



**Jacco Verburgt**

Tilburg School of Catholic Theology,  
Tilburg University  
J.H.P.Verburgt@tilburguniversity.edu  
ORCID: 0000-0003-3092-1997

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/BPTh.2020.010>

13 (2020) 2: 217–228

ISSN (print) 1689-5150

ISSN (online) 2450-7059

## ***Sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus***

### **A Note on Aquinas' Reading of the Pseudo-Athanasian Creed\***

**Abstract.** Today, there is a general consensus that Athanasius of Alexandria (296/298–373), the famous Greek Church Father, did not write the so-called Athanasian Creed; the text was attributed to him much later. Nevertheless, it was an influential document, particularly during the later Middle Ages. And Thomas Aquinas was among those who seemed to have appreciated it. But how did he actually read or appropriate the Creed, especially within the context of his mature thought? In this paper, I focus on Aquinas' reading of one particular verse of the Creed, namely “*Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus*”, by discussing two relevant texts, namely ST III.2 and SCG IV.41. And I argue that these texts convey the notion that Aquinas attempts to critically integrate this verse, not only into his Christological doctrine of Incarnation, but also into his Aristotelian-based anthropology.

**Keywords:** Aquinas; Athanasius; Athanasian Creed; Aristotle; Incarnation; anthropology.

### **Introduction**

**I**t has been well established by modern scholars, ever since G.J. Vossius' *De tribus symbolis* (1642), that Athanasius of Alexandria (296/298–373), the famous Greek Church Father, did *not* write the so-called Athanasian Creed, also known as *Symbolum Athanasianum* or *Quicumque vult* (from the Latin opening words). The Athanasian or indeed pseudo-Athanasian Creed was in fact written much later (most likely not earlier than the fifth or sixth century, the oldest surviving manuscripts dating from the eighth century), not in Gre-

---

\* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the conference *Identity and Tradition: Thomas Aquinas and the Church Fathers*, Toruń, April 4–6, 2019.

ek (but originally in Latin), and by an author or compiler who's theological views were firmly rooted in the Augustinian tradition (especially given the terminology derived from Augustine's *De Trinitate*) and who presumably lived somewhere in the southern Gaul area.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, it was a highly influential document, particularly during the later Middle Ages, notably in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, so much so that it gradually obtained an importance comparable to that of the two most famous Creeds, namely the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. And Aquinas is no exception to this general appreciation of the Athanasian Creed at the time. In fact, he seems to think highly of it. He writes in ST II–II.1.10:<sup>2</sup>

Athanasius drew up a declaration of faith, not under the form of a symbol, but rather by way of an exposition of doctrine, as appears from his way of speaking. But since it contained briefly the whole truth of faith, it was accepted by the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, so as to be considered as a rule of faith.<sup>3</sup>

In section one, I dwell on this quote a bit longer. But let me first formulate a couple of preliminary questions that might come to mind, such as: To what extent did the Creed actually affect, provoke or sharpen, Aquinas' (mature) thought? In fact, how did he read or appropriate the Creed? And what does his reading tell us about his general position with respect to the early Church Fathers?

In this paper, I present a few tentative thoughts specifically on the second issue by focusing on Aquinas' reading of line 37 of the Creed. This line reads

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. J.N.D. Kelly, *The Athanasian Creed*, pp. v–viii ('Preface'), 1–34 ('The Creed and Scholarship' and 'Text, Translation, and Parallels'), 98–108 ('The Soul-Flesh Analogy' and 'The Creed and Christology'); and his classic *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp. 273 and 284–289.

<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I use the following abbreviations: ST=*Summa Theologiae* and SCG=*Summa contra Gentiles*, so that "ST II–II.1.10" means "*Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae Pars*, question 1, article 10". Translations from the Latin (Editio Leonina) are mine.

