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# ST. THOMAS AQUINAS AND THE EARLY CHRISTIAN VIRGIN MARTYRS

BY  
INNOCENT SMITH OP

## *Introduction*

Throughout his theological writings<sup>1</sup>, Thomas Aquinas draws on a wide range of sources, including the Bible, philosophical writers like Aristotle, theological authorities such as Augustine, and ecclesial texts such as the acts of Councils and liturgical collects and antiphons<sup>2</sup>. In

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<sup>1</sup> In this essay, I will make use of the following abbreviations to refer to editions of the Latin texts of Thomas Aquinas:

II Sent.: *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis*, editio nova cura Pierre MANDONNET, vol. 2, Parisiis 1929.

III Sent.: *Scriptum super Sententiis magistri Petri Lombardi*, recognovit atque iterum edidit Maria Fabianus MOOS, vol. 3, Parisiis 1933.

IV Sent.: I have made use of the provisional text of the forthcoming Leonine edition, which was graciously provided to me in July 2018 by Adriano OLIVA, O.P., President of the Commissio Leonina.

*Contra impugnantes: Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, cura et studio fratrum Praedicatorum [praefatio Hyacinthe Antoine DONDAINE] (Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, 41A), Romae 1970.

Quodlibetal questions: *Quaestiones de quolibet*, cura et studio fratrum Praedicatorum [praefatio René Antoine GAUTHIER] (Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, 25), Roma-Paris 1996.

Sermones: Thomas Aquinas, *Sermones*, ed. Louis-Jacques BATAILLON (Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII, 44, 1), Roma-Paris 2014.

De veritate: *Quaestiones disputatae De veritate*, cura et studio fratrum Praedicatorum [praefatio Hyacinthe Antoine DONDAINE] (Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, 22/2-3), Roma 1972, 1976.

ST: *Summa theologiae* (Opera omnia iussu impensa Leonis XIII P. M. edita, 4-12), Romae 1888-1906.

All English translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> For a suggestion of the richness of scholarly literature on various types of sources for Aquinas's theology, see *Reading Sacred Scripture with Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by Piotr ROSZAK - Jörgen VIJGEN (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Âge, 80), Turnhout 2015; *Aristotle in Aquinas's Theology*, ed. by Gilles EMERY - Matthew LEVERING, Oxford 2015; *Aquinas*

pious legends: they were vital and inspiring sources for the study of God and for the Christian life.

### *Abstract*

In a variety of theological contexts throughout his writings, Thomas Aquinas appeals to the witness of four early Christian virgin martyrs: Agnes, Agatha, Cecilia, and Lucia. As a member of the Order of Preachers, Thomas observed the yearly cycle of feasts of the Dominican liturgy, which included excerpts from the lives and passions of the saints in the form of abbreviated Matins readings and chants for the hours of the Divine Office. In this essay, I explore the connections between the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century Dominican liturgy celebrated by Thomas Aquinas and the references he makes to the words and deeds of the Virgin Martyrs. For each saint, I give a brief account of the liturgical texts which Thomas heard and prayed, then trace the textual references Thomas makes to specific details found in the liturgical texts. For Thomas Aquinas, the lives of the saints were not mere pious legends: they were vital and inspiring sources for the study of God and for the Christian life.

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*et operibus eius* and *Liber de laesione virginitatis*), one reference is from Gratian's *Decretum*, one is from the *Summa de commendatione et extripatione virtutum* of Thomas de Chobham († c. 1233/1236), one is from Alexander of Hales' *Glossa in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, three are from the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*, two are from Bonaventure's *Commentary of the Sentences*, one is from Bonaventure's *Quaestiones disputate de perfectione evangelica*, and one is from the *Legenda aurea* of James of Voragine. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present a thorough analysis of these sources and their possible influence on Thomas, but further research should be undertaken to determine the influence of the virgin martyrs on scholastic theology.

