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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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The Monzón Affair (1387–1403) and the Construction of a Dominican Thomist Identity

Isabel Iribarren

On 8 December 1401, Jean Gerson, then chancellor of the University of Paris, delivered a sermon at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois on the occasion of the feast of the Immaculate conception. *Tota pulchra es*[1] (Cant 4:7) not only contains the core of Gerson's position on the issue, but has the additional value of offering a concentrated version of the immaculist debate from its initial developments in the 12th century to its more recent repercussions in the 1380s with the 'Monzón affair'. While still a bachelor in theology, Gerson had witnessed the development of this event, of which he gave a scathing account in his *Tractatus contra Iohannem Montesono*,[2] composed in the aftermath of Monzón's condemnation in 1389. The episode is well known: in his inaugural lecture (*resumpta*) held at the University of Paris in June 1387, Juan de Monzón, Dominican of Aragonese origin, had declared the immaculist doctrine heretical.[3] The boldness of his

1 Iohannes Gerson: *Tota pulchra es*, ed. Palémon Glorieux: *Jean Gerson. Oeuvres completes*, 10 vols, Tournai 1960–1973, vol. 7.2, pp. 1057–1080. On this sermon, see Mourin, Louis: "Jean Gerson prédicateur français pour les fêtes de l'Annonciation et de la Purification", in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 27 (1949), pp. 561–598; *id.*: *Six sermons français inédits de Jean Gerson, Étude doctrinale et littéraire suivie de l'édition critique*, Paris 1946, esp. pp. 321–434.

2 See Iohannes Gerson: *Gallia que viris*, in: Ouy, Gilbert: "La plus ancienne œuvre retrouvée de Jean Gerson: le brouillon inachevé d'un traité contre Juan de Monzón (1389–1390)", in *Romania* 83 (1962), pp. 433–492, editio pp. 472–492: 478: "Ubi vero ad vesperias quibus ab eo disserenda questio erat perventum est, ipse, nescio quem spiritum haustus, ut Vergilius ait, *dat sine mente sonum* [*Aen.* X, 640]. Tanta ibi doctrine barbaries, tam confusus et insanus sermo ut humane mentis illum esse vix credideris."

3 There is a rich literature on the 'Monzón affair'. For the sources, see in particular *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. 1, eds. Jacques Quétif/Jacques Échard, Paris 1719, pp. 691a–694a; *Collectio iudiciorum de novis erroribus*, vol. 1 (Anno 1387), ed. Charles Du Plessis d'Argentré, Paris 1728, pp. 61a–132a; *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 4 vols, ed. Henri Denifle/Émile Chatelain, Paris 1889–1897 [henceforth CUP], vol. 3, pp. 486–533, nos. 1557–1583; Petrus de Alliaco: *Propositio facta in consistorio contra M. Ioannem de Montesono*, ed. du Plessis d'Argentré: *Collectio iudiciorum*, vol. 1/2, pp. 69b–74b; *id.*: *Sermo coram papa Clemente VII Avenione habitus*, ed. du Plessis d'Argentré: *Collectio iudiciorum*, vol. 1/2, pp. 66a–69b; Michel Pintoin: *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis: contenant le règne de Charles VI de 1380 à 1422*, ed. Louis Bellaguet, Paris 1994, vol. 1, lib. 8, cap. 8, p. 490. Among the secondary literature: Doncoeur, Paul: "La condamnation de Jean de Monzon par Pierre d'Orgemont, évêque de Paris, le 23 août 1387", in *Revue des questions historiques* 82 (1907), pp. 176–187; Meerseman, Gilles: *Giovanni di Montesono OP, difensore dei Mendicanti. Studi e documenti sui Concili di Basilea e di Firenze*, Rome 1938; Ouy 1962, pp. 433–492; Guenée, Bernard: *Entre l'Église et l'État. Quatre vies de prélats français à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1987, esp. pp. 189–201; Lamy, Marielle: *L'Immaculée Conception. Étapes et enjeux d'une controverse au Moyen Âge, XIIe-XVe siècle*, Paris 2000a, esp. pp. 551–599; *ead.*: "Les dominicains dans la tour-

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statement caused great scandal and ended up compromising the Dominican Order at large, whose high regard of Aquinas's writings had led to reject a position to which the French court and the University of Paris were both traditionally attached.[4] Suffice it to say that it was the end of Monzón's university career.