<sup>3</sup> These are the last sentences of ST II–II.1.10, entitled 'Whether it belongs to the Sovereign Pontiff to draw up a symbol of faith, responding to the third objection, namely: "Athanasius non fuit summus pontifex, sed Alexandrinus patriarcha. Et tamen symbolum constituit quod in Ecclesia cantatur. Ergo non magis videtur pertinere editio symboli ad summum pontificem quam ad alios" (ST II–II.1.10ob3). Note that, in the Latin Church until the 1960 liturgical reform, the Athanasian Creed was recited every Sunday morning at the Office of Prime (cf. also *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 ad 4), although the 1911 reform already reduced this to Sundays after Epiphany and Pentecost, and on Trinity Sunday, except when a commemoration of a double feast or a day within an Octave occurred. Nowadays, in the 1962 Breviary, it is only recited at Trinity Sunday Prime. And, to be sure, it is also still used in other Western Church liturgies.

as follows: *Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus* (“For as a rational soul and flesh are one man: so God and man are one Christ”). Traditionally, this verse is taken to belong to the second, Christological, part of the Creed (lines 29–44), the first part being the Trinitarian part (lines 1–28). Here are just a few lines (28–37) that, I think, give some sense of the text’s structure and idiom:

[28] *Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de Trinitate sentiat.*

[29] *Sed necessarium est ad aeternam salutem, ut incarnationem quoque Domini nostri Iesu Christi fideliter credat.*

[30] *Est ergo fides recta ut credamus et confiteamur, quia Dominus noster Iesus Christus, Dei Filius, Deus et homo est.*

[31] *Deus ex substantia Patris ante saecula genitus: et homo est ex substantia matris in saeculo natus.*

[32] *Perfectus Deus, perfectus homo: ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens.*

[33] *Aequalis Patri secundum divinitatem: minor Patre secundum humanitatem.*

[34] *Qui licet Deus sit et homo, non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus.*

[35] *Unus autem non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum.*

[36] *Unus omnino, non confusione substantiae, sed unitate personae.*

[37] *Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.*

Much could be said about each of these lines. But I focus on line 37, that is to say, the way Aquinas reads the theologically and anthropologically important comparison, resemblance or analogy, it entails – namely, the likeness between the unity of man (or the human person) and the unity of Christ (or the Incarnate Word).

In sections two and three, I revisit two relevant texts on this topic, one from each *Summa*, namely ST III.2.1 and SCG IV.41, respectively. And my thesis is that these texts convey the notion that Aquinas attempts to critically integrate line 37 of the Creed into his Christological doctrine of Incarnation,<sup>4</sup> while upholding his philosophical, Aristotelian-based anthropology.

In fact, I argue, it involves an integration attempt, in which two notions of ‘unity’ play a crucial role: firstly, the notion of a *double* unity of nature and person (*duplex unitas, naturae, et personae*), which I discuss in section two; and secondly, the notion of an *instrumental* unity of soul and body (*animae corpus organum unitum*), which I discuss in section three. In the conclusion,

---

<sup>4</sup> As to Aquinas’ Christological doctrine of Incarnation, see e.g. D.A. Keating, *Exegesis and Christology in Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 507–530.

I summarize my findings, including by pointing to a particular passage from Aristotle's *De Anima* that seems to confirm the Stagirite's anticipation of the second notion.

## 1. Some Thoughts on ST II–II, question 1 (articles 9 & 10)

But before doing this let me dwell a bit longer on ST II–II.1, not only in order to get some basic idea of Aquinas' general understanding of creeds or symbols, but also in order to draw some attention to his rather specific statement that "Athanasius drew up a declaration of faith, not under the form of a symbol, but rather by way of an exposition of doctrine, as appears from his way of speaking". So what is, generally speaking, the importance and function of a creed, according to Aquinas? In ST II–II.1.9ad1, he writes:

The truth of faith is contained in Holy Scripture, diffusely, under various modes of expression, and sometimes obscurely, so that, in order to gather the truth of faith from Holy Scripture, one needs long study and practice, which are unattainable by all those who require to know the truth of faith, many of whom have no time for study, being busy with other affairs. And so it was necessary to gather together a clear summary from the sayings of Holy Scripture, to be proposed to the belief of all. This indeed was no addition to Holy Scripture, but something taken from it.

In other words: a creed serves as a rule of Faith (*regula fidei*), proclaiming in a clear and summary form the same truth as Holy Scripture. It is no addition to Holy Scripture, but rather taken from it and based on it. It is proposed for the sake of those who have no time to properly study Holy Scripture and it is proposed for the sake of the belief of all (*proponeretur omnibus ad credendum*).

