

Pallavicino's God in Part and Whole

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Sforza Pallavicino taught at the Collegio Romano—a place that has been characterised as representing a certain baroque optimism. This was helped by the influence of one of its professors, Antonio Perez (1599–1649), a Spanish Jesuit, who was acclaimed as the ‘theologus mirabilis’. He was particularly famous for his resurrection of the ‘ontological proof’ for the existence of God—an otherwise overlooked parallel to Descartes, as Ramón Ceñal has pointed out against Dieter Henrich.¹ The ontological proof can be taken to exemplify the said optimism, in that it is rather confident about the ability of our minds to come to a knowledge of God independent from experience. This is also consonant with the tradition of a Bellarminian apologetics that hopes as much as possible to demonstrate the faith by rational philosophical means.

With this background it might come as a surprise that Pallavicino (who is not discussed by Ceñal) *rejects* this Perezian proof. While he shares many optimistic features and a sense of an *a priori* interconnectedness of all things and their possibilities, he is decidedly more sceptical about our ability to *know of* these connections and their necessity. Given that Pallavicino's pupil Silvestro Mauro (1619–1687) follows him in this regard, one might wonder whether there is a distinctly *Italian* school of optimism at the Collegio Romano, as opposed to the Spanish, Perezian school.² It will, in any case, be instructive to locate Pallavicino in this scenario. Limiting ourselves to Pallavicino's doctrine of God, we will articulate his critique of the Perezian proof, as well as characterise his own positive method of approaching the existence and nature of God—a

1 Ceñal R. S.J., “La existencia de Dios en la escolástica de los siglos XVII y XVIII”, in *Homenaje a Xavier Zubiri*, vol. 1 (Madrid: 1970) 245–325. There is a certain antecedent in Gabriel Vazquez's (1549–1604) earlier re-appreciation of the Anselmian proof (at least as *reductio ad absurdum*)—another Spaniard in Rome. Ceñal, “La existencia” 250; *DThC*, vol. 4 (Paris: 1908) 892. On Perez, I point the reader to my own work: Ramelow T., *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl. Die Metaphysik der Willensfreiheit zwischen Antonio Perez, S.J. (1599–1649) und G.W. Leibniz (1646–1716)* (Leiden: 1997).

2 For the personal relationships and politics, see the article by Sven K. Knebel in the present volume. Pallavicino entertains Perez as a fictional conversation partner in the *Trattato sulla provvidenza*, in *Opere edite ed inedite*, vol. 1 (Rome: 1844). Silvestro Mauro, in *Opus Theologicum*, vol. 1 (Rome, Tinassij: 1687) 42b, does not find Perez's proof agreeable either, yet he refuses to ‘reject it positively’.

method that turns out to be ‘mereological’ in character; in other words, following the logic of part and whole.

1 Pallavicino’s Critique of *A priori* Proofs for the Existence of God

1.1 *Perez as a priori Optimist*

The ontological proof for the existence of God argues from the concept of God to his existence. That which is defined as the most perfect being cannot lack the perfection of existence. God’s existence is *a priori* implied in his concept or essence and can therefore be known independently from experience. But any such *a priori* proof has a burden of proof that an *a posteriori* proof does not have: it has to show that the concept is not self-contradictory. While an *a posteriori* proof begins from something actual, which *ipso facto* is possible (from the fact that something exists, it follows that it is possible: *ab esse ad posse valet consequentia*), an *a priori* proof begins from something merely possible, whose very possibility is still in doubt, even before its actuality is proved. These questions did not occur in the Anselmian version of the proof, presumably because notions of *logical* possibility were not yet around (they arise only with Aquinas and Scotus as an independent, noncircular criterion for omnipotence).³ It is Duns Scotus⁴ (and later Leibniz)⁵ who raises the question of whether the concept of God might not imply a logical contradiction, thus making God a ‘chimaera’: are all the perfections that must be part of the concept of God compatible with each other? Is the ‘summit of all simply simple perfections’ (‘cumulus omnium perfectionum simpliciter simplicium’), as Perez calls God,⁶

3 Deku H., “Possibile Logicum”, *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 64 (1956) 1–21; Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 7–31.

4 Duns Scotus John, *A Treatise on God as First Principle*, Appendix, trans. and ed. A.B. Wolter (Chicago: 1965) 157–188. The baroque Scotists, however, rejected any *a priori* proof, as in Jansen B. S.J., “Zur Philosophie der Skotisten des 17. Jahrhunderts”, *Franziskanische Studien* 23 (1936) 28–58, 150–175, at 156.

5 Leibniz argues like Scotus from the compatibility of all simple predicates (see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 19; Henrich D., *Der ontologische Gottesbeweis* [Tübingen: 1960] 48–49). Though not central, one can also find it in Perez Antonio, *In Primam Partem D. Thomae Tractatus V* (Rome, dal Verme: 1656) 10a–10b. John Baptist Gormaz S.J. (1650–1708, Collegio Romano), however, notes that this compossibility can be shown only *a posteriori*, and Rodrigo Arriaga S.J. (1592–1667), claims accordingly: ‘if existence is proved from possibility, then it is not proved a priori’ (‘si ex possibilitate probatur existentia, non probatur a priori’); Bernaldo de Quiros S.J. (1613–1668) takes this *a posteriori* proof to be accomplished only in the beatific vision. All quotations from Ceñal, “La existencia” 296 and 303.

6 See Perez, *In Primam Partem* 1b–2a.

even possible? The crucial move of the Perezian proof is to turn this scepticism back on itself, arguing that the impossibility claimed by the sceptic is itself impossible. It is not the thought of God that is impossible; rather, the impossibility of the thought of God is impossible. Perez's argument shifts the burden of proof to the opponent: 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' is the same as 'that which does not have any defect' ('carens omni defectu'). Yet to be impossible, or a chimera, is the *greatest possible defect*, and thus it is self-evident that such a being must be possible.⁷ After this, the proof proceeds to argue that, if such a being is possible, then it cannot exist contingently; it must exist necessarily.⁸ After all, not having any defect is incompatible with mere contingency, with the very possibility of non-existence.⁹ Perez's pupil, Martin de Esparza S.J. (1606–1689), considers the very capacity of non-existence a 'malum'.¹⁰ Now if God is thus not a contingent but a necessary being, *and* if he has been shown not to be impossible, then he must exist necessarily.¹¹ In the case of God, we can therefore conclude from the possibility to the necessity of existence.¹²

This argument is spelled out in a number of ways, particularly in the notion of God's perfect goodness and our affective relation towards such

7 Evidently false are statements like 'the best is a chimera; the best does not exist' ('optimum est chymaera, optimum est non existens'). See Perez, *In Primam Partem* 10b, and the recounting of Thomas Młodzianowski S.J. (1622–1686), in *Praelectiones Theologicae de SS. Trinitate* (Gdańsk, Ex Bibliopolio Forsteriano: 1666) 23a–23b, and Christoph Haunold S.J. (1610–1689), in *Theologia Speculativa* (Ingolstadt, Knab: 1678) 5b–6a. However, it might be that this is true conceptually, but not in reality, Mauro argues: *Opus Theologicum* 42a–42b.

8 See also Leibniz, *Monadology* n45, in Leibniz Gottfried Wilhelm, *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C.J. Gerhardt, vol. 6 (Berlin: 1885) 607–623, at 614. Today, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Gale, and Alexander Pruss will argue from the modal axiom 'S 5' that iterated modalisators collapse into the last; hence if something is possibly necessary, then it is necessary. Plantinga A., *The Nature of Necessity* (New York: 1979) ch. 10.

9 Ceñal, "La existencia" 254–255.

10 de Esparza Martin S.J., *Cursus Theologicus* (Lyon, Borde – Arnauld – Barbier: 1685) 5; Esparza is a student of Perez. This would be the kind of *malum metaphysicum* that Leibniz appeals to in the *Theodicy*, e.g., n. 20; see also Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 452–453.

11 This argument from exclusion of modal alternatives appears in both Perez and Esparza. Perez, *In Primam Partem* 14: 'the necessary is neither impossible, nor contingent [...]; therefore the necessary exists' ('necessarium non est impossibile, neque contingens [...]; ergo necessarium existit'). Esparza, *Cursus* 5f: 'That which is neither contingent nor chimerical and impossible, is thereby necessary and always exists in reality' ('Quod neque est contingens, neque chymaericum, et impossibile, eo ipso est necessarium, et datur semper a parte rei').

12 Though only in God, as Giovanni Battista Tolomei S.J. (1653–1725) insists, in Ceñal, "La existencia" 280.

perfection—something which gives it its particular feel of baroque optimism. Our very nature is inclined to the best, to the highest goodness; the ontological argument is thus natural to us, making God's existence in this sense self-understood (*per se notum*).

