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Florian Wöller • Ueli Zahnd (eds.)

Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology

The Order of Preachers and Its Spheres of Action (1215 – ca. 1600)

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Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology
Introduction

Florian Wöller/Ueli Zahnd

For historians of medieval and early modern times it is a long-held truth that the founding of the Dominican Order in 1215 had an impact that can hardly be overstated. In the history of Western monasticism the novel concept of religious life introduced by the Order of Preachers may be the most important, even paradigmatic shift after the founding of the Benedictine Order and the many transformations the latter underwent during the first seven hundred years of its existence. While monks and nuns in this tradition were mostly confined to the purview of living a life of contemplative seclusion—located, as it were, at the margins of medieval society—the Dominicans focused on engaging with the broader community beyond the walls of their convents, first and foremost by preaching.[1] Not only topographically but also culturally and intellectually, this new kind of monasticism claimed not the margins but the centre of medieval society: Dominican convents lay within the walls of ever more European cities.[2]

With regard to intellectual history, the Dominican Order quickly gained towering influence. From the year 1220 on, the Friars embraced a wide-ranging educational programme and established a pan-European network of institutions of learning that existed well into early modernity.[3] At every such Domini-

[1] For English secondary literature up to the year 1992 on all areas touched upon in this introduction, see: Auth, Charles R./Emond, James R./Driscoll, James A.: *A Dominican Bibliography and Book of Reference, 1216–1992*, New York 2000. For literature after 1992, see the *Dominican History Newsletter*, published by the Instituto Storico Domenicano (Angelicum, Rome). For a general history of the Order, still relevant is: Hinnebusch, William A.: *The History of the Dominican Order*, 2 vols., New York 1966–1973. For more recent overviews on the period considered in the present volume, see: Prudlo, Donald: "The Friars Preachers: The First Hundred Years of the Dominican Order", in *History Compass* 8:11 (2010), pp. 1275–1290; Vose, Robin: "The Dominican Order in Late Medieval and Early Modern History", in *History Compass* 11:11 (2013), pp. 967–982; Barone, Giulia: "L'età medievale (XIII–XIV secolo)", in eds. Gianni Festa/Marco Rainini: *L'ordine dei Predicatori. I Domenicani: storia, figure e istituzioni (1216–2016)*, Bari 2016, pp. 5–29; and Zarri, Gabriella: "Dallo scisma all'apogeo della Chiesa: i Domenicani tra i secoli XV et XVII", in *ibid.*, pp. 30–57.

[2] See, e.g., Lehmijoki-Gardner, Maiju: *Worldly Saints: Social Interaction of Dominican Penitent Women in Italy, 1200–1500*, Helsinki 1999, and Oberste, Jörg: "Predigen in der Stadt: Die mittelalterlichen Dominikaner in ihrem urbanen Umfeld", in ed. Elias Füllenbach: *Mehr als Schwarz und Weiß: 800 Jahre Dominikanerorden*, Regensburg 2016, pp. 43–60.

[3] The authoritative study on the earlier history of Dominican education and learning remains Mulchahey, M. Michèle: *'First the Bow is Bent in Study ...': Dominican Teaching Before 1350* (Studies and Texts 132), Toronto 1998. See also Courtenay, William J.: "The Educational and Intellectual Framework of German Dominicans in the Late 13th and Early 14th Centuries", in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 57 (2010), pp. 245–259, and Hellmeier,

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can *studium* theology was produced, debated, and by way of interaction with its surrounding intellectual, institutional, and religious environments, theology by Dominicans was also challenged. Just a few years after its inception, the Order forged active relations with the emerging universities and their intellectual milieus—relations that quickly became complex and sometimes also contested.[4] Dominican intellectuals partook in virtually all theological, philosophical, and juridical debates throughout the later Middle Ages and into early modern times: from the thirteenth-century controversies on the incorporation of Aristotelian thought into Christian theology,[5] the question of papal authority around the year 1300, conciliarism, political and ecclesiological theory,[6] and various attempts at pulling together an ever more disintegrating Church in the fifteenth century,[7] up to the Reformation and beyond[8]—to name just some of the most de-

Paul D.: "Die Stellung des Studiums im Predigerorden vor dem Hintergrund seiner Gründung aus der Chorherrentradition", in eds. Sabine Heusinger et al.: *Die deutschen Dominikaner und Dominikanerinnen im Mittelalter*, Berlin/New York 2016, pp. 123–142.