And it is clear that, throughout his writings, Aquinas makes considerable use of the two most famous creeds, the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, which in his view fully meet the criteria for a creed. He accepts the apostolic origins of the Apostles' Creed and he thinks of the Nicene Creed (which he sometimes calls the "Creed of the Fathers") as a further specification of the same apostolic Faith. Now, Aquinas also refers to the Athanasian Creed, including line 37.<sup>5</sup> And he accepts the great bishop of Alexandria as the author of it. But the mere fact that it is – or is taken to be – the work of a great believer and bishop does not by itself make it into a truthful or trustworthy creed, that

---

<sup>5</sup> In the *Summa Theologiae*, for instance, there are a number of more or less explicit references to the Athanasian Creed, mostly in the *Prima Pars* and not seldom in a *Sed contra* (see also footnote 8 below).

is, a rule that further specifies Faith within the context of the teachings of the Church as a whole, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For this, so Aquinas, it needs to be accepted by the magisterial authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. And indeed it was, as the quoted passage from ST II–II.1.10 indicates, because the Creed contained in brief the whole truth of Faith, so that it has to be considered as a rule of Faith.

However, what does Aquinas mean exactly when he says that the Athanasian Creed does not have the form of a symbol (*symbolum*), but rather that of a certain doctrine (*cuiusdam doctrinae*) because of its literary form (*modus loquendi*)? I am not quite sure what this distinction between ‘symbol’ and ‘doctrine’ actually amounts to. Does it imply, for instance, that the *Athanasianum* is more anti-Arian, structurally set up to defend the faith in the two natures of Christ, than the *Apostolicum* or the *Nicaenum*?<sup>6</sup> Or does it indicate that Aquinas takes the *Athanasianum* as an explanatory statement, disclosing important ‘doctrinal’ and ‘truthful’ aspects of Faith, rather than as a merely or properly magisterial confirmation?<sup>7</sup> As far as I know, Aquinas did not previously make

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. G. Émery’s comment in *Thomas d’Aquin: Traités*, p. 188: “Il [Thomas] observe en effet que ce symbole [Athanasianum] est structuré par la foi aux deux natures du Christ, tandis que les deux premiers symboles [Apostolicum & Nicaenum] sont structurés par la foi aux trois personnes divines”. As to the anti-heretical or anti-Arian features of the Athanasian Creed, according to Aquinas in the *Scriptum*, see also footnote 10 below.

<sup>7</sup> In this paper, I make no further attempt to elaborate on this matter, let alone decide on it. Nor do I aim to offer, just to be sure, any comprehensive account of Aquinas’ understanding of the Athanasian Creed, if only because of all the different and interrelated issues that are involved, such as: (i) historical and hermeneutical or methodological issues; (ii) philosophical, ontological, and metaphysical issues; and (iii) theological, biblical, liturgical, ecclesiological, and magisterial issues. – But I do think there are good reasons to assume that Aquinas fully respects the authority of the Athanasian Creed, not least on a dogmatic, both Christological and Trinitarian, level. He not only considers it to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, as I briefly indicated above (cf. also ST II–II.9.10 and *Quodlibet* XII, 17). He also seems to hold that the *Athanasianum* is consistent with the teachings of Chalcedon, an issue I only laterally touch upon in my concluding section (see also footnote 12 below). And finally, Aquinas seems to argue that the Creed is consistent with the rather robust Aristotelian principles he adopts (thus also taking the risk of challenging more Neo-Platonist or Augustinian-framed adoptions), an argumentation I particularly focus on here, namely with regard to his reading of verse 37. – For a comprehensive account of Aquinas’ Trinitarian theology, see e.g. M. Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology*, esp. pp. 213–235. For recent research on Aquinas’ biblical theology, see e.g. Roszak P., Vijgen J., *Towards a Biblical Thomism: Thomas Aquinas and the Renewal of Biblical Theology*, esp. pp. 23–98, as well as J. Vijgen, *Biblical Thomism: Past, Present and Future*, pp. 263–287. For a recent account of Aquinas’ reading of Aristotle and the Church Fathers, see e.g. L. Elders, *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors: The Philosophers and the*

this precise distinction, neither in the *Prima Pars*,<sup>8</sup> nor in the *Contra Gentiles*,<sup>9</sup> nor in the *Scriptum*.<sup>10</sup> In these texts, the Athanasian Creed is still simply called a symbol, just as the *Apostolicum* and the *Nicaenum*.

