

DIVIDING IN ORDER TO UNITE:
THOMAS'S *RESUMPTIO* ADDRESS AT
PARIS, *HIC EST LIBER*, AND THE
THIRTEENTH-CENTURY *DIVISIONES*
TEXTUS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE



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Modern scholarship suggests that one of the required steps in a master's inception ceremony at the University of Paris was the *principium in aula*, a sermon in praise of Sacred Scripture given before the assembled masters. Four disputed questions also had to be resolved and a second "commendation of Sacred Scripture," sometimes called the *resumptio* address, had to be given several days later.¹ Both Father James Weisheipl and Father Jean-Pierre Torrell suggest that Thomas delivered his *resumptio* address, *Hic est liber*, on the first

¹ For more on the circumstances surrounding Thomas's inception, see James Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1974; repr. 1983), 93–97. For what is still the best treatment of these thirteenth-century inception addresses at the University of Paris, see the unpublished dissertation by Nancy Spatz, "*Principia*: A Study and Edition of Inception Speeches Delivered before the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, ca. 1180–1286" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1992). Both Weisheipl and Spatz are depending upon the earliest account we have of the inception ceremony *secundum usum Parisienem*, which is contained in a Bologna manuscript published in *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle, O.P., and E. Chatelien, vol. 2 (Paris: Delanian, 1891), no. 1188 (pp. 691–95).

day of classes after his inception—an address that contained, as university statutes dictated, a commendation of Sacred Scripture and a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible.²

HIC EST LIBER: A LAW THAT GIVES LIFE

Thomas took the *thema* verse for this sermon from Baruch 4:1, which begins: “This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law, that is forever: all they that keep it, shall come to life: but they that have forsaken it, to death.”³ This was the same verse the Franciscan John of La Rochelle had chosen when he incepted in 1238, a little over twenty years before Thomas. It was also the verse chosen by secular master Henry of Ghent when he incepted in 1275, nearly twenty years after St. Thomas. This was *not* the verse revealed to Thomas by an aged man in a white garment who came to him in a dream, however.⁴ That was the verse from Psalm 103:13, which begins *rigans*

² See Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, 96–110, and Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 53 (following Weisheipl on this point).

³ Throughout, I have quoted the Latin text from the best modern critical edition of *Hic est liber*, which can be found in volume 1 of *Opuscula Theologica*, ed. R. A. Verardo and Raimondo Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1954). All English translations in this article are mine, but a good English translation of the whole address is “The Inaugural Sermons,” trans. Ralph McInerny, in *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1998), 5–17.

⁴ See, for example, Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, 96. The story, told by Thomas’s medieval biographer, Bernardo Gui, is that, “with tears,” Thomas begged “for inspiration as to the theme he should choose for his inaugural lecture.” Afterward, he fell asleep and seems to have had a very clear dream in which, according to Bernardo Gui, he seemed to see an old man, white-haired and clothed in the Dominican habit, who came and said to him: “Brother Thomas, why are you praying and weeping?” “Because,” answered Thomas, “they are making me take the degree of master, and I do not think I am fully competent. Moreover, I cannot think what theme to take for my inaugural lecture.” To this, the old man replied: “Do not fear: God will help you to bear the burden of being a master. And as for the lecture, take this text, ‘Thou waterest the hills from thy upper rooms: the earth shall be filled with the fruit of thy works [*Rigans montes de superioribus suis; de fructu operum tuorum satiabitur terra*].’ Then he vanished, and Thomas awoke and thanked God for having so quickly come to his aid. There are three sources for this story, reports Fr. Torrell, all of which can with confidence be traced back

montes—“Watering the mountains from the heights above, the earth shall be filled with the fruit of your works”—the verse he used as the basis of his *principium in aula* address.⁵

Using Old Testament passages praising the law seems to have been common among thirteenth-century masters. Thomas’s teacher Albert the Great used the passage from Ecclesiasticus 24:33: “Moses commanded a law in the precepts of justice, and an inheritance to the house of Jacob, and the promises to Israel.”⁶ The Franciscan Matthew Aquasparta, who incepted in 1277/1278, used the passage from Psalm 93 (94):12: “Blessed is the man whom you shall instruct, O Lord: and shall teach him out of your law.” Of the seven surviving *resumptio* addresses we have from the thirteenth century delivered at the University of Paris, five began by praising Sacred Scripture as a book of *law*: Albert, Mathew of Aquasparta, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and John of La Rochelle.

THE DIVISIO TEXTUS OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

The *resumptio* address of any new master was by university regulation to contain a “commendation and partition of the sacred Scripture” (*Scripturae sacrae commendationem et partitionem*).⁷ By “partition,” this regulation meant doing a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible. And indeed, when we look over these *resumptio* addresses, one of the characteristic features shared by them is the inclusion of a long list cataloguing all the books of the Bible.

Reading through these lists of biblical books can be a laborious task. For this reason, many readers skip over them in frustration the

to Thomas himself (*Saint Thomas*, 1:51).

⁵ For an English translation of the *principium* and a good discussion of it, see Albert and Thomas: *Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Simon Tugwell, Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 268–70, 353–62.

