## Duns Scotus: Ordinatio II d. 3 p. 1 q. 2*

### [ Whether a material substance is of itself individual through something positive and intrinsic ]

[**43**]   Secondly, I ask whether a material substance is of itself individual through something positive and intrinsic.

### [ The Principal Arguments ]

[**44**]   That it is *not* [individual through something positive and intrinsic]: [The term] 'one' only expresses the privation of division in itself and the privation of identity with another; therefore, since 'singularity' or 'individuation' only mean a double negation, it is not necessary to seek something positive as its cause, for the negation is sufficient.

[**45**]   Proof of the first proposition [in n. 44]: If 'one' were to express a positive account, it would[1] express the same thing as 'being,' and then saying 'one being' would be pointless and redundant. Nor does ['one'] mean an account [of something positive] other [than that expressed by 'being'], since then in any given being there would be an entity added to an entity, which seems inadmissible.

[**46**]   That it *is* [individual through something positive and intrinsic]: Primary substance is generated *per se* (from *Met.* 7.8 [$1033^a24$–$1033^b19$]) and operates *per se* (from *Met.* 1.1 [$981^a16$–19]), and in these [features] is distinguished from secondary substance, to which neither [feature] agrees *per se*; therefore, these [features] agree to primary substance through that which it adds above and beyond secondary substance. However, they do not agree to something formally by negation; thus primary substance does not add only a negation above and beyond secondary substance.

### [ Henry of Ghent's Position ]

[**47**]   Regarding the question, it is said that individuation in created things comes about through a twofold negation—see [Henry of Ghent], *Quodlibetal Questions* 5.8 [fol. 166M], for this position.

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*   Translated from *Iohanni Duns Scoti opera omnia* tom. VII, studio et cura Commisionis Scotisticae (ad fidem codicum edita), praeside P. Carolo Balić, Civitatis Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1973, 410–417.

[1]   Omitting *non.*

## [ Refutation of Henry of Ghent ]

[**48**]  Against this position, I firstly state the understanding of the questions put forward on the subject:

(*i*) I am not asking about that by which the nature is singular or individual, if these [terms 'singular' and 'individual'] signify a second-level concept—since then by the second-level concept the nature would be formally singular by the second-level concept, and this would be brought about by the intellect causing that second-level concept, namely going from 'this nature' to 'nature' as from something able to be put as subject to something predicable.

(*ii*) Nor am I asking about the real numerical identity by which the nature is thus formally one; by numerical unity a thing is formally one by numerical unity, whether that unity converts with being or is in a genus of Quantity, whether it expresses a privation or a positing [of something].

(*iii*) Yet, among beings, there is something unable to be divided into subjective parts, that is, [there is something] to which *being divided into many parts of which any given one is that thing* is formally incompatible. I am not asking about that by which it is formally incompatible (since it is formally incompatible by incompatibility), but rather about that by which the incompatibility is present in it as the proximate and intrinsic foundation [of the incompatibility].

Therefore, the understanding of the question on this subject is: What is there in this stone through which, as by a proximate foundation, *being divided into many of which any given one is it* is simply incompatible with it, the way there is a proper division of the universal whole into its subjective parts?

[**49**]  With this now understood, I prove that something is not formally individual [through a twofold negation], as the position [of Henry of Ghent] seems to hold. First of all, nothing is simply incompatible with some being through a privation in it alone, but rather through something positive in it; hence, to be divided into subjective parts is not incompatible with a stone—in that it is a certain being—through some negations.

[**50**]  Proof of the antecedent [namely "nothing is simply incompatible with some being through a privation in it alone"]: howsoever much a negation removes a proximate potency to act and to be acted upon, such that by this [removal] that being in which there is the negation is not in proxi-

mate potency to something, still, [the negation] does not posit a formal incompatibility of that being with something, since through 'possible' and 'impossible,' with those negations put aside (because they do not exist), such a being can obtain with the opposite of those negations, and thus [to obtain] with that to which it is said to be incompatible *per se*—which is impossible. An example of this: if a substance were understood, but not understood with regard to how much it is, [that substance] is not divisible— *i. e.* it is not possible [for the substance] to be divided by a more proximate potency. Nevertheless, *being divided* is not incompatible with it, since then *receiving quantity*, through which [the substance] can formally be divided, would be incompatible with it; therefore, obtaining with the nature of the same corporeal substance, it would not be incompatible with it that it be divisible. Similarly, if *not having sight* were to remove the proximate potency for seeing, still, it does not produce an incompatibility with vision, since [vision] can obtain with the same positive nature (in which there was this negation), and the opposite of this negation can be present in it free from any incompatibility on the part of the nature.

