Stefan Dragulinescu

THOMAS OF HEREFORD'S MIRACLES

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University
Budapest
May 2011

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by

Stefan Dragulinescu

(Romania)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies
Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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I, the undersigned, **Stefan Dragulinescu**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 25 May 2011

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Signature

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA.SS *Acta Sanctorum*

NPNF *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* ed. Philip Schaaf. 14 vols. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1886-1890.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis entails an analysis of Saint Thomas of Hereford's miracles as reflected in his canonization process with a view to understanding the general way in which the interpretation of miracles changed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in contrast to the understanding of miracles in late antiquity and the early medieval period. Different notions of how God can be present extraordinarily in the world pervaded the period demarcated by St. Augustine's treatment, in his *De Civitate Dei*, of the miracles produced at Uzalis by the relics of St. Stephen,[1] and, at the other end, by Aquinas' meticulous survey, in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, of what can occur *contra naturam, praeter naturam* and *supra naturam*.[2] Augustine was writing at a time when, at its inception, the cult of saints was gaining legitimacy through the figures of martyrs and when cultivated Christians, befuddled by the turbulent disintegration of the Roman Empire, were under pressure from Stoicism, Manicheism, and Neoplatonism.[3] Aquinas was writing in a period when the ideal of sainthood was heavily questioned (indirectly by) Cathar heresies and (directly by) the figure of St. Francis,[4] and when (potential) saints were scrutinized with juridical attentiveness in papal canonization processes,[5] while Aristotle's physical and metaphysical writings, re-introduced in the West through the Arab pathway (and heavily interpreted by

[1] Augustine, *The City of God* [*De Civitate Dei*], tr. Marcus Dods, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* Series I, Volume 2 (NPNF V1-02) ed. Philip Schaaf (New York: The Christian Literature Co, 1886) 22.8-22.10.
[2] Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* [*Summa contra Gentiles*], trans. Anton C. Pegis, James F. Anderson, Vernon J. Bourke, and Charles J. O'Neil (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975). Aquinas's definition of miracle was refined in the eighteenth century by Pope Benedict XIV and has since remained the standard approach to miracles in the Catholic Church. See J. A. Hardon, "The Concept of Miracle from St. Augustine to Modern Apologetics," *Theological Studies*, No. 15 (1954), 229–257.
[3] See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo – A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
[4] Aviad Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1-16, 21-32, also idem, "Canonization without a Canon," in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge. Aspects juridiques et religieux – Canonization Processes in the Middle Ages. Legal and Religious Aspects*, ed. Gabor Klaniczay, (Rome: École française de Rome, 2004), 11.

Avicenna and Averroes), affected clerics' minds in the recently created universities in Oxford, and Paris.[6] Both Aquinas and Augustine viewed miracles as basically events that happened beyond the usual course of nature; yet, beside this "common" feature, one is tempted to say, everything else was different, or at least many things were different, from Augustine's time in the thirteenth century.

When looking at saints, their miracles, and the changes in how sainthood was perceived and portrayed during the Middle Ages, tracing the variations in the philosophy and theology of the miraculous can add to understanding the *Weltanschauung* that framed the writing of hagiographical texts, the decisions on canonization, the need to diffuse virtuous exempla in society, the mistrust in (some or all) reported miracles, or, to the contrary, the belief that saints can bring relief and protection. I attempt such an analysis for the case of St. Thomas of Hereford (sometimes also called St. Thomas Cantilupe), one of the last English saints of medieval England and the only Englishman canonized in the fourteenth century.

For his canonization process there is -- besides the classical elements of the bull of canonization,[7] hagiographical writings,[8] and the acts of canonization[9] – a curial manuscript which sheds light on the "internal" deliberations of the papacy prior to the decision to acknowledge Thomas as a saint,[10] which represents "the only medieval document which allows us to observe in detail how the clergy reacted in the face of the supernatural."[11] The unidentified author of the manuscript is extremely favourable towards accepting the reported miracles of Thomas. In his arguments, he examines the

[5] See Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1982), 1-19.
[6] See Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and Scientific Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).
[7] Issued by Pope John XII on 17 April 1320; AA.SS, 597-598.
[8] Richard Strange, *St. Thomas of Cantilupe's Life and Miracles* (Ghent, 1672) reprinted in 1879, http://www.archive.org/details/lifeofstthomasof00strauoft (last accessed 18 Jan. 2011).
[9] Ms Vat. lat. 4015, fols. 123-245, also in AA.SS, 609-640, 697-703.
[10] MS BN. Lat., 5373 A - reproduced as Appendix 1 in Andre Vauchez, *Sainthood in Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

veracity of these miracles using analogies with miracles from other hagiographical writings, quotations from St. Augustine (as well as from Gregory the Great and Bede, two early modern theologians whose views on miracles were heavily indebted to Augustine);[12] and also using the "scientific" style of the thirteenth-century Aristotelians, mostly typified by Aquinas but also by other theologians such as Engelbert of Admont. Strangely, neither Aquinas nor any other Scholastic is mentioned, but the patterns of argument in which physical or physiological "laws of nature" are invoked as potential causal explanations for putative miraculous effects are present, nevertheless. In other words, in the same text one can have (what is commonly recognized nowadays as) the Scholastic drive towards the "naturalization" of the world, "empirical" enquiry, and "causal" understanding of phenomena,[13] juxtaposed with references to Augustine and his early medieval followers' view of miracles.

Importantly, one could argue, however, that the initial Augustinian drive was pulling in a different direction, namely, towards the suspension, neglect or dismissal of the level of secondary causes in favour of an "enchanted" view of the world which should manifest God's presence and will directly (be it in an unmediated or mediated way).[14] Conceivably, the anonymous curialist thought he could consistently appeal to the Augustinian construal of miracles along with his "judicial," "scientific" enquiry into Thomas of Hereford's reported miracles. Yet, it seems fair to say that a latent tension looms in the manuscript he authored. Just to hint in this direction, Augustine

[11] Vauchez, *Sainthood*.
[12] See William McCready, *Signs of Sanctity: Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great*, Studies and Texts 91. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), 225-239, and *Miracles and Venerable Bede*. Studies and Texts 118 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1994).
[13] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind. Theory, Record and Event 1000–1211* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1987), 5-9, and Funkenstein, *Theology*.
[14] Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9, 26; William McCready, *Signs* 7-16 (year), 225-229; Lorraine Daston and

placed "wonder" at the core of his analysis of the miraculous,[15] and urged his readers to look at the marvels of the world in order to be convinced that God's direct presence can change the usual course of nature; and that, moreover, nature and its course themselves are miraculous. Aquinas accepted that miracles are wondrous, but primarily in themselves, and only secondarily wondrous for us, since one can always be deceived by marvels produced by unknown formal causes or by the imperfections of matter.[16] For Augustine, phenomena such as Egyptian trees sinking rather than floating, the Persian stone waxing and waning with the moon, the Agrigentine salt dissolving in fire, and so on, were proof that miracles are possible;[17] for Aquinas, phenomena of this sort were proof that one can be deceived when looking for God's direct presence in the world.[18]

The main purpose of the present thesis is to see how the tension between Augustine and the Augustinian understanding of miracles, on the one hand, and the thirteenth-century Aristotelians' views, on the other, can shed light on the manuscript and the canonization of Thomas of Hereford. What was the intention of the anonymous curialist? Can the tension between the two views on miracles (one centred on wonder, on the "subjective" side, the other on causes, on the "objective" side) shed light on a certain conceptual inconsistency on the part of the anonymous curialist that has been emphasized in the literature?[19] I suggest that it does and that the very crux of the text – the alternation of passages betraying a stern, critical, "empirically minded" evaluation of miracles with passages in which miracles are accepted at face value,

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Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 109-133, esp.120-124.

[15] See Lorraine Daston, "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," *Critical Inquiry*, 18, No. 1 (1991): 93-124.

[16] Of course, I leave aside here the fact that both Aquinas and Augustine acknowledged that demons can blur our vision of what a true miracle is.

[17] Augustine, *The City of God*, 7.29, 21.7.

[18] Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith,* 3.101.2.

appealing to quotations from Augustine and early medieval thinkers or the existence of precedents in the lives of previous saints – can thus be plausibly explained.

The interpretation I put forward has a definite place in the interpretations of the manuscript offered in the literature by Andre Vauchez and Aviad Kleinberg, from which I profit greatly and which I try to continue by developing a philosophical dimension. I proceed in chapter 1 with laying out the requisite historical background for Thomas of Hereford and his canonization (§1.1), setting out the content of the curialist manuscript (§1.2) and presenting the analyses of the manuscript from the literature (§1.3). At the end of this chapter the range of the questions I address, as well as the methodology I adopt (§1.4) – a textual analysis of the manuscript complemented by relevant philosophical writings from Aquinas, Augustine, and Engelbert of Admont – should be clear.

In chapter 2 I begin with Jacques Le Goff's general presentation of the theme of *wonder*, and take up two of these theologians -- namely Aquinas (§2.2) and Engelbert of Admont (§2.3) -- attempting to draw out the scholastic background against which the specificity of Augustine's views is best placed. In chapter 3, after elaborating on Augustine's view of miracles in relation to his rendition of Creation (§3.1 and §3.2), I argue that a genuinely Augustinian position would have been inconsistent with the thirteenth-century Aristotelian causal view of miracles (§3.3). In chapter 4 I return to the curialist manuscript and draw my conclusion as to the intention of its author and the alternation of passages of face-value "belief" and "empirically-minded" enquiry, pointing also to future directions of research that could help strengthen my argument.

[19] Vauchez, *Sainthood.* Aviad Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* 20 (1989): 183–205.

CHAPTER 1. THOMAS CANTILUPE AND HIS CANONIZATION

§1.1 THE ONLY ENGLISHMAN CANONIZED IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Thomas Cantilupe, bishop of Hereford from 1275, died on 25 August 1282 at Castro Florenti, in Italy, subject to an excommunication decision issued by Archbishop Peckham of Canterbury, which he was appealing in Italy at the time of his death.[20] Between 1282 and 1286 his tomb in the Lady Chapel part of the Hereford cathedral did not produce miracles (his bones lay in the cathedral, his heart was buried at Ashridge, and his viscera at the San Severo monastery). As Richard Strange, Thomas's hagiographer in the seventeenth century, relates:

> "Here it lay five years amidst the private veneration of the devout persons, partaking of no more honour than their devotion gave it, each one according to the opinion they had of his sanctity. For though divers things more than ordinary, and such as beget much wonder and veneration were related on several passages, as, the fragrant odour it exhaled, the blood it sweat, morning call, &c., yet formal miracles none were wrought nor pretended to; and the Catholic church hath always used a special wariness to prevent disorders of this nature, that nothing may be publicly ascribed before attested by legal authority; and we need not doubt but the Saint himself among so many decrees as he made, had left this enacted. [21]

Miracles started to occur in 1287, occasioned by the translation of his relics to a new tomb on April 3.The translation of the relics took place at the request of Richard Swinfield, his successor at the Hereford bishropric between 1982 and 1317. It was Easter week, a propitious time when the cathedral was crammed with people.

[20] Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, "Gender and Spheres of Interaction. Devotional Practices in Fourteenth Century Canonization Processes," (PhD Dissertation: Tampere University, 2006), 23.
[21] Strange, *The Life*, 137.

Other circumstances of the translation suggest that "supernatural" events were somehow expected or triggered to happen – in 1286 Richard Swinfield had inquired whether any miracles had occurred at the San Severo monastery. [22] A week before, on March 28, it was suggested to Edith, a mentally disturbed women who had come to pray at the altar of the Holy Cross, to seek Thomas Cantilupe's help instead; once back home, she reported her miraculous healing.[23] Five miracles occurred in the cathedral on the very day of April 3,[24] and more continued to happen afterwards, carefully written down by two custodians who had been placed near Thomas's new tomb on 4 April.

Richard Swinfield spread the news of the miracles at various city councils and parliament meetings, and wrote to the pope himself asking for an enquiry that would certify Thomas Cantilupe's sainthood officially. For almost a century, sainthood had required a complicated inquisition on behalf of the Holy See and its representatives in order to be recognized. Initiated by Innocent III in 1197, by the end of the thirteenth century the canonization process had been perfected into a well-refined mechanism entailing pre-formulated detailed questionnaires for local witnesses,[25] a three stage inspection of evidence -- enquiry *in partibus*, *recollectio* (surveying the results of the *in partibus* enquiry) and *summarium* (refining the *recollectio* in order for presentation to the pope)[26] -- and a legalistic apparatus consisting of notaries and translators, meant to ensure the juridical safety of each turn of the enquiry.[27] The costs for carrying out such an enterprise had accordingly increased considerably, so much that, at the end

[22] See Robert Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims, Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London: Dent & Sons, 1977), 170-178.
[23] Strange, *The Life*, 144; Finucane, *Miracles*, 181.
[24] Strange, *The Life*, 140.
[25] Bartlett, *The Natural*; 10, Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 48; Michael Goodich, "The Criteria for the Proof and Credibility of Miracles," in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge. Aspects juridiques et religieux – Canonization Processes in the Middle Ages. Legal and Religious Aspects*, Gabor Klaniczay ed. (Rome: École française de Rome, 2004), 181.
[26] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 488.

only candidates backed by the powerful rich dynasties of Europe could aspire to the status of saint.[28]

Instrumental in the success of Thomas Cantilupe's canonization was the help of Edward I and Edward II, who wrote to the pope in 1305 and 1307, respectively.[29] Edward I had Thomas of Hereford as one of his counsellors and they had both supported the cause of Simon de Montfort.[30] Edward II wished to continue his father's cause and sent letters not only to the pope but also to twenty-five cardinals, not to mention that he requested help from Philip IV, who was influential in the Avignon papacy.[31]

Even so, the canonization process lasted twenty-five years, finally being sealed by Pope John XXII on 17 April 1320. In the meantime, the papacy had gone through the crisis of the Boniface VIII-Philip the Fair conflict; three popes had succeeded one another (Boniface VIII, Clement V, and John XXII); Thomas Cantilupe was cleared of the accusation of having died excommunicated following his conflict with the archbishop of Canterbury (after an investigation held in London in April 1307);[32] and a local enquiry into Thomas's life and miracles took place in London and Hereford between 13 July and 13 November 1307.

William of Tessa (a papal chaplain, responsible among other things for tax collection), Ralph Baldock (bishop of London), and William Durand (bishop of Mende) listened to 320 witnesses and scrutinized 35 miracles (to which a list of 470 additional miracles was provided by the Hereford proctors on the final day of the

[27] Katajala-Peltomaa, "Gender," 20.
[28] Kleinberg, "Canonization."
[29] Michael Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders. The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150-1350.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).
[30] Finucane, *Miracles*, 175.
[31] Finucane, *Miracles*, 178. Vauchez notes that the French monarchy's influence was decisive for *most* of the canonizations in the fourteenth century; Vauchez, *Sainthood.*
[32] The investigation into Thomas's excommunicattion is preserved in BAV MS Vat. Lat. 4016.

hearings).[33] Four languages were used in the enquiries (French, English, Welsh, Latin);[34] of course, translators and notaries attended in order to ensure that the pre-established questions of the standard formulary were answered. The witnesses were asked, among other things, if Thomas' miracles had been above or contrary to nature, what words were used by those who requested these miracles, or if in the operation of these miracles herbs or stones were applied or any other natural or medicinal things.[35]

Significantly, by the time of this local enquiry, the miracles performed by Thomas had almost ceased.[36] The impetus stirred in 1287 had gradually dwindled, just like the content of the miracles, and the people (claiming to have been) experiencing them had changed. In 1287 160 miracles were reported; in 1300 only nine were noted, and in 1312 only one.[37] Around 1287, the cured persons were mostly simple women claiming healing at the tomb of the saint from "usual" ailments -- blindness and paralysis; a decade after, the persons claiming to have been cured were mostly well-off men with elevated social status, who claimed to have been healed from less ordinary afflictions – accidents or wounds -- away from Hereford by simply invoking the saint;[38] in at least one of the cases of "spectacular" miracles, a resurrection, one can detect echoes of the smouldering conflict between the Welsh and the English.[39] Resurrections were actually perceived as the forte of Thomas of Hereford; as Richard Strange relates:

[33] Robert Bartlett, *The Hanged Man. A Story of Miracle, Memory, and Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 120. The dossier compiling the depositions (to be found in MS Vat Lat. 4015) numbers 245 folios; see Michael Richter, "Collecting Miracles along the Anglo-Welsh Border in the Early Fourteenth Century," in *The Early Fourteenth Century. Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. D. A. Trotter(Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 53.
[34] See Richter, "Collecting," 53-54, Bartlett, *The Hanged*, 25.
[35] Bartlett, *The Hanged*, 13-14, 23-24, Goodich, *Miracles*, 87.
[36] Finucane, *Miracles*, 180.
[37] Finucane, *Miracles*, 183.
[38] Finucane, *Miracles*, 18-187.
[39]See Bartlett, *The Hanged*, Bartlett analyses the resurrection of William ap Rees. Richter, "Collecting," 58-60 also analyses this case, following the language competence of the witnesses to his miraculous resurrection and how this all connected with their social status.

