KEVIN WHITE

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ON PROLOGUES

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According to a proverb the beginning is half of the whole. What about beginnings of written works? The importance of first impressions is felt in a special way by writers, who have the advantage of composing their introductions at leisure and with calculation, but the disadvantage of the absence of their audience. The strain of imagining the absent audience is a major difficulty of writing, and it is perhaps particularly acute with respect to opening remarks.[1] How to begin so as to make the best impression? What in fact is the best first impression? These questions belong to the art of rhetoric, and I would like to draw attention to the way in which St. Thomas Aquinas, as an author who had studied rhetoric, thought about them.[2]

At the beginning of his *Sentencia libri De anima*, St. Thomas makes some observations on the basis of Aristotle's principle that in considering any genus of things one should begin with what is common to the whole of the genus, and only later consider what is proper to individual species, in order to avoid saying the same things frequently. Then, turning to his text, he divides the prologue (*prohemium*) off from the treatise proper and subdivides it. Aristotle, he says, does the three things that are necessary in any prologue, for one who composes a prologue intends three things: to make well-disposed (*beniuolus*), teachable (*docilis*), and attentive (*attentus*). He shows how the effects can be achieved, and he divides the prologue accordingly.

> ...beniuolum quidem reddit ostendendo utilitatem sciencie; docilem, promittendo ordinem et distinctionem tractatus; attentum, atte-

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[1] "Extratextual context is missing not only for readers but also for the writer. Lack of verifiable context is what makes writing normally so much more agonizing an activity than oral presentation to a real audience." W. ONG, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, London and New York 1982, 102.

[2] For historical background, see L. C. MONTEFUSCO, *Exordium Narratio Epilogus: Studi sulla teoria retorica greca e romana delle parti del discorso*, Bologna 1988; and J. HAMESSE (Ed.), *Les prologues médiévaux. Actes du colloque international organizé par l'Academia Belgica et l'École française de Rome avec le concours de la F.I.D.E.M. (Rome, 26-28 mars 1998)*, Turnhout 2000.

stando difficultatem tractatus. Que quidem tria Aristotelis facit in pro-
hemio huius tractatus: primo enim ostendit dignitatem huius sciencie;
secundo uero ordinem huius tractatus, quid sit scilicet et qualiter sit
tractandum de anima...; tercio uero ostendit difficultatem huius scien-
cie....[3]

One makes well-disposed by showing the usefulness of a science,
and accordingly Aristotle begins by showing the dignity of the science
of the soul. (The relation between usefulness and dignity is not
explained.) One makes teachable by presenting the order and division
of the treatise, which is the second thing Aristotle does. (Note that "sci-
ence" and "treatise" are used interchangeably.) And one makes atten-
tive by attesting to the difficulty of the treatise or science, as Aristotle
does in the last and longest part of the prologue. St. Thomas's remarks
seem to allow for other ways of achieving these effects, but not for any
variation in the effects themselves, or in the principle that a prologue is
divided into three corresponding parts.

In a characteristically learned and helpful note, the Leonine editor
of *Sentencia libri De anima*, René-Antoine Gauthier, O.P., indicates the
sources of this understanding of prologues in Roman rhetoric and its
transmission to medieval authors from Boethius to Abelard. He also
indicates *loca parallela* in several other works of St. Thomas, among
them three commentaries in which St. Thomas divides the prologue of
the work he is discussing as he does in *Sentencia libri De anima*, that
is, according to the three purposes of a prologue.[4]

One of these is a very early work of his, the commentary on the
Book of Jeremiah, which he wrote in 1251-1253. As he had it, *Jeremiah*
was introduced with a prologue by its translator St. Jerome, and so, after
his own introduction, he discusses this prologue, which he divides into
three parts.

Hic autem libro Jeremiae, qui librum de hebraeo in latinum
transtulit, praemittit prooemium in quo *more theorico* tria facit. Primo
reddit attentos: secundo dociles facit...; tertio benevolos....[5] (emphasis
added)

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[3] *Opera omnia* XLV.1, Rome 1882- , 4. For the chronology of St. Thomas's writ-
ings I will follow Jean-Pierre TORRELL, *Initiation à saint Thomas d'Aquin: Sa personne et
son oeuvre*, Fribourg-Paris 2002², 45*-50*.

[4] *Opera omnia* XLV.1, Rome 1882- , 4, note to lines 24-32.

[5] *Opera omnia* XIV, Parma 1852-1873, 578. The same text is given in *Opera omnia*
XIX, Paris 1871-1872, 68.

