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From the Middle Ages Back to Antiquity: The Reception of the Idea of Dynamic Unity in the Gospel of John as Entanglement of Intellectual Traditions

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Abstract: This article studies Albert the Great’s conception of reciprocal interiority in the exposition of John 14:10: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works” (Bible quotes from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)). Firstly, the article explores how Albert the Great understands reciprocal interiority as an element of the debate concerning the equality of the Father and of the Son, who, although identical in nature, are different according to the relation, like the one who begets and the one who is begotten. Secondly, it emphasizes the metaphysical solution that Albert borrows from Greek-Arabic neoplatonism, especially from the *Liber de causis*, so as to refute an objection based on Aristotle’s conception of place. This cultural transfer brings to light how Albert the Great’s *Super Johannem* is an innovative melting pot in which Albert imports a new framework from profane sciences, with which to interpret the Gospel of John.

Keywords: Albert the Great, Meister Eckhart, Gospel of John, Neoplatonism, dynamic unity

1 Introduction

To approach the work of Albert the Great, let us begin by adopting a historically later point of view, so as to provide a broader context. Let us observe the

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interpretation deployed, after him, by one of his German Dominican confrères on the topic of reciprocal interiority in the Gospel of John. When he comments on the reciprocal interiority of the Son in the Father and of the Father in the Son in John 15:1–11,¹ Meister Eckhart focuses on the theory of operation that he formulates by means of the paradigm of the Just and justice²: The Just is in justice and justice is in the Just, as far as everything that the Just is and operates, as much as he is just, comes from justice. Thereby, Meister Eckhart builds a model of operation that entails a unique formal cause, justice, which operates through the mediations. These just mediations are identical in their own being with the principal cause, justice. They operate, namely, through the Being that they receive from the formal cause. That is why to act justly or to do just work means, for the just mediations, to be in act identical to their own principle, that is justice in act which causes their operations. Yet, this identity is not static, but is to be understood as a dynamic identity that cannot be expressed unless the one keeps on dynamically relating to the other. Indeed, this dynamic identity is not only a mere relationality, it also entails that the one is in the other and reciprocally so: Just in justice and justice in the Just.

To introduce his reader to the conception of the dynamic identity expressed by the reciprocal interiority in John 15:1–11, Meister Eckhart borrows a hermeneutical tool from Maimonides and refers his reader to the explanation of other preceding verses, without making which ones explicit.³ I call this tool the hermeneutical reciprocal interiority: “It should be noted that what is contained in this chapter evidently attests a great deal of what has been said above. And, from that, what is said here can be explained.”⁴ Thus, Eckhart invites his reader to look for the earlier explanation of what is comprised in John 15:1-11 in the exposition of the verses that

1 See Julie Casteigt, “Le lieu, principe d’individualisation ou d’intériorité réciproque dans le commentaire johannique de Maître Eckhart?” In *Performing Bodies. Time and Space in Meister Eckhart and in the Performances and Video Installations of Taery Kim*, Eckhart: Texts and Studies 6, eds. Christopher Wojtulewicz and Jutta Vinzent (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2016), 115–141.

2 For bibliographical references on the paradigm of the Just and justice and its philosophical interpretation, see Julie Casteigt, *Métaphysique et connaissance testimoniale. Une lecture figurale du Super Iohannem (John 1,7) d’Albert le Grand*, Eckhart: Texts and Studies 11 (Leuven, Paris and Bristol, Connecticut: Peeters, 2019), 453, n. 18.

3 See Alain de Libera, *La Philosophie médiévale*, Premier Cycle (Paris: PUF, 1993), 215.

4 Meister Eckhart, *Expositio sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*, n. 623, ed. and trans. von Karl Christ, Bruno Decker, Josef Koch, Heribert Fischer, Loris Sturlese and Albert Zimmermann, *Die lateinischen Werke III* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), p. 543, l. 3-4: “*Notandum quod contenta in hoc capitulo manifeste testificantur plura ex his quae supra dicta sunt, et quae hic dicuntur, ex illis possunt exponi.*”

include a quotation⁵ of John 15:4-5⁶: “Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”⁷ In particular, those which formulate more precisely the idea of reciprocal interiority. Although the reader is, once again, referred back to the explanation of a network of other verses,⁸ through which Eckhart expresses some common theoretical principles about the operative model that corresponds, for him, to reciprocal interiority. In this way, Eckhart makes his reader experiment, on a hermeneutical level, with what reciprocal interiority means on the level of the theory of operation.

In this article, I shall focus on Albert’s interpretation of reciprocal interiority⁹ in John 14:10 – “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.”¹⁰ – to show the extent to which Eckhart has in some manner changed and radicalized the elements of the Albertian comprehension of this notion. Albert understands reciprocal interiority as identity of nature and difference of relation between the Father and the Son, that is, in terms of equality.¹¹ The overriding aim in this article is to highlight how Albert solves the philosophical problems that reciprocal interiority raises by appealing to other cultural and

5 For example, John 1:4; John 14:10 for a quotation of verse John 15:4 and John 8:34; John 14:8; John 14:12 for a quotation of John 15:5.

6 John 15:4 in *Biblia cum glossa ordinaria*, t. IV (Strasbourg: Adolph Rusch, 1480-1481), p. 1050 b: “Sicut palmes non potest ferre fructum a semetipso, nisi manserit in vite, sic nec vos, nisi in me manseritis.” For John 15:5, see Meister Eckhart, *Sermones et Lectiones super Ecclesiastici cap. 24, 23-31*, n. 67, ed. and trans. von Josef Koch and Heribert Fischer, *Die lateinischen Werke II* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), p. 297, l. 4-6.

7 Trans. NRSV.

8 For an interpretation of these verses and of the function of Eckhart’s quotation from Maimonides, see Julie Casteigt, “Denken in Bildern und durch Bilder: Eckharts Einssein im Anderen.” *Divus Thomas* 122:2 (2019): 265–95.

9 For recent bibliographical references on the topic of reciprocal interiority in theological debates on *circumincessio* or *perichôsis*, see in particular the excellent book by Emmanuel Durand, *La Périchôse des personnes divines: Immanence mutuelle, réciprocité et communion*, Cogitatio fidei 243 (Paris: Cerf, 2005).

10 I quote the Latin version that Albert reads from the critical edition of Albert’s *Super Iohannem* (Ioh. 1, 1-18), Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem* (Ioh. 1, 1-18), in 1:1, Eckhart: Texts and Studies 10, ed. Julie Casteigt (Leuven, Paris and Bristol, Connecticut: Peeters, 2019), 16, l. 14-16: “non creditis quia”: ‘Ego in Patre, et Pater in me est. Verba que locutus sum uobis a meipso non loquor. Pater autem in me manens, ipse facit opera’. Trans. NRSV.