> The palpabest of miracles, or the raising the dead, was so ordinary with our glorious Saint that forty such resuscitations stand upon a juridical record. Our Lord and Saviour has the sole dominion of life and death, keeping in His own hands the keys or both without control; yet so, as that He lends them sometimes to His servants, who, what they do, is by His power and dispensation, so are also all the miracles which they work, not done by their proper virtue but by His concurrence Who communicates it; and thus He wrought with our Saint.[40]

Such "spectacular" miracles were in fact preferred by the papacy in order to stand as proof for the sanctity of candidate saints.[41] Three out of the ten miracles mentioned in the Bull of Canonization issued by Pope John XXII were resurrection miracles, no doubt carefully selected by the three members of the *in partibus* committee and then passed through the filters of the *recollectio* and *summarium* phases of the investigation. When it came to the *summarium* phase, however, a crucial primary resource for my enquiry needs to be introduced.

§ 1.2 A CURIAL TREATISE ON MIRACLES

As mentioned in the "Introduction," a crucial primary source for my enquiry is a curial manuscript detailing the observations made by an unidentified member of the curia on the results of the local enquiries into Thomas Cantilupe's life and reported miracles in Hereford and London.[42] The manuscript appears to be a *summarium*, written down for the final meeting of the curia before taking a decision on canonization, intended for the eyes of a cardinal or even the pope himself.43 It was

[40] Strange, *The Life*, 155-156.
[41] See Vauchez, *Sainthood*. Vauchez also notes that the number of reported resurrection miracles had increased in the thirteenth century compared to the previous periods.
[42] MS BN. Lat., 5373. Aviad Kleinberg argues that the curialist must have been an Englishman; see Kleinberg, "Proving," 203
[43] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 488.

probably produced in Avignon in 1319 or early 1320,[44] that is, between the 1307 local enquiries and the final decision to canonize Thomas Cantilupe reached by Pope John XXII on 17 April 1320.

The anonymous curialist examines twenty-eight miracles out of the initial thirty-six reported in the *recollectio*, dismisses only one of them,[45] regards three others as dubious,[46] and accepts the rest. On a "phenomenological" level, the manuscript reveals significant patterns in the array of miraculous events commonly accepted in the fourteenth century. For instance, curing madness was not considered a real miracle, or at least is not considered a miracle worth mentioning in a canonization process – Edith, the mentally disturbed woman whose healing had sparked the miracles in Hereford, was not a candidate as an "officially" cured person. There are six cases of resurrection -- the "spectacular" recoveries of six children, four of whom had drowned.[47] The range of healings does not include such a great proportion of paralysis recovery as was the case prior to the thirteenth century,[48] but there are some instances of "partial" healings (that is, initial healings followed by relapses or only partial recovery) whose incomplete success is explained by the lack of faith of the person initially cured.

On the level of arguments, the anonymous curialist appeals to the *sic et non* method of analysis, i.e., the rejection of all the possible objections that could be addressed to the supernatural origin of an event. He employs analogies with biblical miracles and hagiographic texts -- *Itinerarium Clementis*, the *Lives* of SS Hippolytus,

[44] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 489.
[45] The case of Milo Pichard, adult, paralyzed.
[46] The cases of Philip Paniot, adult, paralytic, Lucy of Asperton, child drowned in a pond, and Anicia de La Putte, adult, paralyzed for 7 years
[47] Joan, daughter of Adam le Schirreve, aged 5, drowned in a fishpond; John, son of William Drake, aged 1 year 6 months, drowned; Nicholas, son of John Pescarius, aged 9, drowned in a river; Robert, son of Gervase, aged 2 years 3 months, dead after falling from a tower; Lucy of Asperton, child drowned on a pond; Agnes, daughter of William and Letitia, smothered by her mother in her sleep.

Nicholas of Myra, and Francis; and importantly, he also draws on quotations from patristic or early medieval sources, among which the most frequent are St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, and Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*. For instance, in another case of drowning resuscitation, that of John, son of William Drake, in which the child's skin colour did not entirely go back to normal after being saved, book XXII of Augustine's De Civitate Dei is quoted to back up an argument that "incomplete" recoveries may serve the glory of God: *fortassis in ille regno in corporibus martyrum videbimus vulnerum cicatrices que pro Christi nomine pertulerunt*.[49] A quotation from Bede's *Super Lucam* is taken to stress the point: *non ex impotentia curandi cicatrices in Christo fuerunt sed ut in perpetuum victorie sue circumferat triumphum*.[50]

The patterns of argument involve ruling out or questioning putative miraculous effects in which physical or physiological "laws of nature" could count fully as causal explanations. For instance, in one of the cases of resurrection -- that of Robert, son of Gervase -- a child 2 years and three months old who had fallen from a tower and was found alive with only fractures – the curialist ponders an entire theory of falling bodies, considering, for instance, what position a body should have in the air in order for the impact to be as strong as possible, whether it is possible to have an impact with no external signs of harm but with the crushing of the interior organs, whether fear experienced during the fall can cause death in itself, and so on.

> *Dicendum quod licet fuit tenerum, tamen minoris ponderis quam corpus perfecti hominis et quanto minoris ponderis, tanto minor debebat appararere fractura minoremque ictum dare in descensu contingendo rupem vel terram et cum hoc modus casus fortuiti facit ad minorem corporis concussionem. Si enim in descensu membra et tibie*

[48] Only eight out of the twenty-six cases represent paralysis cases, and among them one was dismissed and two others regarded as doubtful.
[49] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 545
[50] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 545.

> *quieta teneantur velud lapis fortiorem ictum dabit corpus cadens. Si vero in descensu membra predicta moveantur, minus corpus confrangetur. Unde corpus descendens a magna altitudine si in descendendo per aliquem interpellantem moveatur extra lineam descensus perpendicularem, minus sentiat de lesura, quod experimentaliter probatur in tantum quod si propre terram fiet dictus impulsus extra lineam sui descensus, vix fractura in corpore apparebit.*[51]

In the case of Agnes, daughter of William and Letitia, smothered by her mother in her sleep, the author of the *summarium* lists five physical signs of true death (*corporis et membrorum immobilitas, inflexibilitas iuncturarum, frigiditas in omni tempore, privatio anelitus, carencia usus sensuum*),[52] and presents a theory as to why these signs are reliable -- the soul is both the form and motor of the body and thus the coldness of the body and lack of sensation, physical rigidity, and the absence of movement and breath show that the soul was no longer active in the victim as *virtus motiva in interioribus.*

> *Dicendum est quod sic, quoniam anima unitur corpori ut forma et ut motor, et premissa arguunt carenciam omnium operationum vitalium; utroque modo carencia eius usus sensuum, frigiditas in omni tempore arguunt carenciam operationum anime ut est forma, quod de sensitiva est manifestum, de vegetativa etiam que est quasi fundamentum et radix aliorum, quia calor est instrumentum anime vegetative quo medicante corpus nutritur et viget, calore ergo sublato tollitur omnis operatio vegetative*.[53]

Overall, passages showing a stern, critical, empirically minded evaluation of miracles alternate with passages in which miracles are accepted at face value, appeals to quotations from Augustine and early medieval thinkers, and the existence of precedents in the lives of previous saints. This alternation between face-value "belief" and "empirically-minded" enquiry is the crux of the text. How can this be explained?

[51] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 547.
[52] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 551.
[53] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 549.

§ 1.3 ANALYSES OF THE TREATISE – VAUCHEZ AND KLEINBERG

In the literature there are two main interpretations of the manuscript, provided by Andre Vauchez and Aviad Kleinberg, which are crucial for situating my enquiry and to which I now turn for an exposition. According to Vauchez, the arguments seem to reveal a positive inclination towards accepting uncritically all or most of Thomas Cantilupe's reported miracles.[54] Even when using medical or "scientific" arguments, Vauchez argues, the curialist does not seem eager to question the reported "supernatural" source of certain phenomena. It seems, for instance, that it is only for the sake of giving an opinion that the author lists five physical signs of true death in the "resurrection" cases, backed up by a mind-body interaction theory. "None [of the five signs] strikes us as convincing," writes Vauchez,[55] who also suggests that the theory of the mind-body interaction was not intended to back up the use of these signs as laws of nature, but it was simply set out because the context "provided [the author] with the opportunity…to formulate his conception" on a such thorny issue. That is why "[f]ar from encouraging a critical attitude, the science of this 'great mind' provided a scholarly justification for facts which, at first sight, offended common sense."[56] The anonymous curialist must have known that Pope John XXII had already accepted Thomas Cantilupe as a saint and that is why "the most amazing facts were taken up and it was justifiable to regard them as miraculous."[57] One has to think here – given Vauchez's previous discussion of the political influence of dynastic power over decisions of canonization (that of Thomas of Hereford included) -- that Vauchez suggests a political motivation lying behind the superficial scrutinizing of the

[54] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 489.
[55] ibid., 491.
[56] Ibid., 491.
[57] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 491, italics added.

supernatural source of the report. But Vauchez's analysis is richer than a mere demonstration of political to-and-fro, and also includes a different, subtler dimension.

Indeed, on a broader level, Vauchez also points to the *Weltanschaung* within which scepticism or approval, justification driven by political means or theological rejection, were formulated. Thus, Vauchez observes -- in line with the differential and careful treatment of miracles adopted in his excellent book on sainthood -- that the very fact that "medical" and "scientific" arguments referring to "laws of nature" are employed in an analysis of miracles represents a drastic change brought about by canonization processes; and that, at the same time, one should not attribute the type of disbelief and scepticism that modern readers almost ineluctably manifest to the clergy of that period.[58]

Vauchez infers, among other things, from the use of quotations from Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, and Bede, that the anonymous curialist did not have a coherent concept of "nature,"[59] and this raises one of the main problems the present thesis is concerned with, because, as I mentioned in the Introduction, the medieval period did not have a single, but multiple, concepts of "supernatural,"[60] and there is, of course, a host of other conceptual issues that should have a bearing on this discussion -- for instance, the fact that the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries marked the stage for pregnant shifts in the understanding of God's omnipotence, presence, and knowledge, the modal notions of necessity and possibility, and so forth.[61] I will come back to these aspects in chapter 2*;* at this point, I just note that these philosophical issues and the bearing of the multiple medieval interpretations of the miraculous could well be used in order to continue and enlarge Vauchez's excellent

[58] Ibid., 490, 494, 498.
[59] Ibid., 491.
[60] R. Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6-10.

analysis. In order to see how, one should look at the other crucial interpretation of the manuscript, provided by Aviad Kleinberg.[62]

According to Kleinberg "the curialist was more interested in a discussion of whether an occurrence *was indeed* a miracle than of whether a miracle has been *proved*."[63] But what was the difference between proving a miracle and being really interested in whether an occurrence was indeed a miracle? Kleinberg argues that the canonists involved in the processes of canonization did not exclude that the enquiries might give the wrong results, in the sense of recognizing miracles which were not really miracles or sanctifying a person who was not really saint. The process of canonization "was seen as a trial resulting in a sentence, not as a philosophical investigation ending in the discovery of truth."[64] Both Innocent IV and Hostiensis admitted the fallibility of these processes and in practice the examination of miracles proceeded using the juridical principle that in the absence of falsification a claim can be held, a principle that, while allowing doubts, was sufficient for reaching a juridical decision.[65] It is in this juridical sense that canonists wanted to prove miracles, by eliminating or dealing with sources of falsification coming from contradictory statements of witnesses, establishing that states A (before-miracle, e.g., illness) and B (after-miracle, e.g., health) were present, etc., as one sees in the analysis provided by Cardinal Petrus Colonna for one of the miracles of Louis IX.[66]

The anonymous curialist, on the other hand, was a theologian, quoting from the Bible, Gregory, Bede, and Augustine, mentioning *auctores medicine* and using expressions such as *quod experimentaliter probatur* and *ut experimentum docet*; he

[61] Funkenstein, *Theology*.
[62] Kleinberg, "Proving."
[63] Kleinberg, "Proving," 203, italics added; see also Kleinberg, "Canonization," 10.
[64] Arguing, for instance, that one should not exclude that the readers and writers of hagiographic texts really believed in the narratives; see Kleinberg, "Proving," 197.
[65] Kleinberg, "Proving," 202.

was a man "who [did] not hesitate to use his knowledge of science to deal with the supernatural."[67] His interest thus lay beyond "proving" miracles in the manner of a canonist and went well into an informed investigation not only of states A and B but also of possible "natural" explanations for the move from A to B,68 as well as proximal causes that could have mediated the miraculous effects.[69]

Thus, according to Kleinberg, the manuscript was not a *summarium*, as Vauchez claims; it was not a document directly involved in the process of canonization and aiming to prove miracles, but some sort of theoretical exercise, "a theoretical introduction to the examination of the miracles, in my view written before the rubrication,"[70] Kleinberg writes, and he brings in several additional reasons for his view – if the pope had already taken the decision to canonize Thomas of Hereford then less support would have been needed, not more; the document approves of more miracles than the *recollectio*, and the usual path from *recollectio* to *summarium* was to restrict the range of miracles; the bull of canonization mentions one miracle rejected by the curialist and one miracle that does not appear in the document at all; the manuscript does not provide the kind of information that would have been useful for cardinals to form their opinion .[71]

It seems then that the anonymous curialist was a full-blooded Aristotelian looking at miracles with the "cold" eyes of the "scientist," and with no particular interest in the canonization of Thomas of Hereford. And yet, according to Kleinberg, the document also reveals a sort of confusion or conceptual ambivalence. After

[66] Kleinberg, "Proving," 201, 202.
[67] Kleinberg, "Proving," 204.
[68] Kleinberg, "Proving," 204.
[69] Kleinberg, "Proving," 204, 205.
[70] Kleinberg, "Proving," 203.
[71] Kleinberg, "Proving," 203, n. 84.

stressing that the curialist's main method of ascertaining miracles was to appeal to precedents, Kleinberg notes that,

> [t]he problem with past examples was that their authority was derived from long tradition, or the fame of the writer, not from 'objective' examination (the kind the canonists would consider valid for canonization). Nevertheless, *they retained their full status as precedent for medieval 'rationalists.'*[72]

Elsewhere, just like Vauchez, Kleinberg mentions that the scepticism (and belief) of those times should not be confused with modern scepticism and belief.[73]

Kleinberg's subtle and informative analysis has still left the discussion open on some points. Perhaps, indeed, the document in question is not a *summarium* and was written before the rubrication. Still, why rule out the influence of political pressures in writing it? One can still think, given the probable English origin of the curialist,[74] that it could have been meant to have a direct influence on the process of canonization, and not just to be a "theoretical introduction" – perhaps in the sense of influencing what miracles were selected in the rubrication, perhaps in the sense of influencing the opinion of a cardinal through an unofficial channel within the notoriously vast and intricate systems of persuasion of the curia.[75] And moreover, in what sense was the scepticism and belief of those times different from modern belief? What sort of conceptual confusion precisely did the curialist have? Kleinberg writes with respect to the miracle involving the fall of a child from a height that:

> the writer was not satisfied with establishing that the boy was definitely dead. He wanted the miracle to make sense. Yet miracles are by definition contra naturam. The canonists restricted themselves to contradictions in the evidence in order to discover lies and inaccuracies. To give a natural explanation to a miraculous occurrence would be almost a contradiction in terms, and certainly redundant … The curialist's effort to isolate the miraculous moment is one of the first

[72] Kleinberg, "Proving," 203, italics added.
[73] Kleinberg, *Prophets*, 1-19, esp. 16.
[74] Kleinberg, "Proving," 203.
[75] In chapter 4 I will come back in to the issue of political pressures.

> signs of the influence of scientific thought on the process of canonization. The process had moved from asking merely 'Did it happen?' to asking 'Could it have happened?[76]

Yet, enquiring into the causal proximal factors acting between states A and B of a miraculous event could hardly have been "one of the first signs of the influence of scientific thought on the processes of canonization," since establishing the states A and B of a miracle also entailed ruling out that B could have followed from A "naturally," as Kleinberg himself observes when looking at the discussion of two miracles, in which the curialist employs a whole host of physiological and physical "empirical" foils.

One is accordingly tempted to play down the difference between juridical and theological thinking in these matters. The questionnaires devised by jurists explicitly contained the question of whether a miracle had been *supra naturam* or not, and it was implicitly assumed that "natural" explanations could not explain real miraculous events.[77] The processes of canonization were devised within an intellectual milieu that included a specific theological understanding of miracles, a certain style of reasoning about what a miracle is, namely, the construal of miracles of thirteenth-century Aristotelianism, and the jurists' question as to whether a miracle was or was not *supra*

[76] Kleinberg, "Proving," 204, 205.