## 2. Some Thoughts on ST III, question 2 (article 1)

But let me now quickly move on to the main question at hand, namely: how does Aquinas read line 37 of the Athanasian Creed (that is, the comparison between the unity of man and the unity of Christ) within the context of his Christological doctrine of Incarnation, while at the same time upholding his Aristotelian-based anthropology, as I suggested? In this section, I focus on ST

---

*Church Fathers in His Works*, esp. pp. 39–66 (see also footnote 13 below), 136 and 144. For a general guide to the methodological issues involved in interpreting Aquinas' texts, see e.g. M. Rossi, *Methodological Guide to Interpreting the Texts of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 519–537.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. e.g. ST I.10.2s.c., ST I.29.3s.c., ST I.30.1s.c., ST I.31.1s.c., and ST I.33.1ad.3.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g. SCG IV.24.5 and IV.41.10 (see section 3 below).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. *Super Sent.*, lib. 1 d. 9 q. 1 a. 2 arg. 1; lib. 1 d. 9 q. 1 a. 2 arg. 4; lib. 1 d. 19 q. 1 a. 1 s.c. 1; lib. 3 d. 6 q. 1 a. 3 arg. 2 (in symbolo Athanasii dicitur: sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo, ita Deus et homo unus est Christus); lib. 3 d. 6 q. 2 a. 3 arg. 7 (Athanasius in symbolo: sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo; ita Deus et homo unus est Christus); lib. 3 d. 21 q. 1 pr.; lib. 3 d. 21 q. 1 pr.; lib. 3 d. 21 q. 1 pr.; lib. 3 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 arg. 3; lib. 3 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 ad 2 (quod patres qui alia symbola post apostolos ediderunt, nihil de suo apposuerunt; sed ex sacris Scripturis ea quae addiderunt, exceperunt. Et quia quaedam difficilia sunt in illo symbolo apostolorum, ideo ad ejus explanationem editum est symbolum Nicaenum, quod diffusius fidem quantum ad aliquos articulos prosequitur. Et quia quaedam implicite continebantur in illis symbolis, quae oportebat propter insurgentes haereses explicari; ideo additum est symbolum Athanasii, qui specialiter contra haereticos se opposuit), lib. 3 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 ad 3 (quod quia tempore Athanasii specialiter haereses insurrexerunt contra personam filii quantum ad utramque naturam, ideo secundum duas naturas symbolum illud in duas partes dividitur. Alia autem symbola, quae non sunt ex principali intentione contra haereticos facta, sed ad doctrinam fidei propalandam vel elucidandam, dividuntur in tres personas, in quibus principaliter nostra fides fundatur), and lib. 3 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 ad 4 (quod symbolum apostolorum fuit editum quando fides nondum erat propalata [...]). Alia autem symbola edita fuerunt tempore fidei jam propalatae; et ideo publice cantantur. Et quia non ad proponendum fidem, sed ad defendendum vel elucidandum edita fuerunt; ideo non in singulis diebus dicuntur, sed in illis in quibus homines maxime ad Ecclesiam venire consueverunt, et in illis in quibus fit aliqua solemnizatio de illis quae ad articulos pertinent. [...] Symbolum autem Athanasii quod contra haereticos editum est, in prima dicitur, quasi jam pulsus haereticorum tenebris).

III.2.1, entitled ‘Whether the union of the incarnate Word took place in one nature’ (*Utrum unio Verbi incarnate sit facta in una natura*), because Aquinas explicitly refers to line 37 of the Creed, namely in objection 2 and the reply to it, and differentiates between two notions of ‘unity’ or ‘union’ in order to clarify the meaningfulness or applicability of the Athanasian comparison. Here is the relevant text in English:

[Objection 2:] Further, Athanasius says that, as the rational soul and the flesh together form the human nature, so God and man together form a certain one nature; therefore the union took place in [the] nature.

[Reply to Objection 2:] From the soul and body a double unity, viz. of nature and person, results in each of us [individual]. Of nature inasmuch as the soul is united to the body, and formally perfects it, so that one nature springs from the two as from act and potentiality or from matter and form. But the comparison is not in this sense, for the Divine Nature cannot be the form of a body, as was proved in Part One [=ST I.3.8]. Unity of person results from them, however, inasmuch as there is an individual subsisting in flesh and soul; and herein lies the likeness, for the one Christ subsists in the Divine and human natures.