Before coming back to these events in more detail, it would be instructive to examine briefly the content of Gerson's homily. *Tota pulchra es* presents a plea delivered before God in favour of Mary's immaculate conception by five allegorical characters: Nature, Wisdom, Charity and "her companions", Virginity, and Prudence. The opposing party is represented by Justice, whose role is to defend the retributive logic of Augustinian tradition, according to which the transmission of original sin concerns all of Adam's descendants insofar as their generation implied concupiscence. The debate confronting Justice with Nature and her companions finally gives way to a definition of the Marian privilege in terms of a sanctification *in utero* thereby exempting her from the common law.[5] The justification of Mary's immaculate conception is based on her providential mission within the economy of Salvation: she who must be God's "mere, espouse et amie singuliere" requires a specific kind of sainthood.[6]

Certain passages of the sermon echo the terms of the Monzón affair, of which they constitute a sort of continuation:

> The doctors trained in the Holy Scriptures have the authority to expound and declare the truths that follow from them, just as the ancient doctors did. And if you say that they do not benefit from such sainthood, I reply that it does not in the least prevent them from having such an authority, just as the new prelates have the same authority as the ancient ones in governing the people, even if they did not enjoy the same degree of sainthood. In view of the great quantity of new doctors and Church prelates who affirm that this opinion is true—that Our Lady was beautiful without the stain of any sin, be it original, venial, or actual—I declare that it is safer to hold it than its opposite against those who pretended that it was formally heretical or a mortal sin. *Contra quos Universitas*, etc. And it must not be forgotten

mente: les suites de l'affaire Jean de Monzon", eds. Patrick Boucheron/Jacques Chiffoleau: *Religion et société urbaine au Moyen Âge. Études offertes à Jean-Louis Biget*, Paris 2000b, pp. 177–200; and more recently, Krupa, Pavel: *Une grave querelle. L'Université de Paris, les mendiants et la conception immaculée de la Vierge (1387–1390)*, Warsaw 2013.

4 See Krupa 2013, pp. 46–53; Guenée 1987, pp. 194–195; Coville, Alfred: *Jean Petit. La question du tyrannicide au commencement du XVe siècle*, Paris 1932, pp. 1–20.

5 Iohannes Gerson *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1062.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 1064: "Je [Sapience] fais doubte pour Justice que elle ne feust conceue en la tache de pechié originel et qu'elle n'eust pas ceste purté, innocence et beauté qui appartient a celle qui doit estre ta mere, ton espouse et amie singuliere"; ibid., p. 1065: "Voirement, a dit Sapience, bien seroit chose mesapartenant que ainsy se feist et que l'estoille journale a sa naissance fut eclipsée, la rose nouvelle flestrie, la fontaine tarie, la fleur du lis epalie, la mere de vie mortifiée, la royne du monde faicte subjecte, subjecte a la plus vile et abhominable subjection qui soit, c'est celle de pechié. Mais aussy, o Pere de toute bonté, dit Miséricorde, puisque tant as descendu a nostre peticion miserable que tu veulz racheter l'umain lignage du servage de pechié, droit est que tu soyes tres parfait racheteur et que du moins tu rachetes une personne tres excellemment." The mystery of divine maternity is pivotal to the arguments advanced by the advocates of Mary's immaculate conception. See Lamy 2000a, pp. 149–175.

that it is much more dangerous to incur error in blaspheming against the Virgin than it is in honouring her, she whom human language cannot sufficiently praise.[7]

The contrast that Gerson establishes between the "sainthood" of the ancient doctors and prelates on the one hand, and the "authority" of the new ones, brings to light one of the major issues involved in the debate on the immaculate conception, that is, the defence of University privileges through the construction of a specific notion of theological authority. For underlying the question of the admissibility of new doctrines such as Mary's immaculate conception was the problem of the competent authority in discerning between a theologically hazardous statement and a pious belief. Who is accredited to define the status of propositions such as "Mary was conceived without original sin"? As I hope to be able to show, the 'Monzón affair', to which Gerson clearly alludes in the passage above (*Contra quos Universitas*), testified to a surge of interest in this question due to the climate of unrest produced by the schism. One of the most resounding episodes of the immaculist controversy in the Middle Ages, the 'Monzón affair' brought to the fore the question of the doctrinal credibility of Thomas Aquinas, whose sainthood came to enhance his theological authority since 1323. In what follows, I would like to examine the doctrinal repercussions of this affair on the construction of a Dominican Thomist identity in the light of Gerson's contribution to the immaculist debate. Indeed, Gerson's writings allow us to identify intimate and very revealing connexions between Aquinas's angelology and the Dominican position regarding the immaculist thesis. Underlying this question and constituting the heart of the matter were two issues: first, the conception of the relation between philosophy and theology, and second, the normative value accorded to the extra-scriptural tradition in matters of faith. As we shall see, both issues were to play a crucial role in crystallising Dominican theological culture into a Thomist exclusivism.

