason why the Ideas have no principle of change and are of no use in accounting for the everlastingness of motion, Thomas suggests, is that they are nothing but separate universals. Universals, as such, move nothing. Every active principle is an individual, as Aristotle had explained earlier.⁹ It is clear that Thomas is thinking of a mover that moves in the manner of an efficient cause or an

⁵ At the end of the *lectio* Thomas adds a reflection of his own concerning this thesis (*In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 5, §2496–99). From this procedure, he says, it is clear that here Aristotle firmly held and believed it necessary that motion and time be everlasting. He then declares that the reasons given by Aristotle for this position, here and in the *Physics*, are not demonstrative. Presumably he has in mind the doctrine of the creation of the world in a beginning of time. Here, however, without mentioning that doctrine, he goes on to observe that even if the argument’s starting point is not necessary, nonetheless the conclusion as to the existence of a first, everlasting immaterial substance follows necessarily. If in fact the world is not everlasting, Thomas argues, then necessarily it was “produced in being” by something pre-existing; and since there cannot be an infinite series of produced producers, as is shown in Book II of the *Metaphysics* (ch. 2, 994a1–b8), there must be an everlasting substance that contains no potency, and that is therefore immaterial.

⁶ *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 5, §2492. Translations of Thomas in this essay are mine.

⁷ *Ibid.*, §2494. For this reason, the substance must also be immaterial, since matter is in potency: *ibid.*, §2495. Later we are told that its being solely act also entails its being unmoved and immobile: lect. 6, §2518.

⁸ *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 5, §2493. Thomas adds that it would be equally useless to posit separate mathematical substances, because mathematical things, as such, are not principles of motion either.

⁹ I suppose he is referring to the discussion in XII.5, where Aristotle says that Achilles’ principle is Peleus, and yours is your father: *Metaphysics*, XII.5, 1071a18–24. See *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 4, §2482.

agent, because on his view a universal can in fact move as a final cause.¹⁰ The unmoved mover's status as agent is thus further underscored.

There are also other places in Thomas's commentary on *Metaphysics* XII 6 where it is plain that he considers Aristotle's first mover to be an efficient cause.¹¹ But now let us turn to the commentary's seventh *lectio*, which concerns *Metaphysics* XII 7, 1072a27–b15. In this *lectio* Thomas offers the principal elements of his understanding of the first mover's *final* causality. This is the main target of Berti's criticism of the "traditional" interpretation of the doctrine of the first mover in *Metaphysics* XII.

II. A Proximate Mover to Which the First Unmoved Mover Is Related as Something Desirable

As Thomas reads it, at XII 7, 1072a27, Aristotle begins to investigate the "condition" of the first mover and, first of all, the mover's "perfection." To determine this, Aristotle focuses on how the mover moves: without being moved. He says that this is how objects of desire and understanding move. Thomas takes him to mean that the first mover moves in just this way, as something desirable and intelligible. *Only* the desirable and the intelligible, Thomas insists, are found to move without being moved.¹² Still, nothing that he says here indicates that he has abandoned the idea that the first mover is an agent or an efficient cause.¹³ He is only

¹⁰ See *ST* I–II, q. 13, a. 5, ad 1. On this point, see the important study by David Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle: A Study of the Medieval Demonstration of God's Existence from Motion*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto (Toronto, 1993), 225.

¹¹ See Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 244–46. Perhaps it should be noted that in other writings Thomas makes it clear that in his judgment, Aristotle conceives the first, unmoved mover as the efficient cause not only of the world's motion, but also of its very existence. See, e.g., *In Meta.*, Lib. II, lect. 2, §295; *In Meta.* Lib. VI, lect. 1, §1164; Thomas Aquinas, *In VIII libros Physicorum expositio*, ed. P. M. Maggiolo (Turin: Marietti, 1965), Lib. VIII, lect. 3, §996 [6]; Thomas Aquinas, *In libros Aristotelis De caelo et mundo expositio* (= *In De caelo*), ed. R. M. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1952), I, lect. 8, §91 [14]. (The commentary on the *Physics* was probably written shortly before the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, and that on the *De caelo*, shortly after.) Thomas alludes to this conception twice in the commentary on Book XII (*In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2534; lect. 8, §2550). However, he does not dwell on it or seem to find any real argument for it there, and his reading of the mover's causality with respect to the celestial motion—which is my concern here—does not seem to depend upon it, at least not directly.

¹² "Haec enim sola, scilicet desiderabile et intelligibile, inveniuntur movere non mota": *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2519.

¹³ On the fact that for Thomas the unmoved mover is both efficient and final cause, see Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 272–79.

saying that what moves without being moved must move as an object of desire and understanding. There is no suggestion that moving in this way excludes moving as an agent.

A little further on appears the first passage that I want to look at in detail.

The first mover is said to move as something desirable, because the celestial motion is on account of him as on account of an end, being caused by some proximate mover that moves on account of the first unmoved mover, so as to assimilate itself to him in causing, and so as to unfold in act that which exists virtually in the first mover. For the celestial motion is not for the sake of the generation and corruption of lower things, as for an end, since an end is nobler than what is for the end. Thus, therefore, the first mover moves as something desirable.¹⁴

Here it is clear that, for Thomas, that to which the first mover is related as something desirable, and of whose action he is the end, is something other than himself. It is that “proximate mover.” Considerably later in the commentary, Thomas will assert that the first mover is also his own end, or in other words, that he acts and moves things for his own sake.¹⁵ But here his final causality is in relation to something else, the proximate mover.¹⁶

¹⁴ “Dicitur autem primum movens movere sicut appetibile, quia motus caeli est propter ipsum, sicut propter finem, causatus ab aliquo proximo movente quod movet propter primum movens immobile, ut assimilet se ei in causando, et explicet in actum id quod est virtute in primo movente. Non enim est motus caeli propter generationem et corruptionem inferiorum sicut propter finem, cum finis sit nobilior eo quod est ad finem. Sic igitur primum movens movet sicut appetibile”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2521.

¹⁵ See below, at note 74.

¹⁶ The thesis that the first mover is desired or loved by another, not just by himself, is the chief element of the “traditional” interpretation that Berti calls into question. With respect to it there is an interesting passage in the *Summa theologiae* that plainly echoes the discussion in *Metaphysics* XII 7. The question is whether God can move bodies immediately. An objection says He cannot, because “Deus est movens non motum. Tale autem est appetibile apprehensum. Movet igitur Deus sicut desideratum et apprehensum. Sed non apprehenditur nisi ab intellectu, qui non est corpus, nec virtus corporis. Ergo Deus non potest movere aliquod corpus immediate.” Thomas replies, “movet Deus sicut desideratum et intellectum. Sed non oportet quod semper moveat sicut desideratum et intellectum ab eo quod movetur; sed sicut desideratum et notum a seipso; quia omnia operatur propter suam bonitatem”: *ST* I, q. 105, a. 2, obj. 2 & ad 2. In other words, the immobility of the first unmoved mover does not strictly require that everything that he moves desire and know him. What it requires is that he desire and know himself and that he move things for his own sake. Otherwise he would be moved, by some desirable object distinct from himself. Why then does Thomas judge that in *Metaphysics* XII 7, the unmoved mover’s finality or desirability is

What is this proximate mover? Here Thomas does not say, but later he explains: “. . . if the first mover moves as the first thing understood and desired, it is necessary that the first mobile desire and understand him. And this is indeed true according to Aristotle’s opinion, inasmuch as he maintains that the heaven is animated by an intelligent and desiring soul.”¹⁷ The proximate mover would be the soul of the heaven.

Now, as a matter of fact, in *Metaphysics* XII Aristotle never mentions a celestial soul, nor indeed any intermediate mover between the heaven and the first mover. Nevertheless, as Berti points out, a good number of other interpreters, both before and after Thomas, have also had recourse to the soul in explaining how the unmoved mover moves as something desirable and intelligible.¹⁸ What I want to try to understand is how, for Thomas, the reference to the soul serves to explain the first mover’s final causality with respect to the celestial motion.

To this end, I find it illuminating to compare the above passage from the seventh *lectio* of the commentary with a text from another work of Thomas’s, written a few years previously—the disputed questions *De potentia*.¹⁹ In the fifth article of the fifth *quaestio*, Thomas asks whether the motion of the heavens will eventually cease. Here obviously his aim is not to interpret the Philosopher. In fact his final answer is strictly theological: the celestial motion will cease when the foreseen number of the souls

with respect to another, not to himself? One reason might be that, up to this point in Book XII, it has not yet been shown that the unmoved mover has understanding and will, so as to be able to be the object of his own knowledge and desire. Also, Thomas elsewhere assigns a special status to the *celestial* motion. Its nature is such as to indicate a proximate intelligent mover that is distinct from God and that moves the heaven for God’s sake; on this point, see below, nn. 22 and 30.