[77] This was the case for Thomas of Hereford as well; see Bartlett, *The Hanged*, 110-111. Bartlett emphasizes that the commission investigating the miracles in Hereford and London did enquire about the *supra naturam* character of the miracles in the Scholastic sense. Among others, the very charge issued by Pope Clement V in 1307 to guide the panel of investigators indicated this direction: [It should be enquired] third, if said miracles occurred above [*supra*] or against [*contra*] nature. … Ninth, for how long and of what ailment [*aegritudo*] were they miraculously cured; how long had they suffered before the miracle took place, and for how many days before [the miracle] had they seen them suffering from such an ailment and how they knew that they were suffering from such ailment. Tenth, whether after the miracle they were fully and completely cured and healthy; and whether continuously and without pauses, and for how long they were healthy, and for how long after said miracle had the witness seen them healthy and free of their ailment." *Miracula ex processu Thomae*, in AA.SS 3 October I, 585-6, translated by Michael Goodich in Goodich, *Miracles*, 88-89. These were tasks to deal with the possibility of *ex arte* miracles, for which there was a need to establish the states A and B, before and after miracle, as Kleinberg says; but the tasks implied a counterfactual question, namely, that the events could not have happened "naturally." It is precisely the thorny issue of whether the miracle occurred

naturam was not innocuous – it included the counterfactual suggestion that the miracle could not have happened "naturally."[78]

And yet, this Aristotelian understanding of miracles, however, seems to have co-existed with other, alternative, ways of construing miracles, as attested by Kleinberg when he points to conceptual ambiguity or ambivalence in the "rational" discourse of the curialist; and hence once again one comes back to the question – how are the multiple interpretations of miracles reflected in the work of the curialist?

There is, moreover, a sense in which Vauchez's analysis is much closer to Kleinberg's than Kleinberg himself thinks. When Vauchez argues that the curialist must have known that Pope John XXII had already accepted Thomas of Hereford as a saint and that is why he accepted "the most *amazing* facts" as miracles, Vauchez points out, just like Kleinberg, a dimension in the curialist's discussion that aimed at discovering the truth of miracles, and not at proving miracles, with all the political connotations that the latter could have entailed. Of course, as Kleinberg reasons, if the pope had already taken a positive decision, then less support would have been needed. But when Vauchez states that the "most amazing facts" were accepted due to the curialist's awareness of the pope's decision, Vauchez implies that, as a consequence, the curialist's analysis was in a sense sincere and less inhibited;[79] he implies that, in a sense, the curialist states what he *believed* in, and it turns out that he was able to

instantaneously or not that the anonymous Curialist has problems in one of the miracles, which he comes ultimately to accept after quoting from St. Augustine; see above § 1.2.

[78] See Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 497, n. 48 on the influence of Aquinas' definition of miracles on fourteenth-century canonists, for instance, Johannes Andreae. In "The Criteria", Goodich notes that the participants in the canonization processes would have been familiar with William of Auvergne's *De Fide*, Aquinas' *De Potentia Dei* and *Summa Theologiae*, and Albert's *Summa;* Goodich, "The Criteria," 182.

[79] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 488-489, n. 22 "There is one problem I have not been able to solve; the *summarium* examines more miracles (twenty-six) than were retained by the authors of the rubrics (nineteen), and they are not always the same. A possible explanation is that, when it was written, probably in 1319, the decision to canonize St. Thomas Cantilupe had already virtually been taken by the Pope, which would explain why the author of the *summarium* was less critical, contrary to custom, than the chaplains who had prepared the rubricated *recollectio*; but this is simply a hypothesis."

believe in miracles even in places where the rigorous proof demanded by an Aristotelian analysis was lacking. That is why Vauchez writes at the end of his analysis of the curialist document:

> I long believed myself that the clerical elite, products of the schools and universities, constituted a world whose reactions to the supernatural were different from those found at that period in the popular mind. Having carefully studied the working documents drawn up by the curialists on the basis of the enquiries *in partibus*, I have come to believe that this is not the case, and that the attitude of the popes and cardinals was very much the same as that of the ordinary faithful. They were sceptical inasmuch as, for them, miracles could not be objectively proven. But far from concluding that they should therefore question the reality of those submitted to them, they were ready to accept them as long as they were corroborated by witnesses who were in agreement, bore a resemblance to those described in the scriptural texts, and contributed to the edification of the Christian people.[80]

My discussion below follows and seeks to develop precisely this core which I think Vauchez and Kleinberg share in common – there is a certain ambiguity and ambivalence in the curialist's discourse which stems from the fact that thirteenth century "empirical" reasoning specifically appealing to "laws of nature" and counterfactual scenarios is juxtaposed with an alternative reasoning in which the resemblance to types of miracles attested in traditional hagiographic writings is considered sufficient, as Kleinberg emphasises, in which facing miracles means accepting almost at face value the most amazing facts, as Vauchez writes, in which there are ultimately different ways of believing in miracles.[81]

[80] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 498.

[81] And such ambiguity was not at all singular in the age. Michael Goodich has catalogued an entire series of such ambiguities or ambivalent views in the processes of canonization under Innocent III, Innocent IV, Alexander IV, and Clement VI; Goodich, "The Criteria," 187-196. Goodich thus underlies the difference between the "theory" and the "practice" of such processes: "On the one hand, an increasingly refined judicial procedure was supported by philosophical arguments in the rational examination and confirmation of miracles….[On the other hand] a private revelation or a miracle that had not been fully tested according to the philosophical and juridical standards was employed in order to clinch the putative saint's claim to sanctity," Goodich, "The Criteria," 196. I come back to Goodich's insightful study in chapter 4 when drawing my concluding remarks.

In fact, the notion of amazement or wonder plays a central role in my enquiry, in the sense that what I seek to describe are two different construals of the miraculous whose distance is measured by their different rapport with the wonder aroused by the extraordinary; and at this point one should remember that in the curialist document the passages suggesting an "uncritical" acceptance of miracles are punctuated by quotations from Augustine and also from Gregory the Great and Bede, two early medieval theologians whose views on miracles were greatly indebted to Augustine. Augustine and Aquinas provided the two most popular and widespread analyses of miracles in the medieval period, and my suggestion is that precisely by looking at their writings and how they construed wonder one can delineate the two main discourses of the miraculous whose tension can be seen in the curialist document.[82] How one should proceed in analysing these different discourses is a methodological issue, which I address in the next subsection.

§ 1.4 METHODOLOGY

With respect to Aquinas' and thirteenth century Aristotelians' views on miracles, on the one hand, and Augustine and his followers' views, on the other, the methodology I adopt is nicely illustrated by a passage from Robert Bartlett's recent book on the natural and the supernatural:

> "This book is concerned with debates and differences in the medieval period – there will be nothing about 'the medieval mind.' Some intellectual historians, like some literary scholars or anthropologists, seem to have a strong urge to search for the inner coherence of the beliefs of those they study and might talk easily of 'belief systems.' This urge is doubtless well intentioned but seems to prejudge the issue. What of our own beliefs? I would be surprised if a thorough and sincere review of my own beliefs concluded that they were consistent, coherent,

[82] On the importance of the theme of wonder for the medieval world, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Wonder," *American Historical Review*, 102 (1997): 1-26.

> and steady. Like most people, I think I hold many discordant beliefs. Their discord only becomes apparent, however, in certain circumstances – this, in the terms made familiar by the historian of science Thomas Kuhn, is when latent anomalies in our paradigms become visible and uncomfortable. I look at several instances of such intellectual discomfort in the Middle Ages.[83]

Bartlett refers here, with his characteristic charm, to Thomas Kuhn and his paradigm. As is well known, Kuhn has argued that the history of science reveals the existence of styles of reasoning within scientific communities between which there was an incommensurability of meaning and conceptual schemes.[84] Just like Bartlett, Kuhn was also concerned to argue against the seeming continuity and consistency that history appears to offer. My methodology takes its cue from Kuhn and Bartlett's general attitude, in the sense in which I wish to argue -- via a textual analysis of relevant philosophical texts -- that the Augustinian discourse on miracles was to a definite extent incompatible with the Aristotelian discourse of the High Middle Ages. The anonymous curialist -- after having laid down the "laws of nature" about the five signs of clinical death (backed up by a theory of mind-body interaction) and the rules about the falling bodies – quotes Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and Bede's *Super Lucam* to explain how certain aspects of miracles could appear (e.g., incomplete healings):

> *Dubium oriri potest quin post resuscitationem non sint omnes partes corporis colori pristino restitute apparentibus in quibusdam partibus coloribus dissuetis, cum potentie divine sit plenam restituere sanitatem. Respondetur quod sicut in corpore Christi apparuerunt cicatrices ad probationem veri corporis et victoriam ac gloriam resurgentis, sicut etiam in corporibus martirum idem creditur esse futurum ad augmentum glorie et signum sue victorie quam moriendo pro Christi nomine reportaverunt, dicente Beda super Lucam de Christo "non ex impotentia curandi cicatrices in Christo fuerunt sed ut in perpetuum victorie sue circumferat triumphum", et Augustinus, De Civitate Dei*

[83] Bartlett, *The Natural*, 2.
[84] Thomas Kuhn, *The Road since Structure: Philosophical Essays,1970–1993* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Alexander Bird, *Thomas Kuhn* (Chesham: Acumen, 2000).

> *"fortassis in ille regno in corporibus martyrum videbimus vulnerum cicatrices que pro Christi nomine pertulerunt.*[85]

I would claim that, in this phenomenon, something of the tension between two paradigms, two styles of reasoning entailing specific meanings of wonder, belief, and ultimately miracle, can be seized.

Bartlett mentions Augustine in his discussion,[86] but he is mostly concerned with scholasticism and the way "scientific" thinking infiltrated the medieval world from the twelfth century onwards. My discussion of the Aristotelian understanding of miracle is indebted to Bartlett's study, and also draws from numerous other analyses of the scholastic world, among which Goodich's *Miracles and Wonders* is particularly useful.[87] As concerns Augustine, however, I seek to follow the minority of commentators who reject the continuity between Augustine and Aquinas on miracles and the thesis that Aquinas simply refines an Augustinian theme;[88] among those rejecting this thesis the most important figure is Luca Bianchi.[89] That is why my discussion of Augustine in chapter 3 is a bit more extended (and polemical) than chapter 2, in which, based on Goodich, Bartlett, and others, I merely seek to offer the

[85] Vauchez, Appendix 1 in *Sainthood*, 545.
[86] Bartlett, *The Natural*, 6, 9, 16. Bartlett notes that Augustine's style of thinking could "inspire reverential awe but was unlikely to generate clear conceptual categorizations of the type in which Scholastic theologians dealt….Hence, Scholastic theories of miracle, in stressing the primary importance of different orders of causation, created a sharper line between miracle and nature than that inherited from the patristic tradition." Bartlett, *The Natural*, 9. Usually miracle or sainthood theorists allocate to Augustine at most 2-3 paragraphs; see for instance, Ward, *Miracles*, 2,3, who also discovers in Augustine Aquinas' distinction between *contra*, *supra*, and *praeter naturam* (p.3).
[87] Goodich, *Miracles*, 15-28.
[88] For instance Hardon, *The Concept*, 150-151 states that "The Augustinian concept of miracle remained standard in the Church until the time of St Thomas Aquinas. The latter adopted Augustine's terminology, *with added clarification*, and the made several formulations of his own that have since become classic in speculative theology … Among the various definitions of miracle given by St. Thomas, the two most often quoted in the subsequent literature are *expansions* on the doctrine of St. Augustine" (italics added). For similar views see also Ernst and Marie-Luise Keller, *Miracles in Dispute* (London: SCM Press, 1969) 26; Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984)1-20, Ward, *Miracles*, 2.
[89] Luca Bianchi, "Quotidiana Miracula," Commune corso della natura e dispense al diritto matrimoniale: il miracolo fra Agostina e Tomasso D'Aquino, *Quaderni Storici* 131, (2009): 312-328.

general lines of the Scholastic background against which the particularity of Augustine's position is best presented.

CHAPTER 2 – WONDER, AQUINAS, AND ENGELBERT OF ADMONT

In the previous chapter I stated that the tension in the curialist manuscript can be explained in terms of the different stances on the supernatural – what one could call the scholastic and Augustinian stances – where the difference between these views is measured by their different relation to the notion of *wonder*,[90] directing accordingly two opposite drives -- one towards the "naturalization," of the world, viewed almost in a "scientific" way, the other poised to unravel or experience its "enchanted," "marvelous" side -- which were also present in the construal of the miraculous. A good introduction to these two drives is Jacques Le Goff's distinction between what he calls the "miraculous" and the "marvelous" sides of the medieval imagination,91 which I present in §2.1, as a preamble to the views on miracles of Aquinas and Engelbert of Admont (§2.2), with the help of which I formulate an inference to the best explanation addressing the basic dilemma of the curialist in §2.3, thus making a transition to chapter 3.

§ 2. 1 LE GOFF ON WONDER AND SAINTS

The "miraculous" and the "marvelous" are two distinct ways of experiencing the extraordinary, which Le Goff lays down in the context of a discussion of Christian miracles and the pre-Christian construal of a mythical world.

> Not all *mirabilia* were things that men admired with their eyes, things upon which they gazed with eyes wide open, but originally there was I

[90] Where medieval wonder, as Caroline Bynum insightfully reminds us, should not be understood, in a post-Cartesian key, merely as "psychological" reaction, but as an engaging attitude, a complex indicator of the relation between medieval people and their multi-faceted world. See Bynum, "Wonder," 3.
[91] Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

> think, an important reference to the eyes.... One characteristic of the marvellous is of course that of being produced by supernatural forces or beings (note the plural) and one finds something of the sort in the plural *mirabilia* of the Middle Ages. The marvellous embraces a world of diverse objects and actions behind which lies a multiplicity of forces. Now, in Christian marvels and miracles there is an author, to be sure, but that author is God, in the singular. In other words, the status of the marvellous is problematic in any religion, but particularly in a monotheistic religion. As rules develop to define what may legitimately be considered miraculous, the marvel is "rationalized" and stripped of its essential unpredictability. Etymologically, the word marvel (from the Latin *mirare*, to look at) suggests a visual apparition. The miracle depends only on the will of God, in which respect it may be distinguished from natural events, which are of course also willed by God, but are determined once and for all the regularity that God has built into his creation. Nevertheless, the miracle is also subject to God's plan and to regularity of a certain kind. Many miracles are obtained through the intercession of saints, for example. I think it is possible to detect a growing lassitude in medieval man's attitudes towards the saints: *the moment a saint appears, one knows what he is going to do. Given the situation, there is no doubt that he will multiply loaves or raise the dead or exorcise a demon. There is no surprise in that what will come to pass. In other words, at some point hagiography ceased to partake of the tradition of the marvellous*.[92]

The marvelous is then associated with the unpredictable, with what appears and makes one look with wide open eyes. Le Goff implies that there is a similarity and at the same time a contrast between marvels and miracles. The similarity lies in both miracles and marvels transcending the ordinary. The contrast stems from miracles being sensitive to, or even (ending up) being the product of rationalization, regularity, and predictability. This also stems from the fact that in its primary sense the marvelous is pre-Christian,[93] even if the border between the marvellous and the miraculous is *not* on a par with the border between Christian and pre- (or non-) Christian. A certain range of miracles, in certain contexts, can indeed be marvellous. The marvelous is close to dreams, metamorphoses and magic (both black and white); is related to protective objects and fabulous animals like the unicorn, griffin, and

[92] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 27, 30, 31, italics original, underlines added. See also Bynum, "Wonder," 17.
[93] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 28.

dragon; yet, can be enacted by fairies, midgets, and giants with their powers, but also by saints, angels, and demons.[94] What unites all these eclectic characters and actions is their (occasional) capacity to amaze.

Le Goff also notes that, in a sense, "the marvelous was one form of resistance to the official ideology of Christianity,"[95] that the marvel is limited in Christian ontology because "the Church controls the occurrence of miracles," and that "Christianity rationalizes the marvel."[96] A late twelfth--early thirteenth century author, Gervase of Tilbury is taken as an example for the specific attitude of certain clerics, who "possessed would what we would nowadays call the scientific spirit, scrutinizing marvels with a scientific eye." Such clerics "looked upon *mirabilia* as extreme or exceptional but not unnatural occurrences and considered them to be true even if not sanctioned by the Bible."[97] Le Goff thus draws a picture in which it seems that phenomena arousing wonder were actually confronted by the Church in an attempt to change their understanding, as it were.

> I do not presume to define the Christian sense of the marvellous. My ambition is simply to circumscribe an idea that, admittedly, played *no* essential role in Christian thought. Medieval Christians developed a concept of marvels, I think, because an influential tradition of the marvellous already existed. Hence Christians had to have an opinion on the subject, to take sides. By contrast, the supernatural and the miraculous are central concepts of Christianity, and these seem to me different from the marvellous in both nature and function. They did, however, influence Christian thinking about marvels. Within Christianity, then, the marvellous is essentially embodied in tradition, elements of which we encounter in beliefs, literature, and hagiography. The roots of the marvellous are almost always pre-Christian. The traditions in question being continuous, medieval Christianity was obliged to *confront* them throughout its history.[98]

[94] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 35. See also Bynum, "Wonder," 18-21.
[95] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 32.
[96] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 35.
[97] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 34.
[98] Le Goff, *Medieval*, 28, italics added.

Le Goff touches here on many themes which the limits of this thesis do not allow me to enter into. What I wish to retain is his indication as to a process in which the marvelous, wondrous layer of miracles was somehow eroded, most prominently in the thirteenth century, along the main lines of the stripping of unpredictability, the development of rules and techniques, a search for "natural" explanations, etc. If one considers that the thirteenth-century saw the processes of canonization regulating which saints and which miracles should be accepted, Le Goff's picture of how the distance between miracles and marvels was shaped -- or, strictly referring to sainthood, how the marvelous dimension of saints' deeds was rationalized -- strikes one as particularly adequate.[99]

§ 2. 2 AQUINAS, ENGELBERT OF ADMONT AND THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY ARISTOTELIANISM

One cannot be sure whether Aquinas, in Le Goff's words, *confronts* the marvels and the capacity to amaze associated with miracles. It is certain, however, that in Aquinas the wonder-dimension of miracles is greatly reduced.[100] For Aquinas, miracles have to be "objective," that is, strictly defined in terms of what God alone can do and, accordingly, what the powers of created natures could never achieve.

