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Providence in the *Summa Halensis*: Between Authority and Innovation

Abstract: The doctrine of divine providence features prominently in the 13th-century early Franciscan *Summa Halensis*. This chapter argues that the account of providence presented in the *Summa* is an innovative reworking of past authorities and may thus be counted among the examples of early Franciscan innovations. For instance, while John of Damascus claimed that providence is part of God's will and Peter Lombard took providence to be a specific form of divine knowledge, the *Summa Halensis* applies the Boethian notion of the *ratio* of providence to harmonize the two authorities, terming the corresponding *executio* 'government'. Thus the distinction between *providentia* and *gubernatio*, so central to Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of providence, is to be found initially in the *Summa Halensis*.

Introduction

In his historical study of Albert the Great's treatise on providence and fate, which shows the dependence of Albert's treatise in the *Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia Dei* on the *Summa Halensis*,¹ Josef Georgen argues that the rise to prominence of the topic of divine providence in the 13th century, in particular, at the University of Paris, is, apart from its intrinsic importance and value for theology generally, largely a function of the theological and philosophical circumstances of the mid-13th century. In particular, Georgen suggests that the Parisian controversy between Christian and Averroistic Aristotelians goes a long way towards explaining the increased interest in the doctrine of providence, not least because it was attacked, in various forms, by Latin Averroists, such as Siger of Brabant, and consequently also dealt with in some of the articles of the condemnations of 1270 and 1277.² Pierre Mandonnet, Antonin Sertillanges, and Martin Grabmann, to name just

1 On the question of the dependence of Albert the Great on the *Summa Halensis*, see also Parthenius Minges, 'Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zwischen Alexander von Hales und Albert dem Grossen,' *Franziskanische Studien* 2 (1915), pp. 208–29; Mathieu-Maxime Gorce, 'Le problème des trois Sommes: Alexandre de Halès, Thomas d'Aquin, Albert le Grand,' *Revue Thomiste* 36 (1931), pp. 293–300; Hubert Neufeld, 'Zum Problem des Verhältnisses der theologischen Summe Alberts des Großen zur Theologischen Summe Alexander von Hales,' *Franziskanische Studien* 27 (1940), pp. 22–56, 65–87.

2 Josef Georgen, *Des hl. Albertus Magnus Lehre von der göttlichen Vorsehung und dem Fatum unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Vorsehungs- und Schicksalslehre des Ulrich von Straßburg* (Vechta in Oldenburg: Albertus-Magnus-Verlag, 1932), pp. 1–6, 41, 71–74, 95–102. The doctrine of providence is – implicitly and explicitly – subject of both the condemnation of 1270 and 1277. See *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 1, eds. Heinrich Denifle and Emile Chatelain (Paris: Delalain Frères,

a few examples, have all noted that the Christian vision of providence was under attack at the time.³ These circumstances, Georgen argues, explain why Albert the Great and his students Thomas Aquinas and Ulrich of Strasburg dedicated so much attention to the doctrine of providence.

The early Franciscan Parisian *Summa Halensis* predates these discussions by a generation but nevertheless dedicates a surprising amount of attention to this topic. This chapter sets out to explore the doctrine of providence in the *Summa Halensis* in the historical-theological context of scholastic treatises at the time and seeks to assess the originality of its contribution against this backdrop. The *Summa Halensis*, at times called the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, is a collaborative work of the earliest generation of Franciscan theologians at the University of Paris in the first half of the 13th century, which was composed under the auspices of the Parisian master and Franciscan friar Alexander of Hales (1184–1245).⁴ The thesis I will defend is that the *Summa Halensis*, in drawing on past authorities, such as Augustine, Boethius, John of Damascus, and Peter Lombard, introduced a couple of noteworthy innovations, most notably the view that providence is a matter not just of knowledge but also of will, on the basis of which the *Summa* then distinguishes government from providence, which influenced later renderings of providence, for example, in Aquinas.

To make this argument, I will first outline in section one the scholastic context of the debates about providence, to determine when the topic became of interest; I will then turn to the *Summa Halensis* and discuss, in section two, the definition of providence adopted and adapted by the *Summa*. In section three, I will finally describe the causal role of divine providence in the world.

The *Summa Halensis* in the Scholastic Context: A Quick Theological Detour

The doctrine of providence asserts in some form or another that God is actively involved in the events that take place and unfold in the world beyond its creation

1889), no. 432; Pierre Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au XIII^{me} siècle*, 2 vols (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie de L'Université, 1908–11), vol. 2, pp. 175–91.

³ Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, vol. 1, p. 160; A.-D. Sertillanges, *S. Thomas D'Aquin*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1922), p. 11; Martin Grabmann, *Neu aufgefundene Werke des Siger von Brabant und Boetius von Dacien* (München: Verlag der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1924), p. 21.

⁴ For an introduction to and extensive assessment of early Franciscan theology, see Lydia Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); for questions concerning the authorship and dating of the *Summa Halensis*, see Victorin Doucet, 'The History of the Problem of the Authenticity of the Summa,' *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947), pp. 26–41, and Victorin Doucet, 'The History of the Problem of the Authenticity of the Summa (Continued),' *Franciscan Studies* 7 (1947), pp. 274–312.

and conservation. Thus, it is generally taken to be distinct from the doctrine of creation, which concerns the coming into being of the world itself – as well as at times from conservation as the continuation of the act of creation, or the upholding of the created order, for that matter. Although the general notion of providence has a well-known pre-Christian origin, Christianity developed a genuinely Christian form of providence: the Christian doctrine of the providence of God.⁵

Although the Christian doctrine of providence can be traced throughout the history of theology, at various points in history it finds diverse forms of expression of varying intensity and detail. In this section I shall show that providence was not a major subject of the theological discourse in the decades prior to the composition of the *Summa Halensis* (1236–45/56; books I–III were largely completed by 1245).⁶ The key scholars who worked in this earlier generation, before 1245, and who influenced the *Summa Halensis*, are mentioned by Victorin Doucet, then prefect of the Commission for the study of Alexander of Hales and chief editor of the Quaracchi edition of the *Summa Halensis*:

[The *Summa Halensis*] very often borrows from them without mentioning them by name; e.g. Prevostin, William of Auxerre, Philip the Chancellor, William of Auvergne, etc. (...) From more recent studies, two authors especially stand out as sources of the *Summa*, namely, John of Rupella and Alexander (...).⁷

The first scholar Doucet mentions, Praepositinus of Cremona (c.1135–1210), is a good example of the trend of his generation to avoid much discussion of providence.⁸ In part one of his *Summa Theologiae* (1206–10), he treats a number of related topics, such as foreknowledge and predestination, but the notion of providence does not ap-

5 For an overview of the historical origins and the general development of the Christian doctrine of providence, see, for example, David Fergusson, *The Providence of God: A Polyphonic Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

6 Book IV is a later addition compiled after the death of Alexander of Hales and John of La Rochelle in 1245. Books I–III also include parts, such as the membrum *De Missione Visibili* (SH I, P2, In2, Tr3, S2, Q2, Ti3, M2 [nn. 514–18], pp. 734–51) or the tractates *De Corpore Humano* (SH II, In4, Tr2 [nn. 427–68], pp. 501–630) and *De Coniuncto Humano* (SH II, In4, Tr3 [nn. 469–523], pp. 631–784), which were added later. See Doucet, ‘The History of the Problem (Continued),’ pp. 310–11.