¹⁷ “Hic philosophus comparat primum quod movet sicut intelligibile et desiderabile, ad id quod intelligit et desiderat ipsum: necesse est enim, si primum movens movet sicut primum intellectum et desideratum, quod primum mobile desideret et intelligat ipsum. Et hoc quidem verum est secundum opinionem Aristotelis, inquantum caelum ponitur animatum anima intelligente et desiderante”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 8, §2536. On the animation of the heaven in Aristotle, see *De caelo* II 2, 285a29; II 12, 292a20, 292b1. On the expression “the heaven,” see the translator’s note to the essay by Enrico Berti in this issue.

¹⁸ See Berti, “Da chi è amato il motore immobile?” 66–75.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae De potentia*, ed. P. M. Pession (Turin: Marietti, 1965), q. 5, a. 5, corp. The body of the article is quite long; for brevity’s sake I will simply paraphrase or summarize the pertinent portions. The *De potentia* probably dates from 1265/66.

of the elect is reached.²⁰ Nevertheless the discussion abounds with Aristotelian ideas, and part of it is very pertinent to the passage from the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, because it concerns the question of the purpose, the end, of the celestial motion. On this question the *De potentia* treatment is in some ways similar to that of the above passage from the commentary, while in other ways it is in significant contrast.

In the *De potentia* article, the inquiry into the purpose of the circular celestial motion starts from the claim that the motion does not arise from the very nature of the heavenly body. This is because a naturally originated motion always tends toward a definite place and ceases when the place is reached. The heavenly body has a natural passive aptitude for the circular motion, so in a sense the motion can be called natural; but its active source is some separate mover.²¹ This mover must be either God himself or else an intelligence or a soul; Thomas says that here it does not matter which.²² But since every agent acts for an end, it is necessary, in

²⁰ The celestial motion would serve to “dispose the matter” for these souls. On Thomas’s view, the human soul begins to exist only at the end of the process of generation: see *ST* I, q. 76, a. 1, ad 1; q. 90, a. 4.

²¹ See *In De caelo* I, lect. 3, §22 [4]. On the celestial motion’s being in a way natural, see *In De caelo* I, lect. 3, §6 [38]. That he calls the mover “separate” in the *De potentia* does not exclude its being called a “soul,” as is clear from the ensuing remark that it might be God or an intelligence or a soul. Thomas accepts Averroes’ view that the celestial “soul” of the *De caelo* is separate in substance from the heavenly body, united to it not as its form, but only as its proportionate mover; see David Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 368.

²² Elsewhere, however, in a work dated 1267/68 (and so between the *De potentia* and the commentary on the *Metaphysics*), he takes the celestial motion’s qualified “naturalness” (see above, n. 21) to imply that the immediate mover is not God but a created incorporeal substance, one whose active power is confined or determined to moving the heavenly body: “substantia spiritualis quae movet caelum, habet virtutem naturalem determinatam ad talis corporis motum. Et similiter corpus caeli habet naturalem aptitudinem ut tali motu moveatur. Et per hoc motus caeli est naturalis, licet sit a substantia intelligente”: Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestio disputata De spiritualibus creaturis*, ed. M. Calcaterra and T. S. Centi (Turin: Marietti, 1965), a. 6, ad 7. In general, according to Thomas, to any natural passive potency, such as that of the heavenly body for the circular motion, there corresponds a proportionate natural active power. Thomas affirms this principle in many places, once with reference to *Physics* III. 1 (the place would be 201a10), and often with reference to Averroes’ commentary on Book IX of the *Metaphysics*. See Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*, Lib. III, d. 26, q. 1, a. 2; IV, d. 43, a. 1, a. 1 q1a. 3; *Quaestiones disputatae De veritate*, q. 18, a. 2; a. 5; *De potentia*, q. 6, a. 1, obj. 18. Other places where the principle is asserted include *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, Lib. III, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1, q1a. 1; *Summa contra Gentiles* II, c. 60, par. 19 (Marietti §1388); *Summa contra Gentiles* III, c. 45, par. 6 (§2222). However, in his *Responsiones ad lectorem Venum*

order to determine the motion's duration, to know what its end is, and whether the end is or is not such as to require an everlasting motion. Thomas then examines four hypotheses about the end, each of which would make it something requiring an everlasting motion. He finds all four of them unsatisfactory.

One of the hypotheses is the one mentioned and rejected in the passage from the commentary on the *Metaphysics*: that the celestial motion is for the sake of the generation and corruption of lower things, that is, the things on earth. Although this is a certain effect and terminus of the motion, it cannot constitute the motion's end, because the heaven is "more eminent" than earthly things, and its motion is more eminent than their motions and changes. An end is always more eminent than what is for the sake of the end.

Two of the hypotheses are not mentioned in the commentary on the *Metaphysics*. Both propose an end for the motion that is intrinsic to it. One holds that the end is simply the motion itself. Thomas rejoins: a motion can never be an end. Every motion intrinsically tends toward something other than itself. It is an imperfect act, in itself incomplete.²³ In this respect, he observes, the motion of the heaven is not like its being, which is indeed an end; according to its being, the heaven is like God.²⁴ The other hypothesis is "to arrive in act at the place to which it is in potency." Thomas remarks that Avicenna "seems to say this" (no work is cited); but nevertheless, Thomas argues, this cannot have the nature of an end, because it is infinite and unattainable.²⁵ Whenever the heavenly body reaches some place in act, it will only be in potency to another place in which it was previously in act.²⁶

de articulis XXX, ad 4 (dated 1271), Thomas seems to consider it only probable, not strictly demonstrated, that the heavenly bodies are moved by angels and not immediately by God.

²³ He cites *De anima* III (the place would be c. 7, 431a7).

²⁴ On the sort of likeness to God that is constituted by the being (and not the motion) of things, see below, n. 59.

²⁵ To put the infinite in the final cause, he says, is to destroy the nature of the end and the good, as is shown in Book XII of the *Metaphysics* (see c. 2, 994b10–14); this is because nothing is moved toward what is impossible to attain, as is affirmed in the *De caelo* (see I 7, 274b9–17).

²⁶ In other words, by means of the rotational motion, the body's being in potency to some place or other can never be fully reduced to act. "Finis autem motus caeli non potest esse ipsum moveri: motus enim, cum semper in aliud tendat, non habet rationem ultimi finis. Nec potest dici quod finis caelestis motus sit, ut corpus caeleste reducatur secundum ubi de potentia in actum: quia haec potentia nunquam potest tota in actum reduci: quia dum corpus caeleste est actu in uno ubi, est in potentia ad aliud; sicut est et de potentia materiae primae respectu

The absence of these two hypotheses, or anything like them, in the commentary on the *Metaphysics* is certainly noteworthy. Several prominent interpreters both before and after Thomas have held that the circular celestial motion, just in itself, constitutes or establishes a likeness to the nature and perfection of the first mover.²⁷ The *De potentia* passage shows that Thomas is familiar with the idea; and yet in his reading of the *Metaphysics*, he does not even entertain it—not even in order to reject it. He apparently judges the ascription of such an idea to Aristotle himself too implausible even to deserve consideration. Perhaps he does so for the reasons given in the *De potentia*.

The last hypothesis in the *De potentia*—the last candidate for the end of the celestial motion—is something extrinsic to the motion. It is also of particular interest for us. Thomas ascribes it to “certain philosophers,” without saying who these are. On this view, the end would be “likeness to God in causing”—*similitudo ad Deum in causando*.²⁸ It seems to be the very end that Thomas himself proposes in the passage from the commentary on the *Metaphysics*. Yet in the *De potentia*, although he does not entirely reject it, he judges it improbable. He finds it leading back to one of the hypotheses that he has already rejected. To say that the end of the motion is likeness to God

formarum”: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, ed. P. Marc, C. Pera, P. Caramello (Turin: Marietti, 1961–67), IV, c. 97, par. 3 (§4287).

²⁷ See Berti, “Da chi è amato il motore immobile?” 66–71; “La causalità del motore immobile,” 637. Berti observes that the idea goes all the way back to Alexander: Berti, “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia,” 234.