4 See, e.g., Tavuzzi, Michael: *Renaissance Inquisitors: Dominican Inquisitors and Inquisitorial Districts in Northern Italy, 1474–1527*, Leiden/Boston 2007; Steckel, Sita: "Rewriting the Rules: The Secular-Mendicant Controversy in France and its Impact on Dominican Legislation, *c.* 1230–1290", in ed. Cornelia Linde: *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation*, Oxford 2018, pp. 105–130; and now Waelkens, Laurent L./Druwé, Wouter: "Les dominicains, les collèges et les universités. Une pauvreté savante au XIIIe siècle", in eds. Anton Milh/Mark Butaye: *A Cathedral of Constitutional Law: Essays on the Earliest Constitutions of the Order of Preachers*, Turnhout 2023, pp. 73–86.

5 See, e.g., Long, R. James: "The Reception and Use of Aristotle by English Dominicans", in ed. John Marenbon: *Aristotle in Britain during the Middle Ages* (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 5), Turnhout 1996, pp. 51–56; and now Schumacher, Lydia: "The History and Future of Philosophy's Relationship With Theology", in *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 83:5 (2022), pp. 318–330.

6 See, e.g., Coleman, Janet: "The Intellectual Milieu of John of Paris O.P.", in ed. Jürgen Miethke: *Das Publikum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert* (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 21), Munich 1992, pp. 173–206; Horst, Ulrich: *The Dominicans and the Pope: Papal Teaching Authority and the Medieval and Early Modern Thomist Tradition*, Notre Dame, IN 2006; Doucette, Jonathan: "The Diffusion of Urban Medieval Representation: The Dominican Order as an Engine of Regime Change", in *Perspectives on Politics* 19 (2021), pp. 723–738; and Rolston, Elisabeth: "Martin of Opava and Dominican Understandings of Imperial Power in the Later Middle Ages", in *The Medieval Chronicle* 16 (2023), pp. 246–269.

7 Delacroix-Besnier, Claudine: *Les Dominicains et la chrétienté grecque aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Collection de l'École française de Rome 237), Rome 1997; Izbicki, Thomas M.: "The Immaculate Conception and Ecclesiastical Politics from the Council of Basel to the Council of Trent: The Dominicans and their Foes", in *id.*: *Reform, Ecclesiology, and the Christian Life in the Late Middle Ages* (Variorum Collected Studies Series 893), Aldershot 2008, pp. I:174–192; and Huijbers, Anne: *Zealots for Souls. Dominican Narratives of Self-Understanding During Observant Reforms, c. 1388–1517*, Berlin/New York 2018.

8 See, e.g., Lemaître, Nicole (ed.): *Les Dominicains en France devant la Réforme: 1520–1563* (Mémoire dominicaine 12), Paris 1998; Foggie, Janet P.: *Renaissance Religion in Urban Scotland: the Dominican Order, 1450–1560*, Leiden/Boston 2003; Springer, Klaus-Bernward: *Die deutschen Dominikaner in Widerstand und Anpassung während der Reformationszeit*, Berlin/New York [2]2014; and van Erp, Stephan/Milh, Anton (eds.): *Hervorming. Dominicaanse spiritualiteit in de 15de en 16de eeuw*, Antwerp 2022.

cisive moments in the history of Western Christianity where Dominicans made their voices heard.

However, the Friar Preachers also acquired an important role in the medieval West with regard to the history of spirituality and material culture. Flourishing for the first time in the Order's founding century, both male and female Dominican mysticism was of consequential influence for centuries to come.[9] Dominican chant, both in theory and practice, shaped medieval liturgy.[10] The distinctively late medieval feast of Corpus Christi found its most committed supporters among men and women of the Order of Preachers.[11] In fine art and architecture, the Order both developed a recognisable iconography and style and produced one of the greatest Italian Renaissance artists, Fra Angelico, whose sphere of influence extended far beyond the Order's boundaries.[12] Last but not least, the Dominican Order also developed its own language of devotion with regard to the cult of relics.[13]

[9] A recent overview is provided in Bartolomei Romagnoli, Alessandra: "Mistici e mistica domenicana", in eds. Gianni Festa/Marco Rainini: *L'ordine dei Predicatori. I Domenicani: storia, figure e istituzioni (1216–2016)*, Bari 2016, pp. 351–388. See also: Mauriège, Maxime: "Die dominikanische Prägung des Lehrsystems der deutschen Mystik", in eds. Sabine Heusinger et al.: *Die deutschen Dominikaner und Dominikanerinnen im Mittelalter*, Berlin/New York 2016, pp. 225–260.