⁶ See “Principium Biblicum Alberti Magni,” ed. Albert Fries, C.S.S.R., based on Cod. Vat. Lat. 4245, fols. 22va–24ra, in *Studia Albertina: Festschrift für Bernhard Geyer*, ed. H. Ostlender (Münster: Aschendorf, 1952), 128–47. See also A. Fries, “Eine Vorlesung Alberts des Grossen über den biblischen Kanon,” *Divus Thomas* 28 (February 1950): 195–213, and “Der Schriftkanon bei Albert der Grossen,” *Divus Thomas* 29 (February 1951): 3–4.

⁷ Denifle and Chatelien, *Chartularium*, vol. 2, no. 1188 (p. 694). Note that this is the requirement for *biblici*, not *baccalarii*.

way students skip over the “catalogue of ships” in Homer’s *Iliad* and the genealogies in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.⁸ They are long lists filled with dozens of names, the importance of which is not always clear. Let me suggest, however, that these *divisiones* provide important information and give us important clues as to how these medieval masters conceived of the Scriptures.

THE THEOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THE SCHOLASTIC *DIVISIO TEXTUS*

Though some find these lists labored and dull, John Boyle has argued that crafting a suitable *divisio textus* was a way of ordering the mind to prepare it for reading by viewing the parts in relation to the whole. According to Professor Boyle:

For a theologian such as Saint Thomas who understands the theological enterprise as the articulation of the ways in which revealed truths—indeed all truths—stand in relation one to another the scholastic division provides a way in which such a theological task can be undertaken in the very reading of scripture itself. It is not merely a matter of breaking the text down into component bits, but of seeing how its parts stand in relation one to another.⁹

For the scholastics, says Boyle, “the division of the text is precisely a means to arrive at ways of seeing the fundamental unity of revealed truth.”¹⁰

⁸ The catalogue of ships can be found in *Iliad* 2.494–759. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke can be found in Matt 1:1–17 and Luke 3:23–38, respectively.

⁹ See John Boyle, “The Theological Character of the Scholastic ‘Division of Text’ with Particular Reference to the Commentaries of Saint Thomas Aquinas,” in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. J. McAuliffe, B. Walfish, and J. Goering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 276–83, at 277. See also Boyle, “Authorial Intention and the *Divisio Textus*,” in *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinais (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 3–8.

¹⁰ Boyle, “Theological Character,” 277.

Modern biblical exegetes might not always agree with the validity of the “themes” by which these medieval theologians associated and distinguished the books of the Old Testament and New Testament, whether it was the distinction between “law” (Old Testament) and “grace” (New Testament), as in Thomas’s *divisio*, or “signs” (Old Testament) and “things” (New Testament), as in Henry of Ghent’s *divisio*, but the medieval goal was one we should still be able to appreciate: the attempt to identify a unity of divine purpose rich enough to express itself in a variety of approaches, genres, and texts. It is for this reason that I think Professor Boyle is right to describe the creation of the *divisio textus* as a properly “theological” project.¹¹

THE MASTER’S *DIVISIO*: A UNIQUE VISION

Providing a *divisio textus* of all the books of the Bible was a required part of the inception ceremony for decades, but no two were quite the same. There is not one ideal division to which they all conformed. Although one can find similarities, it appears that each master was supposed to come up with his own distinctive *divisio*.

To give the reader a sense of the similarities and differences, I have provided outlines of four of the *divisiones*, from the *resumptio* addresses of four medieval masters who incepted at Paris over a roughly forty-year period, between 1238 and 1278. In addition to Thomas’s, there are outlines of the *divisiones textus* done by the Franciscan John of La Rochelle, who incepted in 1238, the secular master Henry of Ghent, who incepted in 1275 or 1276; and Matthew of Aquasparta, another Franciscan and a personal pupil of Bonaventure’s, who incepted in 1277 or 1278.¹² Thomas’s inception in 1256

¹¹ Boyle, “Theological Character,” 277.

¹² For John of La Rochelle’s text, see “Deux leçons d’ouverture de Cours Biblique données par Jean de La Rochelle,” ed. Delorme, O.F.M., *La France Franciscaine* 16 (1933): 345–60. The text of interest for our purposes is the second of the two, which is presumably the one John gave as his *resumptio* address. For Henry’s text, see Henry of Ghent (Henrico de Gandavo), *Lectura Ordinaria Super Sacram Scripturam*, ed. Raymond Macken, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 36 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1980), 5–27. The first lecture would presumably have been Henry’s *principium in aula*. The second was likely Henry’s *resumptio* and contains Henry’s *divisio textus* of the Bible. For Matthew of Aquasparta’s text, see *Quaestiones*

falls roughly in the middle of the span.

Leaving aside Aquinas's *divisio* for the moment, we can summarize the basic characteristics of the *divisiones* of the other three masters under five general headings: (1) the most basic division is that between the Old and New Testaments, but the masters treat it in various ways; (2) all three masters use "law," of various types, as a key component in their concerted efforts to correlate the Old Testament with the New; (3) much more effort is expended on partitioning the Old Testament than the New; (4) even when the three masters use the same divisions, they usually create their own subdivisions and descriptions; (5) many of these *divisiones* were likely crafted with an eye toward (a) memory and (b) their usefulness as aids to preaching.