²⁸ I have not been able to determine who those “philosophers” would be. There are a couple of passages in Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* that contain similar phrases, but I doubt whether Thomas had these in mind, since he had just cited Avicenna, by name, as seeming to hold the previous hypothesis. The passages are these. “Et ex dispositionibus et ex diuturnitate sui cursus sequitur ipsum assimilari primo secundum quod ab illo fluunt bonitas; non quod illae sunt intentio eius, ita ut motus sit propter illas, sed quia intentio eius est assimilari primo, secundum quod possibile est, ut sit secundum quod perfectius esse potest in seipso, quantum ad hoc quod sequitur illum et quantum ad hoc quod *assimilatur primo et quantum ad ea quae proveniunt ab illo post illum*. Igitur motus erit propter illud principali intentione”: Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina* V–X, ed. S. van Riet (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), tract. IX, c. 2, 459 (my emphasis). Even closer to Thomas’s formulation: “Huius autem motus principium est desiderium et electio, non autem ut motus sit id quod intenditur principaliter; hic enim motus est quasi servitium aliquod angelicum vel caeleste. Non est autem de condicione motus voluntarii ut sit intentus in se. Sed, cum virtus desiderativa fuerit ut desideret aliquid, proveniet ei ex ea impressio propter quam moventur membra et aliquando alio modo consimili vel paene eodem, cum fuerit hoc per imaginationem, sive intentio sit aliquid quod assequatur, sive sit *assimilari ei in faciendo quod facit vel in esse*”: *ibid.*, 461 (my emphasis).

in causing, he reasons, is altogether the same as to say that the end is simply “to cause.” But to cause cannot be the end, because it is a transitive operation, one that brings about something else and tends toward something else. As Aristotle says, what such operations bring about is better than the operations themselves; such makings perfect the things made more than the makers. So the true end would be the item brought about, that is, the generation of lower things. But this cannot be the end.²⁹

How is it, then, that in the commentary on Book XII, Thomas can adopt unreservedly the idea that the end of the motion is likeness to the first mover in causing? Is it simply that there he is only interpreting Aristotle, without rendering judgment? In other words, in the *De potentia* passage, would Aristotle himself be one of those “philosophers”? I think this is unlikely, especially since Thomas appeals to Aristotle there in arguing against the idea. Between the composition of the *De potentia* and that of the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, did Thomas simply change his mind about the idea’s plausibility? Perhaps. But I think the truth is that, on closer examination, the idea that he proposes in the passage from the commentary on the *Metaphysics* turns out not to be quite the same as the one presented in the *De potentia*.

For one thing, in the *De potentia*, the causality under discussion is that which belongs to the heavenly *body*, through its motion. It is the causality

²⁹ Of course, even the end that Thomas proposes—the attainment of the number of the souls of the elect—is an effect to which the celestial motion contributes, by disposing the matter. And in fact Thomas somewhat qualifies his judgment about “being rendered like God in causing,” saying that if this is the motion’s end, it would be chiefly in the causality by which the motion is involved in causing what God causes immediately, namely, rational souls. (These are more noble than the heavenly body; and unlike the cycle of the generations and corruptions of lower things, the number of the souls of the elect is a definite terminus.) Similarly, in the rest of the passage of the *Summa contra Gentiles* quoted above (n. 26), Thomas in a way accepts the idea that the motion’s end is to be rendered like God in causing *this* effect: “Sicut igitur finis naturae in generatione non est reducere materiam de potentia in actum, sed aliquid quod ad hoc consequitur, scilicet perpetuitas rerum, per quam ad divinam similitudinem accedunt; ita finis motus caelestis non est reduci de potentia in actum, sed aliquid consequens ad hanc reductionem, scilicet assimilari Deo in causando. Omnia autem generabilia et corruptibilia, quae causantur per motum caeli, ad hominem ordinantur quodammodo sicut in finem, ut in tertio est ostensum. Motus igitur caeli praecipue est propter generationem hominum: in hoc enim maxime divinam similitudinem consequitur in causando, quia forma hominis, scilicet anima rationalis, immediate creatur a Deo, ut in secundo est ostensum. Non autem potest esse finis multiplicatio animarum in infinitum: quia infinitum contrariatur rationi finis. Nihil igitur inconveniens sequitur si, certo numero hominum completo, ponamus motum caeli desistere.”

that the body's motion enjoys with respect to the generation of lower things. What is supposed to be "rendered like God in causing" is the heavenly body itself. In the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, by contrast, the causality belongs to the proximate mover of the heaven, the celestial soul. The celestial motion itself is said to be caused by this mover, and it is the soul that is rendered like the first, unmoved mover in causing. So whereas in the *De potentia*, Thomas could say that it does not matter whether the (proximate) mover of the heaven is God (the first mover) or an intelligence or a soul, in the commentary on the *Metaphysics* it certainly does matter.

It also matters that the proximate mover is intelligent.³⁰ In the *De potentia* hypothesis, the heavenly body is definitely a non-intellectual substance. Its intelligent mover is presumed to be something substantially separate from it. Now of course a non-intellectual being can have a likeness of something else, perhaps even of God. But it cannot have a tendency toward the likeness itself, as such; this would require its having compared itself with the likeness's object. Only an intellectual being can compare itself with something and tend directly toward a likeness of it. Thus it may be observed that, in the *De potentia*, the likeness to God that the heavenly body is supposed to obtain is always expressed either with a noun, *similitudo*, or with a verb in the passive voice, *assimilari Deo in causando*. In the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, on the other hand, Thomas uses a reflexive expression: *ut assimilet se ei in causando*. The celestial soul is seeking to liken itself to God. It acts for the sake of the likeness itself.

I would suggest that this is why, in the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Thomas can accept the idea that the end of the celestial motion is likeness to the first mover in causing. In the *De potentia*, he argues that there is no difference between saying that the end is likeness to God in causing and that the end is simply to cause. But when we are talking about the end of an agent that can understand and pursue a likeness, as such, this is not true. Such an agent can act in a certain way because it is seeking a likeness of something, a likeness that is realized in and through acting in that way. The heavenly body cannot do this, but the celestial soul can.

³⁰ In the *De spiritualibus creaturis* Thomas insists on this point, presenting as his own a view very close to our passage from the commentary on the *Metaphysics*—while integrating into it the goal of completing the number of the elect: "Oportet igitur dicere, quod motus caeli sit ab aliqua substantia intelligente. Nam finis huius motus non potest esse nisi quoddam bonum intelligibile abstractum, propter quod movet substantia intelligens quae movet caelum, ut scilicet assequatur eius similitudinem in operando, et ut explicet in actu id quod virtute continetur in illo intelligibili bono; et praecipue completio numeri electorum, propter quos omnia alia esse videntur": *Quaestio disputata De spiritualibus creaturis*, a. 6, corp. See also *Quaestiones disputatae De anima*, a. 8, ad 3.

The passage from the commentary on the *Metaphysics* also differs from the *De potentia* in another way. It adds a further characterization of the end: “to unfold in act that which exists virtually in the first mover.”³¹ In the third passage to be examined we will see what this “virtual existence” is. But for the moment we can take note of this: when Thomas speaks of the soul’s rendering itself like the first mover in causing, what he has in mind is not that the soul sees the first mover producing a certain motion and desires to imitate it by producing yet another motion.³² The soul functions as the “proximate” mover of the first celestial motion. It is a secondary cause of the very same motion of which the unmoved mover is the first cause.³³ (In the eighth *lectio* Thomas speaks of the motion as

³¹ In the commentary on chapter 10 Thomas speaks again of “unfolding”; see below, n. 70.

³² This seems to be the position of Pedro Fonseca, S.J. (1528–99): the first mover would immediately cause the motion of the *first* sphere, and the celestial souls would only cause the motions of the other spheres, in imitation of the first. See Petri Fonsecae, *Commentariorum in Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagirita tomi quatuor*, vol. IV (Cologne: Zetzner, 1629 [reprint Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964]), 104.

³³ This would also be true according to the *De potentia* passage; see above, n. 29. Twetten (*Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 281) maintains that, on Thomas’s interpretation, that of which the unmoved mover is the efficient cause is the *knowledge* by which the celestial soul knows and loves him. In other words, the unmoved mover would be an efficient cause insofar as he is an intelligible object. (Twetten is silent about the efficient causality of the unmoved mover with respect to the celestial motion itself.) I find no explicit support for this in Thomas’s commentary. It is true that he says that the soul knows the unmoved mover in a way similar to that in which Plato says we know the separate forms, namely, by a certain “contact” (*In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 8, §2541–2542); but Thomas nowhere uses this to explain how the unmoved mover is an efficient cause. Citing this passage about the soul’s “contact” with the unmoved mover, Twetten judges that “Aquinas’s interpretation [of the prime mover’s causality] is possible . . . only insofar as he starts with an Aristotle already overlaid with ‘Neoplatonic’ elements, especially with the doctrine that one intelligence causes in another the forms or ideas by which it is, in turn, understood and loved”: Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 327 (see also 369). However, in commenting on the passage where Aristotle discusses the intelligible and desirable objects, Thomas says only that the intellect’s act is moved “in some way” (*quodammodo*) by the intelligible object: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2522. Moreover, as we have seen, Thomas understands that for Aristotle, Platonic forms do not function as active or efficient principles. The “contact” that Thomas speaks of need not imply efficient causality. It may simply refer to the union of the knower with the object known. On the basis of *ST I*, q. 82, a. 4 and *I–II*, q. 9, a. 1, it seems clear that Thomas does not conceive the objects of the soul’s powers as moving the powers in the manner of efficient or agent

an “influx” of the first mover in the heavenly body.)³⁴ The soul is, as it were, *cooperating* with the unmoved mover.³⁵

In some way, then, the efficient causality of the first mover, with respect to the celestial motion, is still in view. We need to see how it is exercised. This too will become clear in the examination of the third passage. But now let us turn to the second one.