11 Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Iohannem*, in 5:18-32, Ed. Paris. XXIV, eds. A. & Æ. Borgnet (Paris: Vivès, 1899), 211a–223b; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 14:9, Ed. Paris. XXIV, pp. 533b–534a; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 14:12, pp. 535b–536a.

philosophical traditions, in particular to the *Liber de causis*, an anonymous treatise composed in Baghdad in the ninth century in the circle of neoplatonic philosopher, Al-Kindi, and translated into Latin in Toledo in the twelfth century. Notably, he uses proposition XI (XII)¹² of the *Liber de causis*, which reads as follows: “Of all the principles, some are in others on the mode in which it is permissible for one of them to be in the other. In Being there is Life and Intelligence, and in Life there is Being and Intelligence, and in Intelligence there is Being and Life.”¹³ Proposition XI (XII) is a reformulation of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*¹⁴ and bears some similarity to Porphyry’s *Sentences*. Thus, this proposition can be traced back to Greek neoplatonism. His loan from Greek neoplatonism and its Arabic mediations leads Albert to depart from Christian Trinitarian dogma, as hitherto conceptualized, in pursuit of a solution to conceive of the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son. More precisely, Albert departs from the position of the Dominican school, his own religious order, on the Trinitarian production. While distinguishing several theories on Trinity – the relation account, the emanation account and the psychological model – Russell L. Friedman highlights that the Dominican school was “relegating emanation to the background.”¹⁵ That is not, in my eyes, what Albert does in relation to the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son in his exegesis of John 14:10. He explicitly interprets the Trinitarian generation as a flow. Thus, the Albertian commentary on the Gospel of John appears to be a creative melting pot in which Albert hybridizes several traditions of thought that he has not otherwise mixed in his theological treatises.

In this article, I shall not undertake a literal commentary of Albert’s whole exegesis of John 14:10; instead, I would like to situate this essay in the broader context of some exegetical questions that the narrative dimension of this verse raises. In his *Summa Theologiae*,¹⁶ Albert deals with the question of the total and reciprocal interiority of the divine persons in the Trinity and compares it to the

12 Of the 237 Latin handwritten witnesses, 48 divided proposition IV into two propositions, so that the following propositions were designated by a double number. See also Cristina d’Ancona, “Le fonti e la struttura del *Liber de causis*.” *Medioevo* 15 (1989), 1–38, esp. p. 2, n. 5.

13 *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa* [henceforth abbreviated as DCPU], lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Editio Coloniensis XVII/2, ed. Winfridus Fauser (Münster: Aschendorff, 1993), 124, l. 74–5: “*Primorum omnium quaedam sunt in quibusdam per modum quo licet ut sit unum eorum in alio. Quod est quia in esse sunt vita et intelligentia, et in vita sunt esse et intelligentia, et in intelligentia sunt esse et vita.*”

14 See Cristina d’Ancona, “Le fonti e la struttura del *Liber de causis*.” *Medioevo* 15 (1989), 1–38.

15 Russell L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University: The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250-1350*, vol. 1, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 108/1 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 572.

16 Albertus Magnus, *Super I librum Sententiarum. Distinctiones 1-3*, d. 3, cap. 2-4, Ed. Colon. XXIX/1, ed. Maria Burger (Kohlhammer: Aschendorff, 2015), 93, l. 14-122, l. 15.

reciprocal interiority of their image in the human being, namely, the faculties of the soul, according to Augustine.¹⁷ However, in the context of the Gospel of John, Albert does not refer to the debate that he develops about Augustine's arguments in *Summa Theologiae*. The narrative dimension of the Gospel of John implies another elaboration of the problem of reciprocal interiority. The narrative context of the 14th chapter embeds this interiority in another set of problematics than the resemblances and dissimilarities of the totality that the divine persons form, on the one hand, and the totality that the faculties of the soul constitute, on the other. Reciprocal interiority is, namely, employed by Jesus as an argument for the validity of a testimony in a trial in a cultural Hebraic context. Thus, the question is no longer, as in the case in the *Summa Theologiae*, whether the faculties of the soul are totally and reciprocally in each other like the persons of the Trinity, but is rather whether the reader or the protagonists of the narration whom Jesus addresses can give their assent to the following propositions:

Firstly, from a juridical point of view, can Jesus be his own witness against the rules of the book of Deuteronomy that states that there should be at least two witnesses in a trial?¹⁸

Secondly, from an ontological point of view, is it possible to accept the reason that Jesus gives for the validity of his self-testimony, namely that he is, by nature, identical to God, who is his Father, but that, as a Son, he differs from his Father, from the point of view of relation, as the one who is generated differs from the one who generates?¹⁹ Can the Father bear witness in favor of the Son?²⁰

Thirdly, to the one who would ask when the Father testified for the Son, Jesus' argument in the Gospel of John prompts a further question: From the point of view of the theory of operation, is the cause of the Son's operations the Father who gives him his Being and his capacity to act, that is its virtue [*virtus*], so that the Son makes his Father known through his own operations?²¹

Fourthly, from the point of view of the confession, or faith, of the ones who receive the testimony of the Son in favor of the Father and of the Father in favor of

17 See bibliographical indications in Julie Casteigt, "The self as *totum potestativum* in Albert the Great's works: How does a cultural transfer lead to a dynamic conception of identity?" In *Religious Individualisation: Historical Dimensions and Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Martin Fuchs, Antje Linkenbach, Martin Mulsow, Bernd-Christian Otto, Rahul Bjørn Parson, and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019), 345–59.

18 See Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 5:18, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 211a; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 5:31-47, p. 221a; 222b–233b; *ibid.*, in 14:10, p. 535 ab.

19 See also Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 5:18, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 211a; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 10:34-36, p. 428 ab.

20 See Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 5:37-38, Ed. Paris. XXIV, 226b–227a.

21 See Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 10:37-38, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 428–429b; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 14:9, p. 533–534b.

the Son, can the only works which are supposed to be operated by the Father, through the Son, bear sufficient witness to the identity of Jesus as identical to the nature of the Father?²²

In this article, I shall neither address the interlacing of these problematics in the narration of the Gospel of John, nor their interpretation by Albert. Instead, I shall concentrate on the neoplatonic influence on Albert's interpretation of reciprocal interiority as equality of the Father and of the Son, and, more particularly, as identity of nature and difference of relation in the exegesis of John 14:10. Thereby, I would like to highlight that, in Albert's *Super Iohannem*, these linguistic, cultural and religious transfers that lead from Greece to Spain, through the capital of the Abassidian empire, provide one of the first commentators of the *Liber de causis* in the Latin world, namely Albert the Great, the conceptual instruments to conceive of a relation that could not be understood with the concepts of Aristotelian physics or of Augustine's theory of the soul, namely the reciprocal interiority of the Father and the Son. These Greek-Arabic conceptual tools provide the impetus for him to revisit the exegesis of the Gospel of John, resulting in a philosophically and theologically creative exegetical commentary.

Why is a philosophical approach to Albert's exegesis of John 1:14 an appropriate method? There are several reasons for the commentaries of the Gospel of John to be occasions for philosophical and theological innovation and hybridization. On the one hand, the Gospel of John has been read by the philosophical tradition as a speculative treatise,²³ in particular by virtue of its genesis, especially in its Prologue, that has historically been conceived of as reflecting the influence of

²² See Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Iohannem*, in 5:36, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 225–226b; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 14:12, p. 535b.