[10] On the distinctive roles of Dominican nuns in this regard, see, e.g., Hamburger, Jeffrey (ed.): *Leaves from Paradise: The Cult of John the Evangelist at the Dominican Convent of Paradies bei Soest*, Cambridge, MA 2008, and Jones, Claire Taylor: *Ruling the Spirit: Women, Liturgy, and Dominican Reform in Late Medieval Germany*, Philadelphia, PA 2018. See also Giraud, Eleanor J.: "Dominican Chant and Liturgical Practices in the English Province", in eds. ead./Cornelia Linde: *A Companion to the English Dominican Province. From Its Beginnings to the Reformation* (Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition 97), Leiden/Boston 2021, pp. 343–369.

[11] See, e.g., Mulchahey, M. Michèle: "Thomas Aquinas, Dominican Theology, and the Feast of Corpus Christi", in eds. Eleanor J. Giraud/Thomas Leitmeir: *The Medieval Dominicans: Books, Buildings, Music, and Liturgy* (Medieval Monastic Studies 7), Turnhout 2021, pp. 213–253, and Pérez Vidal, Mercedes: "The Corpus Christi Devotion: Gender, Liturgy, and Authority among Dominican Nuns in Castile in the Middle Ages", in eds. Katherine Weikert/Elena Woodacre: *Medieval Intersections: Gender and Status in Europe in the Middle Ages*, New York 2021, pp. 35–47.

[12] On architecture, see, e.g., Mikisch, Sebastian: "Architecture and Space in the Dominican Order: On the Impact of Norms and Concepts in Early Normative and Narrative Sources", in ed. Cornelia Linde: *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation*, Oxford 2018, pp. 189–224, and Morvan, Haude: "Une architecture monastique au féminin: les dominicaines et les clarisses dans le Sud-Ouest de la France au Moyen Âge", in *Annales du Midi* 315/316 (2021), pp. 449–482. On Fra Angelico as a Dominican, see, e.g., Gaston, Robert W.: "Affective Devotion and the Early Dominicans: The Case of Fra Angelico", in eds. Francis W. Kent/Charles Zika: *Rituals, Images, and Words: Varieties of Cultural Expression in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies 3), Turnhout 2005, pp. 87–117. See also Bartuschat, Johannes/Brilli, Elisa/Carron, Delphine (eds.): *The Dominicans and the Making of Florentine Cultural Identity (13th to 14th Centuries)*, Florence 2020.

[13] See Räsänen, Marika: *Thomas Aquinas's Relics as Focus for Conflict and Cult in the Late Middle Ages: The Restless Corpse* (Crossing Boundaries: Turku Medieval and Early Modern Studies 6), Amsterdam 2017; McFarland, Jennifer: "Relics, Reinvention, and Reform in Renais-

These examples (the list of which could easily be extended) from the history of spirituality and material culture on the one hand, and the history of theology and thought on the other, illustrate the many facets, forms, trends, and constellations of the Dominican Order's spheres of action that developed in the Middle Ages and beyond. By its very nature, a study of this wide variety requires a collective and interdisciplinary scholarly approach. The crucial scholarly challenge, then, consists in capturing this plurality as a reflection of the many facets of practices within a single Order. This is what we are attempting to do with the present anthology. To be sure, we are striving neither for a comprehensive account nor for a claim of a singular and stable Dominican identity throughout the first five centuries of the Order's existence.[14] Indeed, it is our conviction that with regard to both Dominican culture and Dominican theology, no single strand of thought or cultural expression can or should be individuated. On the contrary, with this volume we want to make a case for the irreducible plurality of these spheres of action that were being held together by a common framework—or, for lack of a better notion, the common bracket of the Dominican Order.