III. An Immobile Entity as the End of an Action

After asserting that the first mover moves as desirable and intelligible things do—without being moved—Aristotle offers a brief discussion in which, according to Thomas, he seeks to show that the chief object of desire is in fact something intelligible and that the first intelligible object and the first desirable object coincide in the same nature, which is precisely that of the first mover: a simple substance that is pure act.³⁶ Along the way, Aristotle remarks that “simple” is not the same as “one”: whereas “one” means a measure, “simple” means “how something is in

causes; what moves as an agent is what moves with respect to “exercise,” whereas objects move only with respect to “specification.” So I do not think that for Thomas, the efficient causality of the unmoved mover with respect to the celestial motion can be reduced to the way in which he causes the celestial soul’s knowledge. In fact, the first mover’s causality of the soul’s knowledge seems to be merely incidental. As we shall see, the first mover causes the celestial motion by way of a command, and the efficient causality of a command does not consist in how it makes itself known, but in its impelling the command’s recipient toward the execution of the commanded action.

³⁴ “Non autem potest dici virtus caelestis corporis infinita, etiam si infinito tempore moveat inferiora corpora; quia non movet nisi motum. Et ita influentia est ex primo movente . . .”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 8, §2550.

³⁵ In the commentary on the *Sentences*, within a discussion that takes up the idea of likeness to God in causing (and that refers the idea to the “philosophers”), Thomas had spoken of separate intelligences that function as “cooperators” with God: “alicui agenti vel imprimenti, potest aliquod recipiens assimilari dupliciter: vel secundum formam tantum; vel secundum formam et actionem. . . . Sic etiam assimilantur angeli Deo in receptione divini luminis, et haec assimilatio ostenditur in hoc quod dicit: deiforme, in quantum possibile est, similans, et etiam in transfusione ejusdem in alios; et hoc ostenditur cum dicitur: ad inditas illuminationes, id est secundum virtutem et regulam datarum illuminationum ascendens in Dei similitudinem, operando in alios secundum suam proportionem; et ideo nominat ascensum, quia in hoc est perfectio similitudinis, et omnium divinius est Dei cooperatores fieri, sicut ibidem dicit Dionysius: propter quod etiam philosophi posuerunt finem intelligentiarum moventium orbes (quem intendunt) assimilationem divinam in causando”: Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, vol. 2, ed. P. Mandonnet (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1929), Lib. 2, d. 9, q. 1, a. 1, ad 7.

³⁶ For a good treatment of Thomas’s reading of this discussion, see Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 241.

itself.” Thomas suggests that with this remark, Aristotle avoids seeming to share the opinion of Plato, who posited the “intelligible One itself” as the first principle of things.³⁷ Thomas understands that, for Aristotle, the fact that every substance is one does not mean that the very nature of the first principle is somehow found in or shared by every substance. In fact it is not: the other substances do not have the simplicity of the first.

Then come two sentences in *Metaphysics* XII 7, at 1072b1–3, that have been the object of considerable discussion, partly because here the manuscripts do not agree. What Thomas seems to have had in front of him runs as follows (I leave it in Latin so as not to force the sense): “Quia autem est quod cuius gratia in immobilibus, divisio ostendit. Est enim alicui quod cuius gratia, quorum hoc quidem est, illud vero non est.”³⁸ Thomas’s interpretation of these sentences is rather unusual. It constitutes the second passage that I wish to examine.

Since the desirable and the good have the nature (*ratio*) of an end, and an end does not seem to exist in immobile things, as was argued in the objections in Book III, here he removes this doubt, saying that this division, by which two ways of saying “end” are distinguished, shows that “that for the sake of which,” i.e., an end, can in some way exist in immobile things. In fact something can be an end of something else in two ways. In one way, as something preexisting, as the center of the universe is the preexisting end of the motion of heavy things. And nothing prevents an end of this sort from existing among immobile things. For something can tend, by its motion, toward participating somehow in something immobile. And in this way the first mover can be an end. In the other way, something is called the end of something else, as what is not in act, but only in the intention of the agent, through whose action it is generated; as health is the end of medical activity. And an end of this sort is not found in immobile things.³⁹

³⁷ *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2525.

³⁸ Aristoteles Latinus, vol. 25, 3.2, *Metaphysica Recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeke*, ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 257, ll. 257–59.

³⁹ “Sed quia appetibile et bonum habent rationem finis, finis autem non videtur esse in rebus immobilibus, ut in objectionibus tertii libri actum est, ideo hanc dubitationem removet; et dicit, quod haec divisio, qua distinguitur quot modis dicitur finis, ostendit, quod cuius causa, idest finis, aliquo modo potest esse in immobilibus. Dupliciter autem potest esse aliquid finis alterius. Uno modo sicut praeexistens; sicut medium dicitur finis praeexistens motus gravium, et huiusmodi finem nihil prohibet esse in immobilibus: potest enim aliquid tendere per suum motum ad participandum aliquid aliter aliquo immobili: et sic primum movens immobile potest esse finis. Alio modo dicitur aliquid esse finis alicuius, sicut quod non est in actu, sed solum in intentione agentis, per cuius actionem

If I have understood correctly, most interpreters see 1072b1–3 as referring to a distinction that Aristotle draws elsewhere, between two senses of “end.” In one sense, it means “that for whose benefit” something acts, that is, the subject that is perfected through the action. In the other sense, “end” means “that in pursuit of which” something acts, that is, the perfection itself.⁴⁰ On this reading, 1072b1–3 would be saying that “that for whose benefit” cannot be immobile, because it is changed and perfected; but “that in pursuit of which” can be an immobile entity. Against this reading, there is the objection raised by Berti and others, that for Aristotle, “that in pursuit of which” something acts is always a “practical” good.⁴¹ A practical good is something contingent, something that may or may not exist and that is brought about through the action itself; for example, health. Such an end is not immobile.

Thomas, by contrast, takes 1072b1–3 to be referring to a sub-distinction *within* “that in pursuit of which.” What is an end in this sense may be something that does not yet exist, something to be brought about through action, such as health; or it may be a preexisting thing, and hence even a thing that always exists and is immobile.⁴² Taking the 1072b1–3 distinction in this way, Thomas sees a clear reason why Aristotle mentions it: he does so in order to set aside a doubt raised in Book III about the existence of an end in immobile things. Remarkably, at least on Thomas’s reading of it,

generatur, sicut sanitas est finis operationis medicinae; et huiusmodi finis non est in rebus immobilibus”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2528.

⁴⁰ See *Physics* II 2, 194a35; *De anima* II 4, 415b2, b21. The *De anima* passage is the source of the terminology typically used to express the distinction, *finis cuius* (ὅν) and *finis quo* (ᾧ). However, in commenting on this passage, Thomas offers two ways of understanding the distinction. The first way is the one just mentioned, between “that for whose benefit” and “that in pursuit of which”; the second way is between the object chiefly pursued, e.g. health, and that by which it is attained, e.g. warming the body. (Thomas Aquinas, *Sentencia libri De anima*, Lib. II, lect. 7, §316 [Marietti].) This second way, I believe, would explain Thomas’s use of the expressions *finis cuius* and *finis quo* in other places; see below, n. 44.

⁴¹ Berti, “Da chi è amato il motore immobile?” 65, 75; “Ancora sulla causalità del Motore immobile,” 11–12, 20–21. See *De anima* III 10, 433b29–30; *De motu animalium* 6, 700b4–701a2; *Eudemian Ethics* I 8, 1218b4–5.

⁴² Apparently, in Alexander’s commentary on Book XII (which we have only in fragments contained in Averroes’ commentary), the distinction would also be within “that in pursuit of which,” although it would differ somewhat from Thomas’s. It would be between an end that is a being *per se*—a substance—and an end that is a perfection and an accident of something else. See Berti, “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia,” 230–31. For the Latin text of Averroes’ commentary on 1072b1–3 see *Aristotelis Metaphysicorum libri XIII cum Averrois Cordubensis in eosdem commentariis* (Venetiis: Apud Iunctas, 1562; reprint Minerva [Frankfurt am Main, 1962]), 320F–G.

that doubt is very similar to Berti's objection. It is that "an end and that for the sake of which seems to be the terminus of some act, and all action seem to be with motion; and so it seems to follow that in immobile things there cannot exist this principle, that is, the final cause, which has the *ratio* of good."⁴³ Thomas is saying that 1072b1–3 is distinguishing between two types of "termini" of action. One type is brought about through the action, whereas the other preexists.