²³ On the tradition of philosophical commentaries on the Gospel of John, see, Jan Gabriel van der Watt, R. Alan Culpepper, and Udo Schnelle, eds., *The Prologue of the Gospel of John. Its Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Contexts. Papers read at the Colloquium Ioanneum 2013*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 359 (WUNT 359) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016); Udo Schnelle, "Philosophische Interpretation des Johannesevangeliums. Voraussetzungen, Methoden und Perspektiven." In *The Prologue of the Gospel of John. Its Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Contexts. Papers read at the Colloquium Ioanneum 2013*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 359 (WUNT 359), eds. Jan Gabriel van der Watt, R. Alan Culpepper, and Udo Schnelle (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 159–87; Fabrizio Amerini, ed., *'In Principio erat Verbum'. Philosophy and Theology in the Commentaries of the Gospel of John (II-XIV Century)*, vol. 11. *Archa Verbi. Subsidia* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2014); Joachim Ringleben, *Das Philosophische Evangelium. Theologische Auslegung des Johannesevangeliums im Horizont des Sprachdenkens*, HUZTh 64 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); Markus Enders and Rolf Kühl, "Im Anfang war der Logos ...". *Studien zur Rezeptionsgeschichte des Johannesprologs von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Forschungen zur europäischen Geistesgeschichte 11 (Freiburg, Basel and Vienna: Herder, 2011); Ruedi Imbach, "La Filosofia nel prologo di S. Giovanni secondo S. Agostino, S. Tommaso e Meister Eckhart," *Studi* 1995, a cura di Dietrich Lorenz O.P. & Stefano Serafini (Roma: Istituto San Tommaso, Pontificia Università S. Tommaso d'Aquino), pp. 161–82.

Middle Platonism, especially that found in Philo of Alexandria. On the other hand, from the point of view of the *translatio studiorum*, that is to say the transfer of the *corpora* of philosophical texts, the commentaries on the Gospel of John, especially Albert the Great's *Super Iohannem*, are essential milestones in the reception of neo- and middle Platonism and of the philosophy of medieval Islam. Finally, the place and function of the commentaries on the Gospel of John in the economy of medieval knowledge constitutes one of the major reasons why I consider the Johannine *corpus* to be a fundamental place for medieval speculative invention. The exegesis of the Gospel of John is the culmination of syntheses by a medieval author of various kinds of knowledge that he was able to access throughout a career spanning his lifetime at the Faculty of Arts.

Moreover, from the point of view of the articulation of exegesis and theology with other intellectual and cultural traditions, contrary to the historiographical interpretation of Étienne Gilson,²⁴ Albert does not tie the so-called profane works which he draws on to a theological dogma, his predominant aim is not building a "Christian philosophy." On the contrary, a precise reading of his *Super Iohannem* shows that the profane sciences provide him with a new framework for the understanding of the Gospel message itself.

This article proceeds in the following way: firstly, I analyze how Albert synthesizes his interpretation of the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son as their equality in order to explain John 14:10. Secondly, I examine how he formulates the objection related to Aristotle's conception of place. Thirdly, I follow the hypothesis that Albert solves the Aristotelian objection having implicit recourse to the neoplatonic notion of flow [*fluxus*] and to the *Liber de causis*. In particular, Albert interprets the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son according to the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis*.²⁵

2 Reciprocal Interiority as Equality of the Father and of the Son

In the first step of his exegesis of John 14:10, Albert clarifies his comprehension of the reciprocal interiority that Philip and the disciples, who are implicitly

²⁴ Étienne Gilson, *L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, Études de philosophie médiévale (Paris: Vrin, 1998), chh. 1-2, pp. 1–38.

²⁵ On Albert's commentary on the *Liber de causis*, see Alain de Libera, "Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin, interprètes du *Liber de causis*." *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 74 (1990), 347–78; and Alain de Libera, *Albert le Grand et la philosophie*, À la recherche de la vérité, (Paris: J. Vrin, 1990), 116–77.

designated by the second person of plural (*creditis*), do not acknowledge. Let us introduce the two main points of this passage, before we read them. Firstly, that the Son is in the Father means that the Son has the unique nature of the Father, which, as a Son, he receives. Secondly, that the Father is in the Son means that the Father is the author of the divine generation by which he communicates the divine nature to the Son:

“You do not believe that I am in the Father etc.,” as if he were saying: If “you do not believe” – it is astonishing – “that I <am> in the Father” as one nature received from the Father, “and” <that> “the Father is in me,” as the author of the divine generation who communicates his nature to me.²⁶

The first point is that Albert understands the interiority of the Son in the Father consubstantially, that is as an identity of nature. He makes clear that this identity does not cancel out the difference of relation between the Father who gives the divine nature and the Son who receives it. Consubstantiality, or equality of the Father and of Son in the same nature, is, according to Albert, one of the main intentions of John the Evangelist. That is why Albert already addresses it in his exegesis of John 1:1²⁷ and subsequently returns to it in chapters five,²⁸ eight,²⁹ and ten³⁰ of the Gospel of John,³¹ in the context of the accusation of Jesus by those who do not accept him saying that he is the Son of God, that God operates through him and manifests himself through his works and that he, thus, can bear witness for himself, because the Father bears witness for him. Yet, we immediately notice that Albert does not highlight the reciprocity of the interior relationship. He concentrates on an interpretation of interiority that does not accentuate the specificity of the notion of interiority. He interprets it, rather, as the identity of nature of the Father and of the Son and, therefore, as their equality. In a word, interiority enables Albert to argue that there is no hierarchy between the Father and the Son.

26 Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 14:9-12, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 534b: “*Non credis quia ego in Patre etc.*’ *Ac si dicat: Si non credis, hoc mirum est, ‘quia ego in Patre,’ sicut unius naturae acceptae a Patre, sum in Patre, ‘et Pater in me est’, sicut auctor divinae generationis, mihi suam naturam communicans.*” (Latin translations are author’s own, unless otherwise indicated).

27 See Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem* (Ioh. 1, 1-18), in 1:1, ed. Julie Casteigt, p. 14, l. 8-p. 16, l. 18; p. 32, l. 14-18; in 1:2, p. 48, l. 13-15; p. 52, l. 21-p. 54, l. 4.

28 See Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 5:18, Ed. Paris. XXIV, pp. 210 b-212a; in 5:19, *ibid.*, p. 212 b; in 5:20, *ibid.*, p. 213a; in 10:29, *ibid.*, p. 425 b.

29 See Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem*, in 8:38, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 357 b.

30 Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem*, in 10:29, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 425b-426a.

31 Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 14:10, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 535 b: “*Ad intellectum istorum et omnium eorum quae supra, cap. v, viii et x, de ista doctrina dicta sunt [...].*” I shall provide a more developed textual analysis of Albert’s exegesis of the architectonic of the Gospel of John in relation to the equality of the Father and of the Son elsewhere.

The second point emphasizes the difference between the Father and the Son from the point of view of relation. The interiority of the Father in the Son expresses the active role of the Father in his relationship to the Son: he gives him his nature. The word “author” adds the nuance that the Father watches over the growth of his divine Son. Here again, we can observe that Albert interprets the reciprocal immanence of the divine persons as an identity of nature. Yet both perspectives on this dynamic interiority introduce two different points of view concerning the relation: the immanence of the Father in the Son means the active communication of his nature to his Son, while the inherence of the Son in the Father denotes the reception of the divine nature by the Son. We can deduce, from both these points, that Albert understands reciprocal interiority as synonym for identity of nature and difference of relation between the Father and the Son.

In his exposition of John 14:9, Albert follows the *Glossa ordinaria*,³² so as to explain why Philip requests that Jesus show him the Father. Owing to the infirmity of the flesh that the divine Word had assumed, the disciples still believed that the Father was better than the Son. Therefore, they had not perfectly known that the Son was Son by nature:

And because of this assumed infirmity of the flesh, they always believed the Father better than the Son. Therefore, as the *Glossa* says, they also did not perfectly know the Son, because, in the nature of God, the Son is equal to the Father. It is also the reason why he who believes the Father better than the Son has not known either that the Son is Son by nature.³³

My hypothesis is that Albert does not draw attention to the specificity of the relation of reciprocal interiority, that is, how can two persons be simultaneously in the same place? Also, how can two persons be in one another? He interprets it, rather, as the property of generation as a mode of production, namely as identity of nature and difference of relation and, more precisely in this context, as equality of the Father and of the Son.