The classification of miracles is fastidiously framed in Aristotelian terms: What God alone can do is to surpass the powers of nature, either substantially, by endowing matter with a "new" form which nature is unable to attain (as when the sun is made to turn back, a *supra naturam* miracle), or subjectively, by a subject with a form that nature can attain, but not in such a subject (as in the resuscitation of the

[99] No doubt, Le Goff primarily had in mind the High Middle Ages in his depiction of the Christian

dead, restoring sight to the blind or virgin birth, *contra naturam* miracles) or qualitatively, by having forms that a subject can possess manifesting themselves in a way that nature cannot attain (as when a person is suddenly cured of a long-standing disease, without medication and without a period of convalescence, or when water is turned into wine, *praeter naturam* miracles).[101]

Aquinas accepts that miracles are wondrous, but in themselves, primarily, and only secondarily wondrous for us, since one can always be deceived by marvels produced by unknown, created formal causes or by the imperfections of matter; demons, of course, could also deceive one.[102]

> *The order imposed on things by God* is based on what usually occurs, in most cases, in things, but not on what is always so. In fact, many natural causes produce their effects in the same way, ***frequently*** but not always. *Sometimes, indeed, though rarely, an event occurs in a different way, either due to a defect in the power of an agent, or to the unsuitable condition of the matter, or to an agent with greater strength – as when nature gives rise to a sixth finger on a man.* So if by means of a created nature it can happen that the natural order is changed from what is usually to what occurs *rarely* – without any change of divine providence – then it is more certain that divine power can sometimes produce an effect, without prejudice to its providence, *apart from the order implanted in natural things by God*. He does this at times to manifest His power. [103]

What Aquinas is referring here to is a definition of miracles provided by Augustine in *On the Profit of Believing*, according to which a miracle is "anything which appears arduous or unusual, beyond the expectation or ability of the one who marvels at it."[104] The scope of Augustine's definition was clearly large, addressing as it did the unusual that arouses wonder. Aquinas reduced the scope of this definition.

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view of miracles and their marvelous dimension.
[100] See Daston, *Marvelous*, 93-100; Daston and Park, *Wonders*, 121-122.
[101] *On the Power of God* [*Questiones Disputatae De Potentia Dei*], tr. Laurence Shapcote (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1952), Q. 6, art. 2.
[102] *On the Power of God*, Q. 6, art. 2, 3.
[103] *On the Truth of Catholic Faith*, 3.99.9.

Most *mirabilia* are not, strictly speaking, above "the order imposed on things by God," since this order and the array of natural causes attached to it are actively responsible for what frequently, but not always happens. Rarely, within this order imposed by God, there are accidents due to a defect in the power of an agent, inadequate matter, or an agent with greater strength. No use then to wonder at accidents as if they express God's will and are miracles. Rather, Aquinas invites the reader to make a "cold" inference -- since causal elements beyond their knowledge work in nature, they should believe in the existence of a supremely unknowable cause such as God.

> Things that are at times divinely accomplished, *apart from the generally established order of things*, are customarily called miracles, for we observe the effect but do not know its causes. And since one and the same cause is at times known to some people and unknown to others, the result is that, of several who see an effect at some time, some wonder, while others do not. For instance, the astronomer does not wonder when he sees an eclipse of the sun, for he knows its cause, but the person who is ignorant of this science must wonder, for he ignores the cause. And so, a certain event is wondrous to one person, but not so to another. *So, a thing that has a completely hidden cause is wondrous in an unqualified way, and this the name, miracle, suggests; namely, what is itself filled with admirable wonder, not simply in relation to one person or another.* Now, absolutely speaking, the cause hidden from every man is God."[105]

But what is left of wonder (and miracles' capacity to amaze) but the mere name of it (or an essentially different meaning of it), if the persons experiencing are eliminated from its definition? Wonder in this context is an "ideal" emotion, to be experienced not by one or another person with various degrees of causal "ignorance," but by the one who in theory could know all the powers of created world and thus would be able to single out what God alone can do. In fact, wonder here loses all its psychological

[104] Augustine, *On the Profit of Believing* [*De Utilitate Credendi*], tr. C. L. Cornish, in NPNF, V1-03,

traits; that an event is wondrous "in an unqualified way," filled with "admirable wonder," is almost a property of the event itself which could be attributed to it precisely insofar as the psychological connection with whatever it may arouse in one spectator or another has been cut out, and of course, insofar as the right type of causation underlies it. Indeed, the account of miracle proposed by Aquinas is thoroughly causal,[106] which, for any putative miracle -- as a way of departing from the "subjectivity" of wonder and awe -- is in need of a negative answer to the counterfactual question "Could it have happened by the powers of created natures?" Or "could it have happened 'naturally'?"[107]

The origins of this account, as Luca Binachi notes, lie in the twelfth century, when, seeking to separate the miracle from *mirabilia*, *monstra*, and *prodigia* and to isolate the direct causal influence of God, authors were influenced by the Platonic *Timaeus*,

> proposero di studiare la natura come ordo, nexus, e series causarum, cio e come un sistema regulato, e percio razionalmente indagabile, di relazioni fra cause ed effetti: di qui la loro preocuppazione di definire ruolo e limiti dell'opera creatice di Dio, riservando uno specifico ambito all'operare delle creature.[108]

What followed was the quasi-autonomy of the world of nature, as separated from the sphere of the supra-natural, corresponding, for instance, to Petrus

LXXX. See also Bianchi, "Quotidiana," whose analysis of Aquinas I follow here to a certain extent.

[105] *On the Truth of Catholic Faith,* 3.101.2, italics added.

[106] There is an entire Heideggerian literature discussing the major importance that causes came to have in Aquinas' theology in general; see, for instance, Laurence Paul Hemming, *Postmodernity's Transcending: Devaluing God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). On a Heideggerian interpretation of wonder at the Greeks see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) and *The Life of the Mind* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1978). There is no space here to discuss the connection between Arendt's analysis and LeGoff's conjecture that the marvellous as such almost always has pre-Christian roots.

[107] See Bartlett, *The Natural*, 6-10. Bartlett suggests that the question of whether putative miracles are *supra naturam* or not echoes or parallels the questions that the theology of the twelfth (and thirteenth) century was addressing vis-à-vis God's power and his possibility of creating alternative world orders and moral laws; on the distinction between *potentia Dei absoluta* and *potentia Dei ordinata* and the metaphysics of modality it entailed see Funkenstein, *Theology*, 124-144.

Lombardus' distinction between things whose causes "are in God and in creatures," and the things whose causes "are in God alone."[109] This separation received a vital impulse from thirteenth-century Aristotelian natural science.[110] Indeed, Arab Aristotelianism, at least in its Avicennian form, also came with a strong emphasis on "empirical" enquiry that could reveal some of the secrets of the "established" order; in particular, philosophical translations from Aristotle were attended by "scientific" translations of Avicennian medical treatises.[111]

In this context it is worth mentioning the work of another thirteenth-century Aristotelian, Engelbert of Admont, some of whose works have recently been edited and commented on by Michael Goodich. [112] Engelbert appeals to roughly the same categorization of miracles as Aquinas. There are three types of miracles: *contra naturam*, when a superior cause acts alone without any inferior cause, *supra naturam*, when a superior cause acts by means of some intermediary cause serving as its agent, the intermediate cause not being capable of acting by itself, and *praeter naturam*, when a superior cause influences the mode of action of an intermediate cause that is otherwise capable of acting by itself.[113] What is particularly insightful is that Engelbert of Admont does not hesitate to use his knowledge of "empirical science" to analyse miracles, not only to rule out miracles that "could have happened naturally," but even going into "deciphering" the mechanisms of authentic miracles involving

[108] Bianchi, "Quotidiana," 315.
[109] Bartlett, *The Natural*, 7. Of course, criticism of the "traditional" accounts of miracles accompanied these changes, starting with the anonymous *De mirabilis sacrae Scripturae* and Guilbert of Nogent's (1053/1054 – 1124) *De Pignoribus sanctorum*; see Goodich, *Miracles*, 15, 16. Funkenstein notes that prior to *De mirabilis sacrae Scripturae* there was no systematic attempt to interpret miracles as natural; Funkenstein, *Theology*, 126-127, and I will come back to this in chapter 3.
[110] Bianchi, "Quotidiana," 315-316.
[111] Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 69.
[112] See Michael Goodich, "A Chapter in the History of the Christian Theology of Miracle," in *Cross-Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period*, ed. M. Goodich, S. Menache, S. Schein, (New York: Peter Lang, 1995) 89-111, where Goodich analyses and edits Engelbert of Admont's *Expositio Super Psalmum* and the prologue to his *De Miraculis Christi*. A more extensive analysis of *De Miraculis Christi* is in Goodich, *Miracles*, 22-26.
[113] See Goodich, *Miracles*, 22, where Goodich looks at Engelbert's *De Gratiis et virtutibus*.

intermediate causes on the level of proximal causation.[114] For instance, his analysis of Jesus' healing a man with dropsy (Luke 14:1) is framed in terms of the idea that spiritual degradation produces disease and, by appealing to Avicenna humoral theory emphasizing the absence of warmth and water in pathological conditions, explains the curing as a result of spiritual change that effected in turn a change in humours. [115]

One should emphasize again that the members of the Curia involved in the processes of canonization were familiar with the basic texts of scholasticism,[116] and in the study of the anonymous curialist one can recognize well-defined traces of counterfactual reasoning on causation or uses of medical "scientific" knowledge. With respect to the latter, for instance, in one of the cases of resurrection in which the reliability of the signs of death are discussed, the curialist appeals to the theory that life depends on natural warmth in the heart and other interior organs and invokes empirical "experimental" evidence showing that when breathing stops the interior natural warmth has disappeared.

> *Actus autem deficiens in corpore arguit animam non uniri corpori ut motorem et inflexibilitas iuncturarum virtutem motivam in interioribus ostendit deficere et idem arguit quando non perpenditur motus spirituum corporalium circa cor in temporibus et impulsibus brachium et circa nasum ad hoc facit etiam quando respiratio et expiratio non sentiuntur, tunc enim innotescit quod calor naturalis in corde et in membris aliis interioribus est extinctus. In corde enim animalis vivi vel recenter mortui pro aliqua parte est tantus calor quod, ut experimentum docet, hoc non posset sustinere digitus in illla parte cordis animalis propter vehemenciam caloris sicut nec in igne sine*

[114] Goodich points out that one of Engelbert's teachers at the Dominican convent in Padua was William of Brescia, later physician to Pope Boniface VIII, who held the the chair of logic at Padua. See Goodich, "A Chapter," 93.

[115] Goodich, *Miracles*, 23. Goodich follows fols. 31-32 of Ms. Codex Admontensis 398, fols. 22r-38r; see also Goodich, "A Chapter," 96. On the importance of the Avicennian theories in deciphering the "natural" components of the supernatural, particularly with respect to mind-body interaction and the role of imagination in performing miracles, see Alain Boureau, "Miracle, volonté et imagination: la mutation scolastique (1270-1320)," in *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public* (25 congrès, Orleans, 1994), 159-172.

[116] Goodich, "The Criteria," 182. Not to mention that "all the commissioners appointed by Rome to investigate miracles employed distinguished theologians who were familiar with scholastic arguments," Goodich, *Miracles*, 26.

> *combustione et ad huius refrigerationem etiam respirat animal, cum igitur anima non uniatur corpori pluribus modis et premissa arguunt animam nec uniri corpori ut formam nec motorem, separatio autem anime et corporis mors est. Sequitur quod premissa sunt vera indicia vere mortis.*[117]

This Aristotelian filiation notwithstanding, this is just one side of the coin. We also have the other passages in which the anonymous Curialist seems to be struck in wonder, as it were, beyond his critical rational capacity and "empirical" knowledge, or, at least, beyond the Scholastic style of reasoning and enquiring about miracles. These passages stand in need of explanation as well.

§ 2.3 An Inference on the Best Explanation

These passages also stand in need of explanation because the curialist appears to "believe" straightforwardly in some of these miracles, just like lay people would do, just like the pilgrims visiting the tomb of Thomas of Hereford would have done between 1287 and 1312. Was it the same type of "belief"? One need not enter here into the moot debate of the difference between high and popular culture and I do not know the answer to this question. It seems fair to say, however, that people with such high theological training, in the position of participating in a process of canonization, would have needed an argument, background or justification to present their face-value belief in some of the miracles they scrutinized. Commenting on the canonization of Thomas of Hereford and the manuscript of the anonymous curialist, Goodich writes

[117] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 549.

> I would argue that this document concerning Thomas of Hereford, and the others that precede it, indicate that curial officials were very much concerned to ensure that only those miracles which conformed to the highest standards of verifiability were accepted. Although few internal records survive, they all indicate that genuine efforts were made to integrate the rules of evidence taken from Roman law into the inquisitorial procedures developed in the early thirteenth century along with contemporary medical and philosophical knowledge, and Biblical and hagiographic precedents.[118]

What could have been an alternative to the scholastic (and canonical) reasoning in terms of causes, which was assumed on a general level by the Curia in order to ensure the "objective" status of canonizations? It would have been, I infer as the best candidate explanation, Augustinian reasoning about miracles or one of its Early Modern disguises in Gregory the Great and Bede, since, as William McCready has convincingly demonstrated, the thinking of the latter concerning miracles owed a great deal to Augustine.[119] It was this reasoning on miracles that dominated the medieval world up to the twelfth century, when scholastic treatises emerged,[120] and it is by appealing to Bede, Gregory the Great and Augustine that the anonymous curialist frames his "face-value" assessments of miracles.

Indeed, when it comes to Augustine and the early medieval view of miracles, the distance between wonder and miracles does not appear as great as in Aquinas, Engelbert of Admont, and the rest of the scholastics. In fact, one could even claim that wonder was at the core of the Augustinian conception of miracles. I have already referred to Augustine's first definition of miracles, formulated soon after his conversion from Manichaeism, according to which a miracle is simply "anything which appears arduous or unusual, beyond the expectation or ability of the one who

[118] Goodich, *Miracles*, 85.
[119] See McCready, *Signs,* 225-239, and McCready, *Miracles,* 1-20.
[120] See Ward, *Miracles,* 2-3, and Goodich, *Miracles*, 13.

marvels at it."[121] In *The City of God*, Augustine warns against demons effecting wonders for the purpose of worshipping false gods,[122] but at the same time urges his readers to look at the marvels of the world in order to be convinced that God can do "what is beyond their experience and observation."[123]

Such a "subjective" approach to miracles is in keeping with a holistic view of nature: no event can strictly be *contra naturam* "for how can anything done by the will of God be contrary to nature, when the will of so great a creator constitutes the nature of each created thing?"[124] This does not mean that miracles do not exist; it simply means that nature itself should be viewed as miraculous, if one were perceptive enough to see through each "normal" event in the consequences of Creation: "the world itself is a miracle greater and more excellent than all the things that fill it;"[125] and it means that God wills -- given our actual insensitivity to the extraordinary of each "normal" event –certain unusual phenomena to happen. Again, when it comes to miracles, Augustine does not busy himself with drawing any distinction between the level of "secondary causes" -- the powers of created natures, praeternatural powers -- and God's power. Healings produced by saints' relics, just like portents and the effects produced by stones, fountains, and salt, are marvels happening within a marvel – the world (or nature) itself.[126]

Of course, when reading Augustine's claim that: "we give the name 'nature' to the usual and known course of nature; and whatever God does contrary to this, we call 'prodigies' or 'miracles,"[127] something like an Aquinas-ian chord seems to be struck -- as a putative warning against the possibility of us being deceived due to our

[121] Augustine, On the Benefit of Believing [*De Utilitate Credendi*], LXXX.
[122] Augustine, *The City of God*, 22:10.
[123] Augustine, *The City of God*, 21:7.
[124] Augustine, *The City of God*, 7:51.
[125] Augustine, *The City of God*, 21.7.
[126] Augustine, *The City of God*, 21:8.

ignorance; and further, when reading Augustine's claim that "God does something against nature when it is contrary to what we know of nature,"[128] Aquinas's notion of miracles can only lead one to think that in Augustine there are no "real" miracles except that of the Creation of nature itself. However, as I argue in chapter 3, this would be just to stamp the Aquinas-ian scheme over Augustine's thinking, to conflate Augustine's "usual course of nature" with Aquinas's order implanted in natural things (*praeter ordinem naturalibus inditum rebus*) and to over-impose causal categories over an Augustinian thinking which contained an eminently non-causal dimension.