Here the order of effects is the reverse of the one he discovers in the *De anima*'s prologue, but otherwise he has St. Jerome introducing *Jeremiah* in the way that he has Aristotle introducing the *De anima*, by successively making attentive, teachable, and well-disposed. As he does not say of Aristotle, however, he says that St. Jerome proceeds according to a certain *mos*, a manner or custom. His use of the word *mos* in this context itself seems to follow custom, inasmuch as it has a precedent in a twelfth-century commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate* attributed to Thierry of Chartres.[6] This commentary begins with an *accessus* that identifies the intention and the usefulness of the work, the part of philosophy to which it belongs, and its "cause"; then it turns to Boethius's prologue:

> Unde et ad eum facit proemium in quo *morem scribentium* exequitur quia reddit docilem ostendendo de qua re tractaturus sit: reddit beniuolum in modo tractandi: reddit attentum ostendendo difficultatem propositi et utilitatem.[7] (emphasis added)

This *mos scribentium*, "custom of writers", is evidently the custom mentioned by St. Thomas, that of using a prologue to make teachable, well-disposed, and attentive.[8]

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[6] For doubts about this attribution, see L.-J. BATAILLON, *Bulletin d'histoire des doctrines médiévales*, in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 43 (1959) 692-3 and 46 (1962) 508-9. For a response to Bataillon favoring Thierry's authorship, see N. HÄRING, *Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres and His School*, Toronto 1971, 23.

[7] HÄRING, *Commentaries on Boethius*, 126. The classic study of the commentator's prologue called the *accessus* is by E. A. QUAIN, *The Medieval Accessus ad Auctores*, in *Traditio* 3 (1945) 215-64. The prologues of St. Thomas's commentaries seem to descend from the twelfth-century *accessus*. Quain (234) quotes a gloss by a certain MARTINUS commenting on the *Institutes* of Justinian in mid-twelfth-century Bologna: "Morem *recte* scribentium servans Justinianus prologum premittit in quo lectores attentos, dociles et benevolos reddit" (emphasis added). It is the custom of "those who *rightly* write" to begin with a prologue making the readers attentive, teachable, and well-disposed.

[8] But did St. Thomas really call it a *mos theoricus*? It's not clear what a "theoretical custom" would be. Father Adriano Oliva, O.P., President of the Leonine Commission, has discovered evidence suggesting that the *theorico* in the nineteenth-century Parma and Paris editions may stem from a misreading of the morphologically similar but, in the context, more intelligible word *rhetorico*. In an e-mail communication of March 5, 2005, he indicates that the earlier editions (Rome 1570, t. 13, f. 1v; Paris 1660) and the manuscripts (Firense, Laur. Plut. 26.25, f. 233va; Sevilla, Capitula y Colombina 7.6.3, f. 191vb; Vaticano, Urbin. lat. 472, f. 2ra) of St. Thomas's commentary on *Jeremiah* that he has been able to consult all have *rhetorico*, not *theorico*, at this point. If *rhetorico* is correct, St. Thomas is saying that St. Jerome, in dividing his prologue into three parts corresponding to the three effects, is proceeding according to "rhetorical custom".

His explanation of how St. Jerome achieves the three effects refers to strategies different from those he attributes to Aristotle in the *De anima*. He says that in the first part of his prologue St. Jerome makes attentive on the basis of the depth of the writing and the authority of the writer (*Primo ex Scripturae profunditate; secundo ex scribentis auctoritate....*); that in the second part he makes teachable by determining the time narrated in the book (*determinans tempus*); and that in the last part he makes well-disposed "on the basis of his own person", by means of three *loci* or "topoi":

> Hic reddit benevolos ex persona sua, tribus locis. Primo de bonis a se factis sine arrogantia.... Secondo crimen illatum diluit.... Tertio ostendit quae sibi difficultates instent ex contradictioné aemulorum: unde primo ponit eorum invidiam...: secundo ponit assumpti laboris causam....[9]

According to St. Thomas, St. Jerome uses the first of these topoi by mentioning, without arrogance, the good deeds he has done; he uses the second by explaining an accusation brought against him; and he uses the third by showing what difficulties he faces from opposition of rivals, mentioning their envy and his reason for nevertheless taking on the labor of translation. Here St. Thomas closely follows a passage in the chapter on the exordium in Cicero's *De inventione*, and in so doing he implies that St. Jerome closely follows Cicero's advice, which is this:

> Benivolentia quattuor ex locis comparatur: ab nostra, ab adversariorum, ab iudicum *persona*, a causa. Ab nostra, si de nostris *factis* et officiis *sine arrogantia* dicemus: si *crimina illata* et aliquas minus honestas suspiciones iniectas *diluemus*: si quae incommoda acciderint aut quae *instent difficultates*, proferemus: si prece et obsecratione humili ac supplici utemur.[10] (I have emphasized the words that St. Thomas repeats in the passage I have quoted just before this one.)