³² *Glossa interlinearis*, in *Glossa ordinaria* t. 5, (Antverpiae: apud Ioannes Keerbergium, 1617), p. 1239–40, l. 8: “f, a Quia nec filium nouit qui patrem meliorem credit;” *Glossa marginalis*, in *Glossa ordinaria*, *ibid.*, p. 1239AB. “Sed alii erant (de quibus est Philippus) nescientes, & si scirent iustum filium, illum patrem, non putabant filium ex toto similem, sed patrem meliorem & ita nec patrem, nec filium sciebant. Quo animo Philippus dicit: ostende nobis patrem, & sufficit; In quo sufficientia, & non in te. Unde increpatur nec filium scire.”

³³ Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, in 14:9, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 533b–534a: “Et propter illam carnis assumptam infirmitatem, semper Patrem meliorem Filio credebant: et ideo, ut dicit *Glossa*, nec Filium perfecte cognouerunt, quia in Dei natura Filius est aequalis Patri. Et ideo qui Patrem Filio meliorem credit, nec Filium cognovit esse Filium per naturam.”

3 An Objection Based on Aristotle's Theory of Place

In the second step of his exegesis of John 14:10, Albert enunciates the objection to the reciprocal interiority that comes from the Aristotelian conception of place:³⁴ it is impossible for two entities to be at once in the same place, without being identical³⁵. Thus, if the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son, it means that, being in another one, namely the Father, the Son is in himself, which is impossible because the Son cannot simultaneously have two different identities: "So, the objection is also resolved that some object, namely they say: if the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son, then the Son is in himself. And this is not intelligible, namely, that something is in itself, as the Philosopher says."³⁶

In his commentary on the fourth book of *Metaphysics*, Albert paraphrases Aristotle to demonstrate, by means of the example of wine and the amphora that contains it, the impossibility for anything to be in itself in the first and main meaning of the preposition "in," which means place or that which contains something, like a vase. Aristotle has already eliminated the other meanings of the preposition "in" that prevent something to be in itself. The reason for this impossibility is that the interiority of something in another implies their identity

34 On Albert's reception of the Aristotelian conception of place, see Steven C. Snyder, "Place, Time and the *Continuum* in Albert's *Physica* 4-6." In *A Companion to Albert the Great. Theology, Philosophy, and the Sciences*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 38, ed. Irven M. Resnick (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 188–204; Henryk Anzulewicz, "Zwischen Spekulation und Erfahrung. Alberts des Großen Begriff vom Raum." In *Représentations et conceptions de l'espace dans la culture médiévale*, *Scrinium Friburgense* 30, eds. Tiziana Suarez-Nani and Martin Rohde (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 67–87; Silvia Donati, "Materie und räumliche Ausdehnung in einigen ungedruckten Physikkomentaren aus der Zeit von etwa 1250–1270." In *Raum und Raumvorstellungen im Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 25, eds. Jan A. Aersten and Andreas Speer (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 17–51. On the more general context of medieval conceptions of place, see Tiziana Suarez-Nani, Olivier Ribordy, and Antonio Petagine, eds., *Lieu, Espace, Mouvement: Physique, métaphysique et cosmologie (XII^e-XVI^e siècles)* Actes du Colloque International Université de Fribourg (Swiss), March 12–14, 2015, *Textes et Études du Moyen Âge – TEMA* 86 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017); and J.A. Aersten and A. Speer, eds., *Raum und Raumvorstellungen im Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 25 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998).

35 Aristoteles, *Physica*, lib. 4, cap. 3 (210 b 8–9), in Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, lib. 4, tr. 1, cap. 6, Ed. Colon. IV/1: lib. I-IV; IV/2: lib. V-VIII, eds. Paul Hossfeld and Wilhelm Kübel (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987), p. 211, l. 78–9.

36 Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem*, in 14:9-12, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p.534 b: "Et sic solvitur obiectio quam quidam obijciunt. Quia dicunt: Si Filius est in Patre, et Pater est in Filio: ergo Filius est in seipso. Et hoc non est intelligibile, quod aliquid sit in seipso: sicut dicit Philosophus."

and, therefore, the destruction of the relation of the initially distinct entities. To be in another like in oneself is, thus, both an ontological and a logical impossibility:

Just as we have said, with regard to the mode by which something is in something as in a vase, that, first and foremost, “according to” this “mode” “nothing” is said “to be in itself,” so it also appears “to those who consider by induction” “that” something “is” not in itself according to a mode ‘that has been’ “determined above.” By the “reason” capable of defining, it also appears “that” something “is” not in itself in the way by which it is said that something is in another as in a vase, because “one should be the other” by “definition.”³⁷

Albert develops Aristotle’s example of wine and the amphora that contains it. If to be in another like in oneself would be possible, then it would entail either that wine is identical to the amphora in which it is or that it forms a new entity “wine-amphora” to which wine and amphora now identify themselves. Therefore, the relation of capacity and measure of the amphora to the wine disappears: wine is not anymore in the amphora as a vase but in it as identical to itself. As a consequence, the proposition “wine is in the amphora” becomes “wine is in wine”. It sounds, thus, as a mere identity proposition without any connotation of place, capacity and measure involved by the preposition *in*. Albert concludes that it is impossible that an entity is in another like in itself without destroying the relation of what contains and what is contained and, thereby, the difference between both entities:

[...] in fact, it would be necessary for “the amphora to be wine” and for “the amphora and wine to be the amphora and wine,” if, indeed, first and by itself, it would happen that the same “be in itself”. So “if” it would happen that they “were one in the other” “at the highest point” and first, then “the amphora would collect wine, not as” it is, indeed, defined as vase collecting “wine” by the mode of what contains and measures, “but” rather insofar as it “is” wine, because its definition is the definition of wine and reciprocally, as the hypothesis says, to the extent that it is the liquid contained and measured by the amphora, “but” rather by this “that” it is identical “to the amphora”, because it is said that there is only one definition of wine and amphora. Since all this is false, it is a fact that the amphora receives wine by the fact that it has a different definition from wine, and not inasmuch as it is called wine, by the fact that it is said that there is a single definition for both. This is why it <the amphora> also collects wine, insofar as it is defined as a vase and it ‘wine’ as a liquid contained in the vase. And wine is gathered by the amphora by virtue of the proper definition of wine, insofar as it is wine, because, in this way, it is a liquid contained in a vase, and it is not collected by it, insofar

37 Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, lib. 4, tr. 1, cap. 6, Ed. Colon. IV/1, eds. Paul Hossfeld and Wilhelm Kübel, 213, l. 6–14: “*Sicut autem [diximus de modo, quo aliquid est in aliquo] sicut in vase, quod primo et principaliter secundum modum illum nihil [dicitur esse] in seipso, ita etiam inductione considerantibus [apparet], quod non est aliquid in seipso secundum aliquem modum [prius] determinatum. Per rationem etiam diffinitivam patet, quod non est [aliquid in se] ipso eo modo quo dicitur aliquid esse in alio sicut in vase, quia oporteret utraque utrumque esse per diffinitionem [...].*”

as wine is the amphora. Since, “therefore,” the definitions of wine and amphora are “different,” “it is clear that” both are “different” from each other “according to Being”. “For one” is “the definition of that which is” as “in which” ‘something’ is [such as in a vase]; “another” is ‘the definition’ of “that which is” as “what is in” another; hence neither is in itself firstly [and per se].³⁸

According to Aristotle, wine cannot be in the amphora like in itself. Yet, according to Jesus in John 14:10, the Father is in the Son and the Son, reciprocally, in the Father.