## BERNARD GUI'S *DE TRIBUS GRADIBUS* AND INSTITUTIONAL PRESERVATION\*

BY  
RYAN LOW

Recent scholarship has recognized thirteenth-century Dominican administrative practices as important innovations in how religious orders governed themselves<sup>1</sup>. Research concerning Dominican legislative principles in particular has opened exciting vistas in the study of “system rationality.”<sup>2</sup> A “rational system” organizes all of its functional elements

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\* I am grateful to the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission for funding the time spent at University College London during which much of this article was written. I also thank David D’Avray, Daniel Smail, Eric Nemarich, and the anonymous peer reviewer with *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* for reading and commenting on this article in draft.

<sup>1</sup> Much of this is the result of research undertaken at the *Forschungsstelle für vergleichende Ordensgeschichte* (FOVOG-Dresden) under the leadership of Gert Melville. Important syntheses of the work done on Dominican administrative innovation include Florent CYGLER, *Zur Funktionalität der dominikanischen Verfassung im Mittelalter*, in *Die Bettelorden im Aufbau: Beiträge zu Institutionalisierungsprozessen im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum*, edited by Gert MELVILLE - Jörg OBERSTE (Vita regularis, 11), Münster 1999, pp. 385-428; Gert MELVILLE, *Die Rechtsordnung der Dominikaner in der Spanne von constituciones und admoniciones: Ein Beitrag zum Vergleich mittelalterlicher Ordensverfassungen*, in *Grundlagen des Rechts: Festschrift für Peter Landau zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Richard H. HELMHOLZ - Paul MIKAT - Jörg MÜLLER - Michael STOLLEIS (Rechts- und staatswissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft, 91), Paderborn 2000, pp. 579-604; Florent CYGLER, *Zur institutionellen Symbolizität der dominikanischen Verfassung: Versuch einer Deutung*, in *Institutionalität und Symbolisierung: Verfestigung kultureller Ordnungsmuster in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, edited by Gert MELVILLE, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2001, pp. 409-424; Gert MELVILLE, *System Rationality and the Dominican Success in the Middle Ages*, in *Franciscan Organisation in the Mendicant Context: Formal and informal structures of the friars’ lives and ministry in the Middle Ages*, edited by Michael ROBSON - Jens RÖHRKASTEN (Vita regularis, 44), Berlin 2010, pp. 377-388; Gert MELVILLE, *The Fixed and the Fluid: Observations on the Rational Bases of Dominican Constitution and Organization in the Middle Ages*, in *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation*, edited by Cornelia LINDE (Studies of the German Historical Institute London), Oxford 2018, pp. 19-35.

<sup>2</sup> MELVILLE, *System Rationality and the Dominican Success*, pp. 377-388.

focus on the problem of legislative adherence, which appears to have been something of a challenge even from the order's early days<sup>124</sup>. It mattered to Bernard that this legislation be preserved in the acts of the general and provincial chapters, but as a friar with extensive administrative experience as lector and prior, he also recognized that more abstract standards of institutional competence demanded attention. His work therefore included inward-facing legislation and outward-facing charters, the formulaic acts of the provincial chapters and the narrativized foundation accounts of each convent. The framework of Bernard's compilation both modeled the tripartite hierarchy of the order as well as a how friars should populate that framework. His attempt to collect all of the order's governing documents (and not the order's constitutions) shows that he and the order's administrative elite believed in the efficiency and functionality of the order's innovative hierarchy. Bernard and Aimerico da Piacenza doubled down on that structure and ensured that individual convents appreciated their place within that framework so that the order might salvage and preserve its original values. As convents continued to add to Bernard's lists of conventual priors, provincial priors, and acts of the general chapters, they literally re-inscribed these standards onto the order they served. The continued use of Bernard's collection of documents in the convents of southern France and the preservation of the order's basic administrative hierarchy throughout the tumultuous fourteenth and fifteenth centuries testify to the success of his institutional vision.