1.2 *Pallavicino as a posteriori Optimist*

Pallavicino, who shares some of Perez's optimism, is more sceptical about this self-evidence. While he does not mention his colleague Perez for this proof, he gives the typical older references to Augustine, Anselm, and—for the contrary argument—Aquinas and his commentator Cajetan. Nevertheless, his arguments can be understood to target Perez's proof.¹³

Pallavicino is decidedly sceptical about what natural reason can know about God. Not only is God's existence not *per se notum*, but we do not even have a notion of what that God is whose existence we are trying to prove. Epistemologically, Pallavicino will emphasise that the use of philosophical reason comes either after the incentive of faith or after a sensual encounter with reality, and reason only serves to dispel sceptical arguments against faith and experience.¹⁴ Though Pallavicino is an optimist as well, his optimism consists rather in his trust in our *empirical* knowledge. By contrast, those who claim an innate, *a priori* knowledge of God might turn out to be less optimistic, for they do not seem to trust our natural equipment and God's providence—which is why they desire to rely on their own innate concepts. Pallavicino finds this dialectic exemplified in Epicure, for whom such a claim of innate knowledge is only a compensation for the fact that his gods are mere passive bystanders and can therefore not be discerned *a posteriori* from their effects in the world.¹⁵

While Pallavicino is thus optimistic about our *a posteriori* knowledge, there are limits even to this optimism when it comes to certain attributes of God, such as our *a posteriori* knowledge of God's providence, omnipotence, and exclusive claim to worship.¹⁶ We will see in the end that there needs to be some *a priori* compensation, after all. At any rate, at least not *all* predicates of

13 E.g., Haunold, *Theologia* 5b–6a and 8; also Ceñal, “La existencia” 316.

14 Pallavicino Sforza, *Assertionum Theologicarum. Libri Quinque* (Rome, Typis Haeredum Corbelletti: 1649–1652), vol. 8 (Rome, Corbelletti: 1652) 3–4. This might be the reason why he dismisses Zeno's paradox: our encounter with reality has already proved him wrong, even before reason may try to solve those sophisms (though this has its own importance). Delbeke M., “Art as Evidence, Evidence as Art; Bernini, Pallavicino and the Paradoxes of Zeno”, in Schütze S. (ed.), *Estetica barocca* (Rome: 2004) 339–355, at 341–342.

15 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 9–10.

16 *Ibid.* 9, quoting Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, II.II.1.8 ad 1.

God are *per se notum*; hence many pagan philosophers and recently discovered people did not know them.

Moreover, whether Perez's *cumulus omnium perfectionum* is really possible and his predicates really compatible cannot be shown from our knowledge of the analogous perfections in creatures, since they are too dissimilar.¹⁷ While Perez might not actually disagree with this assessment,¹⁸ Pallavicino even adds a note of unusual voluntarism to his scepticism: though some might argue that it is a perfection of God to be *per se notum* and undeniable, Pallavicino suggests (similar to Francis Bacon) that it is the perfection of God *to be able to hide*. Yet, in the baroque twists and turns of the argument, this momentary scepticism turns again into something positive: God's ability to hide is the condition of the possibility for his ability to freely *manifest* himself.¹⁹

1.3 *Conceptual Self-Evidence and Its Limits*

An ontological proof connects the concept or essence of God with his existence. But this connection cannot be conceived of as if existence were 'flowing' (*emanare*) from his definition (in the way in which the ability to laugh 'emanates' from being a rational animal). Existence is different from other properties, in that emanation comes too late: nothing can flow from something not (yet) existing, and hence nothing can give itself existence (or be a *causa sui*). Existence either comes from an extrinsic cause or else is strictly *identical* with the essence itself.²⁰ And so, since God by his nature cannot have an extrinsic cause, his essence and existence must be identical.

17 Ibid. 50. Mauro, in *Opus Theologicum* 54a–54b, argues that contradictions can only emerge from privations, and hence as perfections they cannot contradict each other. On similar quandaries in Scotus' notion of logical possibility, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 17–26.

18 Perez, in *In Primam Partem* 251b, claims that the distance between the normal (creaturely) referent of a metaphorical name of God and its negation is smaller than between it and God himself: 'The distance between God and a perfection known to us is greater than that between the proper signification of this name and the opposite perfection. For God is more distant from a sane person than a raving or drunk person is—and more distant from speech than silence is' ('*distantia est maior inter Deum et perfectionem nobis notam, quam inter significatum proprium illius nominis et perfectionem oppositam. Plus enim distat Deus ab homine sanae mentis, quam distat furens et ebrius—plus a voce quam silentium*'). He also disagrees with the all too optimistic attempt of others to deduce even the Trinity itself; see Ceñal, "La existencia" 261. Still, Perez suggests that the compatibility of the divine attributes is itself one of God's perfections; otherwise they could be distributed over several individuals, each of which would then be absurdly more perfect than the other. Perez, *In Primam Partem* 10–11; Ceñal, "La existencia" 257–258.

19 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 5–6.

20 Ibid. 11–12 and 29–30.

This identity, however, is not visible to our eyes. It is, as Aristotle says, self-understood (*per se notum*) 'by nature', but not 'for us' (*quoad nos*). Pallavicino might otherwise share the 'connexionism' typical to the Perezian school that would connect the predicates of all things not only within themselves, but also with the rest of the world and with God,²¹ thus creating a self-evident universe of truths. Nevertheless, this itself is not in turn self-understood, not known to us except as the result of discursive reasoning and argument.²² The essential connections of all things are not visible to our mind, but only to the *divine* mind—the mind of the architect, who connects all things proportionately and beautifully. God's wisdom infallibly *sees* which terms belong together, simply and immediately; not by intermediate and discursive reasons, nor by empirical knowledge, but by an intuitive knowledge of quiddities or essences. We, on the other hand, have this 'quidditative' knowledge only as the doubtful, experiential kind that can at best be enhanced by scientific exploration.²³ And so again we find a curious juxtaposition of divine optimism and human scepticism in Pallavicino.

Moreover, human minds differ in preparedness for such knowledge. Normally, a self-evident sentence should have the same effect on all minds (like causes, like effects), yet we must not forget that these sentences are *linguistically mediated*.²⁴ And there are more languages than we can learn, and too many things to be signified. Unless words can evoke some foundational and therefore common-sense data, or some common insights from the natural light of the mind, our linguistic efforts will remain equivocal.²⁵ Generally, our significations will remain general, vague, and ranging disjunctively over many possibilities.²⁶ We achieve at best a mere similarity of concepts, objects, and images; that is all that is humanly possible. Hence the same proposition may be self-understood or not, depending on the linguistic clarity of our minds. This would be true even if God or angels were to speak to us: *they* might have quidditative concepts, and might communicate by them, but their communications to us would have to accommodate our linguistic needs and limitations.

21 See Knebel S.K., *Suarezism* (Amsterdam – Philadelphia: 2011) 99. 'The possibility or impossibility of all possible and impossible things is identical in reality with God and convertible with him' ('Omnium autem possibilium, et impossibilium tum possibilitas, tum impossibilitas, est identificata realiter, et convertibilis cum Deo'); Esparza, *Cursus* 2.

22 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 6–7; though on this Esparza agrees, too, in *Cursus* 2.

23 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 12–13.

24 *Ibid.* 14–15.

25 For this very modern-sounding scepticism, he refers to his treatise on the sacraments (ch. 9 and 11), in Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 15.

26 *Ibid.* 16–17.

Thus it would seem that even God could not make his existence *per se notum* for us. We would remain like a blind man hearing talk of colour.²⁷

1.4 *Essence and Existence*

On the other hand, oddly, the identity of essence and existence within God is nothing special. For Pallavicino, it is really true of all things. In other words, Pallavicino denies the Thomistic 'real distinction' between essence and existence within created things. Thus we cannot *conceive* of an essence that does not exist (it would be nothing), though we can *affirm* something of an essence without affirming its existence. The contingency of created beings, their possible nonbeing or nothingness, can be conceived 'in intelligible being' (*in esse cognoscibile*) relative to the free will of an agent, who is indifferent regarding their existence and can determine them to be or not to be.²⁸

Now while God cannot be so conceived (he is not brought about by another free agent, and therefore not contingent),²⁹ this still does not make his existence *per se notum*. For that would require grasping his essence by the first act of the intellect, i.e., quidditatively in one concept, or in what Pallavicino calls 'the first, simple assent' ('*primus assensus simplex*'). Neither his essence nor his existence can be so grasped. The very concept 'exists' (as to be predicated of God) has first to be derived by a process of abstraction: the notion of existence is not known *a priori*, but presupposes actual contact with real things; and these are not yet known under this concept of being, which, after all, is to be abstracted from them in the first place. This abstraction, moreover, will only lead to the *universal* notion of being that applies to *all* things, possible, actual, contingent, and necessary. Only as such is it then predicated of God, when we claim, *Deus est existens*. This statement is not self-evident, because the universal predicate is not simply identical with the particular subject. Rather, since the predicate is *universal* being, the meaning of the proposition is, 'some things exist, and God is identical with one of these'—which might be true but not self-evident.³⁰ Just as for every identification of a universal term with a particular subject, it would require a syllogism to make evident the connection between subject and predicate.