4 Greek-Arabic Transfer into the Gospel of John

4.1 Neoplatonic Influence in Albert’s Interpretation of Generation as Flow

In the third step of his exegesis of John 14:10, Albert refutes the objection borrowed from Aristotle in four moments. The first moment makes clear the difference between the unique and indivisible divine nature which accounts for the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son, on the one hand, and the different modes of them having this divine nature, on the other. Although their common nature is one single reality, their mode of being divine differs, namely, according to their notion as a person, according to the way one understands the difference between both persons. The Son is in the Father in the mode of the one who receives this nature from the Father, whereas the Father is in the Son as the one who communicates the divine nature.

³⁸ Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, lib. 4, tr. 1, cap. 6, Ed. Colon. IV/1, p. 213, l. 14-40: “[...] oporteret enim, quod amphora esset vinum et amphora et vinum essent amphora et vinum, si vere et primo et per se contingeret idem esse in seipso. Ergo si contingeret, quod esset in alterutris maxime et primo, tunc amphora caperet vinum, non secundum quod quidem diffinitur ut vas per modum continentis et mensurantis capiens vinum, sed potius prout ipsa est vinum, quia diffinitio sua est diffinitio vini et e converso, sicut dicit hypothesis, nec vinum esset in amphora per diffinitionem propriam, prout est liquor contentus et mensuratus ab amphora, sed potius per hoc, quod idem esset amphorae, quia una dicitur esse diffinitio vini et amphorae. Cum igitur haec omnia falsa sint, constat, quod amphora accipit vinum per hoc, quod habet diffinitionem diversam a vino, et non, secundum quod ipsa vinum esse dicitur per hoc, quod una dicitur diffinitio esse utriusque, et ideo capit vinum, prout ipsa est diffinita ut vas et illud ut liquor contentus in vase. Et vinum capitur ab amphora per diffinitionem propriam vini, inquantum est vinum, quia sic est liquor contentus in vase, et non capitur ab ipsa, inquantum vinum est amphora. Quia igitur diversae diffinitiones sunt vini et amphorae, manifestum est, quod [utrumque] istorum est alterum ab altero secundum esse. Alia namque est diffinitio eius quod est, sicut in quo est [sicut in vase], et alia eius quod est, sicut quod est in alio; ergo neutrum est in se primo et [per se].”

This argument derives from the Trinitarian doctrine of the distinction of the divine persons inside the unique divine nature.³⁹ However, Albert adds a neoplatonic concept that does not strictly correspond to the theological Christian dogma of Trinity, or, more precisely, to the account of the Trinitarian production in the Dominican school. According to Russell L. Friedman, the common doctrine of the Dominican school generally corresponds to a “deemphasizing of the emanations and production.”⁴⁰ Albert introduces, namely, in the second moment of his exegesis, the notion of *fluxus*. Whereas, according to the Christian theology, the Son is supposed to come from the Father by generation, Albert asserts that the Son emanates from the Father by flowing from him. Thereby, he implicitly refers to his development of this mode of procession especially in his commentary on the *Liber de causis* in the second book of his *De Causis et Processu Universitatis a Prima Causa* (henceforth abbreviated as DCPU).

We will come back to that work and, in particular, to his commentary of the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis*, where he explains how the first universal causes are in each other according to the mode of the one that receives. In the DCPU, Albert distinguishes three modes of being in something: to be in one’s cause, to be in oneself, to be in one’s effect. In the exposition of John 14:10, to be in oneself is a mode that has been introduced by the objection grounded on Aristotle; although it is absent from this passage of the Gospel of John. That is why my hypothesis is that, here, Albert’s argument implicitly takes up this distinction from the *Liber de causis* and uses it in his conclusion. For now, let us follow Albert’s argument in his exegesis of John 14:10, and return later to the DCPU:

It is evident that this “the objection” does not follow, because, although there is a single and undivided nature by which the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son, yet their manner of having this nature, according to the notion, is not the same. For the Son is in the Father by the mode of him who receives this nature from the Father and the Father is in the Son by the mode of him who communicates this nature by the flow.⁴¹

39 On medieval Trinitarian theology, see, in particular, Gilles Émery, *La Trinité créatrice: Trinité et création dans les commentaires aux Sentences de Thomas d’Aquin et de ses précurseurs Albert le Grand et Bonaventure*, Bibliothèque Thomiste (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1995).

40 Russell L. Friedman, *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University: The Use of Philosophical Psychology in Trinitarian Theology among the Franciscans and Dominicans, 1250–1350*, vol. 2, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 108/2 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 891.

41 Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem*, in 14:9–12, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 534b–535a: “*Patet enim quod hoc non sequitur. Quia licet una et indivisa natura sit, per quam Filius est in Patre, et Pater in Filio: tamen modus habendi naturam illam, secundum rationem intelligendi non est idem. Filius enim in Patre est per modum naturam illam a Patre recipientis. Et Pater est in Filio, per modum naturam illam per fluxum communicantis.*”

As a conclusion of both first steps in a third moment, Albert asserts that the modes of being in the other differ for the Father and for the Son. Thus, the way in which the Son is in the Father differs from the way in which the Father is in the Son. The way in which the Son is in the Father is, namely, as the one who receives the divine nature is in the one who gives it to him, whereas the way in which the Father is in the Son is as the one who communicates the divine nature in the one who receives it. Both ways of being in the other differ from the way in which each of them is in himself.

Moreover, as a fourth moment, for the Son, being in the Father cannot be identical to the immanence in oneself for another reason, it would mean that the Son would receive the divine nature from himself. This argument presupposes that the same place would be the place of identity (to be in oneself) and the place of origin (to be in his Father). Here, the philosophical debate on place begun with Aristotle, continued with the *Liber de causis* and transferred into Trinitarian theology in the Gospel of John leads Albert to refute an objection directed against the Trinitarian dogma of generation. In other words, Albert connects different problems and sources together on the basis of the common structural argument he makes regarding them.

This objection corresponds to Joachim of Fiore's heresy, in his *Libellus*;⁴² Joachim pretended that the same generates the same. His doctrine was condemned at the fourth council of the Lateran. Against Joachim's heresy, Albert brings two biblical quotations: John 10:38 and John 1:1. These verses stress the difference between the one who contains the other and the one who is contained. Moreover, in John 1:1, John the Evangelist does not mention the reciprocity of the interiority, but only the inherence of the Word in the principle. Although what matters to Albert, in his commentary on the Prologue, is the consubstantiality of the Father and of the Son, that is the absence of difference, from the point of view of their substance, which is implied in the immanence of the Son in the Father. That the Word is in the principle means that he has the same nature as the principle. This confirms the assertion according to which, in the exposition of John 14:10, Albert only heightens the substantial identity, and not the specificity of reciprocal interiority in the relationship of the Father and the Son. In Albert's eyes, reciprocity simply suggests the double point of view that the relation of interiority between the Father and the Son implies. The common structural argument between the philosophical debate with the Aristotelian doctrine on space and Joachim's heresy about generation is the necessity to vary the modes of inherence, so as to prevent two entities from being simultaneously in the same place:

⁴² Heinrich Denzinger, *Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen: Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, art. 803-806 (Latran IV), 45. edn (Erweiterte Neuausgabe), ed. von Peter Hünemann (Freiburg im Breisgau, Basel and Vienna: Herder, 2017), 335–7.