### *Abstract*

Recent scholarship has recognized thirteenth-century Dominican administrative practices as important innovations in how religious orders governed themselves. Various Dominican legislative, historical, and ideological documents articulate what their administrative structure looked like and how it worked. The *De tribus gradibus* by Bernard Gui (c. 1261-1331), a compilation of various administrative acts, narratives, and biographies, constitutes a monument of these innovative aspects of Dominican government. This article argues that Bernard Gui's collection

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<sup>124</sup> See notes 56-59 above for the example of legislation ordering the preservation of the acts of the general and provincial chapters in 1240, 1245, and 1271. Other examples of issues that required multiple attempts at legislation include the organization of Dominican schools, the admission of novices, and respecting the "preaching zones" that pertained to each convent.



of Dominican historical documents responded to institutional challenges facing the order at the end of the thirteenth century, especially the death of another generation of friars and increasing disobedience within the order's ranks. *De tribus gradibus* builds off of the ethos of previous histories undertaken by earlier generations of friars such as Géraud de Frachet and Thomas de Cantimpré, but it also represents a shift away from highlighting the miraculous and spiritual deeds of great friars. Instead, Bernard focused on the institutional accomplishments of both adept friar-administrators and the order writ large. A study of Bernard Gui's *De tribus gradibus* will contribute much to the growing field of the study of Dominican administrative and institutional history.

VINZENZ FERRER. DER ‚ENGEL DER APOKALYPSE‘  
IM DIENSTE DOMINIKANISCHEN REFORMDENKENS –  
EINE ANNÄHERUNG ÜBER BILDER

VON  
YVONNE ARRAS

Über Vinzenz Ferrer wurde schon viel geschrieben. Bereits ein Blick in die Bibliografien rezenter Biografien führt die Faszination vor Augen, die dem heiligen Katalanen seit nunmehr sechshundert Jahren entgegen gebracht wird<sup>1</sup>. Angefangen von den ersten Lebensbeschreibungen, die bereits wenige Jahre nach seinem Tod am 5. April 1419 entstanden sind, bis hinein in unsere Zeit<sup>2</sup>, bildet Vinzenz Ferrer – mit Philip Daileader gesprochen – „a challenging subject to study for several reasons.“<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vgl. etwa Philip DAILEADER, *Saint Vincent Ferrer. His world and life: religion and society in late Medieval Europe* (The New Middle Age), New York 2016 sowie Laura Ackerman SMOLLER, *The Saint and the Chopped-up Baby. The Cult of Vincent Ferrer in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Ithaca 2014. – Angesichts des immensen Umfangs an Literatur zu Vinzenz Ferrer wäre es eine dankenswerte Aufgabe, eine Bibliografie hierzu zu erstellen.

<sup>2</sup> Eine Chronologie der Biografien zu Ferrer bietet Alfred A. STRNAD, *Salvo Cassetta. Verfasser einer Vita des Hl. Vinzenz Ferrer?*, in *Xenia Medii Aevi. Historiam Illustrantia oblata Thomae Kaeppli O.P.*, hg. von Raymundus CREYTENS OP - Pius KÜNZLE OP (Storia e Letteratura, 142), Roma 1978, S. 519-545, hier S. 545 Anm. 112, der diese Reihe aber wie üblich mit der Vita Pietro Ranzanos von 1456 beginnen lässt, die in den Kanonisationsakten gedruckt ist; siehe dort: AASS Aprilis I (1675), S. 477-529, hier S. 482-512. Dass bereits Johannes Nider den berühmten Ordensbruder im „Formicarius“ würdigte, wird in der Literatur meist nicht erwähnt, obwohl bereits Sigismund Brettle darauf hingewiesen hatte, vgl. dazu Sigismund BRETTLE OFMConv, *San Vincente Ferrer und sein literarischer Nachlass* (Vorreformationsgeschichtliche Forschungen, 10), Münster 1924, S. 2. Zur ältesten Ferrer-Biografie siehe ausführlich Catherine CHÈNE, *La plus ancienne vie de Vincent Ferrier racontée par le dominicain allemand Jean Nider (ca. 1380-1438)*, in *Mirificus Praedicator. À l'occasion du sixième centenaire du passage de Saint Vincent Ferrier en pays romand. Actes du colloque d'Estavayer-le-Lac, 7-9 octobre 2004*, hg. von Paul-Bernard HODEL OP - Franco MORENZONI (Dissertationes historicae, 32), Roma 2006, S. 121-166.