Aquinas also held that, strictly speaking, no miracle is above nature, but his assertion was strictly related to his "objective" stance on miracles, viewing them within the plan of Providence and seeking to establish the superiority of God and his will over the powers of all created natures,

> since God is the primary agent…. all things that come after Him are like instruments for Him. This is why it is not contrary to the nature of an instrument for it to be moved by a principal agent, but, rather, is most fitting for it. Therefore, it is not contrary to nature when created things are moved in any way by God.[129]

For Augustine, that no miracle is above nature since "the will of so great a creator constitutes the nature of each created thing" is part of a construal of miracles as merely signs arousing wonder, where wonder is as "subjective," "psychological," and "personal" as anything that partakes intimately of the human soul can be, including here the soul's "will."

[127] Augustine, "Reply to Faustus the Manichaean" [*Contra Faustum Manichaeum*], tr. Richard Srothern, in NPNF, Series 1, Volume 4, XXVI.
[128] Augustine, Reply to Faustus the Manichaean, XXVI.
[129] *On the Truth of Catholic Faith*, 3.100.3.

Aquinas also appealed to the marvels of the world to make the existence of miracles plausible, but he did so, as noted above, by de-emphasizing the role of personal wonder and inviting readers to make a "cold" inference -- since causal elements beyond their knowledge work in nature, they should believe in the existence of the supremely unknowable cause such as God. Augustine, as I suggest in chapter 3, appeals to a different argument – if his readers wonder at the marvels of the world, then wonder at the Christian miracles is also justified. This is a style of reasoning that is different, and to a definite extent incompatible, with the reasoning of scholastic Aristotelianism.

CHAPTER 3 - AUGUSTINE ON MIRACLES

I have argued in the previous chapter that the best candidate for the style of reasoning exhibited by the anonymous curialist in his face-value assessment of some of the miracles attributed to Thomas of Hereford might well be the Augustinian thinking on miracles. The present chapter is intended to substantiate the claim that this Augustinian style of reasoning was to a definite extent irreconcilable with the scholastic construal of miracles and thus it could have offered a viable alternative in the attempt to justify the face-value acceptance of miracles, proposing a direct inference from wonder to the existence as miraculous, of that which provokes or has in the past provoked wonder.[130]

I start in §3.1 from the rendition of Creation provided by Augustine in his *Confessions*,[131] in order to demarcate his basic views on providence, the relation between temporal and non-temporal, signs, beliefs and knowledge, wonder, conversion, internal and external miracles, and love, will, image and turning or conversion of the soul. I then move in § 3.2 to expand on some of these themes, drawing on material from other Augustinian writings: *On the Profit of Believing*, *On the Trinity*, *On Grace and Free Will*, *On Christian Doctrine*, *To Simplicianus on Various Questions*, *On the Gift of Perseverance*, *The City of God*. The purpose of my discussion is simple. I wish to argue that for Augustine, the processes of canonization initiated in the thirteenth century would have sounded preposterous, contradictory, or nonsensical in principle; and that, in the absence of any theological or metaphysical basis for such enquiries into the life and miracles of putative saints, Augustine would

[130] I refer here to the appeal to past miracles from tradition in the manuscript.

[131] Genesis being a proper approach to the theme of miracles in Augustine; see Chris Gousmett, "Creation Order and Miracle according to Augustine," *Evangelical Quarterly* 60, No. 3 (1988): 217-240.

have at most conceded that processes of canonization could have a role in the daily life of the Church and the educational tasks that the men of Church should fulfil in their pastoral activities. At the end of the chapter I try to pull together the loose threads from the preceding sections and indicate some reasons why the incompatibility between Augustine's and the thirteenth-century scholastic views on miracles and the thirteenth-century scholastic ones, which I discussed in the chapter 1, is at least plausible (§ 3.3); finally, and I return to the curialist' treatise and the passages betraying a face-value assessment of miracles (§ 3.4).

As can be seen from the above choice of Augustine's writings, my discussion is mostly concerned with the mature Augustine. I refer, however, to the young Augustine as well, who provided in 392 in *On the Profit of Believing* a basic definition of miracles that was upheld all the way through to *The City of God*,[132] to be enriched by the views on grace and free will adopted by the mature Augustine. From this point of view it is entirely suitable to start with the *Confessions*, which, even though written after the crucial reading of *Romans* occasioned by Simplicianus' queries in 396, is in the end a transitional book, as is borne out by the Origenist flavour of certain passages. My discussion in the following section is not centred on Origen's influence, though; as stated above, I use the rendition of Creation in order to underline some basic themes in Augustine's thinking that run more or less through his entire mature work, and are also woven together in his construal of miracles.

[132] See *The City of God* 10. 8, where the approach to miracles provided in "On the Profit of Believing" (also mentioned in chapter 2) is upheld. "I should seem tedious were I to recount all the ancient miracles….*For who can but marvel* that Abraham's barren wife should have given birth to a

§ 3.1 GENESIS IN THE *CONFESSIONS*

Books Twelve and Thirteen of Confessions (following the discussion on time in Book Eleven) discuss Genesis 1 and Genesis 2: 1-3. There are no explicit references to the rest of Genesis 2 and Genesis 3, and no discussion of a putative connection between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:26. The reading of Genesis 1 is highly allegorical and figurative.[133] There is an allegory about the Church and its historical role in redemption; there is also a figurative reading of creation as such, as attested by Augustine's references to predestination.[134] Chapters XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII of Book Thirteen summarise the main rationale developed by Augustine in his discussion of Creation.

According to Augustine, time unfolds the pre-existent ideas of things, while what proceeds in time is a reordering of the disorderly motions of the souls , caused by their sins following the fall, ending (for some) in the Sabbath of life eternal and the peace without an evening.[135] Except for Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 2:1-3, which have no correspondence to temporal unfolding, Genesis 1:2-31 allows a reading through a

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son at an age when not even a prolific woman could bear children…*How striking also were the wonders* done by Moses to rescue God's people from the yoke of slavery in Egypt" (italics mine).

[133] According to a heuristic principle adopted by Augustine in his early writings, a principle he came to reject in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, see György Heidl, *Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine: A Chapter in the History of Origenism* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003) 140.

[134] See *Confessions* [*Confessiones*], tr. Albert C. Adler (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 13: 34. One could argue that this is, in fact, a larger figurative story in which the allegory of the historical church and the allegory of creation are enclosed as parts, where the connection between these parts is the connection between historical time and the "time" signified by the days of creation; Genesis 1 and Genesis 2:1-3 (as a series of non-temporal "events") somehow enclose within themselves the temporal unfolding of the history of the church and the temporal interval between the fall and the final redemption. That is, Genesis 1 and 2:1-3 constitute the "simultaneous" (or beyond the successions of time, in the "*present*" of eternity) framing, or indeed, creating, the pattern of temporal happenings that culminates in salvation and the reabsorption of time in the eternal contemplation of God, "face to face" and not through a "mirror", which the chosen ones will enjoy.

[135] This sounds as an interesting reference to Plato's Timaeus 30 A, which treats the creation of the world as the ordering of a "negligent and disorderly motion" caused by the evil soul. The mediating text, which, before Augustine, probably interpreted Timaeus 30A as referring to a precosmic fall, resulting in a negligent motion, which was ordered by the Christian God's activity in creating the material world, seems to be Origen's lost Commentary on Genesis. See on this issue István Perczel, "Greek Philosophy in India? On the track of Porphyry's lost treatise On the eternity of the world" – forthcoming.

historical glance, revealing the hidden things before time that would then come to be manifested:

> in time, thou didst begin to unfold the things destined before time, so that thou mightest make hidden things manifest and mightest reorder our disorders-- since our sins were over us and we had sunk into profound darkness away from thee, and thy good Spirit was moving over us to help us in due season…..[136]

The darkness in Genesis 1:2 was the darkness of sin; the Spirit moving over waters was moving over us. The authority of the Old Testament was established as a firmament, separating the waters from above, the angelic beings from the waters from below, the fallen beings subject to its authority. The voices of prophets and holy men were the lights and stars of this heaven, and with them came miracles and wonders, signified by fowl flying over the waters, in accord with the firmament.

> And if Adam had not fallen away from thee, that brackish sea--the human race--so deeply prying, so boisterously swelling, so restlessly moving, would never have flowed forth from his belly. Thus, there would have been no need for thy ministers to use corporeal and tangible signs in the midst of many 'waters' in order to show forth their mystical deeds and words. For this is the way I interpret the phrases 'creeping creatures' and 'flying fowl.' Still, men who have been instructed and initiated and made dependent on thy corporeal mysteries would not be able to profit from them if it were not that their soul has a higher life and unless, after the word of its admission, it did not look beyond toward its perfection.[137]

The waters below would withdraw into a sea, the sea of the ungodly and the wicked, leaving space for the earth of the faithful, in which the living could be raised, so that passions can be ordered by the strength of continence, and good deeds be performed and imitated, after their kind. After the image of God, says Augustine, the minds of the faithful would be renewed,[138] subordinating rational action to the intelligence, as women are subordinate to men, such that, among others, miracles and

[136] Confessions, 13:34.
[137] *Confessions*, 13:34.

wonders would be no longer needed, and no human authority would be necessary for the faithful *themselves* to perform good deeds (even if ministries would also needed to perfect the faithful in this life);[139] and such that seeing and loving the good of creation, through Spirit, would be seeing what God sees.

> And thus, in thy Word, it was not the depth of the sea but 'the earth,' separated from the brackishness of the water, that brought forth, not 'the creeping and the flying creature that has life,' but 'the living soul' itself! And now this soul no longer has need of baptism, as the heathen had, or as it did when it was covered with the waters--and there can be no other entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, since thou hast appointed that baptism should be the entrance. Nor does it seek great, miraculous works by which to buttress faith. For such a soul does not refuse to believe unless it sees signs and marvels, now that "the faithful earth" is separated from 'the waters' of the sea, which have been made bitter by infidelity. Thus, for them, "tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to those who do not believe." And the earth which thou hast founded above the waters does not stand in need of those flying creatures which the waters brought forth at thy word. …Thus, O Lord, our God, our Creator, when our affections have been turned from the love of the world, in which we died by living ill; and when we began to be "a living soul" by living well; and when the word, "Be not conformed to this world," which thou didst speak through thy apostle, has been fulfilled in us, then will follow what thou didst immediately add when thou saidst, 'But be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' This will not now be "after their kind," as if we were following the neighbor who went before us, or as if we were living after the example of a better man--for thou didst not say, 'Let man be made after his kind,' but rather, 'Let us make man in our own image and our own likeness,' so that then we may be able to prove what thy will is.[140]

All things in time, with morning and evening, will pass away on the seventh day of everlasting duration, when God, Who has given us our good works and has worked in us, will rest, and we will rest in Him. And that will be His rest through us, says Augustine, the rest of Him who sees not in time, moves not in time, rests not in time, and yet has made all those things which are seen in time and everything that proceeds in and from time.[141]

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[138] *Confessions*, 13:22.
[139] *Confessions*, 13:21.
[140] *Confessions*, 13:21, 22.
[141] *Confessions*, 13: 37, 38.

Genesis 1:1, just like Genesis 2:1-3, does not have a temporal correspondent, but Augustine's views on it are also important for my discussion. That in the beginning God created heaven and earth means for Augustine that *before any day*, He created the Heaven of heavens -- a spiritual creature, the House of God occupied by saintly spirits perfectly contemplating His delights, an intelligible heaven where to understand is to know all at once -- not "in part," "through a mirror," but as a simultaneous whole, "face to face."[142] He also created formless matter out of which the earth as we know it was shaped by the addition of Forms.[143]

As to the intellectual creature, its mutability is greatly restrained because of the sweetness of contemplating God, but mutability as such still exists. It was created, and even though we can find no time before it, it should not be confused with divine wisdom, the Son of God; in its way it is wisdom, but a created wisdom, mother to us.[144] Its mutability entails that it "could become dark and cold, if it did not, by cleaving to thee with a supernal love, shine and glow from thee like a perpetual noon." Augustine then introduces the concept of "formless spiritual creation" and of "turning,"[145] stating that the formless spiritual creation preceding the "in-formed" heaven of heaven, and flowing lightlessly like the abyss -- has been turned by the Word and illuminated and "made light," "as an image of that Form [of Light]" which is the Word itself. [146] Thus, the mutability within the heaven of heavens, entailing that

[142] *Confessions*, 13:2.
[143] *Confessions*, 12: 8. On the heaven of heavens and formless matter in Augustine's earlier writings, see Heidl, *Origen's*, 85-90. These are eminently themes of Origen's interpretation of Genesis, much attacked at the end of the fourth and the middle of the sixth century.
[144] *Confessions*, 12:15. This constitutes a particular interpretation of the wisdom of Proverbs, also found in Evagrius of Pontus. See István Perczel, "Notes sur la pensée systématique d'Evagre le Pontique," in *Origene e l'alessandrinismo cappadoce (III-IV secolo): Atti del V Convegno del Gruppo Italiano di ricerca su « Origene e la tradizione alessandrina » (Bari, 20-22 settembre 2000)*, ed. Mario Girardi and Marcello Marin (Bari: Edipuglia, 2002), 277-297.
[145] *Confessions*, 13:2.
[146] *Confessions*, 13:2. On the concept of incorporeal matter of invisible things in *Genesis against the Manicheans*, see Heidl, *Origen's*, 91, 97, 101.
[146] *Confessions*, 13:2.

it "could become dark and cold" is accompanied by the possibility that a soul, by "turning away from thee, [would] lose the light it had received in being turned by thee," given that we are also a spiritual creation by virtue of our souls and once we turned away from God.[147]

When, after having discussed the (possibility of) the fall from the Heaven of heavens, Augustine returns to the creation of the corporeal side of the world,148 to the Spirit moving over the waters and the bringing forth of the corporeal heaven, his statements are highly suggestive of the same "spiritual deformity" attending the turning away from God.[149] Mentioning in the same phrase the formless spiritual creation (before being turned to God and forming the intelligible) and the formless corporeal matter, out of which the corporeal universe is created, Augustine states that the Spirit moving over the waters was moving "over that life which thou hadst made: in which living is not at all the same thing as living happily, since that life still lives even as it flows in its own darkness."[150]

In a paraphrase, the Spirit did not *rest in* waters, on waters (where rest is associated with happiness); it moved over waters, over that created life which has within itself the possibility of darkness. In the waters below the Spirit are those not in

[147] *Confessions*, 13:2.
[148] *Confessions*, 13:5.
[149] Here, of course, one could make the point that the Confessions smack of Origenism, bearing in mind the demonstration provided by Heidl, in *Origen's*, that Origen was a major source of inspiration in Augustine's early writings. On the surface, at least, Augustine seems perfectly "orthodox" as far as his explicit statements are concerned (and no doubt this has kept him safe from the controversy on "Origenism" that started at the time of the writing of the Confessions); the allegory of historical time is indeed attended by the allegory of creation "days," but when it comes to the connection between the fall from the heaven of heavens and our fall or our present state of being fallen, Augustine makes an explicit association between the non-temporal allegory and the temporal, historical allegory that is only on the heuristic level of analogy. However, one may wonder whether this is not precisely the real meaning of the "Origenist myth" so-called. The latter seems to be a Platonist philosophical myth, analogous to the ones used by Plotinus, explaining the origin of individual consciousness, its relation to God and the objective world as well as its original freedom and present distortion. On this issue see István Perczel, "A Philosophical Myth in the Service of Religious Apologetics: Manichees and Origenists in the Sixth Century" in: *Religious Apologetics Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. Yosset Schwartz and Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 205-236.
[150] *Confessions*, 13:5.

rest, but those in need of rest, in need of love, driven downwards by the uncleanliness of their spirit and torn between concupiscence and the need for the grace that should lift them up by granting love.[151] The abyss, states Augustine, would have come to contain the whole spiritual creation if all obedient minds in the heaven of heavens had not obeyed and remained at rest, reposing in the Spirit, which moves over everything mutable. Fallen spirits have lost the *garments of light* and come to exhibit darkness; garments of light we will also wear, when God will restore us to Himself.[152]

§ 3.2 MIRACLES IN AUGUSTINE

Augustine's allegorical rendition of Creation contains the seeds of his basic view on providence, the relation between temporal and non-temporal; signs, beliefs and knowledge; wonder, conversion, love, will, and the turning of the soul. These are all themes that bear an intimate relationship with the Augustinian conception of miracles, to which I turn now.

In the figurative reading of the days of creation -- days hiding what is to become manifest in time, in the interval between the Fall and Salvation – miracles figure explicitly in two places. In the first place, they are the happenings attending the lights and stars of the firmament/corporeal heaven – extraordinary events, signified by the flying fowl, brought about by holy people and God's angels, where the reference is clearly made to the theophanies of the Old Testament (and to the miracles wrought by Jesus and his disciples, insofar as they were needed to establish authority).[153]The other explicit reference to miracles is shaped in a negative tone – miracles should no

[151] *Confessions*, Book 13:7.
[152] *Confessions*, 13:10; see also *The City of God*, 22.29.
[153] See also *On the Profit of Believing*, chapter 32, and Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

longer be needed for those on the dry land separated from the sea of the wicked, once the "living soul" is brought forth.