Old Testament and New Testament

Not surprisingly, the most basic division each master makes is between the Old Testament and the New, but they establish the distinction in a variety of ways. The most common account given by these masters to explain what distinguishes the Old Testament from the New is one that can be traced back to Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* on the difference between "signs" and "things."¹³ Henry's text is clearest in this regard: "Since, therefore, according to Augustine, in the first book of *On Christian Doctrine*, 'every doctrine is either of signs or of things,' and Sacred Scripture is a doctrine, it contains both things and signs: signs in the Old Testament, things in the New." This *divisio* is a creative synthesis of St. Augustine's distinction between "signs" and "things" in the *De doctrina christiana* and his famous affirmation that "what lies hidden in the Old Testament is made manifest in the new."¹⁴

And yet, this division according to "sign" and "thing" is merely one of a series of distinctions thirteenth-century masters used to distinguish the Old Testament from the New. Others included the distinctions between: judgment (OT) and mercy (NT); severity (OT)

and piety (NT); labor (OT) and rest (NT); onerous burdens (OT) and light ones (NT); lessening evil deeds (OT) and helping men to do good (NT); temporal goods (OT) and eternal goods (NT); and finally, for Thomas, law (OT) and grace (NT).

Types of Law

All three masters contrast the Old and the New Testaments as types of "law." What this allows them to do, moreover, is to associate books and sections of the Old Testament with books and sections of the New. So, for example, it is common to subdivide the books of the Old Testament into: first, the laws set forth in the five books of the Pentateuch; second, the *exempla* or "moral examples" found in the historical books; third, the admonitions and exhortations to wisdom found in the sapiential or wisdom literature; and finally, the prophecies in the books of the prophets. So, in the New Testament, we find: "the Lord's precepts" in the four Gospels corresponding to the books of the Mosaic Law; the historical *exempla* in the Acts of the Apostles corresponding to the *exempla* in the Old Testament historical books; the Pauline and canonical epistles corresponding to the sapiential books of the Old Testament; and finally, the Book of Revelation corresponding to the Old Testament prophetic books. These associations may seem odd to us at first, but they make more sense if we understand them as aids to preaching. More on that in a moment.

Greater Attention to the Old Testament than to the New

Although a chief concern for all three masters is to show how the Old Testament is a prefiguration of the New, oddly enough, all three devote much more space to dividing and subdividing the books of the Old Testament than they do for those in the New. This will be true of Aquinas as well.

The Old Testament is admittedly much larger than the New, with a greater number and variety of books, but this alone does not explain the different treatments. While these masters supply exhaustive categories and subcategories to account for each book of the Old Testament, when it comes to the New Testament, after listing the

Disputatae Selectae (Florence: Quaracchi, 1903), 16–22.

¹³ See Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, esp. 2.1–3.

¹⁴ See Augustine, *Quaestiones in heptateuchum* 2.72: "Et in Vetere Novum lateat, et in Novo Vetus pateat" ("the New lies hidden in the Old, and the Old is made manifest in the New").

four Gospels, they lump all the remaining books into large categories such as “Pauline epistles” and “canonical epistles” without listing each individual book.

Unique Subdivisions and Descriptions Even with Shared Main Divisions

Although they wrote over a roughly forty-year spread, several of the basic categories they use remain remarkably constant—the categories of law, *exempla*, and prophets figure in all three treatments of the Old Testament—but arrangement varies. For instance, John of La Rochelle and Henry of Ghent place *exempla* as a subcategory under “law,” whereas Matthew of Aquasparta gives it its own separate category at the same level as “law.”

Another complication is what to do with the wisdom literature and the Psalms. John and Henry, taking their cue from Christ’s words in Luke 24:44 (“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms”), make the threefold *divisio* into law, prophets, and Psalms foundational. Matthew takes a different approach and includes the Psalms as a species of prophecy. And whereas Matthew separates the wisdom books into their own separate category, John and Henry include them under *exempla*, categorizing them as “paternal” admonitions delivered in words, rather than examples in deeds such as we find in the historical books.

The most numerous and complicated series of divisions and subdivisions are always to be found among the Old Testament *exempla*, with the second place going to law. Clearly, the effort to categorize all the books of the Old Testament from Joshua, Judges, Kings, and Chronicles up to Job, Tobit, Judith, and Esther was no small task: there are many books of varying genres, and the relationships among them is not obvious, unlike those among the five books of the Pentateuch, which have a much clearer unity. And yet, even the five books of the Pentateuch were subjected to divisions and subdivisions. John and Henry both made divisions among these five in order to account for various elements of the natural and Mosaic laws.