This text suggests that, according to Aquinas, the Athanasian comparison between human nature (that is, the unity of rational soul and body) and Christ’s God-man nature (that is, the unity of the Incarnate Word) is somewhat ambivalent, ambiguous or equivocal. In fact, it seems to suggest one should adopt a more comprehensive or differentiated conception of ‘unity’ in order to properly understand the comparison, namely a double one, meaning a unity of nature and a unity of person (*duplex unitas, naturae, et personae*).

First, as Aquinas explains, there is the unity of nature (*unitas naturae*), the unity of form and matter, or act and potency, which applies to all (natural or created) beings – but (by definition) not to the Divine Nature itself, especially since the latter cannot be a “forma corporis”, as Aquinas has argued in ST I.3.8. Secondly, there is the unity of person (*unitas personae*), insofar as there is a certain subsisting in flesh and soul (*unius aliquis subsistens in carne et anima*), as Aquinas puts it. And it is only in this latter respect, he concludes, that the Athanasian comparison or likeness (*similitudo*) actually makes sense, being applicable to the both divine and human nature of Christ.

Clearly, it is not farfetched to say that this notion of a unity of nature is basically and highly Aristotelian – something which already seems to nuance the largely Augustinian or Neo-Platonist impetus of the Creed. And what is more, there is yet another Aristotelian-framed notion of unity, namely the notion of an instrumental unity or instrumental causality between body and



soul, that Aquinas utilizes in his reading of line 37 of the Athanasian Creed, as I continue by zooming in on some text passages from the *Summa contra Gentiles*.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Some Thoughts on SCG IV, caput 41 (n. 10–13)

The text passages I mean are taken from SCG IV.41, entitled ‘How we are to understand the incarnation of the Son of God’ (*Quomodo oporteat intelligere incarnationem filii Dei*). In this section, I focus specifically on Aquinas’ notion of an ‘instrumental’ or ‘organic’ unity of body and soul, as distinct from (again) a mere hylomorphic one, since the former is part of his reading of line 37. And I do so by quoting a few relevant passages and giving some comments on them. First of all, I want to point to the following text:

In all created things nothing bears so great a resemblance to this union [i.e., the union of the Word with man, *unionem verbi et hominis*], as the union of soul and body. Greater still would be the resemblance, as Augustine says (*Contra Felicianum*), were there but one intellect in all men, as some indeed have maintained. If this were true we should have to say that the already existing intellect would become united to the human concept in such a way that the two together would form one person, just as we say that the already existing Word was joined to human nature in one person. Hence, on account of this resemblance [*similitudo*] between the two unions, Athanasius says in his symbol: ‘As the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.’

Similar to his approach in ST III.2.1, Aquinas not only underlines here the importance of the resemblance between the union of Christ (the Incarnate Word) and the union of soul and body with reference to line 37. Again, he also introduces an important distinction, which nuances the specific kind of unity involved in the resemblance: “Now the body is united to the rational soul, both as the matter and as the instrument of the soul. But the above resemblance does not regard the former mode of union.” In other words: the resemblance does not regard the union of body and soul in the first sense, namely the hylomor-

---

<sup>11</sup> For an account of Thomas’ evolving thought on the instrumental causality of the sacraments, including the extent to which this notion of instrumental causality is Aristotelian-based, also when it comes to Aquinas’ reading of the Athanasian Creed, including our verse 37, see B. Blankenhorn, *The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments*, pp. 262–268, 271, esp. 277–278, and 282–284.



phic sense, but it only applies to the unity of body and soul in the second sense, namely the instrumental sense.

And Aquinas concludes that he is actually in agreement with the early Church Fathers on this (including Athanasius, I suppose). He states: “The resemblance, therefore, regards the union of soul with the body as its instrument. In fact, the statements of the early Doctors are in agreement with this, who considered the human nature in Christ to be an instrument of the Godhead, even as the body is the instrument of the soul” (*Ad quod etiam dicta antiquorum doctorum concordant, qui humanam naturam in Christo organum quoddam divinitatis posuerunt, sicut et ponitur corpus organum animae*). Here one might perhaps be tempted to raise the question as to whether, or to what extent, the early Church Fathers, “the early Doctors”, would also concord to Aquinas’ understanding of a double unity of nature and person, as discussed in the previous section. But I resist this temptation and limit myself to two short comments on Aquinas’ understanding of the instrumental unity of body and soul.