> Now, therefore, let thy ministers do their work on 'the earth'--not as they did formerly in 'the waters' of infidelity, when they had to preach and speak by miracles and mysteries and mystical expressions, in which ignorance--the mother of wonder--gives them an attentive ear because of its fear of occult and strange things. For this is the entry into faith for the sons of Adam who are forgetful of thee, who hide themselves from thy face, and who have become a darkened abyss. Instead, let thy ministers work even as on 'the dry land,' safe from the whirlpools of the abyss. Let them be an example unto the faithful by living before them and stirring them up to imitation. For in such a setting, men will heed, not with the mere intent to hear, but also to act. Seek the Lord and your soul shall live and 'the earth' may bring forth 'the living soul.'[154]

External miracles, extraordinary events involving the corporeal, external world, are the entry into faith for the ignorant, those who have forgotten God and hidden from Him in their darkened abyss, and are thus amazed and full of wonder about anything that goes beyond the usual course of nature.[155] There are several inter-related questions that arise in connection to Augustine's mentioning of wonder and ignorance in this context. For one, in what sense is ignorance the mother of wonder? For another, why and how could corporeal miracles constitute an entry into faith for those forgetful of God? Why for them only? Why should miracles become unnecessary once the living soul of the dry earth is brought forth? In other words, how is ignorance healed for those who believe and follow the authority of the Scriptures?

Ignorance is the mother of wonder because to be amazed at external events is to be oriented towards the corporeal world, to love temporal things for themselves, to have the movements of the heart targeting what is outside and not what is inside. In

[154] *Confessions*, 13:21.
[155] Where this perfectly corresponds to Augustine's theory of visions in *On the Trinity*.

the body, in the gross and rough body that human beings have,[156] this is what free will allows us to do at most – to fall down and down, lacking faith, belief and, of course, understanding.[157] For a mind immersed in the love of the corporeal world, faith can only be brought about through wondrous, scintillating changes in the world of change. But miracles are merely signs (arousing wonder), and this is so in a triple sense, depending on the emphasis. I take these senses in turn.

*§ 3.2.1 MIRACLES AS **MERELY** SIGNS (AROUSING WONDER)*

On a first count, corporeal miracles are merely signs (arousing wonder) because they do not have any reality as events putatively situated above nature. Everything that fulfils God's will is nature, declares Augustine, and hence no event against nature is even conceivable.[158] Providence, furthermore, entails, as already noted that the temporal changes follow the non-temporal pattern set out in the Creation "days".

Precisely in order to underline the dependence of the temporal on the non-temporal, in *On the Trinity* Augustine advances a theory (distantly inspired by the Stoics but, by Augustine's time, quite popular, especially in Plotinus and Origen) of seminal reasons, causal principles implanted in the days of creation and responsible for all the "subsequent" causality in time.[159] There are "in truth, some hidden seeds of all things that are born corporeally and visibly, [and] are concealed in the corporeal elements of this world"[160] and such seeds also act in the case of miracles.[161] For miracles, thus,

[156] A body different from the subtle body human beings will have at the end of time; see *The City of God* 22.21. Apparently, in the Confessions, Augustine's teaching is that human beings came to have this gross and rough body after the fall; see Robert O'Connell, *St. Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of Soul* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).
[157] See *On Grace and Free Will* [*De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*], tr. Peter Holmes, in NPNF V1-05, chapters 9 and 10.
[158] *The City of God*, 21.8.
[159] *On the Trinity* [*De Trinitate*] 3.8.13 - 3.9.16, tr. Arthur West Haddan, revised by William G. T. Shedd, NPNF V1-03. See also *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* [*De Genesi ad Litteram*], 6.11.18-19, tr. John Hammond Taylor (S.J. New York: The Newman Press, 1982).
[160] *On the Trinity*, 3.8.13.

seminal reasons amount to a "physiology" of miracles integrating them into the natural "functioning" of the entire created world and offering explanations for their possibility – an important train of thought to which I will return in §3.4.

*§ 3.2.2 MIRACLES AS MERELY **SIGNS** (AROUSING WONDER)*

On a second count, corporeal miracles are merely signs (arousing wonder) because this is how the human mind knows, or begins to know, in its pre-faith state of decay and, in fact, this is how the mind works in our temporal lives in the absence of Salvation. Men have no way to contemplate God "face-to-face," so signs direct the footsteps of those lacking understanding and not seeing. Even when, through the grace of God, external miracles as signs fulfil their purpose and men swerve into the path of faith – loving God but not enough to see Him clearly; knowing but not enough to understand; acting virtuously, but not mustering sufficient strength to become free of temptation and dispense with authority -- the teaching of the Church and the Bible remain signs, given the still blurred sight of the faithful.[162]

This emphasis on the "simplicity" of miracles is crucial for making sense of the attitude adopted by Augustine in the issue of "ignorance." Ignorance is the mother of wonder not primarily because the person responding to extraordinary events does not have a sufficiently clarified causal competence.[163] In numerous passages Augustine speaks disparagingly of those looking into causes, prey to the malady of curiosity, trying to discriminate between causes, separate what is proximal from what is less proximal (say, magical) and so on.

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[161] *On the Trinity* 3.8.17.

[162] See *On the Christian Doctrine* [*De Doctrina Christiana*], tr. J.F. Shaw, in NPNF V1-02, book 1 chapters 1-3, book 2, chapters 1-4. See also John Rist, *Augustine -- Ancient Thought Baptised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 23-41.

> This malady of curiosity is the reason for all those strange sights exhibited in the theatre. It is also the reason why we proceed to search out the secret powers of nature--those which have nothing to do with our destiny—which do not profit us to know about, and concerning which men desire to know only for the sake of knowing. And it is with this same motive of perverted curiosity for knowledge that we consult the magical arts. Even in religion itself, this prompting drives us to make trial of God when **signs** and wonders are eagerly asked of him-not desired for any saving end, but only to make trial of him.[164]

The person who believes, has faith, should leave miracles behind mainly because they are related to the corporeal world.[165] To avoid misunderstanding – Augustine does not deny that miracles exist. They exist as signs, and they exist as manifestations of God's will to send a waking call to those who forgot Him. But external miracles, with their reality, should become unnecessary for those with faith, because having faith means having realised a turning of the soul, or more precisely, having had the soul turned by the Holy Spirit towards the inside, the non-corporeal.

Conversion to faith, as such, is also a miracle in itself, an "internal" miracle for Augustine -- which may be preceded or "triggered" by witnessing a corporeal, external miracle -- precisely because conversion is effected by the Holy Spirit pouring love into our hearts,[166] (and as an internal, interior miracle it is accordingly superior to the external, corporeal ones which might have "triggered" it).[167] Hence, to deny the reality of miracles is to negate the reality of grace, to deny the existence of the turning of the soul, re-enacting, to a certain and limited extent (insofar as faith and respect for

[163] Even though Augustine sometimes does argue in this causal vein; see his discussion in Book III of *On the Trinity*, of the example of a faithful person falling sick due to devotion; *On the Trinity*, 3.2.7. I return to this aspect later.
[164] *Confessions* 10.35; on the curiosity attending philosophers' enquiries see *The City of God*, 10.28; see also Daston and Park, *Wonders*, 123.
[165] *Catechising of the Uninstructed* [*De Catechizandis Rudibus*], tr. S.D.F. Salmond, NPNF V1-03, chapter 6. Once again, this strong dichotomy between the spiritual and the corporeal is a necessary but not sufficient condition for defining Christian Platonism par excellence, vulgarly called Origenism.
[166] And if conversions are also miracles, to deny their reality is all the more inconceivable; it would amount to denying actions of the Holy Spirit.
[167] See Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders*, 39-40, 123.

authority is concerned), the turning and in-forming through light of the formless spiritual creation that Augustine mentions in his discussion of the heaven of heavens.[168] Under the "authority" of corporeal miracles the filth of the soul should be partially cleansed, not sufficiently for it to cleave to the truth, as only souls in the heaven of heavens do, but enough for it to turn from the outward form of all things and at least make an attempt at wisdom:

> This is, believe me, a most wholesome authority, this a lifting up first of our mind from dwelling on the earth, this a turning from the love of this world unto the True God. It is authority alone which moves fools to hasten unto wisdom. So long as we cannot understand pure [truths], it is indeed wretched to be deceived by authority, but surely more wretched not to be moved. For, if the Providence of God presides not over human affairs, we have no need to busy ourselves about religion. But if both the outward form of all things, which we must believe assuredly flows from some fountain of truest beauty, and some, I know not what, inward conscience exhorts, as it were, in public and in private, all the better order of minds to seek God, and to serve God; we must not give up all hope that the same God Himself hath appointed some authority, whereon, resting as on a sure step, we may be lifted up unto God. But this, setting aside reason, which (as we have often said) it is very hard for fools to understand pure, moves us two ways; in part by miracles, in part by multitude of followers: no one of these is necessary to the wise man; who denies it? But this is now the business in hand, that we may be able to be wise, that is, to cleave to the truth; which the filthy soul is utterly unable to do: but the filth of the soul, to say shortly what I mean, is the love of any things whatsoever save God and the soul: from which filth the more any one is cleansed, the more easily he sees the truth.[169]

When external miracles become unnecessary for the faithful mind which converted (signified, in the moral reading of Creation by the raising of the "living soul"), the movements of the soul are restrained and re-oriented from the love of outside objects and reality towards the intelligible world inside, towards God. Wonder is precisely such a movement of the soul, a movement that, when triggered by

[168] An in-forming that only becomes complete after the bringing forth of the living soul, only after the renewing of the mind, and in the eternal contemplation of God.
[169] *On the Profit of Believing*, Section 34.

external events, signifies a certain grossness or roughness of the soul; not as serious as the hardening of the soul of those who are not even able to believe in miracles and deny their reality (and I will come back to this), but less subtle than the wonder addressed to the whole of creation in its entirety;[170] and certainly less subtle than the mind or soul who becomes uninterested in the details of the corporeal world, in discerning between different types of causes, proximal and non-proximal, magical or not, coming from God or putatively not coming from God. As Augustine says in the *Confessions*, one of the animals to be tamed and made harmless after the raising of the "living soul" is the serpent, carrying with it the poison of curiosity disguising itself as a search for (what is falsely called) knowledge, in fact the knowledge of a dead soul:

> Seek the Lord and your soul shall live and 'the earth' may bring forth 'the living soul.' Be not conformed to this world; separate yourselves from it. The soul lives by avoiding those things which bring death if they are loved. Restrain yourselves from the unbridled wildness of pride, from the indolent passions of luxury, and from what is falsely called knowledge. Thus may the wild beast be tamed, the cattle subdued, and the serpent made harmless. For, in allegory, these figures are the motions of our mind: that is to say, the haughtiness of pride, the delight of lust, and the poison of curiosity are motions of the dead soul--not so dead that it has lost all motion, but dead because it has deserted the fountain of life, and so has been taken up by this transitory world and conformed to it.[171]

And with this I return to the previous issue discussed in § 3.2.1, regarding the plan of providence and the fact that for Augustine it would have been intellectually silly to view miracles as beyond nature (except as beyond nature as we know it). By dwelling on Augustine's disregard of the search for causes, of enquiry into nature, of curiosity about the corporeal world, one can begin to see why, as I claimed in the beginning of this chapter, for him the processes of canonization would have sounded

[170] This is evident when Augustine comments that after the renewing of the mind man should see the whole of creation as good, as God sees it; *Confessions* 13:31. See also *The City of God,* 10.12.
[171] *The City of God* 10.12.

preposterous or unnecessary. Ignorance nourishing unwarranted wonder was for all the participants in the processes of canonization, causal epistemic incompetence; in order to ascertain that a miracle was real, the Aquinas-like reasoning was that one had to eliminate all the effects stemming from the powers of created nature in order to arrive at what God alone could have put into practice as an effect in the corporeal world. The ignorance that Augustine has in mind could not be dispelled (only) by knowledge of causes, by an enquiry into causes that could (at least in principle, if not possible in practice) discern between various types of causes, separate what is human and "natural" from what is angelic and demonic, and magical, and circumscribe what is God's action alone in the corporeal world, above the powers of all created nature. It was an ignorance related to the weak (or nonexistent) "interior" sight and capacity to see, which, once (partially healed), should have left the corporeal world behind.[172]

Derrida used to say in a different context "Don't speak in terms of universals and the problem of universals will dissolve." Augustine, I think, would have advised the jurists, theologians, and kings implicated in the processes of canonization "if you don't ask questions about causes, the problem of miracles would dissolve (just like the processes of canonization would)." Corporeal miracles to Augustine are about wonder, about the states of the soul, its hardening or becoming subtle and turning inside. Lawyers and their questionnaires would have seemed to an Augustinian eye an utterly useless and inefficient means to find out anything in this regard. In order to see this more clearly one should look at the precise relationship between these corporeal miracles and wonder.

[172] *The City of God*, 10.14.

*§ 3.2.3 MIRACLES AS MERELY SIGNS (AROUSING **WONDER**)*

On a third count, miracles are merely signs (arousing wonder) because wonder is an essential, necessary component of the (corporeal) miraculous.[173] Here it is useful to recall the definition of miracles in *On the Profit of Believing* that I have already mentioned in chapter 2, in which Augustine defines a miracle as just anything unusual arousing wonder, a definition whose spirit Augustine upheld all the way through the *City of God*.[174]

> Therefore to wish to see the truth, in order to purge your soul, when as it is purged for the very purpose that you may see, is surely perverse and preposterous. Therefore to man unable to see the truth, authority is at hand, in order that he may be made fitted for it, and may allow himself to be cleansed; and, as I said a little above, no one doubts that this prevails, in part by miracles, in part by multitude. But I call that a miracle, whatever appears that is difficult or unusual above the hope or power of them who wonder. Of which kind there is nothing more suited for the people, and in general for foolish men, than what is brought near to the senses.[175]

By emphasizing that wonder is an essential, indispensible component of corporeal miracles, Augustine targets the reality of miracles as supra-natural events (mentioned in §3.2.1) and insists on the necessity of cleansing the soul in order to stay away from the world of "the senses" (mentioned in §3.2.2). But the close relationship between wonder and a corporeal miracle is also significant from a different point of view. In *The City of God*, Augustine advances a strange argument in favour of the existence (or possibility) of miracles, an argument which basically says that miracles exist or are plausible because they are believed. Thus, addressing the Platonic sceptics

[173] See Bianchi, "Quotidiana", 314-315.
[174] See *The City of God*, 10.8.
[175] *On the Profit of Believing*, LXXX (italics and underlining mine). Wonder is a necessary but not sufficient condition as demons could also work marvels. Augustine appeals to what is meant to be a fairly straightforward criterion to distinguish demonic marvels from Christian miracles – saints perform miracles for the veneration of God, demons perform miracles for their own veneration, as is the case in

who denied that bodies could exist in a spiritual realm, Augustine argues in Book XXII, Chapter 4, that the sceptics should at least accept the possibility of Christ's Resurrection and the resurrection of the chosen in a subtle, spiritual body at the end of time by pointing to the incredible union of soul and body that we experience in our daily life. In chapter 5, however, as if tired of having discussions about nature, natural properties, impossibilities in nature, etc., Augustine interjects:

> "…behold, now, the world has come to the belief that the earthly body of Christ was received up into heaven. Already both the learned and unlearned have believed in the resurrection of the flesh and its ascension to the heavenly places, while only a very few either of the educated or uneducated are still staggered by it. If this is a credible thing which is believed, then let those who do not believe see how stolid they are; and if it is incredible, then this also is an incredible thing, that what is incredible should have received such credit. … It is incredible that Jesus Christ should have risen in the flesh and ascended with flesh into heaven; it is incredible that the world should have believed so incredible a thing; it is incredible that a very few men, of mean birth and the lowest rank, and no education, should have been able so effectually to persuade the world, and even its learned men, of so incredible a thing …. It is indubitable that the resurrection of Christ, and His ascension into heaven with the flesh in which He rose, is already preached and believed in the whole world. If it is not credible, how is it that it has already received credence in the whole world? … And if the world has put faith in a small number of men, of mean birth and the lowest rank, and no education, it is because the divinity of the thing itself appeared all the more manifestly in such contemptible witnesses. The *eloquence*, indeed, which lent persuasion to their message, consisted of wonderful works, not words. For they who had not seen Christ risen in the flesh, nor ascending into heaven with His risen body, believed those who related how they had seen these things, and who testified not only with words but wonderful signs. " [176]

The miracle of Christ's resurrection and ascension to the heavenly place is not incredible at all, says Augustine, because the whole world has come to believe it. And the whole world has come to believe it because the Apostles performed miracles, and

pagan rites; see *The City of God*, 10. 7, 8. I will come back to this aspect concerning demons towards the end of this chapter.

[176] *The City of God*, 22.4 (underlining mine).

these miracles were in turn believed. Augustine's argument appears odd, circular, and inappropriate. It seems odd because it no longer refers to causes, effects, natural properties, putative impossibilities, etc., but to faith, belief, and what appears unusual, incredible. It seems circular because it is meant to justify belief in miraculous events by way of indicating that belief in miraculous events is already in place. And it seems inappropriate because it employs precisely the type of premises that haughty Platonists would have gladly used against Augustine – does not the fact that the plebs, the multitude of people (or even the whole world) have come to believe in the Resurrection show the power of superstition?[177]

But the argument seems odd and circular only if viewed through the gaze of a causal (Aquinas-like) construal of miracles. Augustine was in the habit of taking up and using for himself arguments (the premises of) which could very well have been used against him. I mentioned in §3.2.2, that Augustine considered conversions themselves as types of "internal" miracles due to the Holy Spirit pouring love into men, and that "internal" miracles could be "triggered" by external miracles witnessed by those whose impurity of heart had led them to have the eyes of the mind directed exclusively at the corporeal world. In fact, however, for such "dead" souls, the relationship between the Holy-Spirit-mediated belief in Christ and believing in corporeal miracles is more intricate in that. In a sense, a type of "turning of the soul" should also be requisite for the "dead" soul immersed in the corporeal world to "perceive" the external miracle and for wonder to arise.