It had become a commonplace by the thirteenth century to distinguish the four Major Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel—from the twelve so-called Minor Prophets. This division

was made centuries earlier, likely for purely utilitarian reasons, “major” and “minor” being designations of size of book, not importance of author. Matthew of Aquasparta testifies to the fact that, even in his day, the twelve books known collectively as the Minor Prophets were bound together in one volume, as were the four books of the Major Prophets. The latter were then associated with the four authors of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—and the eponymous prophets of the former with the twelve apostles, suggesting that a certain *theological* significance was by this time being attached to what had earlier been a simple decision about binding and bookmaking. These associations would not be immediately apparent to us, but they were to these medieval masters, which brings me to my fifth point.

Aids for Memory and Preaching

We might ask about all these odd categories and attempts to associate the books of the Old Testament with the books of the New—“Why all the fuss?” Why was so much time and energy spent creating these divisions and associations? This was not just the pastime of a single scholar, but a mandatory exhibition of skill required of every incoming master at the University of Paris.

We would appreciate these division practices better, I suggest, if we understood them, first, as a reflection of the “memory culture” that characterized the high Middle Ages and, second, as expressions of the special concern to foster better preaching which arose in the wake of the Fourth Lateran Council.¹⁵

I have argued in more detail in my book on the sermons of Aquinas that the *divisiones* in the *sermo modernus*-style sermon were mnemonic devices meant to help listeners recall the major points of the sermon by bringing to mind the words of the opening biblical *thema*

¹⁵ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 2008). For the important influence of the Fourth Lateran Council on the nature of the founding of the University of Paris, see Ian P. Wei, *The Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University, c. 1100–1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. 92–105. I have found no other book as clear or as valuable a guide to the history and culture of the founding years of the University of Paris as this superb volume.

verse.¹⁶ This was especially helpful for providing continuity during the break between the morning's sermon and the evening's continuation at vespers that University regulation required masters to preach using the same *thema* verse as assigned for the morning.¹⁷ In both the thirteenth-century "modern sermon" and the *divisio textus*, the goal was to divide a large mass of material into smaller, more-easily-grasped memory "cells" or "units" and then associate each of these with the parts of something easily memorized, like a single Bible verse.

As much as these *divisiones* owe to the memory culture of the medieval university, they also owe much to the thirteenth-century renewal of preaching. Take, for example, what may seem an odd set of associations we find for the Major Prophets in Thomas, Matthew, and Henry: Isaiah and the Incarnation, Jeremiah and the passion, Ezekiel and the resurrection, and Daniel and the final judgment. We can make sense of it both as a memory aid—four and four—and as a preaching aid. If the topic is the Incarnation, where can the dedicated preacher go in the Old Testament to search for figures prefiguring Christ's Incarnation? If he remembered his master's *divisio*, he would start in the book of Isaiah.

Consider as well John's and Henry's subcategories under *exempla*. Both subdivide Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah into books dealing with the active life (Kings and Nehemiah) and those concerning the contemplative life (Chronicles and Ezra). Nehemiah is associated with the active life because he undertook to repair the city; Ezra with the contemplative life because he repaired the temple. These are precisely the sort of images a preacher would use in preaching.

¹⁶ Randall B. Smith, *Reading the Sermons of Thomas Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2016).

¹⁷ Denifle and Chatelian, *Chartularium*, vol. 2, no. 1188 (p. 692); see esp. item 17: "Item, nota, quod quando unus prelati vel unus magister in theologia facit sermonem de mane in Universitate in aliquot festo in aliqua domo Mendicantium vel alibi: tunc ille qui facit collationem post prandium, debet accipere illud thema in collatione, quod assumptum fuit per prelatum vel per magistrum, qui fecit sermonem eadem die" ("Again, note that, when a priest or a master in theology preaches a sermon in the morning at the university during some feast in some house of the mendicants or elsewhere, then he who delivers the collation in the afternoon ought to use that same *thema* in the collation which was selected by the priest or master who delivered the sermon on the same day").

THOMAS AQUINAS'S *DIVISIO TEXTUS*

We turn now briefly to Thomas Aquinas's *divisio*. In line with the approach taken by his fellow masters, Thomas sees the Old Testament primarily in "legal" terms. So, for example, he divides the Old Testament according to the various types of precepts it contains, the basic division being between those precepts that *bind* and those that merely *warn*. According to Thomas, the binding precepts are to be understood as analogous to "the commands of a king who can punish transgressors," while those that "merely warn" are analogous to "the precepts of a father who must teach." This distinction between "commanding" (such as done by a king) and "warning" or "admonishing" (such as is done by a father) was common. But Thomas further subdivides this first category into two, suggesting that the precepts of a king are of two kinds: one that establishes the laws and another that induces to observance of the law, which is customarily done through his heralds and ambassadors. The result is a division of the Old Testament into three basic parts: books containing royal commandments; books containing heraldic inducements to obey the commandments; and books containing fatherly warnings to act justly. This threefold distinction replaces the more common division into law, *exempla*, and prophets.

And yet, Thomas's threefold division into *commandments*, *inducements*, and *admonitions* is an echo of John of La Rochelle's division into *precepts* such as we find in the Pentateuch, *exempla* such as we find in the historical books, and *admonitions* such as we find in the wisdom books. Thomas tucks the prophets under "heralds who induce observance of the law," while John had put them into their own separate category.