7 Doucet, ‘The History of the Problem (Continued),’ p. 305.

8 For a study of providence in the Middle Ages, see Mikko Posti, *Medieval Theories of Divine Providence 1250–1350* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); for brief discussions of providence in the 12th century and early Disputed Questions and *Sentences*, see Marcia L. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 268–90, and Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*, 2 vols (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), vol. 2, pp. 151–68. Colish comments on treatises on providence in the first half of the 12th century: ‘In examining the approaches taken to these questions by Peter [Lombard], his contemporaries, and his immediate predecessors, one is struck by the one-sidedness of the address of many of them to the recourses provided by both the theological tradition and the school tradition on these matters.’ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1, p. 269.

pear in the index.⁹ Similarly, Philip the Chancellor (1160–1236) seems to have no specific account of providence in his *Summa de bono* (c.1228–36),¹⁰ and the same applies to Roland of Cremona's (d. 1259) *Summa*, which was probably written around 1234.¹¹

William of Auxerre (d. 1231), on the other hand, inserts a short discussion of providence in his *Summa aurea* (first version 1215–26; second version 1226–29) between the tractates on God's knowledge, including the topics of foreknowledge and predestination, and God's power, which is then followed by a discussion of God's will.¹² Thus, the interpolated question seems to mediate between divine knowledge and power. Drawing on John of Damascus and also Augustine, William considers the relationship of providence to good and evil and concludes that God has providence over both good and evil.¹³ He thereby states that divine providence is 'the care (*cura*) and diligence, with which God administers what is necessary for his subjects, where that be good things or, I may say, bad ones, namely, the lashes by which God whips humans to punish them.'¹⁴

As this evidence confirms, two of the most influential *Summae*¹⁵ at the time, the *Summa aurea* and the *Summa de bono*, included little or no specific treatment of providence. On the former, Parthenius Minges comments:

9 Georges Lacombe, *Prepositini Cancellarii Parisiensis (1206–1210) Opera Omnia*, vol. I: *La vie et les oeuvres de Prévostin* (Le Saulchoir, Kain: Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, 1927), pp. 168–78.

10 Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, 2 vols, ed. Nikolaus Wicki (Bern: Francke, 1985).

11 Roland of Cremona, *Summae Magistri Rolandi Cremonensis*, 4 vols, eds. Luigi Cortesi and Umberto Midali, Cortesiana, 9–12 (Bergamo: Corponove Editrice, 2015–17).

12 On the influence of William's short discussion of providence on the *Summa Halensis*, see also Richard Cross, 'The Reception of John of Damascus in the *Summa Halensis*,' in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), pp. 77–79; on the dependent relationship of the *Summa Halensis* on the *Summa aurea* in general, see Parthenius Minges, 'Die theologischen Summen Wilhelms von Auxerre und Alexanders von Hales,' *Theologische Quartalschrift* 97 (1915), pp. 508–29.

13 William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, 7 vols, ed. Jean Ribailier, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 16–20 (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS); Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1980–87), I, tr. 10, vol. 1, pp. 198–201.

14 William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea* I, tr. 10, vol. 1, p. 198. Unless otherwise stated, all translations from the Latin and German are mine.

15 As Lydia Schumacher points out, 'early *Summae* were based loosely on the *Sentences* [of Peter Lombard] and incorporated its main divisions but did not comment on the text per se,' Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology*, p. 14, n. 52. Another way to determine the rise of providence would be to look at *Sentences* commentaries. But since the *Summa Halensis* is a *Summa*, it seems preferable to compare it to other *Summae* (of sorts). For the transition between the two genres, see Marcia L. Colish, 'From the Sentence Collection to the Sentence Commentary and the *Summa*: Parisian Scholastic Theology, 1130–1215,' in Marcia L. Colish, *Studies in Scholasticism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 1–29.

William [of Auxerre] does not discuss many new topics in comparison to the Lombard; in Alexander [i.e. the *Summa Halensis*], however, we find many and long Questions, of which those offer nothing or relatively little, such as (...) on fate and the book of life, on God's disposition, providence, election, and love to creatures.¹⁶

While the doctrine of providence does not appear to have featured prominently, if at all, in early scholastic Summae in the 13th century, things start to change around the time of William of Auvergne's (d. 1249) *De universo* (c.1236–40).¹⁷ William's *De universo*, which is part of his voluminous *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*, includes a lengthy, though compared to the *Summa Halensis* less principled, treatment of providence. As a reason for his discussion of providence, William cites 'dangerous errors' about the doctrine, especially as it concerns humans – a subject that was also part of the condemnation of 1270.¹⁸ As a recipient of the new Arabic and Greek knowledge, William addresses two issues in particular, namely, God's providence over individuals and evils.¹⁹ In treating providence, William argues, among other things, that the providence of God is often mediated through creaturely causes,²⁰ and applies the Aristotelian categories of causation to the topic. William states, for example, that

whatever is the cause of an essential cause in the same kind of causality is also the cause of the effect (...). Since, therefore, the diligence and will of human beings to use such animals were caused by the creator efficiently or effectively and since he causes such a use of them in the same manner of causing, such a use is necessarily the work, gift, and benefit of the creator. But whatever is caused or given by him in that way is caused or given by him through his care and providence.²¹

Thus William of Auvergne argues, according to Corey Barnes, that providence is primarily an efficient cause.²² By contrast, the *Summa Halensis* will classify the causality implied by providence differently and hence takes a stance against the view promoted in *De universo*. This shift dovetails well with Mikko Posti's statement about medieval theories of providence in the 13th century, that 'there was no universal

¹⁶ Minges, 'Die theologischen Summen,' p. 512.

¹⁷ Corey L. Barnes, 'Providence and Causality in the *Summa Halensis*,' in *The Summa Halensis: Doctrines and Debates*, ed. Lydia Schumacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), p. 91.

¹⁸ William of Auvergne, *De universo* I–III, Proem., in *Guilielmi Alverni Opera Omnia*, vol. 1 (Paris: Apud Andream Pralard, 1674, repr. Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963), p. 754; English translation in *The Providence of God Regarding the Universe: Part Three of the First Principal Part of The Universe of Creatures*, trans. Roland J. Teske (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2007), p. 29. The condemnation of 1270 includes the following condemned proposition: 'That human acts are not ruled by the providence of God;' *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, eds. Denifle and Châtelain, no. 432.

¹⁹ William of Auvergne, *De universo* I–III, Proem. (repr. Minerva, p. 754; trans. Teske, pp. 29–30).

²⁰ William of Auvergne, *De universo* I–III, c. 1 (repr. Minerva, pp. 754–55; trans. Teske, pp. 30–33).

²¹ William of Auvergne, *De universo* I–III, c. 2 (repr. Minerva, p. 757; trans. Teske, p. 39).

²² Barnes, 'Providence and Causality,' pp. 91–94.

agreement about how providence should have been classified within the Aristotelian causal theory.’²³

This brief discussion of the *Summa Halensis*’ forebears might already suffice to illustrate that it is among the first scholastic Summae to include an extensive treatise on providence. In fact, an initial innovation concerning its doctrine of providence consists in its comprehensive and principled treatment of the topic by comparison to earlier or contemporary accounts. The relevant section, *De scientia Dei relative spectata*,²⁴ including, in question 1, the topic of divine foreknowledge (9.5 pages), in question 2, divine disposition (5.5 pages), in question 3, divine providence and fate (34 pages), and in question 4, divine predestination, reprobation, election, love, and the book of life (45 pages), is over 90 pages long in the Quaracchi edition, and the discussion of providence amounts to no less than 24 pages, with 8 main questions and a total of 14 sub-questions.