<sup>3</sup> Zitiert aus DAILEADER, *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, S. 3.

*Abstract*

Various Dominican convents and monasteries in southern Germany and Switzerland have images of St. Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419), suggesting that pictorial representations of the holy Catalan may have communicated the values and principles of the German Dominican Observants. This study presents an art-historical examination of these images, assessing the degree to which they support the conclusion that Vincent Ferrer was utilized for the purpose of reform propaganda in the late Middle Ages.



*SANCTI VINCENTI, BEATUS VIR QUI IN SAPIENCIA MORABITUR:*  
SAINT VINCENT MARTYR IN A CATALÁN SERMON OF  
VICENT FERRER\*

BY  
ALBERTO FERREIRO

Vincent, some claim was born in Huesca, yet he was associated more with Zaragoza. He was a deacon and martyr it is believed in the persecution of Diocletian on 22 January 304 in Valencia. It was the last attempt to stamp out Christianity before the rise of Constantine the Great. He is honored as patron of Valencia, Zaragoza, and Portugal. Augustine had a major role in the popularization of his cult. His main sermons were composed scholars maintain around 410 and after<sup>1</sup>. The

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\* A version of this paper was presented at the 54<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, May 9-12, 2019, for the session “Multi-disciplinary Approaches to Ibero-Medieval Texts and Authors II: Self-Fashioning, Identity Formation, and Models of Life (Papers in Honor of Mark D. Johnston). I express my gratitude to the North American Catalan Society for including me in the honorary sessions. I thank Seattle Pacific University for making my attendance possible. I want to thank the Rev. Prof. Miguel Navarro Sorní, Rev. Prof. Alfonso Esponera Cerdán, OP, and the anonymous reader of *AFP* for some valuable insights and suggestions. All conclusions are mine, however.

A word of clarification why I have called it a Catalán as opposed to a Valencian sermon. In Vicent’s day the languages of Catalán and Valencian were not as developed or distinct as they are today, they were a mix of each other with touches of Occitan and Provençal. I have chosen Catalán in the title for the simple reason that the sermon is found in the collection *Els Nostres Clàssics, Obres Completes dels Escriptors Catalans Medievals* published in Barcelona.

<sup>1</sup> For his Sermons 274, 275, 276 and 277 on Vincent in Latin see Augustine, *Sermones, Ad Populum, Classis III. De Sanctis* PL 38: 1252-1268. An accessible English translation is in Augustine, *Sermons*. Vol. 8 (273-305A) Edmund HILL, OP and John E. ROTELLE OSA (translator - editor) *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century, Sermons, III/8 (273-305A) on the Saints*, Hyde Park (NY) 1990, pp. 23-49. On the date of Augustine’s sermons see Miguel NAVARRO SORNÍ, *San Vicente mártir en su contexto histórico y en unas homilias de san Agustín desde una hermenéutica fe-razón*, in *Fides et Ratio*, 1 (2016), pp. 131-144 at 136, analysis of the sermons is at, pp. 140-144. Another study by NAVARRO SORNÍ where he covers in greater detail issues

to be senseless and hopeless from our limited understanding, God is able to make good triumph over evil as happened with the Cross of Christ and Jacob and his brothers. Vincent's triumph was the result of his total submission to God in his resistance against every attempt by Dacianus to break him so he would deny God. Lucifer and his minions too had a choice to make. Vincent chose to remain true to God as did the obedient angels that did not fall into eternal perdition. All followers of Christ, laity or clergy/ rich or poor, in daily life face choices at every moment and they too can either follow the way of Lucifer or that of Vincent; it is the overarching challenge of the sermon. Vincent accomplished this when he adopted select events of Vincent's *passio* and wove them into the sermon with great effect. His main agenda was to convey the moral message and the virtues of Vincent to inspire Christians to follow his example, the sure road to eternal life with God.