Although some of the terms are the same, Thomas crafts his own unique set of categories and subdivisions. So, for example, the division of some historical books into one category ("heralds who induce the observance of the law") and some into another ("precepts of a father who teaches—by deed") is unique to Thomas.

John of La Rochelle had suggested that the four Major Prophets speak about the head, Christ, while the twelve Minor Prophets speak about the body, the Church. Thomas affirms, by contrast, that the Major Prophets were those who "were sent to the whole people and called for observance of the whole law," while the Minor Prophets were sent to particular tribes of Israel, each for different reasons.

Thomas is, in fact, the only master who mentions any of the Minor Prophets by name, listing Hosea and Jonah as two who imparted edicts of the law “for special reasons to special tribes.” Thomas does say elsewhere (echoing John of La Rochelle) that the Major Prophets speak about Christ, with Isaiah foretelling the Incarnation, Jeremiah the passion, and Ezekiel the resurrection, but he differs from John by making no mention of the Minor Prophets speaking about “the body,” the Church.

Thomas—unlike John, Henry, and Matthew—does not use the term *exempla*. Rather, he uniquely associates books of the Old Testament with the four cardinal virtues: justice with Chronicles, temperance with Judith, fortitude with Maccabees and Tobit, and prudence with Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther. Further on, he associates three of the “sapiential” books—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs—with the three categories of virtue listed by Plotinus: political virtues, which involve the use of this world, he associates with Proverbs; purgative virtues, which involve contempt for worldly goods, he associates with Ecclesiastes; and finally, the virtues of the purged soul wholly cleansed from worldly cares and given over to contemplation alone he associates with the Song of Songs.

Interestingly, although Thomas is renowned as one of the prime expositors of the natural law, he does not follow John of La Rochelle’s lead in associating the natural law with the book of Genesis.

Whereas John of La Rochelle divides the New Testament into two parts, the *evangelical*, dealing with Christ, and the *apostolic*, which is further divided into *origins* (Acts of the Apostles), *doctrine* (epistles), and *consummation* of the Church (John’s Apocalypse), Thomas divides the New Testament into *the origin of grace* (the Gospels), *the power of grace* (the Pauline epistles), and *the execution of the power of grace* in the progress of the Church, in whose development there are three stages: the beginning of the Church, treated in the Acts of the Apostles; the progress of the Church, treated in the canonical epistles; and the end of the Church, which we find in the Apocalypse.

Indeed, this theme of Christ as the origin and power of grace is unique to Thomas’s account. The other masters stress the New Testament as the locus of laws, teachings, and moral *exempla*. What no one but Thomas mentions is the centrality of grace. Significantly, when Thomas finally, many years later, crafted a *divisio textus* of the Pauline epistles (an outline of which I have inserted into his *divisio*),

he did so precisely in terms of the various modes and categories of grace, as he had suggested years before at his inception.¹⁸

Thomas’s *divisio* has fewer explicit associations between the Old Testament and the New than do those of John, Henry, and Matthew, but he puts more emphasis on the grace of Christ as a unique gift enabling us (a) to live in accord with the precepts and admonitions of the Old Law and (b) to develop the virtues exemplified in the Old Testament books.

CONCLUSION

Thomas’s *divisio* was both elegant and simple; it does some things better than do those of his peers, but given the complexity of the Scriptures, it could not do everything perfectly. A *divisio* of this sort was not meant to be “the last word.” If this had been the goal, university officials would not have asked for a new one from each incepting master. These *divisiones* of the books of the Bible were meant, rather, as a “first word”: a beginning task by which the newly incepted master could demonstrate his ability to lay out a beginning lecture and a beginning outline for his incoming students. In years to come, Thomas would be expected to lecture on whatever books of the Bible the needs of the students dictated. In those circumstances, his first task would be to give a *principium*, a prologue lecture in the *sermo modernus* style, as part of which he would lay out for his students a *divisio textus* to aid them in their reading and to give them a road map of the lectures to come. In his *principium*, *resumptio*, and *divisio textus*, Thomas demonstrated not only the skills necessary for inception as a master theologian, but also the skills of laying out an admirably clear outline for his students, the hallmark of the great and marvelously lucid teacher he would become.

¹⁸ Compare the *divisio textus* of the Pauline epistles in *Hic est liber* with the more thoroughly worked-out *divisio* of the Pauline epistles in Thomas’s prologue to his *Commentary on Romans*.