Pallavicino also is aware that existence is a rather peculiar predicate, different from all other contingent predicates. It is not a 'real predicate' in the Kantian sense: it does not add anything, except the thing itself. As such,

27 Ibid. 18–19.

28 Ibid. 19–22.

29 Ibid. 26–27.

30 Ibid. 23–28.

existence must be a *gift*. For nothing can give itself existence. One cannot give what one does not yet have. Nobody gives himself a gift. And even after the reception of the gift, the possession remains precarious: normally gifts (such as grace) become mine upon reception; yet if they were taken away from me, I myself would remain. Not so with existence. Hence it is a gift that does *not* become mine. As a result, I do not even belong to myself: 'I, however, am not mine, nor do I possess myself' ('ego autem non sum meus, nec me possideo').³¹ Thus existence is neither identified with me, like a necessary predicate (such as "*rationale*" in *animal rationale*), because it is a gift, nor is it removable from me, like a contingent predicate, because I would disappear together with it. Hence I am closely, but only contingently, identified with my existence.

1.5 *Non-actual Beings?*

That I am not entirely but only contingently identified with my existence means that the *continuation* of my existence (*duratio*) might be removed. At the same time, the distinction implies that *if one is removed, the other is not therefore removed as well*; hence our essence might retain some form of being after the removal of the further duration.³² What might such a realm of possible, nonactual entities be? These entities cannot be nothing, for we are still predicating their *possible* existence; and if that predication is true, then we do not predicate it of nothing, but of *something*. Hence we do need something like a quasi-Meinongian *Gegenstand*: just as Alexius Meinong (1853–1920) later distinguished objects that 'subsist' (*bestehen*) or are at least 'given' (*gegeben*) (in the case of impossible objects), but do not *exist*, so Pallavicino distinguishes three types of objects. Things can have being (a) in themselves, (b) in the cause that can produce them (excluding 'chimeras', i.e., impossibilities), and (c) in logical or intentional being (including 'chimeras'). Only (c) makes it possible to predicate something even of impossible things. This happens, for example, if we predicate impossibilities of themselves ('chimaera est chimaera'), or at least attribute to them their very own impossibility ('chimaera est impossibilis'). Since these expressions are true, they must have an 'objective truth' ('*veritas obiectiva*') that is separable from any actual or even possible existence (because chimeras are neither actual nor possible).

One might consider this kind of 'objective being' to have a reality merely in relation to God's omnipotence (as something he can or cannot do), i.e., as being 'denominated' from this foundation. Yet even impossibilities or nothingness

³¹ Ibid. 29–30.

³² But see Izquierdo Sebastian S.J. (1601–1681), *Pharus Scientiarum* (Lyon, Bourgeat & Lietard: 1659) 224–225.

seem to be real independently from such a denomination, for the Fathers can claim that we have our defects 'from our nothingness'—and thus 'there is' a 'nothing' that makes a difference and that can be talked about as if it were something.³³

What Pallavicino (and then Mauro) opens up here is the realm of 'supertranscendentals', in which the transcendental disjunction of being and nothing is reflectively thematised and transcended.³⁴ These are reflective twists that can seem 'baroque'; indeed, there are even further odd problems: for example, infinite regresses emerge,³⁵ if we make existence itself an object of this supertranscendental realm.³⁶ Then there are not only non-actual objects, but also their *non-actual existence*. Some adversaries of the Perezian proof, for example, will claim that his ontological proof only concludes to *possible* existence, not to actual existence. But this would imply that there must also be an actualisation of such possible existence, i.e., something like the existence of existence (and so *ad infinitum*). To avoid such problems, Pallavicino suggests we should take existence as the subject of predication only 'in quo', not 'in quod'. As such and in 'objective being', real existence is then thematised as distinct from the possibility whose existence it is (including existence's own possibility), while in the state of actuality it is identical with both.³⁷ Then infinite regresses only threaten in the mind, whose features (such as potentially infinite reflexivity) objective being shares.³⁸

Now Pallavicino agrees with Perez's critics that it is merely in the realm of such 'objective being' that the ontological proof for the existence of God might operate: the copula 'est' in 'Deus est existens' might be similar to its use in

33 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 37.

34 Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 238–239. See also Doyle J.P., "Extrinsic Cognoscibility: A Seventeenth-Century Supertranscendental Notion", *The Modern Schoolman* 68 (1990) 57–81, and Sven K. Knebel's article in this volume.

35 Perhaps like this: if we distinguish existence from itself ('real distinction' between possible and actual existence), an infinite regress threatens, for then existence needs to be applied to itself in order for it to become actual. And that is itself a further *possibility*.

36 I.e., such as 'the existence of Peter, who is possible' ('existentia Petri qui est possibilis'), as distinct from this possibility itself; or when we say that 'being is not an accident in God' ('esse non est accidens in Deo'), thus making *esse* the subject of predication. Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 37–45.

37 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 37–45.

38 I.e., any predicate *in obliquo* can also be objectified and predicated upon *in recto* (without implying a hypostatisation). For there is no problem with an infinite regress of *potential* reflections on mental contents, all of which fall under the most universal predicate, that of 'being able to be known and to receive a denomination from cognition' ('posse cognosci et recipere denominationem a cognitione'). Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 42–44.

'chimaera est chimaera'. And while from the concept of 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' it does indeed follow that existence belongs to it (i.e., because it is greater to exist than not to exist), it still belongs only to the *concept*, but nothing beyond. And in this realm of 'nonactual, objective truth' this would actually be true for many concepts. 'The existing Antichrist exists', for example, is tautologically true; it is *conceptually* true, yet nothing follows from this about actual reality.³⁹

1.6 *Chimeras and Necessary Truths*

In addition to these rather dense and complicated reflections, Pallavicino argues that the Perezian procedure could equally prove the existence of *ten* gods or of a greatest possible number: it could be self-evident that 'ten beings that could not be thought greater are no chimera' (and hence they do exist), or 'a number greater than which can be conceived is no chimera'.⁴⁰ But in each case it is not clear whether this is a chimera or not (which in this case it is); and the notion of 'the being that lacks any defect' ('ens carens omni defectu') does not seem to be in a better position (though in this case it is not a chimera).

Yet the further point of these odd formulations seems to be another Perezian argument, which claims that even these 'objective truths' need a real being to make them true, a reality to which they correspond, at least in the sense of a being that thinks the corresponding thought.⁴¹ This becomes especially interesting in the case of necessary truths: what is the truth-maker (*verificativum*) for necessary truths that are true always and everywhere and in eternity? There must be something that is itself a necessary being and which therefore can always think them. And that is God. God is the *verificativum* for all possibilities (because all possibilities are *necessarily* possibilities), as well as for all mathematical truths.⁴² Most especially the tautology *existens est existens* (as necessarily true) can be verified only in God, for there is no other being who

39 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 51–52.

40 Ibid. 52.

41 Esparza, *Cursus* 4: 'Objective truth, however, is a property of a real being, and in reality indistinct therefrom' ('Veritas autem obiectiva est passio entis realis, indistincta realiter ab eodem'). See also Ceñal, "La existencia" 273–274.