### *Abstract*

The erudite Dominican preacher St. Vicent Ferrer (1350-1419) dedicated a sermon to his namesake St. Vincent the Martyr, a deacon who fell victim in the persecution of Diocletian on 22 January 304 in Valencia. His *passio* was popularized by Prudentius in his *Peristephanon* V and Augustine in four sermons. Both of them based their versions on an earlier account that has not survived. In the Middle Ages it was extensively disseminated in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus of Voragine. Vicent Ferrer's sermon *Sancti Vincenti*, number 150 in the modern Gret Schib edition, begins with a *themata* inspired by Sirach 14: 22 - *Beatus vir qui in sapientia morabitur, et qui in justitia sua meditabitur, et in sensu cogitabit circumspectionem Dei*/ 'Blessed is the man that shall continue in wisdom, and that shall meditate in his justice, and in his mind shall think of the all seeing eye of God.' Vicent Ferrer fleshed out what he called five kinds of wisdom that would benefit any person who possessed them: *sapiència philosophical*, *sapiència teologal*, *sapiència apostolical*, *sapiència angelical*, and *sapiència heroycal*. Vicent Ferrer's principal goal was to help people of all backgrounds to achieve eternal life with God by following the example of Vincent Martyr.



## A NOTE ON THE SERMONS OF ROBERT HOLCOT, OP

BY  
SIEGFRIED WENZEL

The English Dominican Robert Holcot (c. 1290 - probably 1349) is an important figure in fourteenth-century English theology<sup>1</sup>. His extant oeuvre, studied in a pioneering article by Beryl Smalley<sup>2</sup>, covers commentaries on several biblical books including the very popular *Super libros Sapientie*, as well as collections of exempla with moralizations (*Moralitates* and *Convertimini*) for use in preaching. To these should be added such other works as *quaestiones* on the *Sentences* by Peter Lombard and a set of biblical *Distinctiones*<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Holcot also wrote sermons. A set of 119 pieces is uniquely ascribed to him in Cambridge, Peterhouse, *MS 210* (henceforth referred to as Peterhouse), the manuscript that will form the basis for the following remarks on Holcot's sermon oeuvre. Evidence will show that not all sermons in Peterhouse are by Holcot, and conversely that Holcot's homiletic work must have included many more pieces<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent account of Holcot's life and works see Jenny SWANSON, *Holcot, Robert* in the electronic *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; and for greater detail Hester Goodenough GELBER, *It Could Have Been Otherwise: Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford, 1300-1350* (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 81), Leiden-Boston 2004, pp. 92-98.

<sup>2</sup> Beryl SMALLEY, *Robert Holcot, O.P.*, in *Archivum fratrum Praedicatorum*, 26 (1956), pp. 5-97. Most of the material was taken over into B. SMALLEY, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century*, Oxford 1960, pp. 133-202.

<sup>3</sup> For a more complete listing of Holcot's works see Richard SHARPE, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540*, Turnhout 1997, no. 1475, pp. 553-558. Sharpe does not include the *Quadragesimale de bello spirituali*, a collection of 45 or more sermons, which is ascribed to Holcot in several manuscripts; see Johannes Baptist SCHNEYER, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150-1350* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 43), 11 vols., Münster 1969-1990, 5: pp. 192-195.