OUTLINES OF THE *DIVISIONES TEXTUS* OF THE
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE FROM THE INCEPTION
RESUMPTIO ADDRESSES OF FOUR
THIRTEENTH-CENTURY MASTERS

John of La Rochelle's *Divisio Textus* of the Books of the Bible

I. Old Testament (signs; wrapped in obscurities and veiled figures)—
three parts:

A) Law: Christ is shown as mediator of precepts, which pertains
to power

- what ought to be done

1. Teaching of precepts: five books of Moses

a) unwritten: **Genesis** (proemium of the Law)

i. before sin

α) nature

$\alpha 1$) conservation of the individual: eat of
every tree

$\alpha 2$) conservation of the species: increase and
multiply

β) discipline: do not eat of the tree of the
knowledge of good and evil

ii. after the fall—3 ages:

α) Adam to Noah: resist concupiscence (given to
Cain) [moral precept]

β) Noah to Abraham: do not eat meat with
blood: abhor letting blood (to Noah) [judi-
cial precept]

γ) Abraham to Moses and prophets: circumci-
sion [ceremonial precept]

b) written:

i. First edition—3 states of man:

α) beginners: receding from evil, approaching
good: precepts in **Exodus**

β) progressing in the desert (moral, ceremonial,
judicial): **Leviticus**

γ) perfection: prepare to enter land of promise
(signifying the perfection of contemplatives
and actives): **Numbers**

ii. Second (explanation): **Deuteronomy** (recap of
the Law)

α) Love the Lord your God (affirmative pre-
cepts)

β) Fear God (negative precepts)

2. Teaching of exempla (deeds): ten books: Joshua, Judges,
Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Esther, Judith, Tobit, Job, Mac-
cabees—threefold state:

a) acting (in accord with the Law), in state of prosper-
ity: Joshua, Judges, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehe-
miah

i. exempla of perfection to the good (before captiv-
ity):

α) beginning (entering land): **Joshua**

β) progress (in land, people tested): **Judges**

γ) consummation:

$\gamma 1$) exempla for actives: regal power: **Kings**

$\gamma 2$) exempla for contemplatives: priestly:
Chronicles

ii. exempla of reparation to the good after the cap-
tivity: Ezra, Nehemiah

α) contemplative (repair of the temple): **Ezra**

β) active (repair of the city): **Nehemiah**

b) sustaining in state of adversity: Esther, Tobit, Job,
Judith

i. personal adversity: **Job, Tobit**

ii. general adversity:

a) through hidden machination: **Esther**

β) through open violence: **Judith**

c) persevering (in both): **Maccabees**

3. Teaching of admonitions (words): Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus

a) general admonition: **Proverbs**

b) special admonitions:

i. contempt for commutable goods: **Ecclesiastes**

ii. conversion to incommutable good: **Song of Songs**

iii. to justice: **Wisdom**

iv. to the benefits of mercy: **Ecclesiasticus**

B) Prophets: Christ is shown as mediator of revelation, which pertains to truth

- what ought to be believed (both affections and intellect)

1. Concerning the Head (Christ): four Major Prophets → four Gospels: Christ is God-man

a) focus on divinity: **Isaiah** (Immanuel) and John (the Word)

b) focus on humanity—dignity of Christ; union of:

i. power (king): **Daniel** (Dan 7: Son of Man) and **Matthew** (prologue; Sermon on the Mount)

ii. wisdom (preaching): **Jeremiah** (preaches to Jews) and **Mark** (begins preaching after baptism by John, focus on preaching)

iii. goodness (priest): **Ezekiel** (was a priest) and **Luke** (begins with Zechariah; true priesthood in passion)

2. Concerning the Body (the Church): **twelve Minor Prophets** → twelve apostles

C) **Psalms**: Christ is shown as mediator of prayers, which pertains to goodness

- seeking the grace of perseverance in prayers to God: divided into three parts in accord with three rules or *regula* [not specified]

II. Teaching of the New Testament—two parts

A) Evangelical Teaching: four **Gospels** (treat of the Head, Christ) [see above]

B) Apostolic Teaching: Acts, epistles, Apocalypse (treat of the Body, the Church)

- three states:

1. beginning: **Acts**

2. growth: **Epistles**

3. culmination: **Apocalypse**

MATTHEW OF AQUASPARTA'S *DIVISIO TEXTUS* OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament: four parts

I. Legal precepts: provide ruling precepts

- A) **Genesis**: treats of multiplication of the people and election, to which the Law was given
- B) **Exodus**: treats of the legislation
- C) **Leviticus**: treats of rites of sacrifice and divine cult
- D) **Numbers**: treats of the progress and order of that people
- E) **Deuteronomy**: recapitulation of the Law

II. Examples (exempla) of the fathers: provide moving examples from history

A) the common state of the whole people

- 1. **Joshua**: entry into the promised land and distribution of it
- 2. **Judges**: progress of the people, multiplication in variety of states
- 3. **Kings**: promotion and exaltation of a king
- 4. **Chronicles**: exaltation of the priesthood
- 5. **Ezra-Nehemiah**: reparation after ruin (temple and city)

B) the state of notable singular persons

- 1. **Job**: example of patience under the natural law
- 2. **Tobit**: example of the same patience under the written Law
- 3. **Judith**: example of purity and chastity (merited cutting off the head of Holofernes)
- 4. **Esther**: example of clemency and mercy as queen, not elevated by pride
- 5. **Maccabees**: example of constancy to the laws of the fathers even to death (prefiguring the martyrs of the Church)