In this context, the *Summa Halensis* apparently feels the need to justify the doctrine of providence, and perhaps also its extensive treatment of the matter, in light of the fact that the creed does not include an article about God’s government. The authors point out that, although the government of God was contested, for instance, by the Epicureans, for which reason one would expect the creed to rebuke the denial, an implicit assertion of providence suffices in this instance. The reason is that compared to other heresies negating, for instance, creation, the objection to providence is less principled. Since God’s government of the world is, according to the *Summa*, closely linked with creation, the creed’s affirmation of creation extends also to the doctrine of providence. God the creator is, as John of Damascus has it, also God the governor.²⁵

What is more, the fact that the *Summa Halensis* holds the sin of accusing God, the source and author of providence, of evil to outweigh the sin of rejecting providence altogether, might be taken to suggest the assumption that what prompts the authors of the *Summa* to deal with providence to such an extent has to do with an attack not so much on providence as such, but on the nature of providence.²⁶

²³ Posti, *Medieval Theories*, p. 5.

²⁴ Alexander of Hales, *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica* (SH), 4 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924–48), Vol I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q1–4 (nn. 181–265), pp. 266–359.

²⁵ SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C8, Ar1 (n. 210), p. 303. John of Damascus states that ‘God is both Creator and Provider, and [H]is power of creating, sustaining, and providing is His good will;’ John of Damascus, ‘The Orthodox Faith,’ in *Saint John of Damascus: Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase, The Fathers of the Church, 37 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958), p. 260 (*De fide orthodoxa* II, c. 29).

²⁶ SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C8, Ar2 (n. 211), p. 304.

The Definition of Providence: A Synthesis of the Damascene and the Lombard

The standard scholastic definitions of providence and related terms at the time were provided by Peter Lombard (c.1095/1100–60) in the *Sentences* (final redaction 1155–57), on which various medieval theologians, including the authors of the *Summa Halensis*, commented and which they integrated differently into their theological systems.²⁷ Hubert Neufeld notes in this connection that the authors of the *Summa* do not often follow the scheme of the Lombard in the way other scholastic authors do, rarely taking ‘a passage from the *Sentences* explicitly as an occasion to treat a theological question.’²⁸ The tractate on providence and divine knowledge more generally appears to be an exception.²⁹ In fact, the approach of the *Summa* will become clear once we have examined the background provided by Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, to which we will now turn.

Peter Lombard and the Terminological Definitions in the *Sentences*

Peter Lombard sets the scene for subsequent medieval debates about providence, by introducing the basic terminology for this purpose in distinction 35 of the first book of the *Sentences*. The *Summa Halensis* will comment extensively on this understanding of providence.³⁰ In his treatise on God as the cause of creation in the first book, the Lombard discusses divine knowledge (dd. 35–41), divine power (dd. 42–44), and the divine will (dd. 45–48) in that order. The context of his discussion of providence is God’s knowledge or wisdom.³¹ Peter effectively presents divine providence and related terms as species of divine knowledge. He states:

God’s wisdom or knowledge (...) is called not only knowledge, but also foreknowledge or foresight, disposition, predestination and providence.

—And foreknowledge (*praescientia*) or foresight (*praevidentia*) concerns only future things (*de futuris tantum*), but all of them, namely good and evil ones; disposition (*dispositio*) concerns

²⁷ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1, p. 269. On Peter Lombard’s sources and earlier related discussions, see Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1, pp. 268–90.

²⁸ Neufeld, ‘Zum Problem des Verhältnisses,’ p. 80.

²⁹ See *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M1 (n. 163), pp. 244–47.

³⁰ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M1 (n. 163), IV and Respondeo IV, pp. 245–47; *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio IV, p. 287; *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q4, Ti1, M1, C2 (n. 221), I and Solutio I, pp. 316–17.

³¹ Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* (*Sent.*), 2 vols, ed. Ignatius C. Brady, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4–5 (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1971–81), I, dd. 35–41, pp. 254–93.

things that are to be done (*de faciendis*); predestination (*praedestinatio*) concerns all who are to be saved (*de hominibus salvandis*), as well as the good things by which these are freed in this life and will be crowned in the future. (...) Providence (*providentia*) is concerned with governance (*gubernandorum*), and it seems to be taken entirely in the same way as disposition; and yet sometimes providence is taken for foreknowledge.

—Wisdom (*sapientia*) and knowledge (*scientia*), however, concerns all things (*de omnibus*): namely good and evil, and present, past, and future, and not only temporal things, but also eternal ones.³²

According to Peter Lombard, consequently, there are two sets of related terms. On the one hand, ‘foreknowledge’, ‘foresight’, ‘disposition’, ‘predestination’, and ‘providence’ all concern the future, in one way or another. ‘Wisdom’ and ‘knowledge’, on the other hand, relate in the case of God to all temporal and not only future things, as well as to eternal ones.

Within the first set, foreknowledge or foresight must be distinguished from disposition, predestination, and providence. Foreknowledge or foresight concerns all future things, whether good or bad, while the remainder is concerned only with future things that are good in some respect. Disposition has to do with things to be done, or made, as we will see below; predestination concerns the salvation of human beings; and providence pertains to things to be governed (*gubernandorum*). The latter is closely linked to or taken to be identical with disposition. The Lombard also notes an alternative interpretation according to which providence is divine foreknowledge.³³ Despite this ambiguity regarding providence, the favored option suggests that providence implies some goodness and a reference to the future. In Lombard’s view, then, providence is a form of divine knowledge, one that implies a reference to the future and probably to the good. So construed, providence pertains to and is a form of God’s wisdom.

The Lombardian Structure of the Exposition of Providence in the *Summa Halensis*

The *Summa Halensis*’ treatise on providence is situated within its first book, and more specifically the tractate on divine knowledge (*SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5), which is preceded by a discussion of divine power (*SH* I, P1, In1, Tr4) and followed by one of the divine will (*SH* I, P1, In1, Tr6). The structure is accordingly power – knowledge – will. In comparison to the *Sentences*, therefore, the power of God comes to the fore;³⁴ for,

³² Peter Lombard, *The Sentences: Book 1: The Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007), p. 194; Peter Lombard, *Sent.* I, d. 35, cc. 1–6 (ed. Brady, 1:254–55).

³³ Peter Lombard, *Sent.* I, d. 35, cc. 1–6 (ed. Brady, 1:255).

³⁴ On this change in Franciscan theology, see also Alexander of Hales, *Magistri Alexandri de Hales Glossa in quattuor libros sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 4 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae,

as pointed out previously, in the *Sentences* the order was knowledge – power – will. In passing, it is worth noting that the *Summa* later on links or ‘appropriates’ power to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and will to the Holy Spirit, following a long-standing tradition championed in the 12th century by the Victorines.³⁵ Consequently, the *Summa*’s presentation of power, knowledge, and will in God corresponds to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Trinity.