<sup>4</sup> A single academic *sermo finalis* has been preserved in two manuscripts and was edited by Joseph C. WEY, *The Sermo finalis of Robert Holcot*, in *Mediaeval Studies*, 11 (1949), pp. 219-224.



moralized picture of a judge (*iudex*) or of Justice (*iustitia*) can be found, apart from other authors, in Holcot's *Convertimini*<sup>81</sup> and in Peterhouse sermons 92 and 105. However, in the last mentioned three texts Justice (not a judge) is a beautiful girl (*puella pulcra*, in *Convertimini* and Peterhouse 92) or a youth (*iuuenis*, in Peterhouse 105), whereas in CO it is a man (*homo*); and while the moralization of Justice's properties is the same, the three texts just mentioned do not have the Gregory text quoted from canon law that we find in CO. Besides all of this, CO refers to "sermone 3" on the text *Iudica me, Deus*; there is no such sermon in Peterhouse. It would then seem that CO's reference to "sermon 3" is correct and has no counterpart in Peterhouse.

The evidence presented, therefore, shows that Holcot's sermon oeuvre goes far beyond what the Peterhouse manuscript offers, and that the latter contains material not from Holcot's pen. It may well be that the ascription "Holcot in sermonibus tam dominicis quam feriis" was written by a reader—not one of the scribes of the texts in the manuscript, and notice the different spellings of Holcot's name—who found Holcot's name attached to the excerpt from his commentary on Wisdom<sup>82</sup> and assumed that the preceding sermons were also his work.

### Abstract

Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 210 contains a collection of 119 sermons, at whose beginning a fifteenth-century hand has ascribed them to "Holcot." Although the entire collection has often been taken to be indeed the work of the English Dominican Robert Holcot (died c. 1349), this article argues that not all of these sermons were composed by Holcot, while discussing several other manuscripts that bear references to sermons attributed to Holcot which do not appear in the Peterhouse manuscript.

<sup>81</sup> No. 3, on *Diligite iustitiam*, in London, British Library, *MS Royal 7.C.i*, f. 94r.

<sup>82</sup> "Redde quod debes. holcot in lectura super Sapienciam," f. 102ra, top margin; "Hec holcot vbi supra," f. 193ra.



IL PROVINCIALATO DI FRA VINCENZO TOMMASO PIRATTONI  
(1822-1828) E IL RISTABILIMENTO DELLA PROVINCIA  
*UTRIUSQUE LOMBARDIAE*

PER  
ALBERTO CASELLA OP

*A cavallo fra due secoli*

La vita di fra Vincenzo Tommaso Pirattoni (1764-1839) si svolge attraverso alcuni degli snodi epocali più significativi della storia europea, ovvero il passaggio dall'*Ancien Regime* all'età delle rivoluzioni, la Restaurazione, i moti liberali della prima metà del XIX secolo, tanto da poter affermare che il tempo in cui visse segnò profondamente tanto la Chiesa che l'Ordine dei Predicatori, mutando sensibilmente la secolare fisionomia di ambedue<sup>1</sup>.

Nato ad Alessandria, nella parte continentale del Regno di Sardegna, il 6 marzo 1764, apparteneva a una famiglia borghese che fu contraddistinta da sentimenti di forte lealismo alla monarchia sabauda e

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<sup>1</sup> Per le vicende biografiche di fra Vincenzo Tommaso Pirattoni le fonti principali sono: Giovanni Battista SEMERIA, *Secoli cristiani della Liguria*, 2 voll., Torino 1843, vol. 2, pp. 437-446; Raimondo Amedeo VIGNA, *I domenicani illustri del Convento di Santa Maria di Castello*, Genova 1886, pp. 90, 165 e 183; Raimondo Amedeo VIGNA, *I Vescovi Domenicani liguri ovvero in Liguria*, Genova 1887, pp. 443-444; Antonio ARECCO, *La Diocesi di Albenga-Imperia e i suoi Vescovi*, 3 voll., Albenga 2018, vol. 3, pp. 151-152. Rimando ad essi per una conoscenza più dettagliata della vita del personaggio. Un eccellente ritratto delle qualità morali del Pirattoni, privo tuttavia di dati biografici che vadano al di là del generico, è quello tracciato da fra Giacinto Lazzarini, priore del convento genovese di Santa Maria di Castello nella lettera obituaria del 1839. Cf. Archivio di San Domenico in Bologna [d'ora in poi ASD], Serie I, documenti della curia generalizia, I.13400, *Lettere Funebri – Pirattoni*. Per una panoramica storica sulle vicende dell'Ordine dei Predicatori nel periodo in cui il Pirattoni fu provinciale, cf. Massimo MANCINI, *L'Ordine dei Predicatori fra età moderna ed epoca contemporanea*, in Gianni FESTA - Marco RAININI (a cura di), *L'Ordine dei Predicatori: storia, figure e istituzioni (1216-2016)*, Bari-Roma 2016, pp. 58-78.