Commenting, in *To Simplician on Various Questions,* on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, which made him insensitive to the devastating plague miraculously brought upon Egypt, Augustine writes that "the hardening which God causes is an

[177] Platonists had a long tradition of mocking "popular" beliefs, starting from Plato himself in his early dialogues.

unwillingness to be merciful. We must not think that anything is imposed by God whereby a man is made worse, but only that he provides nothing whereby a man is made better."[178] In *On the Gift of Perseverance*, discussing the chastising of Chorazin and Bethsaida, Augustine notes:

> "Certainly it is easy to accuse the unbelief of the Jews, arising as it did from their free will, since they refused to believe in such great wonders done among themselves. And this the Lord, reproaching them, declares when He says, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin and Bethsaida, because if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they would long ago have repented in dust and ashes.'[179]

Unbelief results from free will, the free will not to believe in wonders that the fallen creatures with hardened hearts follow. Only grace can bring change into this. As Augustine puts it in *On Grace and Free Will*:

> I have already discussed the point concerning faith, that is, concerning the will of him who believes, even so far as to show that it appertains to grace—so that the apostle did not tell us, I have obtained mercy because I was faithful; but he said, I have obtained mercy in order to be faithful … Now if faith is simply of, and is not given by God, why do we pray for those who will not believe, that they may believe? This it would be absolutely useless to do, unless we believe, with perfect propriety, that Almighty God is able to turn to belief wills that are perverse and opposed to faith. Man's free will is addressed when it is said, 'Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. But if God were not able to remove from the human heart even its obstinacy and hardness, He would not say, through the prophet, I will take from them their heart of stone, and will give them a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 11:19.'[180]

In other words, as far as the miraculous is concerned, believing in miracles is a miracle, as it were, because faith (also faith in miracles) is a given, a consequence of

[178] *To Simplician on Various Questions* [*De Diversis Quaestionibus Ad Simplicianum*], tr. John H. S. Burleigh, in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, *The Library of Christian Classics 6* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953)
[179] *On the Gift of Perseverance* [*De Dono Perseverantiae*], tr. Peter Holmes, revised by Benjamin W. Warfield, chapter 23 (italics added), in NPNF V1-05.

grace, a working of the Holy Spirit against obstinacy and hardness[181] (and one can only remember here Augustine's depiction in *Confessions* 13:37 of the Sabbath of eternal life in which God who does work in us, rests in us).[182] That is why, when looked at from a non-causal point of view, Augustine's argument does not appear circular at all. To argue for the existence or possibility of miracles from the belief in miracles is not begging the question because it amounts to pointing out the miracle of believing and wondering at the extraordinary in order to infer the existence or possibility of corporeal miracles themselves.

In this Augustinian key, if the causal enquiry into the corporeal world was set aside as insignificant then the right "method" left to "ascertain" miracles and their existence, for anyone whose heart is not hardened or irrevocably turned, would be to wonder -- to wonder at an external miracle if witnessed, to wonder at the multitude believing miracles otherwise, to wonder at one's own belief. Of course, it would not be a "method" at all (as wonder simply arises) and, with a vengeance, it could not be a "method" like the juridical one employed in the processes of canonization.

§ 3.3 SO FAR AWAY FROM THE PROCESSES OF CANONIZATION

Returning now to the previously raised point that for an authentic Augustinian view the processes of canonization would have looked strange – indeed, what could lawyers and their causal canonization questionnaires ascertain about the hardening or turning of the heart? – one should emphasize that in this Augustinian thinking the path

[180] *On Grace and Free Will*, chapters 28-29.
[181] Additionally, in *The City of God* 22.8 a mechanism of feedback is emphasized – miracles nourish faith and then faith nourishes belief in miracles.
[182] This is, in a sense, coherent with the mechanism of "physical" perception that Augustine describes in *On the Trinity* according to which the eyes (and senses in general) need a certain intentionality in order to perceive – they need the *will* to see (the trinity of perception); Luigi Gioia, *The Theological*, 191-192, and one can recall here the statement in *Confessions* 13.22 that with the renewing of our minds, "we may be able to prove what [God's] will is."

from sanctity to miracles in the cult of saints would follow an entirely different path from the one in the processes of canonization. The reasoning would have been something of a double conditional: if a person was a saint, then his/her (extraordinary) deeds would be believed as miracles/would arouse wonder; and if they were believed as miracles/would arouse wonder, then his/her extraordinary deeds would be miracles.

This is precisely how Augustine himself evaluated and rendered the witnessed miracles of St. Stephen and other miracles he had heard of. When witnessing the unusual events brought about in his church by the relics of St. Stephen, Augustine's reaction was amazement and then publicizing the event.[183] When hearing of miraculous stories that happened elsewhere, Augustine's reaction was amazement at how limited the spread of such news was and attempting to make it more widely known.[184] This is precisely how the cults of saints developed in general prior to the thirteenth century (and after the thirteenth century, in parallel to the "official" cults of canonized saints).[185] These were "mushrooming" cults, to use Kleinberg's expression, preceded by the public devotion to a saint, followed by miracles, the emergence of "cult" characteristics (pilgrimages, vows, etc.) and the subsequent growth of the cult and the reported miracles.[186] The papacy and the enquiry into causes did not have anything to do with these "mushrooming" cults.

When the processes of canonization began, with the purpose of ascertaining the sanctity of a person starting from evaluating his/her (life) and reported miracles, the reasoning employed by jurists and theologians would have amounted to some sort

[183] *The City of God*, 22.8. See also Sofia Boesch Gajano, "Verita e pubblicità: i racconti di miracoli nel libro XXII del de Civitate Dei", in *Il De Civitate Dei. L'opera, le interpretazioni, l'influsso,* ed. E.Cavalcanti (Rome: Herder 1996) 373-379.
[184] *The City of God*, 22. 7.
[185] And as they still develop in the Orthodox Church.
[186] Kleinberg, *Prophets*, 28, 30, 33, 36, Kleinberg, "Canonization," 14. Benedicta Ward notes the Augustinian traits of these popular cults; Ward, *Miracles*, 32. Caroline Walker Bynum argues on a more general level that one should not infer from High Middle Ages discussions in theology and

of logical fallacy for the Augustinian eye, namely, the fallacy of affirming the consequent, in a (converted) conditional of the form: if the happenings attending the relics of a person are supernatural, then they should be believed[187] and that person should be considered a saint. For an Augustinian, sanctity (and grace) preceded wonder and miracles. For the theologians and jurists involved in the processes of canonization, miracles and causes preceded wonder and hence preceded sanctity. [188]

I have mentioned above that Augustine was in the habit of using arguments the premises of which could well have been used against him. In order to defend Christian miracles, another argument advanced in *The City of God*, Book XXI, Chapter 7 (which I have already touched on in § 2.3) is that in nature there are numerous quotidian phenomena that are not explained and that the adversaries of Christian miracles themselves hold to the existence of such marvels in nature.[189] Why then not accept Christian miracles? asks Augustine.

> For my own part, I do not wish all the marvels I have cited to be rashly accepted, for I do not myself believe them implicitly, save those which have either come under my own observation, or which any one can readily verify, such as the lime which is heated by water and cooled by oil; the magnet which by its mysterious and insensible suction attracts the iron, but has no effect on a straw; the peacock's flesh which triumphs over the corruption from which not the flesh of Plato is exempt … But the rest of the prodigies I receive without definitely affirming or denying them; and I have cited them because I read them in the authors of our adversaries, and that I might prove how many things many among themselves believe, because they are written in the works of their own literary men, though no rational explanation of them is given, and yet they scorn to believe us when we assert that

natural philosophy that wonder and wonder-centred events disappeared in that age; Bynum, *Wonder*, 8,9.

[187] Recall from chapter 2 Aquinas's attitude to wonder in general, and to the "correct", "theoretical" wonder that should not be the wonder of this or that person (who might be causally ignorant), but the wonder *in itself* at the deeds that can be performed by God alone.

[188] As Innocent III declared in 1199, when the processes of canonization were initiated "Although …the grace of final perseverance alone is required for sanctity in the Church Triumphant….in the Church militant two things are necessary: the power of moral behaviour [*virtus morum*] and the power of signs [*virtus signorum*], that is, works of piety during life and miracles after death;" Bull of canonization for Hombonus of Cremona, 12 January 1199, cited in Kleinberg, *Prophets*, 27.

[189] See Bianchi, "Quotidiana" 313.

> Almighty God will do what is beyond their experience and observation; and this they do even though we assign a reason for His work. For what better and stronger reason for such things can be given than to say that the Almighty is able to bring them to pass, and will bring them to pass, having predicted them in those books in which many other marvels which have already come to pass were predicted? Those things which are regarded as impossible will be accomplished according to the word, and by the power of that God who predicted and effected that the incredulous nations should believe incredible wonders.[190]

The premises of this argument could actually be used, however, on a causal perspective on miracles in order to argue against miracles. That is, one could argue that in these "natural" marvels there must be proximal causes explaining the marvellous effects, proximal causes which have not yet been discovered. Augustine seems aware of this causal talk in the case of quotidian marvels, since previously, in the same chapter 7, he mentions that:

> … our adversaries, I say, who, so far from denying emphatically, assert that there are powers in the world which effect marvellous results (whether of their own accord, or because they are invoked by some rite or prayer, or in some magical way), when we lay before them the wonderful properties of other things which are neither rational animals nor rational spirits, but such material objects as those we have just cited, are in the habit of replying, This is their natural property, their nature; these are the powers naturally belonging to them. Thus the whole reason why Agrigentine salt dissolves in fire and crackles in water is that this is its nature. Yet this seems rather contrary to nature, which has given not to fire but to water the power of melting salt, and the power of scorching it not to water but to fire. But this they say, is the natural property of *this* salt, to show effects contrary to these. The same reason, therefore, is assigned to account for that Garamantian fountain, of which one and the same runlet is chill by day and boiling by night, so that in either extreme it cannot be touched.[191]

But Augustine reasons differently, precisely because wonder is intimately associated with the existence of miracles in his own view, and his argument stands –

[190] *The City of God*, 21.7 (italics added)
[191] *The City of God*, 21:7, italics added.

if the adversaries of Christian miracles believe in such marvels, then miracles do exist, and hence there is no reason to deny the existence of Christian miracles.[192]

Surely, as noted in the case of "seminal reasons," Augustine himself was able to take up the causal talk when discussing miracles. But the ultimate outcome for such a causal vein in his argumentation is always the mere affirmation that "all things come from God," i.e., that God is the ultimate cause of everything.[193] Hence Augustine could also reply to the Platonists, in the aforementioned discussion of *The City of God*, 21.7, in their own language:

> And so of the rest, which I am weary of reciting, and in which, *though there seems to be an extraordinary property contrary to nature,* yet no other reason is given for them than this, that this is their nature, a brief reason truly, and, I own, a satisfactory reply. *But since God is the author of all natures, how is it that our adversaries, when they refuse to believe what we affirm, on the ground that it is impossible, are unwilling to accept from us a better explanation than their own, viz., that this is the will of Almighty God,*—for certainly He is called Almighty only because He is mighty to do all He will,—He *who was able to create so many marvels, not only unknown, but very well ascertained, as I have been showing,* and which, were they not under our own observation, or reported by recent and credible witnesses, would certainly be pronounced impossible?[194]

In other words, even if Augustine could adopt the causal talk in his discourse in order to defend miracles, this causal vein would not have gone as far as to accept counterfactual reasoning about causation in miracles. Indeed, if "all things come from

[192] Conceivably, that the (Neo-)Platonists would use such causal argumentation with respect to miracles was due to the Aristotelian vein in their thinking, since, as is well known, from Plotinus onwards their philosophy realised a synthesis between Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic elements, but the Platonic vein, with its slant towards the incorporeal, was predominant. When, in the thirteenth century, Arab Aristotelianism (with its pronounced slant towards empirical enquiry) was massively infused into Western thinking (as I discussed in chapter 2), it seems fair to say that the Aristotelian vein came to predominate (see Ward, *Miracles*, 6, Kruger, *Dreaming*, 66-73, 83-87). Admittedly, why precisely the causal approach to miracles came to predominate in thirteenth-century theology is a much more complicated issue (involving also the Averroist side of Arab Aristotelianism and Jewish- and Muslim-challenges; see Goodich, "A Chapter," 89, Goodich, *Miracles*, 15), which is well beyond the scope of this thesis.

[193] See *On the Trinity*, 3.2.7.

God" then what sense does it make to ask the counterfactual question about a miracle: "Could it have happened 'naturally'"? Proximal causes for miraculous events could be discovered, and Augustine never denies this; on the contrary, his theory of seminal reasons suggests precisely a certain mechanism of proximal causation for miracles, which I will come back to. But looking into the "natural" secondary causes to discern miracle from non-miracle by way of counterfactual reasoning would have seemed nonsensical to Augustine -- just a signpost on the path opened up by curiosity towards being immersed in the corporeal world and forgetting about God. It was not causal ignorance that mainly worried Augustine.

This is not to deny in that Augustine, especially in *On the Trinity*, one finds (probably via Plotinus) the germs of the essence/existence distinction, with its characteristic hierarchy of being (a scheme which grounds Aquinas' approach to miracles).[195] This is to say, however, that when it comes to miracles and causes, Augustine always chooses to emphasize God's direct presence through natural causes, as can be seen precisely in the discussion of miracles in Book III of *On the Trinity*.[196]

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[194] *The City of God*, 21.7.

[195] See Kevin Kerrigan, "Essence and Existence in the Enneads," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd Gerson, 106-124 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) who traces in Enneads VI.7 and VI.8 the germs of the distinction first formulated explicitly by Al Farabi and Avicenna; and John Rist, "Plotinus and Christian Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd Gerson, 307-413 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 407, who traces the connection to Augustine. George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou grant Augustine the laying of a foundation for Aquinas's thesis that God's essence is God's existence, appealing to John Romanides' work; see their "Augustine and the Orthodox, The 'West' in the East," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. George E. Demacopoulos, Aristotle Papanikolaou (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 11-41. In general, orthodox theologians see Augustine as laying out the metaphysical grounds for Western thinking in scholasticism, mainly due to Augustine ignoring the essence/energies distinction. For a less decided view, see James O'Donnell's 1991 St. Augustine's lectures "it is one of the remarkable gaps in our scholarly literature that we have no satisfactory, and really very little unsatisfactory, treatment of the question of the spread of Augustine's influence. It is often assumed that 'the early middle ages' were a period profoundly influenced by Augustine, but in just what way this influence was exercised, what its limits were, and how it came to be, these are questions that still deserve attention." Villanova University St. Augustine Lectures, 1991, http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/ augustine/augauth.html (last accessed May 17, 2011). All of the above is not to enter into this debate. I only discuss above a local claim regarding the construal of miracles in Augustine, which is consistent with a general view of the continuity between him and the subsequent Western thinking.

[196] *On the Trinity* 3.2.7-3.9.19.

In other words, at least insofar as causes and corporeal miracles are concerned, there is no equivalent in Augustine of the scholastic distinction between what God alone does and what God and creatures do, as it appears in Abelard or the *potentia Dei absoluta*/*potentia Dei ordinata* distinction as it appears in Aquinas.[197] It is for this reason that Augustine does not bother about whether natural intermediate causes are present or not in miracles, or rather, favours the presence of natural intermediate proximal causes in miracles. For Aquinas, in contrast, "God and creatures" needs to be separated from "God alone" vis-à-vis miracles, and that is why, even though God's performing miracles involves proximal subjects -- as intermediary causal agents, or simply as receivers of miraculous effects -- these proximal subjects cannot act "naturally" but need to be seen as "modified" by the action of God alone (either as subjects for *supra naturam* forms that nature cannot attain, or, in *contra naturam* miracles, as subjects of forms that nature can attain but in different subjects, or as subjects of forms they naturally possess but acting in a *praeter naturam* mode).[198]

Indeed, what seems particularly strange in Augustine (but perfectly reasonable if one thinks outside the Aquinas scheme of miracles) is that by adopting the causal talk within his seminal reasons theory, Augustine defends the existence of those miracles against the same Platonists who affirmed their impossibility, precisely by emphasizing that they could happen naturally, even if the power of God is especially manifested in them. Because of the seminal reasons, whenever water comes into contact with the roots of a vine and nourishes it, says Augustine, "the water thus transformed becomes wine, which sweetens as it matures". When Jesus performed the miracle at the marriage feast in Cana:

[197] See Bianchi, "Quotidiana," 312-317.
[198] *On the Power of God*, Q. 6, art. 2.

> did the Lord need a vine, or earth or this passage of time when without any such aids He changed water into wine, and such wine that even the guest who had his fill would praise it? Did the Author of time need the help of time? All serpents require a certain number of days according to their kind to be implanted, formed, born, and developed. Did Moses and Aaron have to wait all these days before the rod could be turned into a serpent? When events like this happen, they do not happen against nature except for us, who have a limited knowledge of nature, but not for God, for whom nature is what He has made.[199]

Miracles are signs within a wonderful world, naturally sent by God to those immersed in the corporeal world, whose souls have not yet turned.