Following the basic terminological distinctions of the *Sentences*, the *Summa Halensis*’ tractate on divine knowledge is divided into two sections, which respectively treat the knowledge of God in his own right, or ‘absolutely considered’ (*absolute spectata*), and knowledge of God in relation to other beings, or ‘relatively considered’ (*relative spectata*). In the section concerning divine knowledge relatively considered, the *Summa* deals first with divine foreknowledge,³⁶ before moving on to divine disposition,³⁷ divine providence (and fate),³⁸ and finally divine predestination (and reprobation, election, love, and the book of life).³⁹

The *Summa Halensis* follows then not only to a considerable extent the structure of the *Sentences*, but also adopts its approach in terms of divine knowledge and basic definitions.⁴⁰ In the preface to the section on divine knowledge relatively considered, we read as follows:

Having examined divine knowledge in an absolute sense, it behoves to enquire into it in relation [to other things] (*in comparatione*). For in relation to future things (*ad futura*) it is called foreknowledge (*praescientia*); in relation to things to be made (*ad facienda*), disposition (*dispositio*); in relation to things to be ruled (*ad regenda*), providence (*providentia*); in relation to ‘things’ to be saved (*ad salvanda*), predestination (*praedestinatio*).⁴¹

Accordingly, the *Summa Halensis* structures the material as follows:

1. *De scientia Dei relate ad futura*: divine foreknowledge.
2. *De scientia Dei relate ad facienda*: divine disposition.

1951–57), I, d. 35, 2, pp. 348–49, and Bonaventure, *Commentaries on the First Book of Sentences: Opera Omnia: On the One and Triune God* (Mansfield, MA: The Franciscan Archive, 2014), d. 35, doubt II, p. 614.

35 *SH* I, P2, In2, Tr2, S2, Q3 (nn. 450–60), pp. 645–57, on p. 645: ‘Consequently, it is asked about the appropriations (*de appropriatis*), which are power [which is appropriated] to the Father, wisdom [which is appropriated] to the Son, will [which is appropriated] to the Holy Spirit.’ See also *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr4, Q2, C3 (n. 138), pp. 213–15. The *Summa* makes extensive use of these Trinitarian appropriations. On the origins of the Trinitarian appropriations, see also Dominique Poirel, ‘Scholastic Reasons, Monastic Meditations and Victorine Conciliations: The Question of the Unity and Plurality in the Twelfth Century,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, eds. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 168–81.

36 *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q1 (nn. 181–87), pp. 266–75.

37 *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q2 (nn. 188–94), pp. 275–80.

38 *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3 (nn. 195–219), pp. 281–314.

39 *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q4 (nn. 220–65), pp. 315–59.

40 *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M1 (n. 163), IV and Ad objecta IV, pp. 245–47.

41 *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q1, pr., p. 266.

3. *De scientia Dei relate ad regenda*: divine providence and fate.⁴²
4. *De scientia Dei relate ad salvanda*: divine predestination, reprobation, election, love, and the book of life.⁴³

Two authorities are cited in support of Lombard's distinctions.⁴⁴ Hugh of St Victor is held to define (the subject matter of) divine knowledge, foreknowledge, disposition, predestination, and providence as follows:

Knowledge [is] of existing things (*scientia existentium*),⁴⁵ foreknowledge of future things (*praescientia futurorum*), disposition of things to be made (*dispositio faciendorum*), predestination of 'things' to be saved (*praedestinatio salvandorum*), providence of subjected things (*providentia subiectorum*).⁴⁶

According to the Quaracchi editors, a second implicit source is Peter of Poitiers, who distinguishes the term 'knowledge', as it refers to the divine essence, from the temporal aspect of the preposition 'fore-'knowledge, as it refers to a temporal relation in creatures.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the *Summa* explains that if we abstract from the temporal aspect, then we refer to divine knowledge by the name 'knowledge' or 'wisdom' – the difference being that the former concerns the effect, known through the cause, whereas the latter concerns the cause itself. But if the temporal dimension of creatures is considered, then it is referred to as 'foreknowledge', 'disposition', 'predestination', and 'providence'. Under the name 'foreknowledge', divine knowledge extends to both good and evil, but under the names 'disposition', 'predestination', and 'providence', it only relates to good things, although in different respects: 'disposition' signifies the good of nature in coming-to-be, or as being made (*in fieri*), whereas 'providence' signifies the good of nature in being, or as having been

⁴² As Josef Georgen has shown, the discussion of fate in the *Summa Halensis* has a great similarity with Alexander of Hales' *De fato*, which in this instance presumably served as the main source for the *Summa*. See Josef Georgen, 'Untersuchungen und Erläuterungen zu den Quästionen de fato, de divinatione, de sortibus des Magister Alexander,' *Franziskanische Studien* 19 (1932), pp. 13–39.

⁴³ The questions concerning the book of life in the *Summa Halensis* have, as the editors of the Quaracchi edition have pointed out (*SH* I, p. 346, n. 1), a great similarity with John of La Rochelle's *De libro vitae* (Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale 182, fols 4rb-5ra).

⁴⁴ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M1 (n. 163), Ad objecta IV, pp. 246–47.

⁴⁵ Later on, in *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M3 (n. 168), Ad objecta 1, p. 251, the *Summa* clarifies that this statement does not exclude God's knowledge of non-existing things. Things might not exist in their nature and yet be known by God in their cause.

⁴⁶ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M1 (n. 163), Ad objecta IV, p. 247; Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis christianae fidei* I, pt. 2, c. 9 (PL 176:210B); cf. Pseudo-Hugo, *Summa sententiarum septem tractatibus distincta*, tr. 1, c. 12 (PL 176:61C).

⁴⁷ Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiarum libri quinque* I, c. 14 (PL 211:845 A): 'For by the simple [i.e. mere] name is signified the divine essence, by the preposition a temporal relation which is in creatures. For the divine essence in respect of creatures is called foreknowledge.'

made (*in facto esse*); ‘predestination’, however, signifies the good of grace.⁴⁸ The former statement is essentially Lombard’s position,⁴⁹ further specified in the latter part by the distinction between *in fieri* and *in facto esse*, in order to distinguish providence from disposition. In this the *Summa Halensis* goes beyond the Lombard.

Adopting John of Damascus’ Definition of Providence

In addition to Peter Lombard, the *Summa Halensis* draws here, as in other cases,⁵⁰ on the *De fide orthodoxa* of John of Damascus (d. c.750), who is known for passing down the Greek theological tradition, and in this instance draws in turn on the account of providence in Nemesius’ *De natura hominis*.⁵¹ John’s work had been translated into Latin by Burgundio of Pisa (c.1110 – 93) in the 12th century and was gaining in authority during this period, not least due to the similarities with the Lombard in terms of theological topics covered.⁵²

In the *De fide orthodoxa*, John defines providence as divine care over created things, an act following from and pertaining to the will of God. He writes: ‘Providence, then, is the solicitude (ἐπιμέλεια) which God has for existing things.’⁵³ And he goes on to explain: ‘Providence is that will of God by which all existing things receive suitable guidance through to their end.’ This statement implies that providence pertains to God’s will. In fact, on John’s view, ‘providence is God’s will.’⁵⁴

The Damascene’s definition of providence was subsequently invoked by the authors of the *Summa Halensis*, who interpret providence, and hence divine knowledge concerning things to be governed, that is, the *gubernandorum* of Peter Lombard, as a form of divine care.⁵⁵ Over and again we read, in one form or another, that ‘provi-

48 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S1, Q1, M1 (n. 163), Ad objecta IV, pp. 246–47.

49 See Peter Lombard, *Sent.* I, d. 35, c. 7 (ed. Brady, 1:255–57).

50 For a discussion of various other topics, see Cross, ‘The Reception of John of Damascus,’ pp. 71–90, and Johannes Zachhuber, ‘John of Damascus in the *Summa Halensis*,’ in *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context*, ed. Lydia Schumacher (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), pp. 91–116.