1. The 'Monzón Affair': Historical Background and Main Issues

The aftermath of Monzón's inaugural lecture provoked a conflict marked by a series of escalating tensions. The first reaction came from the dean of the theology faculty, Raoul Glanchard, who charged a commission of masters with the

[7] Iohannes Gerson *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1076: "En tous temps les docteurs instruis en la saincte Escripture ont autorité de l'exposer et declairer les veritez qui d'elle s'ensuyvent et comme avoyent les docteurs anciens. Et se tu dis que ilz n'ont pas telle saincteté, je respon que cecy n'empesche point que ilz n'ayent telle auctorité comme les prelas nouveaulz ont pareille auctorité aux anciens sur le peuple gouverner, jassoit ce que ilz n'ayent pas telle saincteté. Pour quoy je dy que vueue la multitude des docteurs nouveaulx et des prelaz de l'Eglise qui dient ceste opinion estre vraye, que nostre Dame a toudiz esté belle sans laidure de pechié quelconque originel, veniel ou actuel, c'est plus seure chose de ainsy tenir que l'opposite contre ce que ont voulu dire aucuns que c'estoit heresie expresse ou pechié mortel. *Contra quos Universitas*, etc. Et n'est pas a oublier que trop plus grant peril est a errer en blasphemant ceste Vierge que en l'onnourant, elle qui par langue d'omme souffisamment ne puet estre louee."

task of examining the Dominican's compromising statements. A few weeks later, in July 1387, the theology faculty approved—*salva reverentia sancti Thome*—a list of 14 condemnable propositions, known as the *Schedula Facultatis theologiae contra quattuordecim propositiones Johannis de Montesono*, extracted from Monzón's oral and written statements. A copy of this document was officially communicated to the accused[8]—I'll come back later to the content of this syllabus. Despite repeated exhortations, Monzón refused to withdraw his position.[9] In consequence, the faculty decided to turn to the University for support.

Armed with the list of propositions condemned by the theology faculty, the University appealed in its turn to the bishop, Pierre d'Orgemont, the ordinary judge in matters of faith. Declared guilty *in absentia* and condemned in August 1387,[10] Monzón decided to leave Paris for Avignon in order to appeal to the pope. He accused the University of intransigence, an attitude he attributed to the pernicious influence of some doctors, jealous of the increasing celebrity of the Angelic Doctor.[11] Both parties closed ranks. Dominicans joined forces to raise funds in the provinces of Avignonese obedience in support of Monzón's cause.[12] Benefiting from the favour of Peter IV of Aragon, who had recommended him to the pope for the *licentia docendi*[13] and who shared a similar policy of neutrality during the schism, Monzón could hope for some benevolence on the part of the Avignonese pope. But Clement VII found himself in a difficult position. On the one hand, the doctrinal credibility of a recently canonised Aquinas seemed compromised by Monzón's blunders, since he continuously claimed the authority of his fellow Dominican to underpin his position; on the other hand, the pope was under great pressure from the University of Paris in the

8 See Iohannes Gerson *Gallia que viris*, p. 492; Petrus de Alliaco *Propositio facta in consistorio*, pp. 69b–74b.

9 See *Littera rectoris et Universitatis Parisiensis ad omnes Christi fideles adversus errores et modum agendi Johannis de Montesono*, in CUP, vol. 3, n. 1560, p. 497; see also Iohannes Gerson *Gallia que viris*, p. 487: "[...] admirari se putans, maiori inde vento turgidatus est atque stomachancius loqui instituit: 'Non dubitetis, inquit, bene ista sustinebo, rursumque illa repetite [...]'"; also *ibid.*, p. 492: "Sed alterius presto fuit responsio: 'Non dubitetis, inquit: ego bene sustinebo ista'. Adiecitque eadem pene verba que prius in scholis habuerat, ultra admonens magistros cautos fore et bene cavere quid agerent, quoniam Ordo vel eorum domus destruccioni proximior erat quam ipse revocationi."