That is also why it does not follow that the Son is in himself, for this reason that he is in the Father who is in the Son, because then it would follow that the Son would receive this nature from himself, which is the heresy of those who said that the same begets himself, what Abbas Joachim seemed to say in the *Libellus* that was condemned at the Council. John 10:38: 'So that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and that I am in the Father'. John 1:1: "In the principle was the Word." This has been, in fact, explained above, namely, that the Son is in the Father by the absence of difference of substance.⁴³

So, Albert has refuted the objection based on Aristotle's argument regarding the impossibility for something to be in another as in itself. This argument applies to physical beings, not to the divine persons, as the latter are substantially identical. Yet, although they have the same nature, they differ according to the category of relation: the Father actively communicates his nature, whereas the Son receives it. The Father is in the Son as actively begetting the Son, whereas the Son is in the Father passively (in the logical sense) receiving his divine nature from the Father. By expressing the generation of the Son by the Father in terms of flow, Albert borrows from Greek-Arabic neoplatonism, the theory of emanation that usually applies to the hypostases and, more specifically, to the Intelligence and to the Soul. In particular, the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis* that Albert has entirely paraphrased in the second book of his DCPU provides him with the theoretical tools to conceive of a possibility to be in each other regarding the first universal causes and the divine persons.

4.2 The reciprocal interiority of the first universal causes

In the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis*, Albert finds the theory of the reciprocal interiority of the first universal causes – Being, Life and Intelligence, excepted the First Cause, that is the One – and the difference regarding the modes in which each of them are inherent in the others:

Of all the principles, some are in others in the mode according to which it is permissible for one of them to be in the other. [prop. XI (XII), a. 103]⁴⁴

⁴³ Albertus Magnus, *Super Iohannem*, in 14:9-12, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 535a: "Et ideo non sequitur quod Filius sit in seipso, propter hoc quod est in Patre qui est in Filio. Quia tunc sequeretur quod Filius naturam illam acciperet a seipso: quod est haeresis illorum, qui dicebant quod idem generat seipsum: quod dicere videbatur Abbas Joachim in Libello qui in concilio fuit condemnatus. Joan. x,38: 'Ut cognoscatis et credatis quia Pater in me est, et ego in Patre'. Joan. 1,1: 'In principio erat Verbum'. Hoc enim sic supra expositum est, quod Filius est in Patre per indifferentiam substantiae."

⁴⁴ *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, DCPU, lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 124, l. 74: "Primorum omnium quaedam sunt in quibusdam per modum quo licet ut sit unum eorum in alio."

And this is because, in Being, there is Life and Intelligence, and in Life, there is Being and Intelligence, and in Intelligence there is Being and Intelligence. [prop. XI (XII), a. 104]⁴⁵

By commenting on this proposition, Albert does not interpret the different cases of interiority that are mentioned as indicating new entities, as if Life and Intelligence in Being would be really different from Life and Intelligence in themselves, for instance. However, he suggests that these modes of interiority constitute different ways of understanding the same entities: the same Life and Intelligence can be considered either in Being, that is in their cause, or in themselves. Life and Intelligence in Being are only notionally different from what they are in themselves. Thus, it is possible to regard each of the first universal causes either in itself, in its cause or in its effect. This argument attests the closeness, proximity of Albert's exegesis of John 14:10 with his exposition of the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis*. In his *Super Iohannem*, Albert explicitly bases his argument on the difference according to the notion (*secundum rationem intelligendi*), and not on an ontological difference: "although there is a single and undivided nature by which the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son, yet their manner of having this nature, according to the notion, is not the same."⁴⁶ The possibility to be in oneself and simultaneously in another is a question of modality: modality of being and of understanding.

That is the common structural argument that links the philosophical debate on place, the controversy with Joachim's heresy and the *Liber de causis*. In his DCPU, Albert interprets as a mere difference of understanding what the *Liber de causis* characterizes as a real duality, namely that "Being and Life in Intelligence are two Intelligences,"⁴⁷ for instance, or that "Being and Intelligence in Life are two Lives,"⁴⁸ or that "Intelligence and Life in Being are two Beings."⁴⁹ In this interpretation, whereby it is a notional, and not ontological, difference, we clearly perceive Albert's philosophical construction. Albert does not merely put different sources together. He actively leads them to a common philosophical argument,

⁴⁵ *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, DCPU, lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 124, l. 75: "Quod est quia in esse sunt vita et intelligentia, et in vita sunt esse et intelligentia, et in intelligentia sunt esse et vita."

⁴⁶ See Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Iohannem*, in 14:9-12, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 534 b; Albertus Magnus, *ibid.*, in 14:9-12, Ed. Paris. XXIV, p. 534 b.

⁴⁷ *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, DCPU, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 124, l. 76: "Verumtamen esse et vita in intelligentia sunt duae alachili, [id est]* intelligentiae [...]" *[alachili id est] *add. nonnul. codd.* This addition is neither quoted by Albert in his commentary, nor by the mss. BCLOPSUVb (mentioned in Pattin's edition).

⁴⁸ *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, DCPU, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 124, l. 76: "[...] et esse et intelligentia in vita sunt duae vitae [...]"

⁴⁹ *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, DCPU, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 124, l. 77: "[...] et intelligentia et vita in esse sunt duo esse."

which is his own philosophical intention, and he gives a personal interpretation of the letter of the *Liber de causis*:

Albert's aim is to prevent an interpretation of the duality as a substantial difference. What would it mean, indeed, there that Being and Life in Intelligence were two distinct Intelligences in a substantial sense? Therefore, the Albertian strategy consists in understanding *intelligentia* in a notional way. That is why Albert sometimes substitutes the term *intellectus* for it, taken in the sense of intellection:

[...] if we take what is prior in what is later, as Being and Living in Intelligence, they are, indeed, in Intelligence, a single Being of Intelligence, but they differ with regard to intellection [*intellectu*].⁵⁰

In what sense is there, on the one hand, a unity of Being, or of quiddity, for Being and Life, insofar as they are in Intelligence? The Being and the Life of what is intelligent in act find their completion in the living-Being-intelligent. In the living-Being-intelligent, Being, Life and Intelligence are assembled in a substantial unity. Being and Life are, therefore, "a single Being of Intelligence."⁵¹

On the other hand, in what sense are Being and Life, in Intelligence, different from each other, with regard to intellection? The notion of Being, in Intelligence, remains the notion of Being in itself, that is, to be the first created.⁵² And the notion of Life remains to be the first formed,⁵³ inasmuch as the first created has the demiurgic function of forming Life. In other words, the parts of the definition of the living-Being-intelligent are, on the one hand, Being, understood as a universal potentiality (Albert calls it an inchoation here), and, on the other, Life as a principle that gives a precise determination to the universal potentiality. Thus, Being and Life find their full actualization in Intelligence. So, Being and Life together constitute, indeed, a single Being and a single quiddity of Intelligence. Yet, each of them possesses a proper notion [*intellectus*], by virtue of which each of them is oneself, that is to say respectively as first created and as first formed.

