

BERNARDITA NAVARRO / RAFAEL SIMIAN

## Saint Thomas and the Ontological Status of the Agent Intellect

### *Abstract*

*If we contemplate the ontological structure of the human soul, i.e. its accidents and substance, in which one of these 'categories' does the agent intellect belong? Both Thomas and many Thomists have either implied or claimed that the agent intellect is a proprium (necessary accident) of the soul. In this paper, we argue that this is inconsistent with Thomas' own epistemology and metaphysics. Hence, we propose an alternative (corrective) view, one which we think fits Aquinas' philosophy better, namely: the agent intellect is the substantial and immaterial actus essendi of the soul insofar as through this act the soul can make the natures present in phantasms intelligible.*