51 On the significance of John of Damascus for scholasticism, see Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*, vol. 1, pp. 108–13; for his influence on the *Summa Halensis*, see Parthenius Minges, ‘Zum Gebrauch der Schrift *De fide orthodoxa* des Johannes Damaszenus in der Scholastik,’ *Theologische Quartalschrift* 96 (1914), pp. 225–47.

52 On the *Summa*’s use of this translation, see Minges, ‘Zum Gebrauch der Schrift *De fide orthodoxa*,’ pp. 233–38.

53 John of Damascus, ‘The Orthodox Faith,’ trans. Chase, p. 260 (*De fide orthodoxa* II, c. 29); for the Greek text, see John of Damascus, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskus*, vol. 2, *Expositio fidei*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1973), p. 100; cf. Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis*, c. 43 (PG 40:791B).

54 John of Damascus, ‘The Orthodox Faith,’ trans. Chase, p. 260 (*De fide orthodoxa* II, c. 29); cf. Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis*, c. 43 (PG 40:791B).

55 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), pp. 285–88; SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar1 (n. 197), pp. 288–89; SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C4, Ar4 (n. 203), pp. 295–96. On the basic definition I dis-

dence is care (*cura*).⁵⁶ In defining providence as care, the authors of the *Summa* effectively adopt John of Damascus' definition, as rendered into the Latin by the Burgundio translation, as their own: 'Providence is the care which God has for existing things (*providentia est quae ex Deo ad existentia fit cura*).'⁵⁷

In explicating the statement *providentia est gubernandorum* as *providentia est cura*, the *Summa Halensis* thus combines two past authorities, namely Peter Lombard and John of Damascus.

Adapting the Adopted Positions

The *Summa Halensis* then starts explicating and adapting the adopted positions. Based on quotations from Boethius, John of Damascus, the Lombard, and Scripture, the *Summa Halensis* discusses five prominent options as to what divine providence is or that to which it pertains: these positions suggest that providence might be identical with disposition or fate, and it might pertain to God's wisdom, will, or power. The same five positions will be discussed by Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1252–56), where he was among the first to introduce the topic of providence in distinction 39.⁵⁸ What is more, the arguments for each position, quoting four out of five times the same authorities, are initially to be found in the *Summa Halensis*. Like Aquinas, the *Summa* argues that providence is neither identical with disposition nor with fate. Nor does it pertain to power rather than to wisdom or will. Providence is a form of divine knowledge in its own right, conjoined with the will, and distinct from both fate and disposition.⁵⁹

Providence is not (really) divine disposition. The *Summa Halensis* draws a couple of distinctions to differentiate the closely related terms 'wisdom', 'disposition', 'providence', and 'government'. According to the *Summa*, disposition is divine foreknowledge of things to be made with the scope of them being made (*praescientia facien-*

agree with Barnes, 'Providence and Causality,' p. 98, who suggests that 'exemplar reason [as] considered in the divine art (*exemplaris ratio consideratur in arte divina*)' (SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 [n. 196], p. 288) is the preferred definition of the *Summa*. The definition that reappears in various forms in the subsequent articles, however, is the one of John of Damascus. It seems therefore reasonable to see this definition as a further explication of the fundamental identification of providence with divine care.

56 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio I-II, p. 287.

57 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), I, p. 285; similarly, SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3 (n. 197), Contra b, p. 287: 'Providence is care for existing things (*providentia est ad existentia cura*).' The Burgundio translation reads: 'Providentia igitur est quae ex Deo ad existentia fit cura;' John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute; Louvain: Nauwelaerts; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1955), p. 155.

58 Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum Super Libros Sententiarum (In Sent.)* ed. R.P. Mandonnet (Paris: Sump-tibus P. Lethielleux, 1929), I, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, vol. 1, pp. 927–29.

59 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), pp. 285–88.

dorum ut fiant). The *Summa* thus further specifies Peter Lombard's definition of disposition as foreknowledge of things to be made (*praescientia faciendorum*), by distinguishing wisdom from disposition along the following lines.⁶⁰ First, knowledge of things to be made is twofold: someone might have knowledge that something is worthy of being made (*dignum est fieri*), or knowledge with the scope of it being made (*ut fiat*). Accordingly, wisdom is knowledge of things to be made insofar as they are worthy of being made; disposition is knowledge of things to be made with the scope of making them. Hence, whereas wisdom is a judgement that something would be good to be made, the notion of disposition adds the intention of making it.⁶¹

Second, although both disposition and providence concern the actual being of things, they are not identical in their meaning. For disposition concerns the being of a thing with the scope of making it (*esse rei ut fiat*), or insofar as it is being made, whereas providence concerns the being of a thing after it is made (*esse rei postquam factum est*), or insofar as it has been made, furthering their conservation or perfection.⁶² In other words, the coming of a thing into being (*fieri ad esse*), or bringing it into existence, is subject to divine disposition, but the becoming of a thing in being (*fieri in esse*), the ruling of a thing in existence, is subject to government or providence, depending on whether the ruling of a thing in being concerns the continuation of being (*gubernatio*) or the ordination of being (*providentia*).⁶³ In this specific sense, then, the *Summa Halensis* defines providence as follows: 'Providence is disposition, at least insofar as it is said with respect to *fieri in esse*,' that is, ruling a thing in being.⁶⁴

Providence is not fate. Following Boethius, the *Summa* distinguishes between fate and providence. Fate differs from providence in that the former refers to a reality in created things, whereas the latter refers to the *ratio exemplaris* in God. Providence is the exemplar reason in the divine art, but fate is the created effect of God's action. Just like a disposition in the one disposing is not identical to the disposition of the thing disposed, so, too, providence as the exemplar (*exemplar*) is not identical

60 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q2, C2 (n. 189), pp. 276–77. The *Summa* defends the view that there is a disposition in God for things to be made (*dispositio rerum faciendarum*), although not in the same sense human beings have dispositions. In fact, according to the *Summa*, disposition and council (*concilium*) are one in God, but conceptually different. See SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q2, C1 (n. 188), pp. 275–76.

61 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q2, C2 (n. 189), Ad obiecta 1, p. 277.

62 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q2, C2 (n. 189), Ad obiecta 2, p. 277.

63 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q2, C2 (n. 189), Ad obiecta b, p. 277.

64 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), IV, p. 286. In commenting on the *Sentences* and its suggestion that providence is commonly taken to be identical with disposition, the Summists distinguish between two senses of the term 'disposition'. In the strict sense disposition seems to imply some form of coming-to-be (*fieri*), whereas providence is about things in being (*factum esse*). Yet this coming-to-be may refer either to first being or second being which is subject to perfection. Now insofar as 'disposition' has two senses, 'providence' could be taken either in the first sense, complete with regard to first being, or in the second sense, as coming-to-be with regard to second being (*in fieri*). See SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio IV, p. 287.

to fate as the instantiation of the exemplar (*exemplatum*). ‘Fate’, however, can denote either the pagan law of the stars or the Boethian inherent disposition in the things moved by divine providence. While the former is rejected as an erroneous belief, the *Summa* defends and expands on the latter view in a separate treatise on fate, which is based on Alexander of Hales’ *De fato*,⁶⁵ added right after the discussion of providence.⁶⁶

Having explained what providence is not, the *Summa* then turns to the controversial question as to which divine attribute providence pertains. As Marcia Colish observes: ‘There is not a clear consensus, across the period, as to which divine attribute this constellation of ideas should be seen as illustrating.’⁶⁷