42 God is the 'possibility of all possible things' ('possibilitas rerum possibilium'); or, as Perez says, in *In Primam Partem* 231a–231b: 'an eternal necessity exists: for it is always necessary that three plus four equals seven' ('existit aeterna necessitas: semper enim necesse est, tria et quattuor esse septem'). Similarly, Leibniz, *Monadology* n43–44, also thinks that, though atheists can do geometry, without God it would lose its object (*Theodicy* § 184, in Gerhardt (ed.), *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, vol. 6, 226–227). And all this is not verified in the *will* of God, as in Descartes, but in his being.

can say quidditatively: *ego sum qui sum*.⁴³ Most astoundingly, Perez claims that therefore the principle of non-contradiction—which is a necessary truth as well—cannot be the basis of questioning God's possibility, i.e., of wondering whether the most perfect being might turn out to be a chimera. The reason is that as a necessary truth, the principle requires God's existence as its *verificativum*. God is the condition of the very possibility of this principle. Moreover, if God were non-existent, then he would not only be a non-actual possibility, but rather *impossible*—for, if he did not exist, then he would *necessarily* not exist (similarly, Alvin Plantinga today would insist that if something is impossible, it is *necessarily* impossible). God's non-existence would therefore be a necessary truth. But such truths require God as *verificativum*. Hence, *if God is impossible, then he exists!*⁴⁴

In a similar way, Pallavicino seems to suggest that someone would argue that even the necessary *falsehood* of 'a greatest possible number is possible'⁴⁵ requires a truth-maker. This truth-maker is not a thing, however: we are not verifying this (necessary) impossibility in the concept of a greatest possible number itself, about which we are making this statement. Such statements are rather to be treated like Bertrand Russell's 'the present king of France is bald':⁴⁶ they are false not in the sense that there is such a thing *of which* they are false, but rather as statements about nothing or 'about a non-positing subject' ('de subiecto non ponente').⁴⁷ Pallavicino's *Gegenstandstheorie* does not imply the actual existence of a thing such as a chimera, but only the *veritas obiectiva*

43 Perez, *In Primam Partem* 15.

44 Ibid. 12 and 14. See also Esparza, according to Mlodzianowski, *Praelectiones* 24b–25a; against this argue Izquierdo, *Pharus* 221, and Haunold, *Theologia* 8a; see also Ceñal, "La existencia" 259. Haunold, on the other hand, in *Theologia* 7–8, sees the necessity of these truths not in their 'objectivity' but only in their form, which is variously applied to matters that actually exist, one of which at any given time will exist, even if none exists at all times as necessary beings do. Thus concrete human beings would verify necessary truths about the *animal rationale*. And since for atheists the world is eternal, they might claim that it could verify eternal truths; see Mlodzianowski Thomas, *De Deo, Angelis et Actibus Humanibus* (Mainz – Gdańsk, Beckenstein: 1682) 25a. One would have to prove first that the world is not necessary, so that God is the only candidate for the *verificativum* of necessary propositions, as discussed in Haunold, *Theologia* 7–8, and Ceñal, "La existencia" 317–318.

45 Or Haunold, *Theologia* 6: 'the number that contains all possible numbers'.

46 The example in Pallavicino (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 54) is, 'the Turkish Sultan, who walks in this court, is not a chimera' ('Magnus Turca qui ambulat in hac aula non est chimaera').

47 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 53–54.

that verifies their chimerical character. And here the *veritas obiectiva* is not that of a concept: we do not entertain any concept, but only a judgement.⁴⁸

1.7 *Necessary or Conditional?*

But, now against Perez, it might turn out that the ontological proof is only a judgement ‘about a non-positing subject’ (*de subiecto non ponente*) as well. Perhaps, as with Kant, there is no contradiction in denying the existence of a necessary being, since we can always drop both subject and predicate at once (such that nothing is left to be contradicted).⁴⁹ Or one might say, Pallavicino suggests, that the subject of which existence is predicated is at best *conditionally* entertained.⁵⁰ Thus the subject would be ‘the greatest possible number that *could* be entertained’;⁵¹ and a statement about such a notion is still false, because that conditional thought could never become an *actual* thought. Moreover, even if a thought such as ‘that than which nothing greater can be conceived’ could become actual, the fact that it is only conditionally entertained shows by itself that its actuality is not *per se notum*. There is no such thing as ‘something conditionally self-understood’.⁵²

48 Similarly, Vazquez and the Perezians, in Knebel, *Suarezismus* 87–97.

49 There are many Kantian anticipations: Kant’s argument that cosmological proofs need the ontological proof as capstone was anticipated by Cardinal Tolomei, a correspondent of Leibniz; see Ceñal, “La existencia” 277–278. Yet Tolmei in turn is anticipated by Pallavicino, as we will see. That existence predication is always synthetic was held before Kant by Arriaga Rodrigo, in *Primam Partem* (Lyon, n.p.: 1669) 29, and cited in Ceñal, “La existencia” 295. Likewise, Antonio Bernaldo de Quiros, in Ceñal, “La existencia” 300–301, adds that such intuitive (as opposed to abstractive) knowledge is never *per se notum*. But this also affects our ability to know God’s *possibility*, precisely because it includes existence, as quoted in Ceñal, “La existencia” 303: ‘For the possibility of God, as supposed by the objection, includes actual existence. Therefore it cannot be known, unless one knows at the same time this actual existence’ (‘Possibilitas namque Dei, ut supponit obiectio, includit exercitam existentiam. Ergo non potest cognosci nisi cognoscendo simul existentiam exercitam’).

50 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 54–55. According to Honoré Fabri S.J., in *Summula Theologica* (Lyon, Anisson: 1669) 14–15, conditional reinterpretations of necessary or eternal truths were a typical nominalist strategy: ‘nor is it necessary for objective truth to have another truth-maker; for all necessary propositions are like hypothetical propositions’ (‘nec opus est veritati obiectivae alia verificatione; cum sint omnes propositiones necessariae quasi hypotheticae’).

51 Or else one can say, according to Mauro, in *Opus Theologicum* 40a, that impossible concepts can be entertained in *actu signato* (not *exercitu*).

52 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 55. Haunold, in *Theologia* 12 and Ceñal, “La existencia” 285, points out that in the ontological proof either the perfect being is already conceived as existing (which begs the question), or it is conceived prescinding from whether it is real or chimerical—and then it is not self-evident.

1.8 *The Goodness of Real Existence*

In fact, the whole realm of such conditionally entertained concepts depends on our encounter with real, existent, particular creatures, from which they have to be abstracted in the first place. Thus we cannot begin *a priori* even from a totally indeterminate notion of being, as Henry of Ghent (1217?–1293) would suggest, and as in Pallavicino's days the Perezian Miguel de Elizalde S.J. (1617–1678) carries even further.⁵³ Henry identified this indeterminate notion of being with God himself, who would then be presupposed in any thought and whose existence would therefore be self-understood. If we try to understand what such a notion might mean, we would have to reformulate it as 'being and nothing else' ('ens et nihil aliud'), i.e., what Henry would call 'negative indeterminacy', and which he identifies with God. Now, as Pallavicino points out, the 'nothing else' refers to the further determinations that differentiate created beings into this or that form of being. But then the differences would need to be something outside of being itself. This, however, would imply that they are either *nothing* (and therefore cannot differentiate), or even *evil*—for being is convertible with good, and therefore anything outside of being itself would not be good. Thus the differentiations in creation would be contrary to God rather than his positive gift. This would be a terrible verdict on creatures, and there would be no positive similarity between God and creature.⁵⁴

Now this similarity in goodness is something of utmost importance to Pallavicino and characteristic of his particular brand of baroque optimism: it is not founded in *a priori* conceptual arguments, but in the *a posteriori* experience of concrete created and differentiated entities, by abstraction from which we may ascend to God. There is no innate concept of being from which we could begin. Before we encounter actual beings, we do not have a concept of either being *or* its negation; with regard to this concept, we are still like blind men hearing others talking of colour.⁵⁵ Moreover, against Henry of Ghent, God himself is not the *negation* of creaturely particularity, but its *totality*, as we will see shortly. If we do not begin with particular, positively existing entities and their goodness, then we implicitly or explicitly begin, like Henry of Ghent, with chimerical negations, and that is something that Pallavicino, like the whole Collegio Romano,

53 With looming dangers of ontologism and pantheism, as in Mangenot, in *Dieu*, from *DThC*, vol. 4, 911. Elizalde might be the apex of a rationalist *a priori* deduction of the faith. See Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 41.

54 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 46–47. In *DThC*, vol. 4, 911–912, Mangenot feels reminded of Spinoza's axiom that 'every determination is a negation' ('omnis determinatio est negatio').