As such, this volume may contribute to a growing research trend in Dominican studies. While planning the Copenhagen conference that stimulated this anthology, we looked for guidance to the volume *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans* from 1998 (edited by Kent Emery Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow), one of the earliest examples of a similarly broad and interdisciplinary endeavour like ours.[15] However, our ambition was not to assemble Dominican reflections on and of a single theme, even if it were only to be "heuristically approached" as in the 1998 publication.[16] Rather, in order to assemble as many aspects as possible of the problem that we had posed ourselves and our colleagues, we encouraged contributions from any angle of Dominican history. Another model for this volume is the one edited by Cornelia Linde on *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation* from 2018, encompassing many aspects of medieval Dominican reality from the vantage point of the Order's statutes and other pieces of legislation.[17] However, in contrast also to this work, we did not want to restrict the perspective of the contributions assembled here in a similar way. At the same time, we felt encouraged to do without a well-defined thread (and thus to put up with a potential weakness of our volume) by the excellent scholarly standard that both anthologies mentioned above have

sance Venice: Catherine of Siena's Stigmata at the Basilica dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo", in *Renaissance Studies* 34:2 (2020), pp. 278–302; Prudlo, Donald S.: "Heretics, Hemorrhages, and Herrings. Miracles and the Canonizations of Dominican Saints", in eds. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa/Jenni Kuuliala/Iona M. McCleery: *A Companion to Medieval Miracle Collections* (Reading Medieval Sources 5), Leiden/Boston 2021, pp. 102–124.

14 See also Duval, Silvie: "Female Dominican Identities (1200–1500)", in ed. Mercedes Pérez Vidal: *Women Religious Crossing Between Cloister and the World: Nunneries in Europe and the Americas, ca. 1200–1700*, Leeds 2022, pp. 19–36.

15 Emery, Kent Jr./Wawrykow, Joseph (eds.): *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers* (Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies 7), Notre Dame, IN 1998.

16 Emery, Kent Jr./Wawrykow, Joseph: "Introduction", in *ibid.*, pp. 1–6: 2.

17 Linde, Cornelia (ed.): *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation*, Oxford 2018.

achieved. Thus, should our readers feel the need for more clearly prominent orientation markers, they may confidently resort to these trailblazing works.

In 2021, the year of the Copenhagen conference, two further interdisciplinary anthologies on the medieval Dominicans appeared: *A Companion to the English Dominican Province: From Its Beginnings to the Reformation,* edited by Eleanor J. Giraud and J. Cornelia Linde, and the anthology *The Medieval Dominicans: Books, Buildings, Music, and Liturgy,* edited by Eleanor J. Giraud and Christian T. Leitmeir.[18] Although the present volume is appearing four years later, we see it as complementary to its (near) contemporary publications, which is why we would like to briefly mention both some common and contrasting features of *Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology* as compared to the *Companion* and *The Medieval Dominicans.*

While the *Companion*, on the one hand, adopts a regional and (within the limits of the English Dominican province) a comprehensive perspective (as any companion volume should), our volume assembles studies from nearly all regions of Western Europe. It must be said, however, that the area covered by the *Companion* is underrepresented, while we are glad to edit here three contributions that each have a distinct and diverse Scandinavian focus (Etheridge, Jakobsen, and Troelsgård), a fact that reflects not least the regional geographical and scholarly context of the 2021 conference in Copenhagen. *The Medieval Dominicans*, on the other hand, focuses on "material, liturgical, and cultural (in music and art) aspects of Dominican life", whereas "theology, preaching, education, and transregional exchange" are discussed but implicitly.[19] By contrast, *Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology* includes quite a few contributions explicitly on philosophical and theological Dominican thought, thereby reflecting our own scholarly backgrounds, and programmatically entangles these with articles on subject matters that, in terms of genre, also figure in *The Medieval Dominicans*; neither volume, however, excludes the one from the other. Also with our anthology, we hope to foster the dialogue between the respective disciplines and perspectives, both within the collection assembled here and in our readership.