First, there is Aquinas’ view that the soul-oriented instrumentality of the human body is essentially different from the instrumentality of external, commonly available or interchangeable, objects or utensils. He illustrates his view by referring to the difference between using your hand and using a spade:

the body and its parts are the instruments of the soul otherwise than extraneous instruments: thus a man’s spade is not so much his own instrument as his hand is, since many can work with that spade, whereas that hand is employed for the special work of that man’s soul [*ad propriam operationem huius animae*]. Hence a man’s hand is an instrument united and proper to him, whereas the spade is distinct from him and common to many.

And it is in analogy with this intrinsic, soul-directed, type of bodily instrumentality of the human hand, which Aquinas calls an ‘organum unitum et proprium’ or ‘instrumentum proprium et coniunctum’, that the union of God with man in Christ needs to be understood, as he affirms by saying that

human nature was assumed by Christ, that it might be an instrument in works belonging to God alone, such as cleansing from sins, enlightening our minds by grace, and perfecting us unto eternal life. Accordingly, Christ’s human nature is compared to God as a proper and united instrument, as the hand is compared to the soul.

Secondly, however, Aquinas stresses that being the proper and united instrument of something, important as it obviously is, does not equal belonging to the specific nature or form of it; as such, it rather relates to the individual in re-

spect of its matter principle. And he does so by using yet another example, namely the tongue as the proper instrument of the intellect:

the tongue, as the instrument of speech, is the proper instrument of the intellect [*proprium organum intellectus*], and yet, as the Philosopher proves [in *De Anima III*], the intellect is not the form of any part of the body. In like manner, there may be an instrument that does not belong to the specific nature [*ad naturam speciei non pertinet*], and yet belongs to the individual on the part of the matter [...]. In this way, therefore, nothing prevents our saying that human nature by its union with the Word became, as it were, the Word's instrument, not separate but united: and yet human nature does not belong to the nature of the Word, nor is the Word its form; but it does belong to his Person [*pertinet tamen ad eius personam*].

Thus, on the basis of such conceptual distinctions and concrete examples, Aquinas reaches a conclusion that largely confirms our discussion of ST III.2.1, namely that Christ's human nature can be regarded as the Word's proper and united instrument insofar as it belongs to the Person of the Word, that is to say, without being part of the nature of the Word itself and without the latter being its form or species.

## Conclusion

By way of summarizing, I wish to underline two interrelated characteristics of Aquinas' integrative reading of line 37 of the Athanasian Creed, one regarding his Christological doctrine of Incarnation and the other regarding his Aristotelian-based anthropology.

On the one hand, the mature Aquinas aims to critically clarify the comparison between "anima rationalis et caro unus est homo" and "Deus et homo unus est Christus" in terms of his doctrine of Incarnation. In this paper, I have pointed to two texts in particular, namely ST III.2.1 and SCG IV.41. Obviously, there are more texts and contexts that need to be taken into account. But my reading so far suggests that, according to Aquinas, it is possible to uphold and assume the comparison – provided that a more comprehensive and differentiated notion of unity is assumed, namely one that goes beyond the mere 'anima forma corporis' unity, especially when it comes to the 'unitas personae' involved in the Incarnate Word, which is Christ, the one Person, as Chalcedon has it, in Whom there are two natures, divine and human, each retaining its own properties and together united in one person and one single subsistence.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, n. 148: "indeed born of the Father before the ages according to divine nature, but in the last days the same born of the virgin Mary, Mother of

On the other hand, it is also important to raise the question whether Aquinas remains faithful to his Aristotelian-based anthropology – especially when it comes to the notion that the soul is not merely the form of the body. As I indicated, Aquinas not only adopts the notion of a unity of person, which in turn is part of the larger notion of a double unity of nature and person, but also the notion of an instrumental unity or instrumental causality, namely that the body is the instrument – the united and proper organ – for the sake of the (rational) soul. And it is in these both ‘personalist’ and ‘instrumental’ terms that Aquinas is able to affirm that the unity of the human person is comparable to that of the Incarnate Word.