Providence does not pertain to God’s power, but to his wisdom and will. The *Summa Halensis* maintains that divine providence contains two elements. The Summists argue that *providere* derives from *videre*. To see, however, implies cognition (*videntia sive cognitio*). Cognition is the first and fundamental dimension of providence. But the notion of providence adds a causal aspect to divine knowledge insofar as the *videre* in question is a *pro-videre*. The *Summa* takes the preposition ‘*pro*’ to imply a form of causality (*causalitas*), namely, an ordering or governing one. So the second essential dimension of providence is causality. While the former and fundamental epistemic dimension of providence concerns, according to the *Summa*, God’s intellect, the latter superadded causal dimension pertains to God’s will.⁶⁸ The Summists state:

Providence provides [literally, foresees] (*providet*) and orders or governs (*ordinat sive gubernat*): this seeing (*videre*) pertains to wisdom, but this order and government (*ordo et gubernatio*) is from the highest goodness and will.⁶⁹

On the *Summa*’s account, then, providence is first and foremost knowledge or cognition, as the Lombard argues, and as such, it pertains to, or is reducible to, God’s wisdom; and secondarily, it is causality, and as such pertains to, or is reducible to, God’s will, or his goodness, as the Damascene suggested.⁷⁰ By contrast, the *Summa* rejects the view attributing providence to God’s power, at least insofar as it is distinguished from God’s wisdom and will. On this account, ‘power’ at best denotes God’s ability or capacity to enact his wisdom and will.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Georgen, ‘Untersuchungen und Erläuterungen,’ pp. 13–39.

⁶⁶ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio V, pp. 287–88. The *Summa*’s discussion of fate can be found in *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti2 (nn. 212–19), pp. 304–14.

⁶⁷ Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 2, p. 269.

⁶⁸ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio I–II, pp. 286–87.

⁶⁹ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio I–II, p. 287.

⁷⁰ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio I–II, p. 287.

⁷¹ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio III, p. 287.

In summary, the *Summa Halensis* concludes that providence pertains fundamentally to God's wisdom, but in terms of its realization it depends on God's will.⁷² In this manner, the *Summa* seeks to explain and account for John of Damascus' description of providence as care and God's good will.⁷³ Although it may therefore seem successfully to reconcile two seemingly conflicting authorities, namely, the Lombard and Damascene, there is an interesting challenge which arises from this innovative synthesis of Peter Lombard and John of Damascus which calls for further scrutiny.

A Challenge and its Solution

The tension concerns the question of how we are to reconcile the two dimensions of providence which the *Summa Halensis* posits, to wit, the cognitive and the causative, which pertain to God's wisdom and will, respectively, in God.

The *Summa* eases this tension by invoking a remarkable distinction which soon afterwards will become crucial for the further history of the doctrine of providence, which is found in one of the *Summa's* sources. In the *De divinis nominibus*, John of La Rochelle (c.1190/1200 – 45) introduces providence as 'the precognition of that which is to be governed' (*praecognitio eius quod gubernandum est*), which he distinguishes from 'the execution of that which has been provided' (*executio eius quod provisum est*):

Providence is defined in two ways. In one way it refers to the precognition of that which is to be governed and how, and in another way it refers to the execution of that which has been provided.⁷⁴

The context of John's argument is the question of how to reconcile the claims of the Lombard and the Damascene that providence is divine knowledge and the divine will, respectively. The distinction between the two modes of providence supports the conclusion that providence pertains to both, namely, as providence in the first mode to God's knowledge and as providence in the second mode to God's will. The will in a way executes the things which are providentially ordered, and in the way they are ordered, in God's knowledge.⁷⁵

The *Summa Halensis* introduces a similar but slightly modified distinction when differentiating between providence as 'the divine reason by which all (things) are

⁷² In this regard, the reader might find some similarities with the *Summa's* account of free will, as outlined by Lydia Schumacher in this volume, where free will is comprised not only of the considering reason, but more importantly of the choosing will, without one being reducible to the other.

⁷³ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio I–II, p. 287.

⁷⁴ John of La Rochelle, *De divinis nominibus* (Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 162, fol. 138ra).

⁷⁵ John of La Rochelle, *De divinis nominibus* (Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 162, fol. 138ra).

governed' (*divina ratio qua cuncta gubernantur*) and government as 'the execution of providence' (*executio providentiae*):

The providence (*providentia*) of God refers, properly speaking, to the divine reason (*divina ratio*) by which all [things] are governed (*gubernantur*): and in this way the providence of God exists only by itself (*se ipsa solum*); in another way [providence refers to] the execution of providence (*executio providentiae*), namely, the government (*gubernatio*) itself: and this is for the most part through a creature.⁷⁶

The immediate context of the distinction here is the question of whether God's providence is mediated through creatures (*per creaturam*). The *Summa* argues that providence in the strict sense is immediate to God, whereas the execution of providence is often mediated through creatures – where 'through' (*per*) is to be understood as by the power and authority of God (*subauctoritatem*) and not of their own accord (*auctoritatem*).⁷⁷ Providence thereby moves, in the form of the execution which is conceptually distinguished from the divine reason in God, into the creation, partially crossing the creator/creature divide, while remaining, as this divine reason, an attribute of God.

Two things are noteworthy in this connection. First, the *Summa* identifies providence in the strict sense as the *divina ratio*. Second, the *Summa* terms the execution of providence *gubernatio*. Thus the *Summa Halensis* clearly distinguishes between providence as the divine reason in God and government as the execution of providence, which happens for the most part through the mediation of creaturely causes.

Moreover, while providence as the *divina ratio* is a reality in God's wisdom or knowledge, the latter execution through secondary causes elaborates further on the causal aspect resulting from God's will. Concerning the mode of providence, the *Summa Halensis* teaches that providence is not wholly eternal but has in a certain way a temporal aspect. As noted already, on the *Summa's* account, providence implies both cognition and causation. Now insofar as providence is considered under the cognitive dimension, it is said to be eternal. It is also eternal insofar as the causative aspect is concerned in habit (*cura in habitu*), or to the extent to which the providential care refers to God's essence being able to govern creatures, but providence is temporal insofar as this causality is enacted (*cura in actu*).⁷⁸ Thus the *Summa* states that 'the view of providence is from eternity (*ab aeterno*) (...); but [its] causality, insofar as it is called in act (*in actu*), is in time (*ex tempore*).'⁷⁹ From this statement it can be inferred that providence as the *divina ratio* is eternal, whereas government as the execution of providence, at least if executed through secondary causes (although not insofar as the execution of providence is 'habitually' in God's will), is temporal.

⁷⁶ SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C5, Ar2 (n. 205), Respondeo, p. 297.

⁷⁷ SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C5, Ar2 (n. 205), Respondeo, p. 297.

⁷⁸ SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar1 (n. 197), Respondeo, pp. 288–89.

⁷⁹ SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar1 (n. 197), Respondeo 1, pp. 289.

As is well known, the distinction between providence and government – arguably prefigured in the *Summa Halensis* – is among the main building blocks of Thomas Aquinas' theory of providence and has since become the hallmark of the subsequent Thomist tradition. In his *Summa Theologiae* (c.1266–73), Aquinas introduces providence as 'the reason of the order of things provided for to an end' (*ratio ordinis rerum provisarum in finem*) and government as 'the execution of this order' (*executio huius ordinis*):

Two [things] pertain to providence, namely, the reason of the order of things provided for to an end (*ratio ordinis rerum provisarum in finem*); and the execution of this order (*executio huius ordinis*), which is called government (*gubernatio*).⁸⁰

As in the *Summa Halensis*, the context is the question of the immediacy of God's providence. Similar to the *Summa Halensis*, Aquinas teaches that providence is immediate to God, whereas his government is ordinarily mediated through secondary causes executing his providential ordering;⁸¹ that providence is eternal, whereas government is temporal;⁸² and finally that both providence and government are universal, but fate as the providential order existing in the governing secondary causes, implying a mediated execution, is not.⁸³ Moreover, like the *Summa Halensis*, Aquinas calls providence the divine *ratio* and terms its execution *gubernatio*.