III. Sapiential literature: provide directing warnings and information [ed., this is a switch from his opening]

A) special information

- 1. **Proverbs**: information concerning the exercise and progress of virtue
- 2. **Ecclesiastes**: contempt of vanity, preparing the mind for the love expressed in the Song of Songs
- 3. **Song of Songs**: the embrace of love
- 4. **Wisdom**: the contemplation of truth

B) universal information (all higher things): **Ecclesiasticus**

IV. Oracles of the prophets: provide illustrating oracles

A) through the medium of prayer (by which the light of grace is obtained by entreaty)

- **Psalms**: because of the truth of the grace of the Spirit

B) through the medium of preaching (by which the truth is manifested)

- 1. **Isaiah**: principally predicts the mystery of the Incarnation (Advent readings)
- 2. **Jeremiah**: principally predicts the remedy of the passion (Lamentations: prefigures the passion of the Lord)
- 3. **Ezekiel**: principally predicts the resurrection (rededication of the temple)
- 4. **Daniel**: principally predicts the judgment (Son of Man coming on the clouds)

C) through the medium of testifying: **twelve Minor Prophets** = twelve apostles [bound in one volume]

New Testament

I. Lord's precepts (correspond to books of the Law)

- Christ is God-man, king and priest

A) **Matthew**: treats of his humanity

B) **Mark**: treats of his regal power

C) **Luke**: treats of his priestly dignity

D) **John**: treats of his divinity

II. Apostolic exempla (correspond to historical books)

- **Acts of the Apostles**: unity of the mystical body and bond of charity commended

III. Canonical literature (correspond to sapiential books)

A) special information for the churches and persons to whom they are directed:

- **Pauline epistles**

B) general information, thus common name retained

- **Canonical epistles**

IV. Prophetic Oracle (corresponding to prophetic books)

- **Apocalypse**: deals with the final state of the Church, in which is rest and consummation

HENRY OF GHENT'S *DIVISIO TEXTUS* OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Augustine: "signs" and "things"

I. Old Testament: (sign; mystical senses; figural with respect to the New)

A) Law: what ought to be done (to be expounded principally with tropological sense)

1. Preceptive (what ought to be done): five books of Moses

(Genesis as prologue: rejected)

(Genesis provides creation of creatures; other books provide the law for them: rejected because Genesis not part of law; instead:)

a) remembrance of natural law (not only word, but deeds in history; man was made in natural law; patriarchs

observed it; corrupted by sinners; shown by deeds): **Genesis**

b) coercion to observe the natural law: precepts of written law

i. Law promulgated:

α) moral precepts (man ordered in relation to himself): **Exodus**

- pertains to beginners (beginning good): describes the people exiting from Egypt, hastening to sea of baptism and to mountain of divine law

β) sacramental (man ordered in relation to God): **Leviticus**

- pertains to those progressing and the increase of good: describes the people progressing through the desert of this world to the promised land

γ) judicial (man ordered in relation to neighbor): **Numbers**

- pertains to the perfect and the consummation of good: describes the people preparing themselves to enter and possess the promised land

ii. Law explained: **Deuteronomy**

2. Directive (how it ought to be done):

a) exempla through just deeds: historical books

i. of doing the good of justice

α) entry (beginning): **Joshua**

β) progress (against temptation; progress in virtue): **Judges**

- annexed: time under one judge: **Ruth**

γ) perfect consummation: justice of divine cult

γ1) active life (kings and princes): **Kings**

γ2) contemplative life (ministers; spiritual matters): **Chronicles**

δ) reparation for lost justice—twofold:

δ1) in the spiritual regimen of the contemplative life: **Ezra** (temple)

δ2) in the temporal regimen of the active life: **Nehemiah** (city)

ii. of sustaining the evil of punishment

α) personal:

α1) pain of loss: **Tobit** (struck with blindness)

α2) pain of sense: **Job** (struck with the worst boils: sustained the Cross)

β) communal

β1) through open violence: **Judith**

β2) through hidden machinations: **Esther**

iii. of persevering in both doing the good of justice and in enduring the evil of punishment: **Maccabees**

b) exhortation through words: books of Solomon

i. dissuading from doing evil

α) flee iniquity: **Proverbs**

β) not to love vanity: **Ecclesiastes**

ii. persuading to do good

α) to the contemplative life: **Song of Songs**

β) to the conservation of the republic: **Wisdom**

γ) by an invocation to divine mercy: **Ecclesiasticus**

B) Prophets: what ought to be believed (principally with allegorical)

1. Twelve Minor Prophets: concern the mystic body, the Church

2. Four Major Prophets: concern the head, Christ

a) nativity and Incarnation: **Isaiah** (Virgin will conceive)

b) passion and death: **Jeremiah**

c) resurrection and ascension: **Ezekiel**

d) advent to judgment: **Daniel**

C) Psalms: for what we ought to hope (principally with analogical): most excellent, preeminent prophet (less involved with images and coverings of words; dreams; more directly inspired by Holy Spirit)

II. New Testament: (New Law divided as was the Old)

A) Law (what ought to be done from charity)