55 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 48.

rejects throughout.⁵⁶ Negations presuppose positive realities, just as fictions or baroque virtual realities do, which prescind from reality: in *Arte della perfezion cristiana* ('The Art of Christian Perfection'), Pallavicino recounts how he suggested to the pope that a mere fly resembles him more than even Bernini's portrait statue—simply because it is real and not a fiction.⁵⁷

2 Pallavicino's Own Proofs

2.1 *Baroque Optimism and Our Mind*

Thus Pallavicino's optimism is different from the Perezian kind. Both proceed from God's goodness, but in Pallavicino, God's goodness and reliability are the basis for trusting our abilities to practise induction in the empirical sciences⁵⁸—i.e., trusting our *a posteriori* knowledge rather than our *a priori* deductive capacities.⁵⁹ What is truly innate is not an *a priori* knowledge of God, but an affective inclination, which is part of our nature and which will find its fulfilment only in God. Perez, too, had claimed this *a posteriori* element in support of his proof; the point is that our very nature in its inclinations cannot systematically and in principle be deceived. We cannot, for example, in the very principles of our conscience be inclined to desire an infinite good, which

56 E.g., there are no 'pure omissions' (on this important and celebrated question, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 168–198, 336–346, and Ramelow T., "Konträre oder kontradiktorische Freiheit: Gibt es reine Unterlassungen?" in *Leibniz und Europa. VI. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongreß* [Hannover: 1994] 613–620); negations are verified in positive *modi exclusivi*. This Pallavicino shares with Perez and the rest of the Collegio Romano. Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 230–250.

57 Pallavicino, *Arte della perfezion cristiana*, vol. 1 (Rome, Antonio Celsi: 1665) xiv, 72. The baroque taste for virtual realities is verisimilitude as a means to move us affectively, though one needs to know (philosophically?) that, like Zeno's paradoxes, they are only sophistries. Delbeke, "Art as Evidence" 343–347.

58 Knebel S.K., "Pietro Sforza Pallavicino's Quest for Principles of Induction", *The Monist* 84 (2001) 502–519. Pallavicino regularly argues against atomism—perhaps as a rival theory concerning *empirical* evidence.

59 In the analysis of the act of faith, Pallavicino is critical of Perez's *discerniculum experimentale* as a form of illuminism. Schlagenhaufen F., "Die Glaubensgewißheit und ihre Begründung in der Neuscholastik", *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 56.4 (1932) 530–595, at 589; Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 38–41. For empirical induction, on the other hand, as Knebel explains in "Induction" 514, Pallavicino uses some Augustinian illumination as well.

is a chimera. Hence we can conclude from a final cause or systemic telos to the very possibility of this end.⁶⁰

Pallavicino agrees with Perez, though he does not believe this conclusion itself to be *per se notum quoad nos*. Rather, this affective aspect with its implications is important to Pallavicino in disciplines that are not deductive in nature, namely in judgements of aesthetics and faith. For these are not deductive but require a real and sensual contact with reality.⁶¹ Still, both Pallavicino and Perez consider the beauty, order, and wonder of the world to be an incentive for the search for the ultimate good. They share a peculiar tendency to connect the true and the good, or intellect and will—a baroque, dynamic synthesis of rationality and sentiment, fuelled by the spirit of optimism.⁶²

2.2 *God and the Whole: 'Universal Nature'*

Given Pallavicino's empirical starting point, the notion of God that seems to him the first and most natural starting point is that of a 'universal nature'. Just as Aristotle thought it ridiculous having to prove that everything has a nature, so it seems most obvious to Pallavicino that the universe has a nature that appears in its order and coherence. Just as a machine by its design points to its maker, so the 'machine' of an animal or indeed of the whole universe points to its maker. But this notion might also allow for pantheist approaches, and Pallavicino will initially allow such ambiguities. Thus such a starting point can even encompass the errors of those who describe God as a 'world soul' (he quotes Virgil's 'the mind moves the matter' ['mens agitat molem']). The advantage is that such a notion is known to everyone, even atheists and Epicureans.⁶³ What in Aquinas is the fifth and final way to God becomes the starting point

60 Perez's conclusion, in *In Primam Partem* 9–10, is 'from the obvious effect of a final cause to the possibility of this end' ('ex effectu evidente causae finalis ad possibilitatem finis'). Esparza follows Perez; Mauro, Pallavicino's pupil, agrees and illustrates this with the example of gravity, yet he denies that it is *per se notum* that our centre of 'gravity' or inclination is God. See Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 44.

61 See Delbeke, "Art as Evidence" 345–346.

62 See Eschweiler K., "Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des 17. Jahrhunderts", in Finke H. (ed.), *Spanische Forschungen der Görresgesellschaft*, vol. 1: *Ges. Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens* (Münster: 1928) 251–325, at 300 and 282, who talks about the *practical* intellectualism of what he dubs 'baroque scholasticism'. See also Lewalter E., *Spanisch-jesuitische und deutsch-lutherische Metaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: 1935) 17. The image of a baroque apotheosis centres the subject ecstatically in something outside of itself, making it not the centre of the Renaissance paradigm of a circle but one focus of an ellipse—i.e., Kepler rather than Copernicus. See also Blumenberg H., *Die kopernikanische Wende* (Frankfurt: 1965) 151.

63 Pallavicino, *Assertio Theologicarum* 48–49.

for Pallavicino: he believes God's design to be more obviously displayed in the universe than his omnipotence;⁶⁴ it is from this design that everyone develops his first notions of God and 'that which', in Aquinas's phrase, 'everyone calls "God"' ('quod omnes dicunt deum'). Pallavicino otherwise agrees with Aquinas in his preference for *a posteriori* proofs. He develops his thought accordingly in commenting on Thomas's 'five ways'.⁶⁵ This conventional procedure distinguishes him from his colleague Perez, who mentions the five ways only in passing, and just so that nobody can object.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Pallavicino develops patterns of argument within his commentary that are specific to him, and not to Aquinas.⁶⁷ And they are *mereological* patterns, i.e., analyses of part and whole and their logic.

The definition just given—a 'universal nature'—already references a certain totality. And this initial notion anticipates what Pallavicino will propose as the quidditative concept of God, which also references a certain whole: 'that being, which equivalently contains every being' ('ens quod aequivalenter continet omne ens').⁶⁸ Moreover, throughout his commentary Pallavicino uses a mode of argumentation that is both inductive and mereological: after all, inductive methods⁶⁹ conclude from samples to the whole of a set—even though it will be a question when and where such conclusions are legitimate. This connects Pallavicino to more general developments of his day: statistics as an emerging field might illustrate the same form of thought, including aleatoric

64 Pallavicino, "Trattato sulla provvidenza", in *Opere edite ed inedite*, ed. O. Gigli, vol. 1 (Rome: 1844) 249–278. Though Pallavicino will, through the fictional interlocutor Perez, make clear that this order must not be confused with a world soul (which might be the danger when abstracting from omnipotence); the universe does not know decay, after all (*Ibid.* 251–252). On the other hand, it is not like a mechanical artifice that is somewhat violently imposed on the natural forms of its parts, but displays the infinite mind of someone who knows the interior connection of all the possibilities, essences and natures (253–254).

65 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 99–151.

66 Perez, *In Primam Partem* 13; Ceñal, "La existencia" 253.

67 They cannot be found in the commentary of his pupil Mauro.

68 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 167–70; see below.

69 Pallavicino connects the stability of nature with God's own stability (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 80). Though induction needs the support of some illumination: see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 207–208; Knebel, "Induction" 514; Knebel S.K., "Necessitas Moralis ad Optimum (III), Naturgesetz und Induktionsproblem in der Jesuitenscholastik während des 2. Drittels des 17. Jahrhunderts", *Studia Leibnitiana* 24.2 (1992) 182–215, at 203. Exceptions (miracles) cannot have a moral necessity, as discussed in Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 396. They would indeed contradict God's illumination—which can be allowed in exceptions, according to Knebel S.K., *Wille, Würfel und Wahrscheinlichkeit. Das System der moralischen Notwendigkeit in der Jesuitenscholastik 1550–1700* (Hamburg: 2000) 548–551.

theories and such distinctions as that between a 'distributive' and 'collective' sense (which will be discussed below). All of these were developed first in the Jesuit scholasticism of his day, including by Pallavicino himself.⁷⁰

2.3 *Contingency and Compositional Fallacies*

Pallavicino begins with a fundamental *a posteriori* argument that proceeds from contingent to necessary being—anticipating Aquinas's third way and moving it to the very beginning. Pallavicino will also add a certain complication to this argument: while—as an *a posteriori* proof—it begins with contingent being as that which is empirically given, this contingency itself is not obvious, but needs to be established first (perhaps against pantheist notions that consider the world itself to be the *ens necessarium*). Hence Pallavicino also cannot rely on his usual definition of contingent being as that which is indifferent to existence and non-existence, such that it needs a free will—i.e., that of the creator—to determine it to be on one rather than the other side of this disjunction.⁷¹ At this point such a definition would beg the question, for the existence of a creator is precisely that which is to be demonstrated. Contingency is rather implied in the fact that something is *not always*, that it comes or goes in time. And this kind of contingency is visible even to those who do not believe in God or who think that everything is ruled by fate rather than by free decisions.⁷² If something has a beginning in time (and hence is contingent), then its beginning must have a cause. And the cause of such a contingent being with a beginning in time cannot ultimately itself be contingent; otherwise we would end in an infinite regress. Therefore, there is a necessary being, namely God. It is in fact the beginning of philosophy to wonder about the origin of being; and in a Perezian moment, Pallavicino claims that such an innate quest for a First cannot be chimerical.