10 He was henceforth forbidden to dogmatize, publish, or preach the 14 propositions under penalty of excommunication. See *Schedula Facultatis theologiae contra 14 propositiones Johannis de Montesono*, in CUP, vol. 3, n. 1559, p. 496.

11 See Monzón's letter to his fellow Dominicans in defence of Thomas Aquinas: "Sucurrite, fratres, sucurrite qui frater Thomas tollitur a nobis! [...] Ecce frater Thomas publice condempnatur ymo lumen ecclesie et gloria nostra aufertur a nobis ut nec eum audeatis in publico vel occulto defendere nec studere": Krupa, Paweł: "La lettre en défense de saint Thomas d'Aquin de Jean de Monzon OP (1388)", in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 98 (2005), pp. 633–647: 647.

12 *Acta capituli generalis apud Ruthenam* (1388), in *Monumenta Ordinis Praedicatorum Historica*, vol. 8, Rome 1900, pp. 38–39; CUP, vol. 3, n. 1562, pp. 500–501. See also Krupa 2013, pp. 17–18; Guenée 1987, p. 194; Lamy 2000a, p. 569; Doncoeur 1907, pp. 176–187.

13 See CUP, vol. 3, n. 1572, p. 518. Hence the young Gerson's ironical remark in *Gallia que viris*, p. 478: "Crede michi, aliquid mali afferet bullata hec licencia!" On the subject of pontifical promotions accorded to mendicants, see Krupa 2013, pp. 38–39.

person of Pierre d'Ailly, then regent of the influential Collège de Navarre. The Parisian delegation arrived in Avignon in May 1388 in order to defend its cause before the consistory. Pierre d'Ailly delivered on this occasion his *Propositio facta in consistorio contra Ioannem de Montesono* (July 1388). As in his later *Tractatus ex parte Universitatis studii Parisiensis contra quemdam fratrem Johannem de Montesono* (autumn 1388), rather than intending to justify the novelty of the immaculist thesis, d'Ailly endeavoured to define and circumscribe the normative status of the theologians' opinion, in particular that of Thomas Aquinas.[14] Anticipating the outcome and before the sentence was rendered, Monzón left Avignon in August 1388 for Aragon and then reached Sicily, where he embraced Roman obedience—with serious consequences for him and his order. In January 1389, the pope formally condemned the 14 propositions extracted from Monzón's works and enacted his excommunication. The University subsequently decided to take action against his supporters and advisors, thus banning those Dominican masters who did not accept the condemnation of their fellow friar and persisted against the immaculist thesis. Refusing to comply with such measures and recant, the friars Preachers were compelled to leave the University. They were subsequently deprived of their privileges and restricted in their predication.[15] Dominicans were not readmitted within the University walls until 1403, upon the king's request and after the restitution of obedience to pope Benedict XIII.[16]

[14] See Petrus de Alliaco *Propositio facta in consistorio*, *pp.* 69b–74b. See also Guenée 1987, 197–198; Salembier, Louis: *Le cardinal Pierre d'Ailly, chancelier de l'Université de Paris, évêque du Puy et de Cambrai, 1350–1420*, Tourcoing 1932.

[15] See CUP, vol. 3, n. 1568, p. 512; Michel Pintoin *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis*, vol. 1, lib. 9, cap. 16, p. 578. See also Iohannes Gerson: *Subtiliter aperitis materiam. Letter to the Carthusian Oswald de Corda (Lyon, 1428)*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 2, pp. 325–326: "Scio quod in praeclara universitate parisiensi praedicans oppositum [the immaculate thesis] cogeretur revocare [...]. Et quoniam nostro tempore multi, maxime de ordine praedicatorum, nimis pertinaciter adhaeserunt verbis sancti Thomae, placet hic adducere modum solvendi suam rationem principalem."