More generally, Cicero defines the exordium as "a discourse that prepares the mind of the hearer for the rest of the speech", which is accomplished by making him "well-disposed, attentive, teachable". There are, he says, two kinds of exordium: the *principium*, which straightforwardly makes the hearer well-disposed or teachable or attentive, and the *insinuatio*, which steals into the hearer's mind by

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[9] *Opera omnia* XIV, Parma 1852-1873, 578.

[10] CICERO, *De inventione* I.XVI.22, in *De inventione, De optimo genere oratorum, Topica*, Cambridge-London 1949, 44-6. Cf. Ps.-CICERO, *Ad C. Herennium De ratione dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)* I.IV.7-V.8, Cambridge-London 1954, 14-6.

dissimulation and indirection. So far his remarks leave ambiguous whether a prologue should produce all three effects or only one, but what he says next indicates the latter. A prologue should be adapted to the kind of case in hand: an honorable (*honestum*) case, for example, or a strange (*admirabile*) or ambiguous (*anceps*) one, should be introduced by winning good-will; an apparently insignificant (*humile*) case needs a prologue that will make the hearers attentive; an obscure (*obscurum*) case must be introduced by making them teachable. He then describes techniques for provoking each of the effects, including the four topoi for producing goodwill. A second ambiguity, left unresolved, arises when he says that when you wish to make teachable you should simultaneously make attentive, since he is most teachable who is prepared to listen most attentively. Are teachability and attentiveness, then, really distinguishable effects, or does the latter include the former? The chapter also treats of the special features of the *insinuatio*, the *sententia* and *gravitas* that should characterize an exordium, and the vices to be avoided in exordia.[11]

St. Thomas's remarks about prologues in his commentaries on *Jeremiah* and the *De anima* diverge from Ciceronian doctrine in several ways: by asserting that a prologue must achieve all three effects, by making teachability and attentiveness unambiguously distinct, and by insisting that prologues must be divided into three parts corresponding to the three effects. Moreover, when he explains how prologists get their effects, he is willing both to borrow from Cicero's chapter, as in his explanation of how St. Jerome achieves goodwill, and to introduce devices not mentioned by Cicero, as when he says that St. Jerome makes teachable by determining the time of the events in the book.

In his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, written at the University of Paris during 1251/52-56, St. Thomas uses the same method of *divisio textus* again in discussing Lombard's prologue. In fact, some reference to the Ciceronian purposes of a prologue seems to have been expected of mid-thirteenth-century *sententiarii* in their treatments of Lombard's prologue, but they responded in different ways. St. Albert, for example, alludes to the purposes only rarely and casually in his commentary on Lombard's prologue.[12] St. Bonaventure makes them the prin-

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[11] Cicero, *De inventione* I.XV.20-XVIII.26, 40-52. Cf. Ps.-Cicero, *Ad C. Herennium De ratione dicendi* I.III.5-VII.11, 10-22.

[12] *Opera omnia*, t.XXV, Paris 1890-1899, 6-12. St. Albert obviously invokes the classical doctrine of prologues when he says, for example, *Et dicit tria, scilicet laborem compilationis ut attentos reddat....* (11), but he does not seem to follow it systematically.

ciple for dividing just the closing section of the prologue. St. Thomas alone of the three uses them to divide the entire prologue. St. Bonaventure's and St. Thomas's divisions may be compared as follows.