1. Preceptive: Evangelical doctrine, concerning Christ per se

a) principally divinity: **John**

b) principally humanity:

i. his entry into the world and things pertaining to human generation and birth: **Matthew**

ii. his progress in the world and things pertaining to things foretold of him: **Mark**

iii. his exit from the world and things pertaining to his passion: **Luke**

2. Directive: Apostolic doctrine, concerning Christ through the apostles and his disciples

a) through the example of the just: **Acts**

b) through the instruction of words: epistles of Apostles

i. for informing the faithful in the time of prosperity: **Pauline epistles** (Grace to you and peace)

ii. for consoling the afflicted in the time of adversity: **Canonical epistles** ("Count it joy when you fall into various temptations" [James 1:1])

B) Prophets (how it ought to be done fruitfully): **Apocalypse**

THOMAS AQUINAS'S *DIVISIO TEXTUS* OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Sacred Scriptures lead to eternal life—and this in two ways:

I. By commanding:

(Old Testament)

A) Binding: command of a king who punishes

1. King who establishes the law

a) private: **Genesis** (Adam, Eve, Abraham, etc.)

b) public:

i. Law from LORD to mediator: three ways people need to be ordered:

α) equity of judgments: **Exodus**

β) establishment of worship: **Leviticus**

γ) establishment of offices for community:
Numbers

ii. Law from mediator to people: **Deuteronomy**

2. Heralds who induce its observance (prophets)

a) manifest beneficence of the king

i. effect of heredity: **Joshua** [see also under B.1 below, "Warning: By deed"]

ii. in destruction of armies: **Judges**

iii. exultation of the people

α) private: **Ruth**

β) whole people: **Kings**

b) declare the edict of the law

i. to the whole people for observance of the whole law (Major Prophets)

α) by cajoling: **Isaiah** (also foretells Incarnation, read during Advent)

β) by warning: **Jeremiah** (foretells passion, read during Passiontide)

γ) arguing, scolding: **Ezekiel** (foretells resurrection: raising of bones)

δ) **Daniel** spoke of the divinity of Christ

ii. for special reasons to special tribes (**Minor Prophets**), e.g.:

α) to the ten tribes: **Hosea**

β) to the Ninevites: **Jonah**

B) Warning: precept of a father who teaches

1. By deed

a) warning about future: **Joshua** (see St. Jerome)

b) teaches virtues from past

i. Justice: **Paralipomenon (Chronicles)**

ii. Temperance: **Judith**

iii. Fortitude

α) to attack: **Maccabees**

β) to endure: **Tobit**

iv. Prudence:

α) to build city and temple while enemies plot:
Ezra–Nehemiah

β) to repel the violent: **Esther**

2. By word

a) asking for gift of wisdom: **Psalms**

b) teaching wisdom:

i. **expose** the liar: driving out errors by disputation:
Job

ii. not to lie about what is known:

α) wisdom is commended to us: **Wisdom**

β) precepts of wisdom (and virtue) are proposed

-three grades of virtue (see Poltinus)

β1) political virtues (use things of the world): **Proverbs**

β2) purgative virtues (contempt of the world): **Ecclesiastes**

β3) virtues of purged soul (wholly cleansed from worldly care; contemplation alone): **Song of Songs**

3. By word and deed: **Ecclesiasticus**

II. By helping with gifts of grace:

(New Testament)

A) Origin of Grace: Jesus Christ (divine and human: priest, prophet, king)

1. Divine nature: esp. **John** (eagle)

2. Human nature: Synoptics

a) king: **Matthew** (Incarnation: man)

b) prophet: **Mark** (resurrection: lion)

c) priest: **Luke** (passion: bull)

B) Power of Grace: Pauline epistles:

[missing from the *resumptio*; the divisiones of the Pauline epistles has been taken from the prologue to Thomas's Commentary on Romans]

1. As it is in the Head—namely, Christ: **Hebrews**

2. As it is found in the chief members of the Mystical Body: the letters to the prelates, both spiritual and temporal:

a) spiritual prelates instructed about:

i. establishing, preserving, and governing ecclesial unity: **I Timothy**

ii. resistance against persecutors: **II Timothy**

iii. defense against heretics: **Titus**

b) temporal lord instructed: **Philemon**

3. As it is found in the Mystical Body itself, that is, the Church: the letters to the Gentiles:

a) as it is in the Church itself: **Romans**

b) as it exists in the sacraments of grace:

i. nature of the sacraments: **I Corinthians**

ii. dignity of the minister: **II Corinthians**

iii. superfluous sacraments rejected against those who wanted to join old sacraments to the new: **Galatians**

c) with regard to the effect of the unity it produces in the Church:

i. establishment of ecclesial unity: **Ephesians**

ii. consolidation and progress of unity: **Philippians**

iii. defense against certain errors: **Colossians**

iv. unity during existing persecutions: **I Thessalonians**

v. during persecutions to come, especially in time of the anti-Christ: **II Thessalonians**

C) Execution of Power of Grace: progress of the Church

1. Beginning: **Acts of the Apostles**

2. Progress: **Canonical epistles** (James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; and Jude)

3. End: **Apocalypse**