[16] See Iohannes Gerson: *Letter to the members of the college of Navarre (Bruges May-September 1400)*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 2, pp. 36–42, esp. pp. 39–41: "Cogor tum ex hoc, tum ex aliis quibusdam illam deflere scissuram miserabilem et mutilationem luctuosam partis non modicae Universitatis Parisiensis, praesertim a sacra theologiae facultate, cuius scissurae causam praebuerunt illius de Montesono erroneae, temerarie et impiae assertiones. Nolo putet aliquis me hec loco justificationem seu defensionem partis illius quae depulsa vel avulsa est suscepisse, Fratres Praedicatores loquor [...]. Quin etiam pia mater Universitas haec quae hactenus filiis irata est, numquid tandem misericordiae recordabitur, aut continebit in ira sua misericordis suas? [...] Quin etiam naturalis pietas exigit ut mater filio aberranti et corpus membro aegrotanti compassione moveatur [...]. Ipsa (dampna plurima) tamen, meo judicio, leviter obliviscenda aut contemnenda sunt pro commercio pacis, pro fraterna reconciliatione, pro reintegratione partis abruptae." The document formally requesting the reincorporation of Dominicans in the University is contained in CUP, vol. 4, n. 1781, p. 56: "*Non veni pacem mittere in terram, sed gladium* [Mt 10, 34] [...] quod condempnatio prenominata quatordecim propositionum inviolata ab eis servaretur nullusque fratrum aut alius dogmatizaret, aut legeret, aut predicaret oppositum." Reincorporation was thus offered on the condition that Monzón's condemnation be maintained.

As Alain Boureau has shown,[17] the question of the status of Mary's privilege had serious repercussions on the controversy between the secular clergy and the mendicant friars in the 13th century. The latter had benefited from the privilege of exemption and the protection of successive popes, nourishing a feeling among members of the secular clergy of an unfair competition. But when Gerson appeared on the stage, the debate's backdrop had changed significantly. The actors had multiplied and the cartography of alliances had been redrawn: the search for solutions to the schism had encouraged much thought on the relation between pontifical power, temporal power and University privileges. Indeed, as Paweł Krupa has shown in his work devoted to the Monzón affair, the question of the immaculate conception could not alone explain such hostility against the friars Preachers.[18] The debate surrounding Monzón sent flash-backs of a long history of academic rivalry and conflicting ecclesiologies with episodes extending as late as 1385. In that year, the chancellor of the University of Paris, Jean Blanchart, was accused of partisanship in the nomination of new masters and of abuse of power involving the exaction of fees in exchange of university degrees.[19] The accusation was made by Pierre d'Ailly who, in a speech exalting the theological magisterium and the autonomy of the university, succeeded in outsmarting Blanchart and replacing him as chancellor in 1389.[20] Contrary to young doctors, who had rallied behind d'Ailly, Dominicans granted their support to Blanchart. The scandal that followed had repercussions that largely surpassed the university milieu. To a certain extent, Monzón's unfortunate statements provided an ideal pretext to settle accounts with the friars Preachers regarding university privileges, an amalgam that the Aragonese Dominican had himself induced in maintaining that he had acted according to the counsel and injunction of his order.[21] Ironically, the 'Monzón affair' thus became one of the main levers of the University's political power during the schism.

17 Boureau, Alain: *La Religion de l'État. La construction de la République étatique dans le discours théologique de l'Occident médiéval (1250–1350)*, Paris 2006, esp. pp. 242–244.

18 See Krupa 2013, pp. 37–38 and 304–305.

19 On this subject, see Bernstein, Alan E.: *Pierre d'Ailly and the Blanchard Affair. University and Chancellor of Paris at the Beginning of the Great Schism*, Leiden 1978a; *id.*: "Magisterium and Licence: Corporate Autonomy against Papal Authority in the Medieval University of Paris", in *Viator* 9 (1978b), pp. 291–307.

20 See Petrus de Alliaco: *Super omnia vincit veritas*, ed. Alan E. Bernstein 1978a, p. 282. Gerson alludes to this affair in his treatise against Monzón, see *Gallia que viris*, pp. 476–477.

21 According to the report made by Gerson in *Gallia que viris*, p. 487: "Non dubetis, inquit, bene ista sustinebo, rursumque illa repetite; namque hec non sine magno consilio posita sunt, nec me tantum movit ad hoc propria maiorum tocius Ordinis iniunctio auctoritasque, cui etsi contrarie velim non liceat"; see also Petrus de Alliaco *Propositio facta in consistorio*, pp. 69b–74b; *id.*: *Littera rectoris et Universitatis Parisiensis*, in CUP, vol. 3, n. 1560, p. 497.