Now, it does not seem to me that in saying this, Thomas is denying that action is always in pursuit of a practical and contingent good. To say that something acts in pursuit of a preexisting and immobile thing does not mean that it acts *only* in pursuit of that. Elsewhere, in fact, Thomas shows that this is not possible. When something acts in pursuit of a pre-existing thing, it also acts in pursuit of some *attainment* of the thing. In different senses, both of these—the preexisting thing, and the attainment of it—are the action's end; both are "that in pursuit of which" the agent acts.⁴⁴ Thus, there is the center of the universe, toward which heavy things tend; and there is their own being at the center, toward which they also tend. In the case of the celestial motion, there is the unmoved mover himself, and there is also the likeness of him, realized by the soul through the action of moving the heaven.⁴⁵ And even if the preexisting thing

⁴³ "Finis autem, et cuius causa fit aliquid, videtur esse terminus alicuius actus; omnes autem actiones videntur esse cum motu. Ergo videtur sequi, quod in rebus immobilibus non possit esse hoc principium, scilicet causa finalis, quae habet rationem boni": *In Meta.*, Lib. III, lect. 4, §374. The *Metaphysics* passage is: "τὸ δὲ τέλος καὶ τὸ οὐ ἔνεκα πράξεώς τινός ἐστι τέλος, αἱ δὲ πράξεις πάσαι μετὰ κινήσεως; ὥστ' ἐν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις οὐκ ἂν ἐνδέχοιτο ταύτην εἶναι τὴν ἀρχήν": *Metaphysics* III 2, 996a26–28. In Averroes' commentary on 1072b1–3 (see above, n. 42) there is no mention of Book III. In one of his earlier writings on the topic, Berti connects 1072b1–3 with the passage from Book III (Berti, "Da chi è amato il motore immobile?" 65), arguing however that an immobile thing can be the end only of its own activity, not of a motion. In a later discussion of 1072b1–3, where he expresses even stronger doubts about the unmoved mover's status as an end in *Metaphysics* XII 7, Berti is silent about Book III (Berti, "Ancora sulla causalità del Motore immobile," 12–13, 20–21).

⁴⁴ This would be the distinction between *finis cuius* and *finis quo* as Thomas intends it in *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 8. (Here he refers the distinction to *Metaphysics* V, but this seems to be a mistake. The source is surely *De anima* II 4, 415b2, understood in Thomas's second way—see above, n. 40.) See also *ST* I–II, q. 2, a. 7; q. 3, a. 1; q. 5, a. 2; q. 11, a. 3, ad 3; q. 16, a. 3. Of these two senses, the chief one is *finis cuius*, i.e., the thing pursued. The attainment of the thing is good on account of the goodness of the thing itself: see *ST* I–II, q. 16, a. 3.

⁴⁵ Whereas being at the center coincides with the cessation of the motion of heavy things, the likeness to the first mover in causing is simultaneous with the (soul's) action of moving; hence it is compatible with an everlasting motion and is itself

exists necessarily, the attainment of it may or may not exist. The attainment is practical and contingent. Further on in the commentary, Thomas will insist that for Aristotle the celestial motion does not exist with absolute necessity. It is contingent. The only necessity that belongs to the motion, Thomas holds, is what he calls “necessity for an end,” which is merely a kind of hypothetical necessity. It consists in the fact that “without the perpetuity of such motion, there would not be the suitable order to the end.”⁴⁶

The idea of a preexisting thing functioning as the end of an action does not seem very problematic.⁴⁷ A target, for example, is an end, insofar as one strives to hit it. Still, we might wonder how it is that being rendered like the unmoved mover constitutes “attaining” him. Thomas does not address this question here. If I were to hazard an answer, I would start from the fact that to “attain” a thing means to be united with it in some way. There are many ways of being united with something. Aristotle says in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that, for the beasts, “living together”

everlasting. Thomas alludes to its everlastingness in glossing the line where Aristotle says that the unmoved mover moves “as loved.” It is better to say “loved,” Thomas remarks, rather than “desired,” because desire is of what is not yet possessed, but love is also of what is possessed (what has already been “attained”): *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2529. Although what the soul causes is a motion, the likeness to the first mover is not itself a motion, nor is it something that is generated by the motion or that takes any time to accomplish. It is nothing other than the conformity between the soul’s own everlasting action of causing the motion and something existing “virtually” in the first mover.

⁴⁶ “Cum ergo dicitur quod caelum ex necessitate movetur, non potest dici, quod huiusmodi sit necessitas violentiae, quia in rebus incorruptibilibus non est aliquid extra naturam; quae autem sunt violenta sunt extra naturam. Similiter non potest esse necessitas absoluta, quia primum mobile est movens seipsum, ut probatur in octavo Physicorum [see *Physics* VIII 5, 256a21 ff.]; quod autem seipsum movet in seipso habet moveri et non moveri [see *Physics* VIII 4, 255a7–11]. Relinquitur ergo, quod necessitas primi motus sit necessitas ex fine, inquantum sine perpetuitate talis motus non convenit [contingit?] esse convenientem ordinem ad finem”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2533. He is commenting on *Metaphysics* XII 7, 1072b11–14. To me it is not clear that these lines refer to the celestial motion, but this is not the place to go into that. Perhaps though it is worth noting that in any case, what Thomas is calling contingent is only the motion of the heavenly body, not its being. Thomas always teaches that the substantial being of the heavenly bodies is absolutely necessary. This point comes out also in the commentary; the first mobile, Thomas writes, can be otherwise *secundum locum*, but not *secundum substantiam* (§2530–31).

⁴⁷ In the *Eudemian Ethics* VIII 3, 1249b14–15, Aristotle even says that “the god” is the end in view of which prudence commands. Here he also reminds us that “end” is said in two senses. Evidently the “attainment” of the god, in this passage, would be the “contemplation and service” of him (1249b21).

means eating in the same place, whereas for men, it means sharing words and thoughts.⁴⁸ This is what friends seek. To be sure, in the *Metaphysics* he does not say that the first mover is the celestial soul's "friend." He does however say—immediately after the two sentences in 1072b1–3—that the first mover moves as "loved." And, as we have seen, at least on Thomas's account the celestial soul is indeed united with the first mover in something, some activity. The soul "cooperates" with the first mover in causing the celestial motion.

Why, however, does Thomas speak of this in terms of *assimilatio*?⁴⁹ Perhaps one could answer that being like something also means being united with it in something, some *form*.⁵⁰ But what would the form be in this case? Moreover, if we say that the celestial soul shares a form with the unmoved mover, are we not merely strengthening another possible objection to this passage in Thomas's commentary? He speaks here of "participating" somehow in something immobile. The objection is: Platonism! That indeed is how it sounds. But we still need to see what the "form" is, according to which the soul is rendered like the first mover.⁵¹ This will become clear, I think, in the third passage.

⁴⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics* IX 9, 1170b12–13.

⁴⁹ A discussion that is certainly pertinent, though the point of view is not quite the same, is found in the *Summa theologiae*, within the reply to an objection against the idea that the end of God's government of the universe is something extrinsic to the universe (viz., God). The objection is that according to *Nicomachean Ethics* I 1, an end is always either an operation or else a work brought about through operation—that is, it is always something "practical." In the reply, Thomas first argues that the *Ethics* passage only concerns the ends of the arts, and then he says, "Contingit autem aliquid extrinsecum esse finem non solum sicut operatum, sed etiam sicut possessum seu habitum, vel etiam sicut repraesentatum, sicut si dicamus quod Hercules est finis imaginis, quae fit ad eum repraesentandum. Sic igitur potest dici quod bonum extrinsecum a toto universo est finis gubernationis rerum sicut habitum et repraesentatum, quia ad hoc unaquaeque res tendit, ut participet ipsum, et assimiletur ei, quantum potest": *ST* I, q. 103, a. 2, ad 2. Thus, being rendered like something would constitute "being united" with it, in the sense of "making it present," representing it. However, in commenting on Book XII, he speaks not of "representing" the first mover, but of "unfolding" what is in the first mover virtually, that is (as we will see in the third passage), what is in his understanding and will. Perhaps the difference is connected with the fact that in the commentary, Thomas is speaking not of the end of God's own government—what God Himself intends in governing—but of the end intended by the celestial soul in moving the heaven.

⁵⁰ See *ST* I, q. 4, a. 3.