At this point, Pallavicino entertains an objection that has become more prominent in modern philosophy, from David Hume⁷³ to Bertrand Russell⁷⁴

70 See Knebel, *Wille, Würfel und Wahrscheinlichkeit*, and the same author's article in this volume.

71 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 21 and 128–129.

72 It corresponds in fact to the ancient system of modal logic that was replaced under the auspices of the notion of creation. See Hintikka J., "Aristotle on the Realization of Possibilities in Time", in Knuuttila S. (ed.), *Reforging the Great Chain of Being* (Dordrecht – Boston: 1981) 57–72.

73 Hume David, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (London, Robinson: 1779) 164–170 (part 9).

74 Russell's famous debate with a later Jesuit (F. Copleston) indeed rehearses a number of earlier Jesuit themes; see Russell B., *On God and Religion*, ed. A. Seckel (Buffalo: 1986) 123–146.

and onward: why could not the necessary being be *the world as a whole*, even though it consists individually of contingent beings? Perhaps the whole is greater than its parts? Pallavicino responds: it depends. In this particular case, this claim would constitute a ‘compositional fallacy’, but in other cases it would not. For in this case we can argue from the properties of the parts to the whole—from the ‘distributive’ sense to the ‘collective’ sense: if *each* part is contingent, then so will be the whole of *all* of them taken together. Similarly, if *each* part of a wall is white, then the *whole* wall will be white. In this case, the whole is not greater than the part. But this is not always true (compositional fallacies are informal fallacies, after all). A counterexample is that in a rotating ball all the parts are moving, but the ball as a whole is not; here we cannot conclude from the parts to the whole.⁷⁵ Pallavicino proceeds, interestingly, to develop mereological rules that allow us to distinguish one case from the other. He proposes that all cases where one cannot conclude from the parts to the whole, from the distributive to the collective sense, concern predicates of two kinds: negations and relations.

An example for negations is the predicate of ‘smallness’: all parts of Mount Olympus are small, but the mountain as a whole is not. The reason is: smallness implies a negation (in this case perhaps a kind of limitation), and this negation is taken away by the addition of like parts, (which would not be true in positive predicates). Likewise, in the case of the rotating ball every movement entails a dual negation: a negation of the present (it is not now where it was just before), and a negation of the past (it was not before where it is now).⁷⁶ But in the case of rotation this is cancelled out, because wherever a part is now, *another part of the whole* was before, and wherever that one was, another part will be. The negations are not transferred to the whole. Now Pallavicino claims that none of this is the case for the predicate of ‘contingency’.⁷⁷ The argument is not clear, but Pallavicino seems to suggest that the negation that is, after all, involved in contingency (some temporal parts are *not*) is not negated by anything that is in the whole.⁷⁸

An example for *relations* would be the relation of ‘being seen’: *each part* of a pile of things might be seen by one of ten observers; but it would not therefore be true that the *whole pile* is seen *as such*, by any *one* spectator. It is not a relation that indivisibly implies a respect towards the whole, but only towards the parts. There is something alike in each spectator in his relation to a part, but

75 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 61–65.

76 On such use of negations, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 242–243.

77 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 61–68.

78 *Ibid.* 72.

not in his relation to the whole. The beauty of the whole, for example, might not be visible to any of the spectators, since the parts of an ordered whole do not display that order itself.⁷⁹

Could this be the case at hand, the case of 'contingency'? After all, causality is a relation, and it might be that each contingent being has a cause, but not the whole. Thus contingent beings could cause each other, and if there is always *some* contingent cause (by temporal overlap), then this might be all that is needed. For the whole would then always exist and in this sense be necessary, at least in the temporal sense of necessity.⁸⁰

Pallavicino does not think so. For the argument is not *from* causality as a relational property, but *to* causality from something that is not itself a relational property but rather an intrinsic one, namely contingency. As intrinsic, contingency is a property rather like the whiteness of the wall. Hence the same property that permeates the parts also permeates the whole. A relation, on the other hand, would be a 'superadded' rather than an intrinsic feature.⁸¹ And even for the relation of causality Pallavicino has doubts: even if there could be just two contingent things that mutually cause each other's existence, then there would need to be a third cause for each of them and hence for their collection. For there is nothing in the parts that accounts for the existence of the whole, and if the whole of them needs a cause, then this cause cannot be identical with any of the parts.⁸²

2.4 *Order, Design, and Our Instinct for the Whole*

Moreover, there is one sense in which the whole as a whole requires a cause, and another in which it does not. Pallavicino distinguishes two kinds of causal series: an accidental one (*per accidens*) and one from features of design in nature (*ex intentione naturae*). The first, illustrated with Aristotle by a potentially infinite series of procreation, is not an overall ordered series. But the second (Pallavicino thinks of cases of design) requires an ordering cause of the whole. This is not the distinction of causal series that Aquinas appeals to, however; the second part of the distinction is concerned with *final* causes rather than efficient causes. Pallavicino refers here to the order of the universe

79 Ibid. 70–72.

80 A similar suggestion is made by Clarke N., *The Philosophical Approach to God* (New York: 2007) 42–44.

81 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 70–72.

82 Ibid. 73–75. This is similar in Mauro, *Opus Theologicum* 49a. Mereological counterarguments like that of Robert C. Koons ("A New Look at the Cosmological Argument", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 34 [1997] 193–211) are somehow anticipated by Pallavicino, though the argument is somewhat different.

and the natural cycle of seasons. With Aristotle, such regularities cannot be random (they are susceptible to scientific knowledge, after all) and therefore require a cause.⁸³ But since these regularities govern the *whole* of the collection, their organising cause cannot be one of its members.⁸⁴ Moreover, this cause needs to be outside of time, not only to keep the temporal parts in existence, but also to organise and govern them.⁸⁵

For Pallavicino, this insight appeals to a deep-seated instinct in the regularity of our own nature, whose reliability we can trust. This instinct also reliably supports our ability to predict events from inductive observation, including our prediction that the world as a collective whole is not suddenly going to disappear, even if some of its parts do.⁸⁶ This trust and expectation is supported by the assumption common to the Collegio Romano (and later Leibniz) that God by his nature is inclined (though not necessitated) to choose the best.⁸⁷ While (contrary to Leibniz) there is no highest finite good or universe, no best of all possible worlds (and God is therefore free), yet *within* the created order, he chooses everything according to the rule of the best.⁸⁸ If God is inclined to the best, then our own inclinations to assume the best are justified.

Our instinct related to the unified order of the whole would also support the assumption that there is not more than one God; otherwise the competition

83 Like poetry or St. Peter's Basilica, it cannot be the product of random processes, even in an infinite amount of time, as Mauro, *Opus Theologicum* 43b–45b, argues, even if, by God's design, there is a random layer in nature. See also Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 459–461.

84 The new seventeenth-century concept of laws of nature will make this argument even more cogent and it is introduced at the Collegio Romano, as discussed by Knebel, "Necessitas Moralis ad Optimum (III)" 192–201. Knebel also shows that Pallavicino, however, conceives of laws of nature as merely statistical, plus, on the observer's part, a subjective assurance and illumination by God (203). Pallavicino also finds it wondrous that, on the other hand, *variety* can come from such uniform causes (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 103–104).

85 Pallavicino discusses this at length in the context of Aquinas's first way (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 99–112). In addition, if God would be merely everlasting *in time*, he would have to cause his own continuance in existence (there is no 'existential inertia': if the first instant needs a cause, then the collection of all instants does, too); but nothing can cause its own existence (*Ibid.* 116–117).

86 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 75–82.

87 *Ibid.* 87–88; Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 372–419; Knebel S.K., "Necessitas Moralis ad Optimum (I), Zum historischen Hintergrund der Wahl der besten aller möglichen Welten", *Studia Leibnitiana* 23 (1991) 3–24. Pallavicino says, axiomatically, 'nature always intends the best that it is capable of' ('natura semper intendit perfectissimum quod potest') (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 145). On Pallavicino's take on Buridan's ass, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 161–168.