Peter Lombard[13]	St. Bonaventure[14]	St. Thomas[15]
Cupientes aliquid de penuria....	Totali libro praemittit Magister prologum, in quo tangit causas suscepti operis. Dividitur autem in duas partes. In prima parte ponit rationes, quae moverunt ipsum ad aggrediendum praesens negotium sive opus....	Huic operi Magister prooemium praemittit, in quo tria facit. Primo **reddit auditorem benevolum....** Benevolum reddit assignando causas moventes ipsum ad compilationem hujus operis....
Horum igitur et Deo odibilem....		secundo **docilem....**
In quo maiorum exempla....	In secunda rationes, quae debent movere discipulos ad benigne audiendum, ibi circa finem: *In quo maiorum etc.*, ubi incipit alloqui auditores.	
"Non igitur debet hic labor...."		tertio **attentum....**

Since we tend to think of St. Bonaventure as more "rhetorical" than St. Thomas, and St. Thomas as the more "Aristotelian" of the two, it's a bit of a surprise to see St. Bonaventure here begin by speaking about the "causes" of the book, and St. Thomas about its audience; but St. Bonaventure is following the form of the *accessus ad auctorem*, St. Thomas his method of division by effects. According to St. Bonaventure, Lombard devotes most of the prologue to explaining the reasons that moved him to undertake the work, and then, near the end, where he *begins* to address "the hearers" (plural) (*ubi incipit alloqui auditores*),

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[13] *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* I, p. II, Grottaferrata (Rome) 1971, 3-4.
[14] *Opera omnia* I, Quaracchi 1882-1902, 22.
[15] *Scriptum super Sententiis* I, Paris 1929, 19.

he gives the reasons that should move them to listen willingly (*benigne*). But according to St. Thomas, Lombard addresses "the hearer" (singular) from the very beginning, making him first well-disposed, then teachable, and finally attentive. To be sure, St. Thomas agrees that Lombard begins by presenting the causes that moved him to compile the work, but his more rhetorical approach leads him to emphasize the *effect* of doing this, namely winning the audience's good-will. At the beginning of St. Bonaventure's second main division (where Lombard is still, according to St. Thomas, making the hearer teachable) he, St. Bonaventure, explains how Lombard concludes by producing the three desired effects. Note the elegance of St. Bonaventure's diction, which uses abstract nouns for the effects and assigns a suitable verb to each: the author prepares for teachability, arouses attentiveness, and tries to win good will:

Peter Lombard	St. Bonaventure[16]	St. Thomas[17]
In quo maiorum exempla....	...dividitur haec pars in quatuor partes secundum quatuor, quae movent discipulos ad audiendum, duo quorum sunt ex parte operas, videlicet auctoritas et utilitas; duo vero ex parte docentis, scilicet humilitas et facilitas. In primo **praeparat docilitatem**, scilicet in *auctoritate.*	
"Non igitur debet hic labor...."	In secundo, scilicet in *utilitate*, **suscitat attentionem.**	Hic **reddit auditorem attentum**: et primo ex utilitate operis....
In hoc autem tractatu....	In duobus autem sequentibus, scilicet *humilitate et facilitate*, **captat benevolentiam.**	Secundo ex profunditate materiae....
Ut autem quod quaeritur....		Tertio ex ordinatione modi procedendi....

[16] *Opera omnia* I, 25.

[17] *Scriptum super Sententiis* I, 24.

So different are the two divisions that it seems almost a matter of chance that they coincide at one point, the passage beginning *"Non igitur debet hic labor..."*, where, both agree, Lombard makes the audience attentive by showing the usefulness of the work.[18] Their general divergence otherwise shows that thirteenth-century divisions of a text might vary significantly, and that the method of prologue-division that St. Thomas used was not universally followed.

In *Sentencia libri De anima* St. Thomas says that the topos of usefulness makes well-disposed; here he says that it makes attentive. Thus he suggests that not only can the same effect be produced by different means, but the same means can be directed to different effects.

In 1257-58 St. Thomas commented on Boethius's *De Trinitate*. The only thirteenth-century commentator on this work, he agrees with the twelfth-century commentator mentioned above that Boethius in his prologue makes teachable, well-disposed, and attentive.

> Huic ergo operi prohemium premittit. In quo tria facit: primo breuiter causas operis prelibet, in quo reddit auditorem docilem; secundo excusationem subiungit, in quo reddit auditorem beniuolum.... tertio ostendit sui operis originem et quasi subiectum esse doctrinam Agustini, ex quo reddit auditorem attentum....[19]

Boethius makes the hearer teachable by briefly presenting the causes of the work (material, efficient, formal, and final); he makes the hearer well-disposed by offering an excuse (for the difficulty and imperfection of the work); and he makes the hearer attentive by showing that the origin and, as it were, subject of the work is the teaching of Augustine. The strategies for getting the three effects differ from those mentioned in earlier texts, but the three effects remain constant. In fact, as should be evident by now, even if St. Thomas sometimes comments on prologues without using, or at least without mentioning, a division into three parts according to the three effects to be achieved, the technique of such a division was a constant among his resources as a commentator.[20] With its correlation between partition and purpose,

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[18] St. Albert agrees that the topos here is usefulness: *Haec est pars secunda totius prooemii, in qua determinantur hujus voluminis utilitates ex parte auditoris, vel lectoris.* (t.XXV, 11)

[19] *Opera omnia* L, Rome 1882- , 77.