While the initial context of John of La Rochelle's discussion seems inextricably linked to the Franciscan synthesis of John of Damascus and Peter Lombard, and the *Summa Halensis'* appropriation of the modified distinction in a new context is still encapsulated in the Lombardian structure, Thomas Aquinas will systematically develop, in his mature writing, the explanatory power of the distinction for the explication of the doctrine of providence.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, the similarity between the Do-

⁸⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ST), in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opera Omnia: iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1882–), I, q. 22, a. 3, vol. 4, p. 267.

⁸¹ Thomas Aquinas, ST I, q. 22, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 4:267–68).

⁸² Thomas Aquinas, ST I, q. 22, a. 1 ad 2 (Leonine ed., 4:264).

⁸³ Thomas Aquinas, ST I, q. 116, a. 4 (Leonine ed., 5:555–56); ST I, q. 22, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 4:264–66); SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti2, C3, Ar1 (n. 215), pp. 309–11.

⁸⁴ The distinction appears in one way or another in most, if not all, of the relevant writings of Aquinas, until it finds its full systematic expression in the prima pars of the *Summa Theologiae*, where Aquinas effectively reorganizes the doctrinal materials by dividing his discussion of providence in two parts, one discussing it as a divine attribute (q. 22), the other as an effect in creation (qq. 103–119). See Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 ad 1 and ad 5 (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 928–29); Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae De Veritate*, in *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia: iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1882–), q. 5, a. 1, vol. 22/1:2, pp. 137–41; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, in *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia: iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1882–), III, q. 94, vol. 14, pp. 287–90; Thomas Aquinas, *De Substantiis Separatis*, in *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia: iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1882–),

minican Thomas Aquinas and the Franciscans John of La Rochelle and Alexander of Hales is striking in this instance, down to the very wording of the distinction of providence and government: *divina ratio qua cuncta gubernantur* and *executio providentiae* in the *Summa Halensis*, and *ratio gubernationis rerum (...)* in *mente divina* and *executio providentiae* in Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary on the Sentences*.⁸⁵ Although this comment is not meant to imply a textual dependence of Aquinas on the *Summa Halensis*,⁸⁶ the previously discussed evidence of John of La Rochelle and, more importantly, the *Summa Halensis* suggests that the distinction was being employed at the University of Paris, by his Franciscan contemporaries at a time Aquinas wrote his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1252–56). In fact, as already mentioned, Aquinas was among the first to introduce providence as a separate question in his *Sentences Commentary*, where we find the distinction between *providentia* and *gubernatio* for the first time in his writing.⁸⁷

Now one might say that this distinction comes in fact from Boethius (c.480–524), another important source of the *Summa Halensis*, and in one sense that is true, but I will show that in another respect the evidence best supports it being an innovation of the *Summa*. As seen previously, the *Summa* holds fate in the Boethian sense to be distinct from providence. In fact, if providence is the divine reason in God which disposes all things, as the *Summa* notes, then this would seem to speak against the view that God provides for creatures through creatures.⁸⁸ By contrast, the *Summa* takes the Boethian notion of fate to be a correlate to their notion of government. Maintaining

c. 15, vol. 40 (D-E), pp. 67–68; Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium Theologiae*, in *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia: iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P. M. edita* (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1882–), I, c. 131, vol. 42, p. 131; Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 22, a. 3 (Leonine ed., 4:267–68); *ST I*, q. 103, a. 6 (Leonine ed., 5:458–59).

⁸⁵ *SH I*, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C5, Ar2 (n. 205), Respondeo, p. 297; Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 ad 1 (ed. Mandonnet, p. 928): 'The execution of providence (*executio providentiae*) is called government (*gubernatio*).' Aquinas then goes on to explain: 'The reason of the government of things (*ratio gubernationis rerum*) in the divine mind (*in mente divina*) is one thing, where it is called providence (*providentia*), and another in secondary causes, through whose service the divine government is completed (*officio gubernatio divina expletur*);' Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 ad 5 (ed. Mandonnet, p. 929). In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas states that 'the reason of the order of things to an end (*ratio ordinis rerum in finem*) preexists in the divine mind (*in mente divina praeexistat*);' Thomas Aquinas, *ST I*, q. 22, a. 1 (Leonine ed., 4:263). Similarly, the *Summa Halensis* calls providence 'the exemplar reason (*exemplaris ratio*) [as] considered in the divine art (*in arte divina*),' and an 'order (*ordo*) (...)' in the divine mind (*in mente divina*);' *SH I*, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), Solutio V, p. 288.

⁸⁶ On the question of a potential dependence of Thomas Aquinas on the *Summa Halensis*, see Parthenius Minges, 'Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zwischen der Summe Alexanders von Hales und dem heiligen Thomas von Aquin,' *Franziskanische Studien* 3 (1916), pp. 58–76, where Minges suggests that 'between the *Summa* of Alexander and several writings of St Thomas there is some kind of relationship of dependence, be it a direct or indirect one, namely, in such a way that the *Summa* has a temporal priority;' Minges, 'Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zwischen der *Summa*,' p. 76.

⁸⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1 ad 1 and ad 5 (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 928–29).

⁸⁸ *SH I*, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C5, Ar2 (n. 205), Contra 1, p. 297.

the Boethian distinction between the divine reason and creaturely dispositions, the *Summa* interprets Boethius as saying that if providence is taken as the divine reason, then no creature administers in it, but if it is taken as the disposition inherent in creatures, then it is administered by creatures, which the *Summa* terms an ‘execution’.⁸⁹

While Boethius’ famous distinction of providence and fate is indeed an important and explicit source of the *Summa*’s distinction between providence and government, they are arguably not identical. In the *De consolazione philosophiae* (c.524) we read:

Providence is the divine reason (*divina ratio*) itself, established in the highest ruler of all things, the reason which disposes all things that exist; but fate is a disposition inherent in movable things, through which providence binds all things together, each in its own proper ordering. (...) Now although these are different, yet the one depends on the other; for the order of fate proceeds from the simplicity of providence.⁹⁰

Although we clearly see here the idea of providence as divine reason in God and hence the first element of the distinction, the ‘execution’ terminology is absent in Boethius. On his account, providence is to be distinguished from fate as inherent dispositions in creatures, which are in a sense dependent on the former, but if the statement above about the universality of government in contrast to fate is correct, then fate cannot be the same as government. In the *Summa Halensis* and Aquinas, it seems, the term ‘government’ refers to the universal execution of providence, whereas fate is the particular disposition inherent in secondary causes and hence restricted to God’s government executed through secondary causes.⁹¹ In other words, fate in the Boethian sense appears to become a part of the general notion of government, namely, the one mediated through secondary causes, and hence a specific form of the execution of providence. Moreover, while this new concept of government developed into a crucial element for explaining divine providence, theologians were increasingly reluctant to speak of fate, not least because of its pagan connotations. Thus in contrast to the former, in later providence studies the latter notion of fate was eventually dropped.