An important commonality with the *Companion*, on the one hand, is the inclusion of the early sixteenth century. Yet, while in the *Companion* the Reformation on the British Isles marks the end point of medieval Dominican history, we include the Reformation era as one historical context where Dominicans both confronted, and were confronted by, "Others" (more on this below). On the other hand, our volume shares more emphatically an important perspective with *The Medieval Dominicans*: namely, Dominican culture. Similar to Giraud and Leitmeir, we adopt a broad notion of 'culture' as a mode of producing Dominican theology, material culture, and social, religious, and institutional practices as a setting of the Order's activities, and as (an interface of) communication both within and outside the Order. Correspondingly, our notion of 'theology'

[18] Giraud, Eleanor J./Linde, J. Cornelia (eds.): *A Companion to the English Dominican Province: From Its Beginnings to the Reformation* (Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition 97), Leiden/Boston 2021, and Giraud, Eleanor J./Leitmeir, Christian T. (eds.): *Books, Buildings, Music, and Liturgy* (Medieval Monastic Studies 7), Turnhout 2021.

[19] Giraud, Eleanor J./Leitmeir, Christian T.: "Introduction", in *ibid.*, pp. 13–29: 15.

is equally broad. It denotes any reflection on and expression of reality in the light of the Christian religion as articulated by Dominicans or in the realm of the Order. While this definition refers, by its own nature, to doctrinal debates as discussed amongst historians of theology and philosophy, it also encompasses topics pertaining to the history of art, music, law, and other adjacent disciplines. Thus, Dominican theology—in this volume—is found expressed not only in treatises and debates, but also in legal, institutional, material, artistic, and devotional spheres of action of the Order of Preachers. In short, Dominican culture and Dominican theology are, in our perspective, entangled aspects of the same reality.

The 23 articles in this volume are organised into seven sections. In the first section on "Dominican Identities and Cultures of Expertise", the articles by Jan-Hendryk de Boer, Marcel Bubert, Isabel Iribarren, and Ulrike Treusch address institutional roles and varieties of Dominican identities that members of the Order discussed and took on in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly in the historical contexts of the Avignon papacy and the era of conciliarism. Under the heading of "Preaching and Liturgy", one of the most definitive spheres of Dominican action is discussed. Christian Troelsgård, Carol Williams, Alberto Ferreiro, and Kristin Hoefener open up a wide range of topics with case studies located across the European continent, from Denmark and Germany to Catalonia and Portugal. The third section on "Memory and Material Cultures" spans an arc from Dominican attitudes toward the cult of relics (Marika Räsänen) to sepulchral culture (Kirsten Schut) and the memory of saints in Dominican iconography (Christian Etheridge). Keeping in mind that, according to the volume's approach, all chapters have a bearing on Dominican culture and Dominican theology, this section is without a doubt the most explicit one on material culture and artistic practices, while the following two sections are devoted to intellectual history.

Section four on "Dionysian Theology" investigates the influence of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite's thought on three Dominican authors from the thirteenth century: Guerric of Saint-Quentin (J. Cornelia Linde), Albert the Great (Samuel Baudinette), and Thomas Aquinas (Constant Mews). Albert also takes centre stage in the fifth section. The articles by Amalia Cerrito on natural philosophy and theology, by Marco Vorcelli on biblical exegesis and Aristotelian ethics, and by Paul Hellmeier on Neo-Platonic epistemology in Albert, Aquinas, and Berthold of Moosburg examine three different aspects of the broad authorship of one of the Dominicans' greatest thinkers, and Albert's legacy. The following section six on "Dominicans and Prayer" features three studies that combine devotional practice with theological argument in Aquinas (Jonathan Reinert) and two prominent exponents of Dominican mysticism (Anja Bork on Meister Eckhart and Andreas Zecherle on Johannes Tauler). Finally, the last section of the volume on "Dominicans and the 'Others'" presents a *tour d'horizon* of three intersections of Dominican culture and theology on the one hand and other religions as well as Christian dissenters (Johnny Jakobsen), Eastern Christianity (Cheryl Midson), and the Lutheran Reformation (Volker Leppin) on the other.

Taken together, the articles assembled here describe a spiral that begins with questions of Dominican identity and ends with the Order's external relations. In its totality, therefore, the anthology circles around a common centre, casting light on a broad range of aspects that all pertain to the multifarious historical reality of the Dominican Order. It is our hope that the individual articles assembled here will contribute to further studies on this fascinating reality, and that the volume as a whole will promote further research in Dominican studies that crosses the divides between modern disciplines: work that has only just begun.