⁵¹ Yet another objection would be that "being rendered like" seems to refer more to the formal or exemplary cause than to the final cause. This is true, but here the likeness is being considered as something *desired*. So at least the likeness itself

IV. The Will of the Unmoved Mover as Agent and as End

The passage appears at the end of the seventh *lectio*. We are at the place where Aristotle writes, “on such a principle depend heaven and earth” (1072b14). Thomas explains that the principle meant is “the first mover as end” (*primum movens sicut finis*).⁵² Then he returns to the point about the necessity of the celestial motion, drawing out an implication.

. . . Aristotle says here that the necessity of the first motion is not absolute necessity, but rather necessity for an end. Now, the end is the principle that he later calls God, insofar as an assimilation to him is realized through the motion. But an assimilation to that which wills and understands, as he shows God to be, is realized according to will and understanding; as artifacts are assimilated to the artisan insofar as the artisan’s will is fulfilled in them. It follows that the entire necessity of the first motion is subject to the will of God.⁵³

Here I think we find the answers to the questions raised by the first two passages.

Let us begin with the question of the likeness. It is now fairly clear what the “form” is, according to which the celestial soul is like the first mover. It is not the form that constitutes the first mover’s own substance, his simple and immobile nature.⁵⁴ Rather, it is like the form of an artifact,

is functioning as a final cause. And if this is sought because it in some way constitutes an “attainment” of that which serves as exemplar, the exemplar too has the status of a final cause.

⁵² See Twetten, *Aquinas and the Prime Mover of Aristotle*, 270.

⁵³ “Attendendum est autem, quod cum Aristoteles hic dicat, quod necessitas primi motus non est necessitas absoluta, sed necessitas, quae est ex fine, finis autem principium est, quod postea nominat Deum, inquantum attenditur per motum assimilatio ad ipsum; assimilatio autem ad id quod est volens, et intelligens, cuiusmodi ostendit esse Deum, attenditur secundum voluntatem et intelligentiam, sicut artificata assimilantur artificii, inquantum in eis voluntas artificis adimpletur; sequitur quod tota necessitas primi motus subiaceat voluntati Dei”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 7, §2535. (I have divided the translation of this into several sentences, to make it more readable.)

⁵⁴ The second passage said, “For something can tend, by its motion, toward participating somehow in something immobile.” Berti presents this as though it were a matter of participating in the very immobility of something immobile. “Thomas reintroduces the traditional interpretation, saying that the end can be among the immobile realities that preexist the motion and are the object of participation by the heaven under the aspect of their immobility (*potest enim aliquid tendere per suum motum ad participandum aliquantulum aliquo immobili*)”: Berti, “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodizia,” 242 (my translation); see also Berti, “Da chi è amato il motore immobile?” 68–69. But in this passage Thomas

which is not the artisan's nature, but something that he understands, a form that he has conceived.⁵⁵ The soul does not somehow become one in kind with the first mover.

Moreover, the example of the artifact is only a comparison. The form here is not a quality, something "structural," like the shape of a statue. It is a form of action. The soul is likened to the first mover "in causing." But not even the soul's action is of the same kind as the first mover's. Thomas has already indicated, in our first passage, that what the celestial soul enacts is not found "in act" in the first mover. The soul acts in order to "unfold in act" something that is found in the first mover only virtually. And now what this means is clear. What the soul enacts is something that exists in the first mover's intellect and will. It is something that the first mover has conceived and toward which he has ordained the soul by an act of will. The soul does not act in the same way as does the first mover, but rather in the way that the first mover wants it to act. How does the first mover himself act? In a work that is more or less contemporary with the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Thomas writes that Aristotle posits a separate good that is "commander or lord"—*imperatorem vel dominum*—of all things.⁵⁶ So if we wish to specify the first mover's action, I think we can call it an *imperium*, a command. The soul does not command. It executes the first mover's command.

It seems to me that these considerations serve to ease at least some of the discomfort that may be generated, from an Aristotelian perspective,

is only explaining how something immobile can function as an end. He is saying that it can be an object of participation "somehow," i.e., according to some characteristic or other. But he does not specify that the participation is precisely according to its immobility, and it does not seem to me that this is what he has in mind. I think our third passage makes it clear that it is not a matter of imitating the very nature or mode of being—the simple and immobile substance—of the first mover, but only of imitating something in his understanding and will.

⁵⁵ "Voluntas et natura secundum hoc differunt in causando, quia natura determinata est ad unum; sed voluntas non est determinata ad unum. Cuius ratio est, quia effectus assimilatur formae agentis per quam agit. Manifestum est autem quod unius rei non est nisi una forma naturalis, per quam res habet esse, unde quale ipsum est, tale facit. Sed forma per quam voluntas agit, non est una tantum, sed sunt plures, secundum quod sunt plures rationes intellectae, unde quod voluntate agitur, non est tale quale est agens, sed quale vult et intelligit illud esse agens": *ST I*, q. 41, a. 2.

⁵⁶ "Ponit enim unum bonum separatum omnibus providentem, sicut unum imperatorem vel dominum, sub quo sunt diversi rerum ordines": Thomas Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis*, in *Opera omnia*, iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, vol. 40 (Rome: Ad Sanctae Sabinae, 1969), c. 3, ll. 61–63.

by the word “participation.”⁵⁷ We should keep in mind that for Thomas this word can be used in very many ways. Especially important here is the fact that, as he uses it, the idea is not always that what participates in something has in itself the very nature or kind that characterizes the thing in which it participates—not even in a diminished way. Sometimes what the participant has in itself is only some sort of proportion or order to that in which it participates. For example, in another work, Thomas declares that someone may participate in the art of medicine in any of three ways: either by receiving in himself the “property of the nature” of the art—that is, receiving the art itself, becoming a physician in his own right; or by receiving some knowledge of the art; or by somehow “doing service” to the art—that is, not by having the art itself, or even a part of it, but only by doing something that the art directs him to do.⁵⁸

We might also consider that in Thomas’s own thought, it is in just this way that God functions as the “exemplar” of created things. Creatures, writes Thomas, never become like God according to his very nature or in His very “kind.” What they can attain a specific likeness of is only the representation in Him of some *ratio* that He understands, as a house that is in matter is like the house that is in the mind of the builder.⁵⁹ For

⁵⁷ We might also note that in a famous passage in the *De caelo* concerning the distribution of the motions in the world, Aristotle speaks of that which “has and participates in [μετέχει] the best”: *De caelo* II 12, 292b9. Tommaso comments, “Dicit autem ‘habet,’ propter supremam causarum, quae est Deus altissimus, qui est ipsa essentia bonitatis; dicit autem ‘participat,’ propter inferiores substantias separatas, quae esse et bonum habent ex alio; nam ‘participare’ nihil aliud est quam ab alio partialiter accipere”: *In De caelo* II, lect. 18, §463 [6]. Also in this *lectio*, Thomas repeatedly says that the celestial substances are like the goodness of God “in causing,” and more precisely, insofar as they attain a certain “universal” causality; see §463, §465, §467, §468.

⁵⁸ “Tripliciter enim aliquid potest ab alio participare: uno modo, accipiendo proprietatem naturae eius; alio modo, ut recipiat ipsum per modum intentionis cognitivae; alio modo, ut deserviat aliquantulum eius virtuti, sicut aliquis medicinalem artem participat a medico vel quia accipit in se medicinae artem, vel accipit cognitionem artis medicinalis, vel quia deservit arti medicinae”: Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Colossenses lectura*, in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli lectura*, vol. 2, ed. R. Cai (Turin: Marietti, 1953), cap. 1, lect. 4, §42. This passage appears within a discussion of the ways in which the various angelic orders participate in God. (The dating of this work is not entirely certain; the evidence favors the period 1265–1268, but there is some possibility that it was not composed until 1272 or 1273.)

⁵⁹ “Licet creaturae non pertingant ad hoc quod sint similes Deo secundum suam naturam, similitudine speciei, ut homo genitus homini generanti; attingunt tamen ad eius similitudinem secundum repraesentationem rationis intellectae a Deo, ut domus quae est in materia, domui quae est in mente artificis”: *ST I*, q. 44,

Thomas, not even grace, which is termed a participation in the divine nature, constitutes an inherence of God's nature in the soul. It is a created quality that renders the soul pleasing (*grata*) to God and worthy to receive the vision of His nature.⁶⁰

Granted, this does mean that in a way the end (*finis cuius*) of grace, its "target," is the divine nature itself. But grace is something supernatural. I think it is clear that in the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, although Thomas sees the first mover as in some way the end of the celestial soul's action, the soul's "target" is not precisely the first mover's nature. What the soul's action renders the soul like is not the first mover's nature but something in the first mover's will. And this, not in the sense that the soul does exactly what the first mover's will does, but only in the sense that it does what the first mover wants it to do.⁶¹

This brings to mind something that Thomas says in the *Summa theologiae* regarding the obligation (the "necessity for an end") to conform oneself to God's will. He observes that the good that is proportioned to a creature's nature and knowledge, its proper good, is only a particular good. It is not the universal and divine good, to which God's will alone

a. 3, ad 1. To be sure, according to Thomas, God conceives creatures insofar as He knows himself and the various ways in which it is possible to participate in the perfection of his nature: *ST* I, q. 14, a. 6. But this participation does not constitute a specific likeness, or even a generic one; it is only an analogy, that is, a likeness of proportion, similar to that which all things are like each other in "being": *ST* I, q. 4, a. 3. Berti himself finds analogies in *Metaphysics* XII 7 between things that fall within our experience and the unmoved mover: Berti, "La causalità del motore immobile," 644; "Ancora sulla causalità del Motore immobile," 17–18.