[51]  The case at hand can be argued in the fashion [of the argument in nn. 49–50]: although [Henry of Ghent] holds that "the nature is one and individual of itself," still, 'being formally divided' will never be incompatible with [the nature] through some negation "posited in the nature," and so there will never be some positive being among things that will be completely individual.

[52]  And if an objection is raised in some way to the first proposition of the argument [given in n. 49, namely an objection to the proposition that "nothing is simply incompatible with some being through a privation in it alone, but rather through something positive in it"], I assume at least this proposition:

> No imperfection is formally incompatible with something except through some perfection

and [a perfection] is something positive and a positive entity; but *being divided* is a certain imperfection, and hence cannot accrue to the divine nature—therefore, [something is not formally individual through a double negation].

[53]  Second, [against n. 47]: through a negation, something is not constituted in an entity more perfect than is the entity presupposed by the negation, for otherwise the negation would formally be a certain positive entity; but primary substance, according to Aristotle in *Cat.* 5 [$2^a11$–15], is substance most of all, and it is also more substance than secondary sub-

stance. Thus it is not formally constituted in the entity of primary substance through a negation, inasmuch as it is distinguished from secondary [substance].

[**54**]  Third, [against n. 47]: of a singular, that of which it is a singular is predicated *per se primo modo*; but of some being taken under a negation no entity is predicated *per se* by reason of the whole subject, since the whole is not one *per se* (if [some entity were predicated *per se*] by reason of a part, then it is not a predication of a higher of a lower, but [a predication] of the same of itself).

[**55**]  Fourth, although the position [stated in n. 47] seems to be false in itself, according to the arguments already given, if [Henry of Ghent] understands an individual to be constituted in the entity and unity of singularity by negation, [his position] nevertheless also seems completely superfluous and not to answer the question, since even granting [his position] the same question still remains—for I ask about the twofold negation that he posits, what is the reason whence this negation agrees to it? If he says that the twofold negation is the *per se* cause, then the question is not answered; I am asking for that through which the opposite of those negations is incompatible, and, in consequence, through what those negations are present.

[**56**]  Similarly, I ask whence a negation is a *this*, since it is of the same account in this [singular] and in that one? For just as there is a twofold negation in Socrates, so too in Plato there is a negation of a twofold account; whence, therefore, is Socrates singular by his proper and determinate singularity and not by the singularity of Plato? No [answer] can be stated unless it is discovered whence the negation is this negation, and this can only be through something positive.

### [ Scotus's Response ]

[**57**]  Therefore, I grant the conclusions of the arguments [given in nn. 49–56], that it is necessary that through something positive and intrinsic to this stone, insofar as *being divided into subjective parts* is incompatible with it through some proper account; and that positive factor will be that which is said to be the *per se* cause of individuation, since I understand by 'individuation' such indivisibility or incompatibility with divisibility.

### [ Reply to the Principal Argument ]

[**58**]  With regard to the [principal] argument given [in n. 44]: even though the assumption [that "the term 'one' expresses only the privation of division

in itself and the privation of identity with another"] is perhaps false (I'll deal with it elsewhere), nevertheless, if it were true that 'one' formally signifies that twofold negation, it does not follow that it does not have some positive cause through which that twofold negation is present in it. For specific unity, by a symmetrical argument, would signify a twofold negation, and yet nobody denies that there is a positive entity in the account of specific entity, from which positive entity the account of the specific differentia is taken. And this is a good argument for the resolution of the question [raised in n. 43] and for the position [stated in n. 47], since if for any given unity less than numerical unity a positive entity that *per se* is the account of that unity and of the incompatibility with the opposed multiplicity [must be] given, then all the more—or equally—will [such a positive entity] have to be given for the most perfect unity, which is numerical unity.

### [ End of the Question ]