88 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 89–90.

of divine beings would threaten the order with chaos.⁸⁹ The universe would be like a flawed tragedy, in which there are only actors, but no poet to organise the plot.⁹⁰ Here indeed there would not be an argument from each member to the whole: the union of these presumed divine beings would not be more than their individual wills. They can only concur by accident, and are more likely to end up in the fights of the Homeric gods.⁹¹ This, however, would imply that each of them is unhappy, as well as that the highest good, that of the universe, would itself be contingent. And this, Pallavicino says in a Perezian manner, would be a contradiction, because contingency is itself a defect in goodness and hence would contradict the notion of the *highest good*.⁹²

God as the highest good also needs to be infinite and self-sufficient. Again, Pallavicino argues mereologically: a collection containing God and creation cannot be more than God alone.⁹³ Creation does not add to God's perfection, as one cannot add to infinity. There is an incongruity between whole and part in that a whole of something finite and something infinite is itself infinite. The best cannot be made better by additional parts, contrary to what Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (?–1332) claims for the Incarnation—nor indeed worse, as Perez claims for the same event.⁹⁴

Similarly, Pallavicino's analysis of Aquinas's first way (from motion) gives a mereological reading to the impossibility of an infinite regress in causation: it is not so much that God is the first in the sequence of causes, but that the whole

89 Ibid. 85–86, 91. Similarly, Perez and Estrix, in Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 42–43.

90 Pallavicino (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 107) and Mauro (*Opus Theologicum* 47b–48a, 49b–50a) like this aesthetic metaphor of Aristotle (*Metaphysica* XIV).

91 Democracies tend towards anarchy, with neither physical nor moral principle of unity: nobody can be forced to enter the social contract. God, like a monarch, needs to precede such a contract. Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 119–121; Mauro, *Opus Theologicum* 50a.

92 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 89–92. He adds with Aquinas that whatever would distinguish perfect beings among each other would have to be something imperfect—which implies a contradiction (Ibid. 94–95).

93 Mauro, *Opus Theologicum* 51b, speaks of God as part of a 'universitas rerum'; this sounds more like our *contemporary* idea of possible worlds—of which God may be part or not.

94 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 93–94; Perez, in Ibid. 189, claimed this because of the imperfection of creatures which therefore leave God free to become creature or become incarnate. Pallavicino will argue that only the *bonum cui* (that for which something is good) is enhanced by additions, but in accidental wholes there is only a *bonum quod* (and here an angel and a dog are better than an angel alone). However, in the case of God and creature, even the *bonum quod* of this accidental whole is not better than God alone (who is, after all, the part of the whole that causes the whole) (Ibid. 186–191).

series rerum collectively needs a cause.⁹⁵ Other than this, Pallavicino goes far beyond Aquinas's topic, explaining how new beginnings are compatible with an unchanging God, just as regularities are compatible with an eternally free cause.⁹⁶ Throughout his commentary, and contrary to Aquinas, who limits this aspect of regularity to the fifth way, Pallavicino mixes in *final* causality, perhaps in accord with his baroque optimism.

2.5 *Quantifier Shift?*

For Aquinas's third way Pallavicino's mereological interest anticipates a common contemporary objection to Aquinas: that of the fallacy of a quantifier shift.⁹⁷ Aquinas seems to argue that, if *each* of the things is contingent individually, and contingency implies temporary non-existence, then *all*—the *whole*—will cease to exist eventually. But then there would be no cause to 'jumpstart' the whole again (given a lack of overlapping causes), unless indeed there is a first and necessary cause that keeps it in being. Hence Aquinas argues from the possibility of *each* thing's non-existence to the actuality of the non-existence of *all* things at some time. Is this a fallacy? Again, it depends. For example, it is precisely on atheist presuppositions that one would need to assume the eternity of the world (or else what would begin it?); but in an infinite amount of time, infinitely many possible permutations of the universe would occur—one of them being the simultaneous non-existence of all things. And since an infinite amount of time has already elapsed, this should already have happened and hence we should not be here.⁹⁸

Pallavicino notes how this reasoning would vindicate his earlier argument from contingency. For there are two kinds of contingency: 1) the possibility of being and non-being at *different* times, and 2) the possibility of being and non-being at the *same* time. We recall that the temporal contingency (1) was Pallavicino's initial starting point, because the synchronic contingency (2) depended for his definition on the free choice of a first cause, thereby begging the question of God's existence and his free choice.⁹⁹ The present argu-

95 Ibid. 101–102, and similarly Mauro, *Opus Theologicum* 48a. Pallavicino (e.g., *Assertionum Theologicarum* 186–187) in fact repeatedly relates cause and effect like whole and part. For more, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 426–430.

96 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 99–112.

97 E.g., Kenny A., *The Five Ways* (New York: 1969) 56.

98 This is the way Pallavicino takes it (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 122).

99 Which is indeed its historical origin, usually attributed to Duns Scotus, as in, for example, Knuuttila S., *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (London – New York: 1993); Dumont S.D., "The Origin of Scotus' Theory of Synchronic Contingency", *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995) 149–167; MacDonald S., "Synchronic Contingency, Instants of Nature, and Libertarian Freedom: Comments on 'The Background of Scotus's Theory of Will'",

ment makes clear that, nonetheless, the temporal contingency of the parts implies the logical contingency of the whole, as dependent on a free cause. A whole with temporally contingent parts cannot be a logically necessary being. All actual, contingent beings taken together are not therefore 'disjunctively necessary'.¹⁰⁰

Pallavicino also notes that therefore even the regular temporal distribution of the parts does not affect their contingency: they might occur regularly, as if by the necessity of the laws of nature (or the heavens), and yet still be contingent.¹⁰¹ For the underlying distribution is *logical* and synchronic rather than temporal—the non-successive possibilities of being and non-being and their distribution. This distribution is that of a vague or distributive *necessity*: logically, one side *must* be true, according to the principle of the excluded middle. Yet which side this is cannot be determined by any random or other procedures, but only by an intelligent and free cause that is itself indifferent with regard to either side, yet that can choose among them.¹⁰² This being must itself be a necessary being, as the foundation and eternal *verificativum* of this disjunctive necessity. At the same time, it cannot be the eternal necessity of mathematical entities, since these do not have free choice (they are causally inert and cannot determine anything to start contingently anew),¹⁰³ but would bring forth everything *more geometrico*.

2.6 *Maximum and Minimum*

The commentary on the fourth way does not employ mereological arguments, but distinguishes quantitative measures that do not have a maximum (ultimately because they always involve imperfection, *qua* quantity), but are measured by their minimum (the basic unit). However, in 'heterogeneous' things, that is, graded qualities such as perfections, there cannot be such a minimum. There can always be something less (the lowest can always have an accident or effect that is by definition less; they can infinitely peter out). Nor can their measure consist in pure nothingness, because this always presupposes something

The Modern Schoolman 72 (1995) 169–174; Williams T., "The Libertarian Foundations of Scotus's Moral Philosophy", *The Thomist* 62 (1998) 193–215; Liske M.T., "Muß man, um einen Indeterminismus zu rechtfertigen, mit Duns Scotus eine gleichzeitige Möglichkeit zum Gegenteil fordern?" *Theologie und Philosophie* 78.3 (2003) 339–367.

100 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 129–130.

101 Though God, according to Pallavicino, would not usually change the laws of nature or annihilate beings that are relatively necessary such as angels, it does remain a logical possibility (*Ibid.* 131–132).

102 *Ibid.* 124–129.

103 According to Aristotle (*Metaphysica* XII), such also would be a multiplicity of principles. Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 82–85, 102–103, 133–134.

positive which is more perfect and therefore the true measure. Hence, they must be measured by a maximum that instantiates their meaning perfectly, and that is God. Though Pallavicino reminds us that even if God exemplifies the meaning perfectly, we do not have a clear and distinct notion of this infinite being, but only a *notio confusa*.¹⁰⁴

2.7 *A Mind for the Whole*

Pallavicino's treatment of the fifth way, finally, is rather odd. Here we would expect him to speak at length about final causality. But he has done so earlier (especially on the first way). Rather, he speaks of the fact that all things are interconnected, of the 'order and connection of all natural effects among each other' ('ordo et connexio effectuum naturalium inter se'), something dear to the Collegio Romano as well as to Leibniz.¹⁰⁵ Just as for Leibniz all things are laden with the whole past (and pregnant with the future), so for Pallavicino the present is the sum total of past causalities. And hence another mereological interpretation offers itself: for how can the totality of the past causes be effective now, if they are indeed in the past? The whole as a whole is only present through a mind, and that is the mind of God. Just as our mind can partially remember and retain the past in 'intentional being' (*esse intentionale*), so the past can be totally present in the mind of God.¹⁰⁶ And God is a *present* cause, so he is the only cause that can make it possible that the sum total of all partial causes of the past is effective now.¹⁰⁷

While this does not reference final causes, for Pallavicino this mind of God is also ordering all things to itself as the final good of the universe—which, qua mind, is their *truth*. Every evil is therefore tantamount to deceit. Now God can allow such evil in the order of the universe as an occasion for merit and virtue (or else we would become lazy).¹⁰⁸ And as such, evil is not just the result of a pure omission of God, or a mere accident, but rather within the intention of God. Only the evil of *sin* cannot be directly willed by God, not even as a *means*;

104 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 146–148.