⁶⁰ See *ST* I–II, q. 110; also I, q. 13, a. 9, ad 1. Even in the beatific vision, the soul "has" the divine nature only as its object, not as something inhering in it.

⁶¹ The likeness that Thomas has in mind, between the celestial soul and the first mover, does not seem to consist simply in the fact that the soul too exercises an intelligent and voluntary causality. In that case, it would be only a likeness of proportionality. There is a passage in the *Summa theologiae* along this line. Objection: "Videtur quod beatitudo consistat in operatione intellectus practici. Finis enim ultimus cuiuslibet creaturae consistit in assimilatione ad Deum. Sed homo magis assimilatur Deo per intellectum practicum, qui est causa rerum intellectarum, quam per intellectum speculativum, cuius scientia accipitur a rebus". Reply: "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod similitudo praedicta intellectus practici ad Deum, est secundum proportionalitatem; quia scilicet se habet ad suum cognitum, sicut Deus ad suum. Sed assimilatio intellectus speculativi ad Deum, est secundum unionem vel informationem; quae est multo maior assimilatio. . .": *ST* I–II, q. 3 a. 5, obj. 1 & ad 1. As I see it, Thomas views the celestial soul's causality as "informed" by that of the first mover, insofar as it "unfolds in act that which exists virtually in the first mover." In this way the soul would attain a genuine "union" with the first mover—not a contemplative union, but an active one, a "cooperation."

adequately corresponds. This is not to deny that the rational creature is somehow obliged, in his own way, to want the universal good; Thomas insists that he is. But Thomas also argues that, even in wanting his own merely particular good, the creature can and should conform himself to God's will. By wanting his true proper good, he is wanting what God wants him to want.⁶²

I mention this because, as Berti rightly insists, for Aristotle each thing has its proper good and its intrinsic end, which is not the same as the first and separate good.⁶³ The point would be that in Thomas, there is a sense in which acting for God's sake, as for an end, may mean simply acting in pursuit of one's own proper good. One acts for God's sake in acting to fulfill His will, and this may consist simply in tending rightly toward one's proper good—a good that is distinct from the divine good itself. I think it is clear that this is the sense of “acting for the first mover's sake” that is operative in the commentary on Book XII. Our third passage leaves no doubt that for Thomas, the good that is proper to the first mover—which he now insists on calling God—wholly transcends that which the celestial soul attains by causing the celestial motion. I am referring to the last sentence: “the entire necessity of the first motion is subject to the will of God.” God's good does not depend on or need the motion. What needs it is only that which falls under the order that He has freely instituted.⁶⁴

In the same article of the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas explains that this type of conformity to the will of God is according to the divine will's character as an *efficient* cause.⁶⁵ This is because the creature's inclination

⁶² ST I-II, q. 19, a. 10.

⁶³ See *Nicomachean Ethics* I 4, 1096b31–34; Berti, “Da chi è amato il motore immobile?” 19.

⁶⁴ Earlier in the commentary on chapter 7, Thomas was careful to qualify the order itself as something merely “suitable” to the end; see above, at n. 46. The order is “for” the first mover, but he does not strictly need it. On “subject to the will” as an expression of freedom, see ST I, q. 41, a. 2.

⁶⁵ “Secundum autem quod non conformatur ei [scil. voluntati Dei] in voluto materialiter, conformatur ei secundum rationem causae efficientis, quia hanc propriam inclinationem consequentem naturam, vel apprehensionem particularem huius rei, habet res a Deo sicut a causa efectiva”: ST I-II, q. 19, a. 10. (Thomas is thinking of a case in which the creature wants a particular good that in itself is not wanted by God and is not realized, even though God wants the creature to want it. It is also supposed that the creature wants this good as ordered to God as last end; in other words, that from the creature's point of view, this good seems truly in conformity with the universal common good.) Berti is thus correct in saying that the example of the artisan offered in our passage makes one think more of an efficient cause than of a final cause: Berti, “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia,” 243. But what the example is serving to illustrate is a rather

to its proper good comes from God, as from an efficient cause. I have already proposed the word “command” to designate the efficient action of the first mover, such as Thomas presents it in the commentary on Book XII. I think we can now see how the first mover and the celestial soul can be said to be efficient causes of the same effect, the celestial motion. With an act of his intellect and will—a command, or something similar—the first mover orders the soul to bring the motion into act, and the soul executes the order.⁶⁶ We can also see that the first mover is functioning, at the very same time, as final cause of the celestial motion, insofar as the soul effects the motion for the purpose of complying with and executing the mover’s command. This is how command works. He who commands certainly gives an “impulse” or a “thrust”; he functions as an efficient cause, that from which motion originates. But his command has its effect by way of someone who grasps it and wants to fulfill it. And if he who fulfills it wants to do so out of love for the commander, may we not say that the commander is also functioning as a final cause?

Among the interpretations proposed in the last century concerning the causality of the unmoved mover, probably the most influential is that of W. D. Ross, according to which the unmoved mover would be an efficient cause of the celestial motion “insofar as he is a final cause.”⁶⁷ Thomas’s reading could perhaps be formulated inversely: at least in a sense, the unmoved mover is a final cause insofar as he is an efficient cause. I do not mean that his final causality is identical with his efficient causality. They are different relations. The unmoved mover is efficient cause insofar as his will or his command gives rise to the celestial motion. He is final cause insofar as the celestial soul, in producing the motion, acts

special case, in which what the “artisan” (the first mover) acts directly upon is itself a voluntary agent, the celestial soul; and the effect produced depends also on the soul’s will, which tends toward it out of love for the first mover and for the sake of conforming itself to his will. So final causality is involved as well.

⁶⁶ Also in Alexander (as reported by Averroes—see above, n. 42) the first mover is presented as a lord and king, to whose will the others must “conform.” Similarly, Themistius compares the first mover to a law or a king that the first heaven wants to obey and “imitate”; see Berti, “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia,” 231–33 and 236–38.

⁶⁷ W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1949), 181; *Aristotle’s Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), vol. 1, cxxxiv. Ross seems to hold that the object of desire is an efficient cause of desire, even though it is only a final cause of the motion that the desire produces. He rejects the idea that the unmoved mover causes by an act of will, because on his view the life of the unmoved mover is that of pure thought, without any practical dimension: *Aristotle*, 184–86; *Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, cxxxvii, cxlix–cliv.

for his sake. But the precise thing that the soul is seeking is to fulfill his command. This is what I mean: it is in the very quality of commander—which is a kind of efficient cause—that the first unmoved mover is that for the sake of which the celestial soul moves the heaven.⁶⁸

V. The Unmoved Mover as His Own End in Commanding

I close with a nod to chapter 10 of Book XII. Here Aristotle asks how the nature of the “whole” has the good and the best: as something separate and independent, or as the whole’s order? According to Thomas, the “whole” in question is the whole universe, that is, heaven and earth.⁶⁹ In other words, the whole would not include the separate good itself. The question then would be whether the end of the whole is extrinsic to the whole, as is the place toward which something is moved; or whether instead it is an “intrinsic form,” as is the order that unites the parts of a whole. Aristotle’s answer is: both. The situation is like that of an army, whose good is found both in its order and in the general. But it is more in the general, because the order is on account of him, and not vice versa. Thomas’s gloss on this is lengthy, but it will serve to recapitulate much of what we have seen.

There is a separate good, which is the first mover, on which heaven and earth depend, as on an end and an appetible good. . . . And since all things that have a single end must come together in the order to the end, there must be a certain order in the parts of the universe. . . . It is as we see in an army. For the good of the army is found both in its order and in the general who presides over it; but more in the general than in the order, because the end is stronger in goodness than the things that are for the end, and the order of the army is for the sake of fulfilling the good of the general, namely, the general’s will to attain victory; and not vice versa. And since the *ratio* of the things that are for an end is taken from the end, it is necessary not only that the army’s order be for the general, but also that the army’s order be from the general. . . . Thus the separate good, which is the first mover, is a better

⁶⁸ I am speaking of the way in which the first mover constitutes the end of the action of the celestial soul. This does not exhaust the account of the first mover’s final causality, because there is also the fact that he acts for his own sake (see below, section V). Obviously in this respect the first mover would not be a final cause “insofar as he is an efficient cause”; that is, it is not that he acts in order to fulfill a command given by himself to himself. It is simply that he acts on account of his own goodness.