fra due epoche che garanti una continuità storica nella vita domenicana, gettando le basi per il fertile operato del Maestro generale Jandel e dei suoi successori<sup>148</sup>.

### *Abstract*

The mandate of Vincenzo Tommaso Pirattoni (1764-1839) as governor of the the Dominican Province Utriusque Lombardiae (1822-1828) is crucial for understanding the vicissitudes of the Order of Preachers in the Central and Northern Italy on the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Pirattoni began to rebuild the Province after the Enlightenment and Napoleonic suppression, only partially overcoming the difficulties arising from the repossession of the cloisters and the return to the regular life. His most important achievements were the restitution to the Order of the Bologna cloister (1825) and the reopening of the Studium Generale in Bologna (1827), while less fortunate was the passage of Santa Sabina cloister in Rome under the jurisdiction of the General Master (1827). Paper archives and Capitular acts outline a policy aiming to restore the regular and intellectual life in the Province; while only partially accomplishing such aim, nonetheless Pirattoni delivered to his successors a fairly safe basis for a future stabilization. However, the following suppression, undertaken during the Savoia rule (1859-1860), wiped away the work of Pirattoni and of his immediate successors, returning the situation to its post-Napoleonic state.

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<sup>148</sup> Ritengo significativo che fra Alexandre-Vincent Jandel (1810-1872) avesse avuto la propria formazione religiosa in Italia a partire dal 1841, a La Quercia presso Viterbo e, poi, a Bosco Marengo, come era già accaduto a fra Henri Jean-Baptiste Lacordaire (1802-1861), novizio a La Quercia nel 1840. In Italia vennero formati in quel periodo anche diversi altri religiosi francesi che, con i più noti Jandel e Lacordaire, furono protagonisti della rinascita dell'Ordine dei Predicatori nella loro madrepatria. Per la vicenda dei francesi a Bosco Marengo, cf. Massimo MANCINI, *I Domenicani francesi a Bosco (1829-1845)*, in Fulvio CERVINI - Carlenrica SPANTIGATI (a cura di), *Santa Croce di Bosco Marengo*, Alessandria 2002, pp. 41-50. Sulla influenza dei conventi italiani sulla rinascita dell'Ordine, cf. Daniel Antonin MORTIER, *Nôtre-Dame de la Quercia*, Parigi 1904, in particolare 165-200. Va aggiunto, inoltre, che non solo frati francesi, ma anche domenicani spagnoli vissero nei conventi italiani negli anni della Restaurazione: a Bosco Marengo si rifugiarono numerosi di loro, espulsi dalla loro patria i seguito alla rivoluzione liberale del 1836. Cf. VALLARO, *Del ristabilimento*, pp. 55-86 e VILLA D'ANDEZENO - BENEDICENDI, *I Domenicani*, pp. 333-357.