105 Here and in Pallavicino we also find it rooted in God's indivisible 'total decree' for the universe. See Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 419–465; B. Des Bosses s.J. (1668–1738) refers to Leibniz, who explains astrology and chiromancy by his pre-established harmony to Pallavicino, in Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 36.

106 Jesuits also use this *esse intentionale* to explain divine foreknowledge; see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 83–86. For Pallavicino it is the locus of the infinite merits and prayers of Christ, according to which they can have (retroactive) effects in the past; and here there is an element of final causality, after all: Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 409–410.

107 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 149–150. One wonders whether this is a form of occasionalism, given contemporary versions thereof in Malebranche and others.

108 *Ibid.* 152–154.

it can only be permitted as a *side effect* of greater goods (i.e., the principle of double effect, attacked by Pascal).¹⁰⁹ A mereological analysis of good and evil in the universe might offer itself, but Pallavicino does not pursue it here.¹¹⁰ Still, this whole is present in the *esse intentionale* of God's mind, a mind occupied with the totalities of possible worlds.¹¹¹

2.8 *Who is God?*

Who, then, is God, after all these explorations? Though not *notum per se*, we might now be in the position to offer a quidditative definition (at least *quoad nos*), Pallavicino suggests. The concept that we are looking for cannot be relative or negative, and it must be of the highest perfection (the best possible predicates). Like the universal concept of being which must be able to accompany all our acts of knowing, so God must be the most comprehensive of all beings. In other words: he is a totality of all of these 'parts', though in this case the whole is definitely more than all parts, since all that is relative or negative is negated. Pallavicino proposes as the quidditative concept of God: 'that being, which equivalently contains every being' ('ens quod aequivalenter continet omne ens'). God's perfection is to be the equivalence or totality of all beings taken together—again, a mereological definition.¹¹² This totality, of course, would exist in utter simplicity, without parts, for out of finite and imperfect parts, no infinite whole can emerge. Here it would be a compositional fallacy to conclude from the parts to the whole (finitude implies a negation).¹¹³ And yet the whole is not more than the parts by any added difference: God is *equivalent* to all differences; he does not *add* another one. Yet being the equivalent

109 Ibid. 156–161.

110 Unlike the Perezian school: 'Parts taken separately I indeed conceded not to be the best; but since parts are for the sake of the whole, as every faculty supposes and teaches, that which is chiefly in them is that they are parts. Thus, God cannot make better parts than he in fact makes, although the whole out of such better parts would without doubt be better' ('Partes quidem separatim acceptas concessi non optimas; at cum partes sint propter totum, ut omnis facultas supponit et tradit, in eis potissimum illud est, quod partes sint; sic vero nec partes meliores facere potuit Deus, quam fecit: cum totum meliorum partium melius sit procul dubio'). de Elizalde Miguel, *Forma verae religionis quaerendae et inveniendae* (Naples, apud Hyacinthum passerum: 1662) 502–503.

111 For the origin of this notion, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 410.

112 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 167–170. Similarly, Mauro calls 'that which contains the whole of being' ('continens totum esse') God's *haecceitas*: Mauro, *Opus Theologicum* 55a.

113 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 191–192.

(in simplicity) is itself *distinctive* of him.¹¹⁴ Not in spite of but because of his mereological approach, Pallavicino is not a pantheist.

2.9 A Final, Deductive Step

Now from this definition, Pallavicino attempts to *deduce* all other attributes of God. In other words: once he has arrived at this notion of God *a posteriori*, Pallavicino can finally proceed *a priori* as well and deduce further notions, such as omnipotence, eternity, omnipresence, simplicity, and immutability.¹¹⁵ In fact, he believes that this procedure is necessary: if we want to arrive at notions of God as the first cause that are not tainted by the imperfection of the effects from which we begin the argument, then we need to supplement them with *a priori* proofs. In other words, Pallavicino might be the first to anticipate Kant's argument that all the *a posteriori* proofs ultimately presuppose the ontological proof.¹¹⁶ The equivalence of the whole of things (God) is, after all, greater than all the particular entities or effects taken together—which is true only for an infinite whole or cause.¹¹⁷ God therefore transcends the entities and effects from which the *a posteriori* proof begins; he is not entirely reached by them. We therefore need a quidditative concept of God in order to deduce his infinite perfections. And so, whatever is true of the ontological proof remains part of the whole of Pallavicino's proof, in spite of his initial misgivings. Still, for Pallavicino all this does not have the consequences that Kant draws from it; it merely indicates a complementarity of the two kinds of proofs. For Pallavicino it means that our hearts are restless until they rest in a perfect conception of God.

And this notion might after all imply the very existence of God: for if God did not exist, then he would not be 'equivalent to all things'. And if there is a totality of all things, then God must be equivalent to it; he must exist by definition (though that definition is not *per se notum*). It is here that Pallavicino adds a final twist to his argument, namely, that there *must* be a totality of all things. For it is *per se notum* that *there cannot be a negation of all things*, since *all things*

114 Ibid. 193–194. Mauro, in *Opus Theologicum* 64b, perhaps overreacting to Scotus, goes so far as to say that this implies that God punishes by his mercy and wills by his intellect, and his love includes the perfect hate by which he hates all that is to be hated.

115 Pallavicino insists that the terms used, 'ens', 'omnia', and 'aequivalere', are 'most known' ('notissimum') and therefore *first* notions (*Assertionum Theologicarum* 172–173).

116 Ibid. 182–184. See also Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* B 634–635. Ceñal, in "La existencia" 276 and 324, finds the same thought in Cardinal Tolomei—also of the Collegio Romano, but much later than Pallavicino, who therefore might count as the originator of this thought.

117 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 185–187.

have a *necessity* to exist, at least taken disjunctively and vaguely: according to the principle of the excluded middle, contingent things *necessarily* do either exist or not exist. And this necessity as an eternal truth has its foundation and eternal truth maker in a God who thinks it and whose free choice is the root of this contingency.¹¹⁸ The totality of necessary possibilities can only exist in God, who is equivalent to everything.¹¹⁹ Perhaps we may say that, in this sense, God is the *omnitudo realitatum*. Kantian though this phrase may sound, here Pallavicino is home again at the Collegio Romano, even if only after a long discursive way: God is the ontological foundation of the objective truth of all disjunctive necessities of existence, whose actuality is determined by God's choices—choices that, though free, will in some way always be for the best.

3 Conclusion

Pallavicino's thought is characterised by many surprising 'baroque' twists and turns. He shares some of these ingenious dialectics with his colleague Perez. Nevertheless, his speculative *ingenium* prefers to take its starting point from more empirical, inductive, and *a posteriori* starting points (perhaps indicating a distinct Italian school at the Collegio Romano). Because of his inductive approach, Pallavicino's mode of argument is frequently mereological, arguing from the '*part-iculars*' to the whole, while always securing itself against possible compositional fallacies. Since God in this way becomes the ultimate whole of all things, Pallavicino might seem in danger of coming too close to pantheism (*natura universalis*). Still, his ultimate conceptualisation of God as a whole will also recapture his simplicity and perfection, and in such a way that God remains distinct from his creation.

With his own age and environment, Pallavicino shares a certain baroque optimism regarding the goodness and well-orderedness of creation, but also regarding our mind—for both object and subject. Our minds can be trusted as being ordered to the goodness of the external world (i.e., God is not a deceiver, Pallavicino might say like his contemporary Descartes). Likewise, our inclinations, including our affective inclinations, point us to a good God about whom we cannot ultimately be mistaken. They point us to a God who is not only good but also the root of all logical and eternal truths that we find in our minds (one of the Augustinian elements in Pallavicino). God is therefore accessible mostly

118 On this theory, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl* 322.

119 Pallavicino, *Assertionum Theologicarum* 173–174.

in his goodness and truth, more than in his power and omnipotence or as a voluntaristically conceived first efficient cause of the universe.

While much of this will connect Pallavicino with his own age, he is also surprisingly 'modern' in that some of his ideas antedate later thinkers such as Immanuel Kant and Alexius Meinong, and in that he anticipates contemporary arguments combining the modal logic of necessity and contingency with mereological questions of compositional fallacies and quantifier shifts. Beyond merely historical interest, Pallavicino deserves our continued attention.