> The miracle indeed of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby He made the water into wine, is not marvellous to those who know that it was God's doing. For He who made wine on that day at the marriage feast, in those six water-pots, which He commanded to be filled with water, the self-same does this every year in vines. For even as that which the servants put into the water-pots was turned into wine by the doing of the Lord, so in like manner also is what the clouds pour forth changed into wine by the doing of the same Lord. But we do not wonder at the latter, because it happens every year: it has lost its marvellousness by its constant recurrence. And yet it suggests a greater consideration than that which was done in the water-pots. For who is there that considers the works of God, whereby this whole world is governed and regulated, who is not amazed and overwhelmed with miracles? If he considers the vigorous power of a single grain of any seed whatever, it is a mighty thing, it inspires him with awe. But since men, intent on a different matter, have lost the consideration of the works of God, by which they should daily praise Him as the Creator, God has, as it were, reserved to Himself the doing of certain extraordinary actions, that, by striking them with wonder, He might rouse men as from sleep to worship Him.[200]

From Augustine's discussion of Moses' miracle, as in general from his theory of seminal reasons according to which natural processes could be accelerated in order for miracles to happen, the thirteenth century authors retained the acceleration part, [201]

[199] Literal Meaning of Genesis, 6.13.24

[200] *Homilies on the Gospel of John* [*In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus*], tr. John Gibb, in NPNF, V1-07, Homily 8 on (John 2:1-4).

[201] See Bartlett's discussion of Abelard in Bartlett, *The Natural*, 6, and his discussion of Peter Lombard; Aquinas appeals to the acceleration of causal processes as one mode by which *praeter naturam* miracles can take place; *On the Power of God*, Q. 6, art. 2.

but not the naturalness.[202] I think that the difference between viewing the acceleration of causal processes as natural in Augustine in order to defend miracles against those denying their existence, and viewing the acceleration of causal process as *praeter naturam* in Aquinas in order to distinguish miracles from existing events that could arouse wonder, even if produced naturally is significant.[203]

§ 3.4 THE AUGUSTINIAN STYLE OF REASONING AND THE CURIALIST'S TREATISE

In spite of his detailed and subtle construal of wonder and corporeal miracles, Augustine thought that internal miracles (and the attending journey in the incorporeal realm) were superior to external miracles (always attended by the danger that one might remain stuck in the love and awe of corporeal things).[204] That in the last two books of *The City of God* Augustine speaks less disparagingly of the importance of corporeal miracles than in his earlier writings[205] is conceivably due to the time and context when he was writing the book. It was completed towards the end of his life, after the harsh experience as a bishop in the remote Hippo had long acquainted him with the multitude, the "fools" in need of corporeal signs (whom he was looking down on at the time of writing *The Genesis against Manicheans*, for instance), and when the Vandal danger to the Roman Empire loomed larger and larger and portended hard times for the Church.[206]

[202] See Goodich, *Miracles*, 26, where Goodich points out the change from a view of the processes being accelerated in miracles to a view in which miracles presuppose the *suspension* of ordinary causation and of the powers of created things (including the case of *praeter naturam* miracles).
[203] See also the discussion in § 2.3 on Aquinas' stance on *mirabilia*.
[204] See Rowan Greer, *The Fear of Freedom* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008) 171.
[205] Even though the superiority of incorporeal, internal miracles over corporeal signs is still maintained; see *The City of God* 10.12 on the miracle of man being superior to any external miracle.
[206] Brown, *Augustine*, 413 ff "….Augustine's sudden decision to give a maximum of publicity to miraculous cures in Africa should not be regarded as a sudden and unprepared surrender to popular

Augustine died in 430 in a Hippo besieged by the Vandals; unlike some of his contemporaries,[207] he had been a proponent of the cults of saints (having himself contributed to the cult of St. Stephen) and these cults played an important, stabilising role in the turbulent subsequent centuries of the Church. Would Augustine have agreed on the processes of canonization initiated in the thirteenth century? Perhaps, given his preoccupation with the fact that demons could also perform wonders,[208] he would have approved the set of questions for witnesses destined to rule out witchcraft, magic, and other such practices.[209] Perhaps, had he known the external circumstances, e.g., the threat posed by the Cathar heresy, he would have approved of the whole procedure for pragmatic reasons. However, as concerns his basic theological thinking about miracles, I have tried to show that he would have been very puzzled as to the core of the canonization questionnaires asking about causes and inquiring whether a putative miraculous event could have happened by "natural" means.[210]

On this basis one should judge the issue raised in chapter 2 concerning the alternative to the thirteenth-century Aristotelian style of reasoning about miracles that the Augustinian thinking could have offered to the anonymous curialist. It is fair to say that, besides the "Aristotelian" passages, we find in the curialist's study somewhat

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credulity. [M]odern miracles….now become urgently important as supporters of faith;" see also Greer, *The Fear*, 176.

[207] The most famous example is Vigilantius.

[208] See *The City of God*, 8.9.

[209] As Goodich notes, Augustine inspired the canonists of the processes of canonization with the suggestion that demons could also perform miracles. For instance, Pope Innocent III compared the Cathar heretics with the Pharaoh's magicians; Goodich, *Miracles*, 14.

[210] Note that this is a factual argument concerning Augustine's thinking, developed in his own writing with no connection to the processes of canonization. In this chapter I have myself used counterfactual reasoning by asking what Augustine would have thought about the processes of canonization. This was for the purpose of clarifying my exposition; I have tried, however, to avoid the dangers of ambiguity or lack of specificity and this gives me room to clear up such a potential charge. My counterfactual argument is based on two factual arguments: i) There was, from a certain point onwards, an incompatibility between the causal discourse and Augustine's own discourse, ii) The processes of canonization hinged on a causal interpretation of miracles; hence, iii) Augustine would not have agreed with the processes of canonization, at least with the part enquiring into proximal causes and whether a miracle had been indeed *supra naturam*. For an argument that the logic of counterfactual conditionals

"neutral" passages, reflecting the general preoccupation of the patristic age -- which remained in place up until the thirteenth century and well beyond -- that demons could also perform miracles;[211] and on this point, the fact that Augustine was also preoccupied by this aspect should not be underestimated, even if he offers fairly simple solutions to distinguish demonic miracles from "orthodox" miracles.[212] Thus, in certain cases, the anonymous curialist appealed to biblical references to miracles precisely in order to rule out the demonic, as in the case of Joan, the 5-year-old daughter of Adam le Schirreve, for instance, who had drowned and was resuscitated after having been measured when taken out of the water.

> *Dices mirandum videtur ad quem effectum per patrem dicte puelle fuerat corpusculum mensuratum. Responsio: consuetudinis est in plerisque partibus hoc fieri ut de eadem mensura ad reliquias sancti in Dei et ipsius honorem fiat cerea facula vel candela; qui mos mensurandi ab Helya incepit et Heliseo. Helyas enim expandit se atque mensus est super puerum tribus vicibus clamavitque ad Dominum: 'Domine Deus meus, revertatur anima pueri huius in viscera eius'*[213]

However, in the case of John, son of William Drake, aged 9, also drowned, no demonic or *ex arte* suspicion is at play, but the fact that the subsequent revival could have been brought about "naturally." A sudden and complete resuscitation would have proved God's direct intervention. What to do when the child in question first opened an eye, then the second, and then fully recovered only in the next couple of days, retaining however an unusual yellow-green colour in the eyes and over the

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is no different from the logic of material conditionals, Jonathan Lowe, "The Truth about Counterfactuals," *Philosophical Quarterly* 45 (1995) 41-59.

[211] It is important to bear in mind that, as Boureau rightly emphasizes, the Church did not have to wait for the thirteenth century Aristotelians to be critical about miracles and ask whether they could have been performed by demons or were *ex arte* miracles, contrived by humans; Boureau, "Miracle," 160. Of course, Aquinas' metaphysics of miracles was also intended to rule out demons; see *On the Power of God*, Q. 6, art. 2, 3.

[212] The demoniac wonders are mainly those acknowledged by pagans, and they are performed by demons because they are not addressed to the Christian God. Hence, Augustine's argument is fairly simple at this point –the works of demons can be discerned because their purpose is to be worshiped themselves, whereas the miracles of Christian saints or angels are for the purpose of worshiping the true God; see *The City of God*, 10.4-8 and 22. 9, 10.

[213] Appendix 1, Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 543.

nose? The curialist first reasons by appealing to past examples from hagiographic writings:

> *Curatio miraculosa est aliquociens succesiva. Sanctus enim Iohannes Eboracensis archiepiscopus brachium virginis tumore tanta inflatum ut nichil prorsus in cubito inflexionis haberet, benedicens primo sua benedictione sedavit dolorem, deinde fuga tumoris horrendi est secuta nec statim sed facto temporis non modico intervallo*.[214]

With respect to doubts about the persisting colour of the skin, the curialist responds:

> *Respondetur quod sicut in corpore Christi apparuerunt cicatrices ad probationem veri corporis et victoriam ac gloriam resurgentis, sicut etiam in corporibus martirum idem creditur esse futurum ad augmentum glorie et signum sue victorie quam moriendo pro Christi nomine reportaverunt, dicente Beda super Lucam de Christo "non ex impotentia curandi cicatrices in Christo fuerunt sed ut in perpetuum victorie sue circumferat triumphum", et Augustinus, De Civitate Dei "fortassis in ille regno in corporibus martyrum videbimus vulnerum cicatrices que pro Christi nomine pertulerunt. Consimiliter in corpore suscitato reservantur vestigia generis mortis de qua est vite priori donatus ad monumentum talis resuscitationis.*[215]

After the resuscitation, nature as a sign of the miracle has remained almost ingrained in the eyes and skin of the child. Was it a *supra naturam* event? The curialist does not enquire further, using the medical knowledge that, as I have indicated in chapter 2, he could well have appealed to. The miracle was powerful enough to arouse wonder in the hearts of the witnesses, just as in the previous examples provided by hagiography, past miracles were powerful enough to have saints venerated as a result of popular devotion.

[214] Appendix 1 in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 545.
[215] Vauchez, Appendix 1 in *Sainthood*, 545.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The starting point of this analysis, as outlined in chapter 1, has been a certain ambiguity or conceptual ambivalence in the arguments of the anonymous curialist enquiring into the miracles of Thomas of Hereford. My hypothesis, stemming from the insightful comments of Vauchez and Kleinberg, was that this curialist manuscript embodies a confrontation between "rationalistic," "empirically minded," causal thinking about miracles and another, face-value, approach which corresponds by and large to the Augustinian approach.

Also, on a methodological level, taking my cue from Robert Bartlett's Kuhnian stance on the stability and coherence of beliefs in a given historical period, I have hypothesized that in the curialist document, in the passages where counterfactual reasoning about putative miracles (e.g., regarding the fall of bodies which could or could not produce death) alternates with face-value acceptance of miracles given "insufficient" information or "proof," is the tension between two incompatible discourses about miracles. These two discourses, two irreconcilable discourses and styles of reasoning about miracles -- the Augustinian style and the causal, scholastic style characterising the processes of canonization – are outlined in chapters 2 and 3.

I have presented the reasons favouring the plausibility of this hypothesis in the form of what philosophers of science call "inference to the best explanation." The curialist appears to "believe" straightforwardly in some of these miracles and I have suggested that, like all the persons with such high theological training in the position of participating in a process of canonization, the curialist would have needed an argument, background or justification to present his face-value belief in some of the miracles they scrutinized. What could have been an alternative to the scholastic (and

canonic) reasoning in terms of causes?[216] It would have been, I have inferred as the best explanation, the Augustinian reasoning about miracles or one of its early modern disguises in Gregory the Great and Bede, since, as William McCready has convincingly demonstrated, the thinking of the latter concerning miracles owed immensely to Augustine.[217] It was this reasoning on miracles that dominated the medieval work up to the twelfth century, when scholastic treatises emerged.[218] I have tried to suggest in chapter 3, that it was this reasoning that was consonant with the "mushrooming" cults of saints prior to the processes of canonization (and even after, since they evolved in parallel). And it is by quoting Bede, Gregory the Great, and Augustine that the curialist proceeds in his "face-value" assessments of miracles.

Note that my interpretation does not entail ruling out the significance of political pressures or interests in the work of the anonymous curialist, which, as I have shown in chapter 1, was at the heart of the disagreement (and misunderstanding) between Vauchez and Kleinberg; it rather entails that Augustinian reasoning could also be employed for rhetorical purposes, in order to respond to various pressures on the processes of canonization that did not have to do with the sanctity of the candidates or their miracles.[219]

Through further research I hope in the future to clarify the extent and details of Augustinian reasoning in the scholastic age and also to extend the range of my interpretation to a wider series of enigmatic ambivalences present in the processes of canonization. The ambiguity of the anonymous curialist was by no means singular in the age. As I noted in chapter 2, Michael Goodich has catalogued an entire series of

[216] Which, as Goodich has argued, was assumed on a general level by the Curia in order to ensure the "objective" status of canonizations. See Goodich's comments on the canonization of Thomas of Hereford and the manuscript of the anonymous curialist, in Goodich, *Miracles*, 85.
[217] McCready, *Signs*, 225-239, and McCready, *Miracles*, 1-20.
[218] See Ward, *Miracles*, 1, Goodich, *Miracles*, 15, 18.

such ambiguities or ambivalent views in the processes of canonization under Innocent III, Innocent IV, Alexander IV, and Clement VI,[220] emphasizing the difference between the "theory" and the "practice" of such processes:

> On the one hand, an increasingly refined judicial procedure was supported by philosophical arguments in the rational examination and confirmation of miracles….[On the other hand] a private revelation or a miracle that had not been fully tested according to the philosophical and juridical standards was employed in order to clinch the putative saint's claim to sanctity.[221]

Looking at these processes of canonization, particularly those of Celestine V and Louis IX, for which documents of the same type as the curialist document exist,[222] would be useful for extending and strengthening my interpretation.

As to the extent and filiation of Augustinian reasoning in the thirteenth century, what I hope to be able to research in the future is the "subterranean" contribution of sermons and hagiographic writings to its diffusion, and here Michael Goodich is also a source of challenge and direction, given his argument that, in parallel to the speculative enterprises of the Aristotelians:

> [t]he contemporary miracle continued to fulfil several traditional roles: it echoed the paradigmatic aims of its Jewish, Christian and early medieval predecessors as the most effective means of converting the nonbeliever and renewing the faith of those whose faith had grown cold; it served as an illustration of the gift of the divine grace with which the apostles, saints, angels and others are endowed; it illustrated the superiority of the Christian deity over the forces of nature.[223]

[219] Gabor Klaniczay has documented the dynastic interests that lay behind many canonizations from the thirteenth century onwards; see Gabor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[220] Goodich, "The Criteria," 187-196.
[221] Goodich, "The Criteria,"196.
[222] Goodich, *Miracles*, 80-83.
[223] Goodich, *Miracles*, 26. See also Ward, *Miracles*, 24.

Goodich also notes that that, in spite of Guilbert of Noget's attack on the foundations of miracles in the twelfth century,

> many contemporary hagiographers preferred to disregard the challenge posed by both the arguments of non-believers and contemporary attempts to provide a philosophical foundation to the belief in the supernatural. They continued to reiterate the patristic view that the believer has no need of miracles to confirm his faith they are rather necessary as a sign to the non-believer.[224]

It would have been through such sermons and hagiographical writings, as well as the diffusion of works by Augustine, Bede, and Gregory the Great that the contours of Augustine's reasoning as presented in chapter 3 were preserved in the age of scholasticism, and not through the work of the so-called Neo-Augustinians, who, by taking up Avicennian theories in the background of the Aristotelian natural sciences were looking into soul and imagination for intermediaries, proximal *natural* causes involved in *supranatural* events.[225]

If, from an authentic Augustinian perspective, one can indeed interject that the jurists drawing up the canonization questionnaires could not have found out anything about the hardening or turning of the soul, then with respect to the Neo-Augustinians' attempt at deciphering the mechanism of imagination effecting miracles by combining the natural with the supernatural, one can in turn muse that they were showing pernicious curiosity about causes in the incorporeal realm and the workings of grace.

[224] Goodich, Miracles, 16. Goodich gives the example of Praemonstratesian Hermann (Judaeus) of Scheda, a convert to Christianity and author of *De Conversione Sua*. Goodich remarks in addition that the Augustinian theme brought about by Hugh of St Victor according to which the entire Creation is miraculous and at the same time, "what is within us is more wonderful than what is without" and "both man and place are dependent on God for sanctification" was "a major locus" for the discussion of miracles by later preachers," Goodich, *Miracles*, 16.

[225] See Alain Boureau's argument that these neo-Augustinians played a crucial role in the mutation of the concept of miracle that occurred in the thirteenth century; Boureau, *Miracle*, 164, 165.

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AA.SS *Acta Sanctorum*

NPNF *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* ed. Philip Schaaf. 14 vols. New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1886-1890.

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MS BN. Lat., 5373 A. Vauchez, Andre. Appendix 1. *Sainthood in Later Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

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