Note also that the context of the distinction of providence and fate in Boethius is the simplicity and immutability of God’s providence, in comparison to the complexity and mutability of creaturely causes and fate. The circle analogy illustrates this.

⁸⁹ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C5, Ar2 (n. 205), Ad objecta 1, p. 297.

⁹⁰ Boethius, *Theological Tractates; The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand, and S.J. Tester, LCL 74 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), IV, 6, p. 359; Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae; Opuscula Theologiae*, ed. Claudio Moreschini, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana (Munich; Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2005), IV, 6, p. 122.

⁹¹ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti2, C3, Ar1 (n. 215), pp. 309–11; Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 116, a. 4 (Leonine ed., 5:555–56); *ST* I, 22, a. 2 (Leonine ed., 4:264–66).

According to Boethius, fate and providence may be compared to a circle and its center.⁹² In a way, fate is like the moving part of a compass whereas providence is likened to the stable needle point at the centre of the circle. On the *Summa Halensis*' reading, the circle analogy can then be taken to mean that, similar to the fact that the centre of the circle remains, in a sense, stable while the pencil lead rotates, providence is immobile while fate is mobile. Moreover, like the complex process of reasoning is derived from the simple intellect, fate comes from and is the result of providence. Providence is the simple disposition of things to be governed in God but fate the complex and derivative dispositions in the things governed.⁹³ Boethius accordingly concludes:

So God by providence disposes what is to be done (*facienda*) in a single and unchanging way, but by fate accomplishes those same things he has disposed in a manifold and temporal way.⁹⁴

But notably Boethius neither speaks of an execution of providence in this connection, nor does John of La Rochelle, who does so, term this execution 'government'; both elements we find innovatively combined in the *Summa Halensis*, newly applied to the question of divine and creaturely causation in the execution of providence.

In light of this, then, it seems reasonable to consider the treatise on providence in the *Summa Halensis* an innovative reworking of past masters. We have here a synthesis of Damascene's and Lombard's definition of providence, further elaborated by an application of the Boethian notion of *ratio* combined with John of La Rochelle's idea of an *executio*, which the *Summa* termed *gubernatio* and employed in a new and causal context. With this much information, we can now proceed to look more closely into the causality of providence.

The Causality of Providence

As Hester Goodenough Gelber has pointed out, 'The recovery of Aristotle's natural philosophy in the Latin West provided a new vocabulary for analysing providence.'⁹⁵ Yet there was, as previously mentioned, no consensus at the time on how to classify

⁹² Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae* IV, 6 (ed. Moreschini, p. 124; trans. Stewart, Rand, and Tester, p. 363): 'Therefore as reasoning is to understanding, as that which becomes is to that which is, as time is to eternity, as the circle is to its centre, so is the moving course of fate to the un-moving simplicity of providence.' See also, *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar1 (n. 197), arg. 3, p. 288. The Summists use a similar analogy to explain the relation of divine ideas to God. See Schumacher, *Early Franciscan Theology*, p. 129.

⁹³ *SH* I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar1 (n. 197), Respondeo 3, p. 289.

⁹⁴ Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae* IV, 6 (ed. Moreschini, p. 123; trans. Stewart, Rand, and Tester, pp. 359–61).

⁹⁵ Hester Goodenough Gelber, 'Providence,' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. Robert Pasnau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 762.

providence in the fourfold Aristotelian account of causation. In the *Summa Halensis* the question of the causality of providence appears as a corollary of the question of what providence is, or to which divine attribute it can be reduced. Power is thereby associated with efficient causation, wisdom with (exemplar, that is, extrinsic) formal causation, and will or goodness with final causation.⁹⁶ Since on their account providence implies not only cognition but also causation, the *Summa Halensis* concedes that providence is a cause, that is, an efficient cause, but suggests it is first and foremost an exemplar formal cause: in his knowledge God contains the forms of all things to be made as an exemplar, that is, an extrinsic formal cause.⁹⁷

Here we encounter a slight ambiguity in the *Summa*'s reasoning, for if providence pertains primarily to God's wisdom and secondarily to his will or goodness, then one would expect the *Summa* to characterize the causality of providence primarily as (exemplar) formal causation and secondarily as final causation. Instead, the *Summa* replies that providence is not the final cause of things: God orders things but these things do not terminate in him as an end.⁹⁸ In other words, providence is the end moving the efficient cause, insofar as God externally orders creatures, but not in the sense that these creatures internally seek him as an end of their own account. Hence, with respect to the cognitive dimension, the causality of providence is classified as formal causality, and with respect to the causal dimension, it is classified as efficient causation. Material causation, on the other hand, is ruled out as irrelevant because God is not a material being.⁹⁹

This view of providence as the *exemplaris ratio*, as formal and, to a lesser degree, efficient causality linked to the divine wisdom and will, is worth highlighting for at least two reasons. First, if William of Auvergne's efficient causal account of providence turns out to be problematic, as Barnes argues, then the *Summa Halensis*' account relocating providence's causation into the category of formal causation is a noteworthy development.¹⁰⁰ Second, Mandonnet credits Bonaventure for having exposed the errors of Siger of Brabant and other Latin Averroists in their interrelatedness, one of which Bonaventure names as the denial of providence.¹⁰¹ Bonaventure suggests in this connection that a neglect of exemplar causation (*exemplaria rerum*) in God, namely, that the reasons of things (*rationes rerum*) are not in him, is at the

96 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C2 (n. 196), I, p. 285.

97 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar3 (n. 198), pp. 289–91.

98 Albert the Great will at least partly remedy this ambiguity in his *Summa Theologiae*, by further distinguishing the good of the will and the good of all other goods, thus suggesting that providence falls into three categories, namely, formal, efficient, and final causation. See Albert the Great, *Summa Theologiae*, in *Alberti Magni Opera Omnia*, 38 vols, ed. Étienne César Auguste Borgnet (Paris: Apud Ludovicum Vivès, 1890–99), I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 4, a. 1, Solutio, vol. 31, p. 687.

99 SH I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q3, Ti1, C3, Ar3 (n. 198), Solutio I–II, pp. 290–91.

100 Barnes, 'Providence and Causality,' esp. pp. 91–95. On the contested relation of God and creatures in William's account of efficient causation, see Michael Miller, 'William of Auvergne on Primary and Secondary Qualities,' *The Modern Schoolman* 75 (1998), pp. 265–77.

101 Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant*, vol. 1, p. 156, n. 2.

root of these errors.¹⁰² In this regard the *Summa* might even be considered to anticipate a later development found in Bonaventure, one of Alexander of Hales' students.

Conclusion

The *Summa Halensis* is among the first scholastic Summae in the 13th century to include an extensive, detailed, and principled treatment of the doctrine of divine providence. In drawing on past authorities, such as Boethius, John of Damascus, and Peter Lombard, the authors of the *Summa Halensis* developed their own and distinct account of providence. Noteworthy examples of innovations found in their exposition of providence include not only the fact of its extensive treatment, but also the distinction between providence as the divine reason and government as the execution of providence – a distinction that will later become the hallmark of Thomistic approaches to providence – and the exposition of providence in terms of exemplar causality, which might be considered a precursor of Bonaventure's reply to Siger of Brabant. Thus the *Summa's* treatise on providence seems not only to have had an impact on Albert the Great, but can also claim its distinct place in the history of theology.

¹⁰² Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, in *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, 10 vols (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), Collatio VI, 2–4, vol. 5, pp. 360–61.