METODĚJ HABÁŇ, OP IN THE YEARS 1945-1970:  
A CZECH NEO-THOMISTIC PHILOSOPHER  
VIS-A-VIS COMMUNISM

BY  
PETR MACEK

1. *Introduction*

Metoděj (Methodius) Petr Habáň OP (1899-1984) was a significant Czech Dominican priest, philosopher, and psychologist<sup>1</sup>. Owing to his participation in the revival of neo-Thomistic philosophy in Czechoslovakia between the wars, he is sometimes compared to the French philosopher Jacques Maritain<sup>2</sup>. Like Maritain, Habáň was engaged in the dialogue between modern culture and Thomistic philosophy. Although Habáň was a less innovative philosopher than Maritain and can be regarded rather as a populariser of Thomism, he was close to Maritain because of his desire to bring the thinking of Saint Thomas into the life of modern society. Habáň was also strongly influenced by Maritain's work *Art and Scholasticism*, which he published<sup>3</sup> in 1933 as a part of the activities associated with the journal *Filosofická revue* (Philosophical Review). Habáň often referred to Maritain not only in the interwar period, but he also returned to Maritain in the final period of his life, when he deliberately defined his position against the contemporary development of modern theology.

Habáň was also very active in the area of education of the youth

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<sup>1</sup> The article is based on the dissertation thesis Petr MACEK, *Metoděj Habáň (1899-1984) – sonda do dějin českého novotomismu*, Praha 2018, which contains the complete biography and bibliography of M. Habáň. The thesis was published under the title *Metoděj Habáň: učitel, filosof a svědek dvacátého století*, Praha 2019.

<sup>2</sup> This idea is most emphasised by important Czech philosopher Karel Floss: 'There is so much analogy to J. Maritain in Habáň's life and work that a deeper interpretation of Habáň's works and endeavours is unthinkable without a more detailed understanding of the French thinker.' Karel FLOSS, *Metoděj Habáň (1899-1984) a tomismus*, in Karel FLOSS, *Hledání duše zítřka*, Brno 2012, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> The work was translated by Václav Renč, a distinguished Czech poet.

In the early 1970s, Habáň withdrew from public life. He retired in 1970. In 1972, he lost his state approval to perform spiritual services and had to leave Chlum Svaté Máří. He then stayed in several places in Western Bohemia, in Prague in a secret Dominican monastery in Lysolaje. He spent the longest time in Brno, where he left at the turn of 1978 and 1979. In the last phase of his life, he mainly focused on the formation of those interested in life in the Dominican Order and on teaching philosophy and theology in underground seminars. Metoděj Habáň died on June 27, 1984 in Brno.

## 5. *Conclusion*

The life of the Dominican priest and philosopher Metoděj Habáň during the time of the Communist regime, i.e. from 1948 until Habáň's death in 1984, testifies to the ambiguity and inconsistency of this period. Although Metoděj Habáň was imprisoned twice by the Communist regime, he was not one of its radical opponents as concerns both his actions and thinking. His release from prison was aided by his more or less acknowledged support for the anti-church activities of the regime as well as by his subsequent willingness to work in the officially authorised official church structures. Neither in his reflections nor in his written work was he overtly critical of Marxism and Communism. It is interesting that, in his legacy, we can find rather the criticism of secular liberalism and "bourgeois" society and, in the field of theology, the rejection of a turn to a new theology leading to the Second Vatican Council. Habáň's person thus specifically combines the emphasis on traditional Thomistic philosophy and theology with a certain understanding and openness to left-wing political ideas, as was also evident in his involvement in the dialogue between Christians and Marxists in the 1960s.

## *Abstract*

This article focuses the life of the Czech Dominican priest and philosopher Metoděj (Methodius) Petr Habáň OP (1899-1984) in the period after World War II. In particular, it focuses on those aspects of his life that are closely related to the Czechoslovakian communist regime, with special attention to Habáň's persecution and imprisonment in the 1950s and involvement in the Christian-Marxist dialogue in the 1960s. We try to illustrate how Habáň's relationship with the regime

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was influenced by his philosophical and political anchoring and point at the limits and compromises he was forced and willing to accept. While discussing Christian-Marxist dialogue, we seek to portray Habáň's position in the midst of a changing social context. In a situation in which Marxism changed towards its reformist and humanist form and Christian theology sought a new position and a new relationship to modern secularism, Habáň remained faithful to his theological and philosophical foundations formed by the Thomistic school of thought.





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