[20] He does not mention the three purposes of a prologue when dividing the prologue of Boethius's *De Hebdomadibus* into three parts, but perhaps he has them in mind: *Primo ostendit de quo sit intentio. Secundo quodmodo sit tradendum.... Tercio tradit ordinem quo procedendum est.... Opera omnia* L, Rome 1882- , 268.

between form and end, the technique betrays a formal approach to the reading of books, suggesting that St. Thomas not only speaks, but also reads, in a remarkably formal way.

His commentaries on the prologues of St. Jerome, Peter Lombard, and Boethius – Latin authors themselves familiar with Ciceronian rhetoric – were composed in the 1250s. By 1267-68, when he composed *Sentencia libri De anima*, his situation had changed considerably: he had entered into the mature stage of his career; he was teaching at a school of his own; and he was beginning two of his greatest projects, his *Summa theologiae* and his commentaries on Aristotle.[21] In applying the technique of tripartition to a prologue by a Greek author, he extended it into new territory.[22] In reformulating it, he presented it in a new light:

> In tractatu autem de anima quem habemus pre manibus, primo ponit prohemium, in quo facit tria que *necessaria* sunt in *quolibet* prohemio. Qui enim facit prohemium tria intendit: primo enim ut reddat beniuolum, secundo ut reddat docilem, tercio ut reddat attentum.... (emphasis added)[23]

In his commentary on St. Jerome's introduction to *Jeremiah* he had spoken, in the twelfth-century way, of a "custom" of making well-disposed, attentive, and teachable in a prologue; now he speaks rather of necessity and universality, saying that three things are *necessary* in *any* prologue, because one - that is, *anyone* - who composes a prologue intends to accomplish three things. The Ciceronian understanding of how a prologue is constructed has changed from a matter of custom to a matter of necessity, a necessity in which a prologue, any prologue, must by *nature* have three parts, one to make well-disposed, one to make teachable, and one to make attentive.

He repeatedly attributes such importance, whether as a matter of necessity or venerable custom, to the three-part prologue, that we are led to ask whether his own prologues have this structure. Is there any evi-

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[21] See L. E. BOYLE, O.P., *The Setting of the "Summa Theologiae" of St. Thomas – Revisited*, in S. POPE (Ed.), *The Ethics of Aquinas*, Washington 2002, 1-16.

[22] In Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 3.14.1415a35-38, there is a clear precedent for Cicero's enumeration of the effects of a prologue. Aristotle says that a prologue makes *eunous* and *prosektikos*, and produces *eumatheia*. In his translation of the *Rhetoric*, William of Moerbeke renders these terms as *benivolum*, *attentivum*, and *eumatheiam* respectively; see B. SCHNEIDER (Ed.), *Rhetorica: Translatio anonyma sive vetus et translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka*, Leiden 1978, 310. GAUTHIER argues that St. Thomas first encountered the Moerbeke translation towards the end of 1270; see *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Somme contre les gentils*, Paris 1993, 79-80.

[23] *Opera omnia* XLV.1, Rome 1882- , 4.

dence of it, for example, in the most famous of them, the prologue of
the *Summa theologiae*?[24] This prologue does consist of three sentences,
in the present, perfect, and future tense respectively, and in each of them
St. Thomas mentions himself, using the topos of "his own person": he
states his duty and intention to teach Catholic truth in a mode suitable
to beginners; he reviews his previous consideration of three impediments
to beginners in what has been written on the subject; and he promises to
avoid such impediments and to teach in the appropriate mode, namely
as briefly and clearly as possible. Might each of the sentences be
intended to achieve one of a prologue's effects? The first sentence, with
the help of a quotation of *I Corinthians* 3.1-2, expresses parental con-
cern for the hearers; if this is calculated to have any effect, it is surely
that of winning goodwill.[25] The second sentence characterizes the hear-
ers as "novices of this teaching" (*huius doctrinae novitios*), and it
instructively itemizes their difficulties in this capacity; this would seem
likely to dispose them to be teachable. The third sentence promises to
proceed *breviter ac dilucide*, mentions confidence in divine assistance,
and ominously closes with a hint at difficulty (he will proceed briefly
and clearly "insofar as the material will allow it", *secundum quod mate-
ria patietur*), all of which would seem to contribute to making the hear-

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[24] *Opera omnia* IV, Rome, 1882- , 5. This prologue was likely written when he
began the *Summa* in 1266-67.