Now, by way of closing, my simple suggestion is that the notion of instrumental unity or instrumental causality between body and soul is indeed retraceable in Aristotle, at least to some significant extent. There is one particular passage from the second book of *De anima* that I want to mention here since it seems to clearly reflect this. It reads as follows:

It is manifest that the soul is also the final cause. For nature, like thought, always does whatever it does for the sake of something, which something is its end. To that something corresponds in the case of animals the soul and in this it follows the order of nature; all natural bodies are organs of the soul. This is true of those that enter into the constitution of plants as well as of those which enter into that of animals. This shows that that for the sake of which they are is soul. That for the sake of which has two senses, viz. the end to achieve which, and the being in whose interest, anything is or is done. (415b15–21)

Obviously, I cannot go into all the complexities surrounding this passage here. But I do think it is a remarkable passage, especially the phrase that all natural bodies are organs of the soul, as being their final cause. And it would be interesting to revisit Aquinas’ comments on this and similar passages,<sup>13</sup> not only in light of his reception of the early Church Fathers, but also in light of the

---

God according to human nature; for us and for our deliverance, one and the same Christ only begotten Son, our Lord, acknowledged in two natures, without mingling, without change, indivisibly, undividedly, the distinction of the natures nowhere removed on account of the union but rather the peculiarity of each nature being kept, and uniting in one person and substance, not divided or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son only begotten God Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as from the beginning the prophets taught about Him and the Lord Jesus Himself taught us, and the creed of our fathers has handed down to us” (*The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, p. 61).

<sup>13</sup> It seems particularly important to scrutinise Aquinas’ comments in Book 2, especially Lectures 6 and 9, of the *Sententia Libri De Anima*. Cf. e.g. L. Elders, *Aristotele et Thomas d’Aquin*, pp. 308–325, and his *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors*, pp. 39–66.

Aquinas reception, including his reading of Aristotle, in later Eastern Orthodox tradition(s).<sup>14</sup> But I have to leave these topics for another occasion.

## Bibliography

- Blankenhorn B., *The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet*, Nova et Vetera (English Edition) 4/2 (2006), pp. 255–294.
- Denzinger H., *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, Freiburg 1954, 30th edition, revised by Karl Rahner SJ; English translation: *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, translated by Roy J. Deferrari from the Thirtieth Edition of Henry Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Fitzwilliam, NH, 1955).
- Elders L.J., *Aristote et Thomas d'Aquin: les commentaires sur les oeuvres majeures d'Aristote*, Paris 2018.
- Elders L.J., *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors: The Philosophers and the Church Fathers in His Works*, Washington, DC, 2018.
- Keating D.A., *Exegesis and Christology in Thomas Aquinas*, in: *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas: Hermeneutical Tools, Theological Questions and New Perspectives*, P. Roszak, J. Vijgen (eds.), Turnhout 2015, pp. 507–530.
- Kelly J.N.D., *The Athanasian Creed*, London 1964 (The Paddock Lectures for 1962–3).
- Kelly J.N.D., *Early Christian Doctrines*, London 1989 (fifth, revised edition).
- Levering M., *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology*, Oxford 2004.
- Plested M., *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, Oxford 2012 (Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology).
- Plested M., *Thomas Aquinas and John of Damascus on the Light of the Transfiguration: Can We Speak of a Greek Patristic Turn in Thomas?*, in: *Thomas Aquinas and the Greek Fathers*, M. Dauphinais, A. Hofer OP, and R. Nutt (eds.), Ave Maria, FL, 2019, pp. 206–220.
- Rossi M., *Methodological Guide to Interpreting the Texts of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Angelicum 85/2 (2008), pp. 519–537.
- Roszak P., Vijgen J. (eds.), *Towards a Biblical Thomism: Thomas Aquinas and the Renewal of Biblical Theology*, Pamplona 2018.
- Thomas d'Aquin, *Traité: Les raisons de la foi, Les articles de la foi et Les sacrements de l'Église* (introduction, traduction du latin et annotation par Gilles Émery), Paris 1999 (coll. *Sagesse chrétiennes*).
- Vijgen J., *Biblical Thomism: Past, Present and Future*, Angelicum 95/3 (2018), pp. 263–287.
- Vossius G.J., *Dissertationes tres de tribus symbolis, Apostolico, Athanasiano et Constantino-politano*, Amsterdam 1642.

---

<sup>14</sup> Cf. e.g. M. Plested, *Orthodox Readings of Aquinas*, pp. 9–28, as well as his article *Thomas Aquinas and John of Damascus on the Light of the Transfiguration*, pp. 206–220.