From a hermeneutical point of view, the difficulty of interpreting and translating this passage rests on the identification of the distinct meanings that Albert attributes to the name *intelligentia*. In Intelligence, that is to say, in one of the first universal causes, Being and Life are not two Intelligences in the sense of a substantial redoubling of this first universal cause, but two distinct notions. Hence the Albertian commentary is based on the slippage of meaning that Albert introduces

50 Albertus Magnus, DCPU, lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 121, l. 75-78: "*Si enim priora in posteriori accipiamus, sicut esse et vivere in intelligentia, haec quidem in intelligentia unum esse sunt intelligentiae, intellectu tamen differunt.*"

51 Albertus Magnus, DCPU, lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 122, l. 3-4: "*unum esse intelligentiae.*"

52 Albertus Magnus, DCPU, lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 122, l. 12: "*primum creatum.*"

53 Albertus Magnus, DCPU, lib. 2, tr. 2, cap. 28, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 122, l. 11: "*formatum primum.*"

between *intelligentia* in the sense of one of the first universal causes and *intelligentia* in the notional sense that also corresponds here to that of *intellectus*.

What does it mean, therefore, from a metaphysical point of view, that Being and Life form “only one Being of Intelligence,” while they are “two Intelligences”? According to the Albertian interpretation, Being and Life in Intelligence are two Intelligences in the sense of two distinct intellections of Intelligence. In other words, Being in Intelligence and Life in Intelligence are both Intelligences, that is to say Being-intelligent and intelligent-Life. Being and Life are, first of all, Intelligence, in so far as they give to Intelligence what Intelligence needs so as to be itself, namely to be and to live. On the one hand, Intelligence cannot, in fact, be invested as such in what is not alive. On the other hand, the Being by which Intelligence exists is no longer designable in Intelligence other than as the Being of Intelligence, that is to say, in the first place, Intelligence.

Albert applies the same argument of the substantial unity and the difference of notion to the prior principle, Being, and to the median principle, Life. Then, Albert generalizes what he has established with regard to the first universal causes, Being, Life and Intelligence, to every cause in relation to what it causes:

And, indeed, this is only because each of the former is either the cause or the caused. The caused in the cause is, therefore, in the mode of the cause, and the cause in the caused in the mode of the caused. [prop. XI (XII), a. 106]⁵⁴

It follows, firstly, that reciprocal interiority is the property of the cause and of what it causes; secondly, that what is in another is in it in the mode of that in which it is; finally, that this immanence signifies a procession ordered according to three degrees: what is prior, what is median, what is later. In his *Super Iohannem*, Albert interprets the difference between the modes of inherence notionally and not ontologically and transfers from the *Liber de causis* into the Gospel of John the theoretical tool of the notional distinction of the first universal causes that are in themselves and also reciprocally in each other. Therefore, it becomes possible for the Son to be in his Father, being identical in nature with him and distinct notionally as the one who receives differs from the one who gives. And, reciprocally, it is also possible for the Father to be in his Son. Yet, with such a conception of reciprocal interiority it becomes more difficult to differentiate the generation of the Son by the Father from the neoplatonic procession of the hypostases.

Indeed, Albert does not only transfer the Arabic-Latin metaphysical conceptual tools of the *Liber de causis* into his *Super Iohannem*, so as to elaborate a hybrid conception of the relations of the divine persons in the Trinity. With the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis*, he also implicitly imports the proposition 103 of

⁵⁴ *Liber de causis*, prop. XI (XII), in Albertus Magnus, DCPU, Ed. Colon. XVII/2, p. 124, l. 77-78: “*Et illud [quidem] non est ita nisi quia unumquodque primorum aut est causa aut causatum. Causatum ergo in causa est per modum causae et causa in causato per modum causati.*”

Proclus' *Elements of theology*⁵⁵ that mentions Being, Life and Intelligence, an import that the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis* literally takes up.

All in all, but each in its own way. In Being there are, indeed, Life and Intellect, in Life Being and Intelliging, in the Intellect to be and to live. But, in the one, in the mode of the Intellect, in another in the mode of Life and in another 'in the mode of Being' among all beings [on ontos].

Since each is either according to the cause, or according to the subsistence or to the posterior habitation, since in the former the others are according to the cause, since in the median the first is according to the posterior habitation, whereas the third is according to the cause, and since, in the third, those who are before are according to the posterior habitation, in Being, Life and Intellect are, therefore, precontained. But each one is characterized according to subsistence, and not according to the cause – for it causes others – nor according to posthabitation – for it has from elsewhere what it possesses later. Thus, Living and Intelliging are here essential Life and essential Intellect. And, in Life, Being is, of course, according to posthabitation, while Intelliging is according to the cause, but both in the mode of Life – for subsistence is according to this 'mode of Life'. And, in the Intellect, Life and Essence are according to the posthabitation, and both in an intellectual mode. For the Being of the Intellect is cognitive and 'its' Life is Knowledge.⁵⁶

55 Proclus Diadochus, *Elementatio Theologica*, prop. 103, vol. 5, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 1, trans. Guillelmus de Morbekka, ed. Helmut Boese (Leuven: University Press, 1987), p. 52, l. 1-p. 53, l. 17: "*Omnia in omnibus, proprie avtem in vnoquoque: et enim in ente et vita et intellectus, et in vita esse et intelligere, et in intellectu esse et vivere; sed alicubi quidem intellectualiter, alicubi avtem vitaliter, alicubi vero enter entia omnia. Quoniam enim unumquodque aut secundum causam est aut secundum subsistentiam aut secundum posthabitionem, in primo autem reliqua secundum causam sunt, et in medio primum quidem secundum posthabitionem, tertium autem secundum causam, et in tertio que ante ipsum secundum posthabitionem: et in ente ergo uita presumpta est et intellectus, unoquoque autem secundum subsistentiam characterizato et neque secundum causam – aliorum enim est causa – neque secundum posthabitionem – aliunde enim habet hoc quod posthabet –, sic est ibi et uiuere et intelligere, uita essentialis et intellectus essentialis; et in uita secundum posthabitionem quidem esse, secundum causam autem intelligere, sed uitaliter utrumque – secundum hoc enim subsistentia –; et in intellectu et uita et essentia secundum posthabitionem et intellectualiter utrumque: et enim esse intellectus cognituum et uita cognitio.*"

56 Proclus Diadochus, *Elementatio Theologica*, prop. 103, vol. 5, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 1, trans. Guillelmus de Morbekka, ed. Helmut Boese (Leuven: University Press, 1987), p. 52, l. 1-p. 53, l. 17: "*Omnia in omnibus, proprie avtem in vnoquoque: et enim in ente et vita et intellectus, et in vita esse et intelligere, et in intellectu esse et vivere; sed alicubi quidem intellectualiter, alicubi avtem vitaliter, alicubi vero enter entia omnia. Q. enim unumquodque aut secundum causam est aut secundum subsistentiam aut secundum posthabitionem, in primo autem reliqua secundum causam sunt, et in medio primum quidem secundum posthabitionem, tertium autem secundum causam, et in tertio que ante ipsum secundum posthabitionem: et in ente ergo uita presumpta est et intellectus, unoquoque autem secundum subsistentiam characterizato et neque secundum causam – aliorum enim est causa – neque secundum posthabitionem – aliunde enim habet hoc quod posthabet –, sic est ibi et uiuere et intelligere, uita essentialis et intellectus essentialis; et in uita secundum posthabitionem quidem esse, secundum causam autem intelligere, sed uitaliter utrumque – secundum hoc enim subsistentia –; et in intellectu et uita et essentia secundum posthabitionem et intellectualiter utrumque: et enim esse intellectus cognituum et uita cognitio.*"