[25] In his commentary on *Psalms*, composed in 1273, St. Thomas applies his method
of prologue-division to a single verse of scripture, *Psalm* 33.12, and in so doing he men-
tions expression of parental love as a cause of *benevolentia*: *Primo praemittit quasi
prooemium suae doctrinae.... In exordio tria facit. Primo reddit audientem benevolum.
Secundo attentum.... Tertio docilem.... Dicit ergo quantum ad primum, Venite filii. Par-
entum enim est diligere filios: et ideo dicit, Filii, ut eos reddat ex paterna dilectione benevo-
los. Opera omnia* XIV, Parma 1852-73, 578. He also points to a connection between
parental concern and *docilitas*: *Item parentum est invitare filios ad doctrinam, et eos
erudire....* (*ibid.*). (If a prologist can present himself as a loving parent, one might reverse
the terms of the comparison and say that the speech of parents to their children constitutes
a great prologue for the latter.)

[26] Perhaps the phrase *breviter ac dilucide* echoes references to brevity in Cicero's
chapter on prologues. We can make attentive, Cicero says, by promising to set forth our
case and the relevant judgments "briefly" (*brevi*); and we make teachable if we set forth
the gist – the word is *summa* – of our case, that is, what the controversy is about, "openly
and briefly", *aperte et breviter* (*De inventione* I.XVI.23, 46). Is St. Thomas simply sub-
stituting *dilucide* for *aperte*? (There are only two other occurrences of *dilucide* in St.
Thomas's work, both also in prologues, those to *Compendium theologiae* and to the com-
mentary on *Psalms*.) Cicero mentions brevity again when he explains that the *insinuatio*
should be used when the case is of the "difficult" (*admirabile*) kind, which may happen
for several reasons, one of them being that the hearers are weary from having listened to
others - a situation not unlike that of St. Thomas's audience in the *Summa theologiae*, by
his account. Cicero's advice is to promise to speak more briefly than you had planned to,

ers attentive.[26] In at least this most well-known of his prologues, then, the pattern that he discerned in prologues of others does seem to show through.[27]

A comprehensive study of all of St. Thomas's prologues and commentaries on prologues would be worth undertaking. In presenting all of his writings, regardless of genre, from the point of view of their beginnings, such a study would itself perhaps be an ideal prologue to his work as a whole.[28]

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and promise not to imitate your opponent (*ibid.*, XVII.25, 50). As the author of a book, not a spoken speech, St. Thomas cannot make the former of these promises. (This touches on a large and interesting point, the medieval oddity of using the art of public speaking to guide the composition of books; note that St. Thomas regularly refers to "hearers" of books. See ONG, *Orality and Literacy*, 108-12.) Nor does he present the theological writers who have preceded him as adversaries. Still, he does implicitly promise to avoid imitating others, and to do so by being brief.

[27] Alternatively, or perhaps additionally, one might say that the three impediments mentioned in the second sentence, together with the promise to try to avoid them, are correlated with the three purposes of a prologue. The first impediment is a "useless" multiplication of questions, articles, and arguments; the implicit promise to be useful would be understood by St. Thomas, as we may infer from the passage of *Sentencia libri De anima* with which we began, as a way of winning goodwill. The second impediment is neglect of "the order of learning" in favor of the requirements of commentaries and the opportunities of dispute; the importance given to order here, and to this order in particular, might lead someone to be teachable. The last impediment is frequent repetition of the same things (a problem mentioned at the beginning of *Sentencia libri De anima*), which produces *fastidium* (distaste) and confusion in the minds of the hearers; in his *Questiones de quolibet* 7.6.1.ad 2, St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, says that truth is manifested in scripture accompanied by difficulty, and that this is useful for removing *fastidium*, because attentiveness, which removes weariness (*taedium*), is aroused by what is difficult. *Opera omnia* XXV.2, Rome 1882- , 28.

[28] See the valuable remarks by J.-P. TORRELL, O.P. in *Philosophie et théologie d'après le Prologue de Thomas d'Aquin au "Super Boetium de Trinitate". Essai d'une lecture théologique*, in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 10 (1999) 300-3.

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