⁶⁹ *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 12, §2627–2628 (on *Metaphysics*, XII 10, 1075a11). In other words, the separate good, which is the first mover, would be separate *from* the whole—while nonetheless being the good *of* the whole.

good than the good order that is in the universe; for the entire order of the universe is for the first mover, that is, is for the sake of unfolding in act in the ordered universe that which is in his intellect and in his will. And so it is necessary that the entire ordination of the universe be from the first mover.⁷⁰

What stands out here is Thomas's effort to present the first mover as a good and an end. It is thus that the whole depends on him and is on account of him. But for this very reason, the order of the whole also comes *from* him.⁷¹ He is its efficient cause as well. And he is the whole's end just insofar as his will for its order is something due to be carried out.⁷²

At the same time, further on it becomes clear that the comparison with the general can be taken only so far. A general's good, his own end, is victory, which is something distinct from him. Even a general is only a moved mover, moved by some other desirable object. With the first mover it is otherwise. *Metaphysics* XII 10 contains a brief passage in which Aristotle seems to praise Anaxagoras for making his *Good* and his *Intellect* to be a moving principle.⁷³ But then Aristotle adds a reservation. Such a principle, he says, "moves for an end, which will be other"—evidently another *good*, and a more principal one—"unless it is as we say: in a certain way, the art of medicine is health." Thomas glosses this last remark thus:

⁷⁰ "Est enim aliquod bonum separatum, quod est primum movens, ex quo dependet caelum et tota natura, sicut ex fine et bono appetibili, ut ostensum est. Et, quia omnia, quorum unum est finis, oportet quod in ordine ad finem conveniant, necesse est, quod in partibus universi ordo aliquis inveniatur. . . . Sicut videmus in exercitu: nam bonum exercitus est et in ipso ordine exercitus, et in duce, qui exercitui praesidet: sed magis est bonum exercitus in duce, quam in ordine: quia finis potior est in bonitate his quae sunt ad finem: ordo autem exercitus est propter bonum ducis adimplendum, scilicet ducis voluntatem in victoriae consecutionem; non autem e converso, bonum ducis est propter bonum ordinis. Et, quia ratio eorum quae sunt ad finem, sumitur ex fine, ideo necesse est quod non solum ordo exercitus sit propter ducem, sed etiam quod a duce sit ordo exercitus. . . . Ita etiam bonum separatum, quod est primum movens, est melius bonum bono ordinis, quod est in universo. Totus enim ordo universi est propter primum moventem, ut scilicet explicatur in universo ordinato id quod est in intellectu et voluntate primi moventis. Et sic oportet, quod a primo movente sit tota ordinatio universi": *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 12, §2629–2631.

⁷¹ ". . . ordinare in finem est eius cuius est proprius ille finis": *ST* I–II, q. 90, a. 3.

⁷² On the comparison with the general as an indication that the first mover is an efficient cause, see Berti, "Prefazione," in *Nuovi studi aristotelici*, 9–12.

⁷³ *Metaphysics* XII 10, 1075b8–10. Berti discusses this passage in Berti, "Da chi è amato il motore immobile?" 81–82. Pertinent is *De caelo* II 12, 292b4–7; see also Berti, "La causalità del motore immobile," 647.

unless perhaps he should say as we have said, that the intellect and the thing understood can be the same, and that the intellect moves for its own sake; which in a way is found in those who act by intellect, according to our view. For the art of medicine acts for the sake of health, and health is in a certain way the very art of medicine, as was said above.⁷⁴

The first principle must be entirely for his own sake. Somehow he must be so not only in his contemplative activity but also insofar as he operates in a “practical” way, as an agent or mover. His end, in moving other things, cannot be anything distinct from or higher than himself. But we get a glimpse of how this is possible by considering just what Anaxagoras said: he is intellect. One who acts by intellect acts for the sake of a good that he understands, as one who has the art of medicine understands health; and in a way, the intellect and what it understands are one and the same, as the art of medicine and health are.

This discussion seems to be quite pertinent to one other possible objection to Thomas’s interpretation of the causality of the unmoved mover.⁷⁵ The objection is that in Book XII, notwithstanding the comparison with the general, Aristotle never says that the unmoved mover “commands”; and that in fact, in the last chapter of the *Eudemian Ethics*, he declares that “the god is not a commanding ruler but is the end for the sake of which prudence commands,” since the god “has need of

⁷⁴ “Nisi forte dicat sicut nos diximus, quod idem potest esse intellectus et intellectum, et quod intellectus moveat propter seipsum, quod aliquo modo invenitur in his quae agunt per intellectum secundum nos. Ars enim medicinae agit propter sanitatem, et sanitas est quodam modo ipsa ars medicinae, ut supra dictum est”: *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 12, §2648. (The reference might be to *Metaphysics* XII 4, 1070b33; see also XII 9, 1075a1–4.) One might also take the expression “*secundum nos*” in this passage to mean “among us.” In this case, Thomas would be saying that even among human beings, in some way one who acts by intellect, e.g. a physician, acts for his own sake. At any rate, Thomas sees a need to qualify the comparison (“in some way,” *aliquo modo*). I suppose this is because, as he reads Aristotle, human practical understanding is ultimately ruled by and for the sake of a principle outside the mind, which is not the case with the first mover. Human art “imitates nature” (*Physics* II 2, 194a21–23; see *In Physicorum*, Lib. II, lect. 4, §170–71 [5–6]), whereas the first mover is the source of the natural order itself, as comes out fairly clearly in the continuation of the *Metaphysics* XII 10 passage (1075a16–25; see *In Meta.*, Lib. XII, lect. 12, §2632–37); and human action is ultimately for the sake of contemplation, whose chief object is not man himself or even man’s own mind, but the divine (see, *inter alia*, the *Eudemian Ethics* passage discussed below, n. 78), whereas of course what the first mover chiefly contemplates is himself (*Metaphysics* XII 9, 1074b15–1075a10).

⁷⁵ See Berti, “Il movimento del cielo in Alessandro di Afrodisia,” 233.

nothing.”⁷⁶ Thomas does not entertain this objection.⁷⁷ But I would ask: what exactly does Aristotle mean by this? Does he mean that the god does not command at all? Or does he mean that the god’s rule does not consist *solely* or *primarily* in commanding? If it did, then the god would be ruling for the sake of some end beyond himself, as prudence does; and in that case, he would be being ruled by a higher principle, the end. But does the god’s being the end exclude his *also* commanding? A couple of lines previously in the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle had observed that in man, the ruling principle is twofold. In one sense, it is like the art of medicine; in another, it is like health.⁷⁸ The general idea seems clear: the art of medicine rules insofar as it commands, but the end and the primary ruling principle is health. But now, in *Metaphysics* XII 10, speaking not of man but of the first mover, Aristotle brings in the comparison with medicine and health, not to say that they are two, but to say that in a way they are one and the same. Does this not suggest that here there is one principle that is at the same time end *and* commander? To be sure, it will be the very first principle, the “most principal” one, because it is the end, the final cause. But it is nevertheless also an agent, a moving cause—one that moves for its own sake.

Moreover, it is a purely intellectual substance. I must say that I find it difficult to imagine how a purely intellectual substance could function as a mover, if it is not by way of a command, or at least something analogous to one.⁷⁹ But I leave this as a question. N V

⁷⁶ οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτακτικῶς ἄρχων ὁ θεός, ἀλλ’ οὐ ἕνεκα ἢ φρόνησις ἐπιτάττει . . . , ἐπεὶ κείνός γε οὐθενὸς δεῖται: *Eudemian Ethics* VIII 3, 1249b14–16.

⁷⁷ I have not found any reference at all to this passage of the *Eudemian Ethics* in Thomas’s writings.

⁷⁸ *Eudemian Ethics* VIII 3, 1249b12–13. The principle in man that he seems to be comparing to medicine is prudence; what is comparable to health, i.e., the end, would be contemplation—the contemplation of the god.

⁷⁹ It is true that the “agent intellect” of *De anima* III 5 does not seem to act by way of a command. But what the agent intellect effects is not a motion in the strict sense. It is the actuality of the intelligible object, which is a “perfect actuality,” one that has its proper end in itself. A motion is for an end distinct from the motion itself. To say that a motion is caused by an intellect, it seems to me, means that the thing moved has been ordered toward the motion’s end; and I see little difference between “ordering to an end” and “commanding.”