Albert inherits also Porphyry's tenth *Sentence*.⁵⁷ Although there is, on the one hand, in both neoplatonic sources, a universalization of the mutual immanence: all things, and not only the first universal causes, are in all. While, on the other hand, in Porphyry's *Sentences*, one cannot find the relation between what causes, what is caused, and the order of procession. Porphyry's tenth *Sentence* states only the principle *secundum modum recipientis* [according to the mode of the one that receives]. It also extends the appropriate mode of reception on a larger ontological scale than the proposition 103 and the *Liber de causis* do. Whereas the *Elements of theology* take into account Being, Life and Intelligence, the *Liber de causis* adds the soul to this list, in the final example of proposition XI (XII), the tenth *Sentence*, for its part, extends its consideration to plants, bodies and to what is beyond intellection and essence, that is in particular the One, without explicitly mentioning Being and Life as first universal causes:

All things are in all [Πάντα μὲν ἐν πᾶσιν], but in an appropriate manner [οἰκείως] to the essence of each [ἐκάστον οἰοσίᾳ]. They are, namely, in the intellect in the mode of intellection [νοερώς], in the soul in the mode of reasons [λογικῶς], in plants in the mode of seed [σπερματικῶς], in bodies in the mode of image [εἰδωλικῶς], and in the hereafter [ἐν δὲ τὸ ἐπέκεινα] in the mode of non-intellection and of beyond-essence [ἀνεγνωήτως τε καὶ ὑπερουσίως].⁵⁸

In light of these sources, it appears that the *Liber de causis* inherits from the Greek neoplatonism the idea of a universal mutual immanence in the mode of what receives. Although, the anonymous treatise no longer universalizes it with the formula "All in all."⁵⁹ It concentrates the mutual immanence, rather, on the first universal causes and regulates it according to the order of procession and of causality.

5 Conclusion

The close analysis of John 14:10 has brought into sharp relief the neoplatonic influence on Albert's interpretation of reciprocal interiority. In conclusion, I would

⁵⁷ Cristina d'Ancona, "Les *Sentences* de Porphyre entre les *Ennéades* de Plotin et les *Éléments de Théologie* de Proclus." In Porphyre, *Sentences. Études d'introduction, texte grec et traduction française et commentaire*, Histoire des doctrines de l'Antiquité classique XXXIII (Paris: Vrin, 2005), tome 1, pp. 253–5, esp. p. 253.

⁵⁸ Porphyrios, Sent. 10, in Porphyre, *Sentences*, tome 1, p. 310–11; trans. John Dillon, in Porphyre, *Sentences*, tome 2, p. 797.

⁵⁹ Proclus Diadochus, *Elementatio Theologica*, prop. 103, vol. 5, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, Series 1, trans. Guillelmus de Morbeka, ed. Helmut Boese, p. 52, l. 1.

like to highlight four dimensions which are methodologically implied in my analysis: the transfer of a metaphysical model into the Johannine exegesis; Albert's exegetical method and conception of rationality; the philosophical transition from Albert to Eckhart, and Albert's interpretation of the notional specificity of reciprocal interiority. Albert's commentators⁶⁰ usually consider the problem of the *circumincessio* of the divine persons from the point of view of the patristic authorities who are traditionally mentioned in theological debates. My method consists, for its part, in observing, on the material basis of certain quotations and expressions by Albert, how his exegesis and philosophy are intertwined. I seek to show how he interweaves different sources to elaborate on the meaning of certain concepts, in the present case, that of reciprocal interiority as modalities of inherence, in order to resolve an exegetical, theological and philosophical difficulty.

Firstly, it follows from the properties of the reciprocal interiority of the first universal causes in each other, as they are presented in the Albertian commentary on the proposition XI (XII) of the *Liber de causis*, that they shed light on the structures of the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son in the chapter XIV of the Gospel of John. They help reading the Johannine model that applies to divine persons through a philosophical conceptualization that appeals to metaphysical entities. By transferring the theoretical tools of the *Liber de causis* into the exegesis of John 14:10, Albert connects different sources and debates on the basis of a common structural argument. The philosophical debate on the Aristotelian theory of place, that is the impossibility for two bodies to be simultaneously in the same place, the refutation of Joachim's heresy on Trinitarian generation, the neoplatonic doctrine of the mutual immanence of the first universal causes, and the Johannine assertion on the reciprocal interiority of the Father and of the Son are all based on the necessity to vary the modes of inherence. The way in which the prior entity is in the posterior one differs from the way the posterior entity is in the prior one. Albert's method of connecting different textual *corpora* corresponds to his own philosophical intention. It is not a mere reception of sources. Through the similarities and differences of the sources he appeals to, Albert elaborates his own concept of reciprocal interiority.

Secondly, in that way, from the point of view of his Johannine exegesis, Albert transfers into the Greek-Hebraic model of the Johannine Gospel, the Greek-Arabic metaphysics of the neoplatonism deployed in the *Liber de causis*, a treatise based on Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and, more distantly, on Porphyry's *Sentences*. Thereby, he supplies the Gospel of John with concepts coming from another linguistic, philosophical, cultural and religious tradition. This transferring practice

⁶⁰ See, for instance, Emmanuel Durand, *La Périchôrese des personnes divines: Immanence mutuelle, réciprocité et communion*; and Gilles Emery, *La Trinité créatrice*.

reveals Albert's understanding of philosophy and exegesis. It shows us that the study of these disciplines consists, for him, as for us, in surveying a complex phenomenon that expands according to the *corpora* of texts that are commented upon and their relations to other disciplines.

Thirdly, to return to our starting point and open up the perspective beyond Albert, it seems to me that Meister Eckhart synthesizes and radicalizes the Albertian interpretation of reciprocal interiority in the operative model of justice that operates just works through the Just who receives his or her Being and his or her capacity to act from justice, as far as he or she is just. Eckhart inherits from Albert the connection between Being and virtue, or capacity to operate, of the Son who receives it from the Father, on the one hand, and the connection between the works of the Son and the manifestation of the Father through them, on the other. However, he formulates it in a logical and ontological pattern that applies to a comprehension of Being in act, that is to operative Being, not to substantial Being. Albert does not make this distinction in this context and does not shape out of John 14:10 a logical and ontological model that can be universalized.

Lastly, for Albert, reciprocal interiority mainly means identity of nature and equality between the Father and the Son. The specificity of reciprocity consists, for its part, in furnishing a double point of view for the relation of the Father and of the Son: from the point of view of the one who gives and from the point of view of the one who receives. Albert's originality resides in appealing to neoplatonic sources to interpret the possibility for divine persons to be in each other to refute Aristotle's conception of place that applies to physical entities. This inheritance results in Albert formulating the generation of the Son by the Father in terms of flow, that is of procession, a conceptualization that does not strictly correspond to the common account of the Trinitarian dogma in the Dominican school. Albert's wide and interdisciplinary comprehension of rationality makes it possible to interpret the sacred Scriptures by means of Greek and Arabic metaphysics. Thereby, his commentary of the Gospel of John becomes an innovative melting pot in which he invents rational solutions to approach the mystery of the reciprocal interiority of the Father and the Son.

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