2. The Condemned Propositions

Let us turn now to the content of the 14 condemned propositions.[22] The list is articulated around four main themes: the possibility of a "pure" (*pura*) rational creature and its metaphysical and moral implications (1–5); the compatibility between necessary being and created being (6–8); the Scriptures as the absolute criterion of theological normativity (9 and 14); finally, the immaculate conception as a doctrine contrary to Scriptures (10–13). As Krupa has convincingly shown, the 'montesonist' theses relied on the opinions formulated by certain Dominican masters before the outbreak of the controversy in 1387.[23] First among them was Jean Thomas, Monzón's tutor at Saint-Jacques and leading figure in the trial launched by the Dominicans against the University. Jean Thomas had been impugning the immaculist thesis for over more than ten years, declaring it, as Monzón would do later, as erroneous and heretical. It is therefore hardly surprising that the University should have retroactively prosecuted Jean Thomas with the other Dominicans involved in the affair. Arrested and imprisoned, Jean Thomas finally submitted himself to a public retraction in March 1389 at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois in Paris[24]—the same church, it is rather piquant to point out, where Gerson delivered his sermon *Tota pulchra es* twelve years later. On the occasion of this act of repentance, the Dominican reconstituted the content of the now lost *Maledicta dies* (originally from 1374).[25] In addition to his objections against the immaculist thesis, Jean Thomas's treatise puts us on the path of the more profound issues underlying the 'Monzón affair'. In Krupa's terms, the aim of the author of *Maledicta dies* is clear:

> From the outset, he wants to eliminate all probabilistic arguments based on the miraculous. For Jean Thomas, the basis of any dogmatic debate can only be found in the Bible and the Church tradition, and both are agreed that the Virgin was conceived in a natural, fully human way.[26]

2.1 Scriptural Text and Doctrinal Development

Monzón's position follows the same hermeneutical principles as his fellow Dominican. The condemned propositions 9 and 14 are based on the axiom that the explicit content of the Scriptures constitutes the absolute criterion for defining the truth of faith.[27] A glimpse into Gerson's exegetical method and attitude to-

[22] See *Schedula Facultatis theologiae*, pp. 493–496. The censured propositions are also contained in d'Ailly's treatise against the Dominicans: *Tractatus ex parte Universitatis Parisiensis contra Johannem de Montessono*, in *Collectio iudiciorum de novis erroribus* 1728, pp. 90b–112b.

[23] Krupa 2013, pp. 22–23.

[24] Krupa 2013, pp. 53–60.

[25] Krupa 2013, pp. 57–69.

[26] Krupa 2013, pp. 305–306.

[27] *Schedula Facultatis theologiae*, p. 494–495: "*Nona propositio*: Asserere aliquid fore verum, quod est contra sacram scripturam, est expressissime contra fidem. Revocanda est tanquam falsa et injuriosa sanctis et doctoribus, si eam intelligat universaliter, prout in probacione ejus videtur pretendere: quia aliquid est contra sacram scripturam, quamvis hoc

wards lay devotion can enlighten by contrast the implications of such a precept. Gerson endorses a distinction between the grammatical and the literal sense of the Scriptures, where the *sensus litteralis* is alone identified with the intention of the divine author.[28] This hermeneutical distinction opened the way to a conception of doctrinal development that allowed some space for the expert elu-

non sit evidens, et illud asserere, non est expressissime contra fidem, patet, quia altera istarum duarum proposicionum, 'Deus potest creare supremam speciem' et 'Deus non potest creare supremam speciem' est contra sacram scripturam; et tamen nulla earum est expresse contra fidem. Et ita de multis aliis proposicionibus sibi invicem contradictoriis inter sanctos et doctores disputabilibus et disputatis. [...] *Quartadecima proposicio*: In exposicione sacre scripture, sive determinando per ecclesiam, sive declarando per doctores, sive excipiendo per quemcumque, de scriptura sacra, et non aliunde, trahenda est determinacio, declaracio sive excepcio, sicut in grammatica, que regulas ponit in eadem, excepcio reperitur. Revocanda est tanquam falsa et erronea, si intelligatur, quod expositio vel excepcio sit trahenda expresse et explicite ex scriptura sacra, et non aliunde, prout videtur pretendere. Aliter regula non esset ad propositum suum, quia multe sunt contra eam instancie, sicut de ista: *Omne, quod in os intrat, per secessum emittitur* [Matt 15:17]; *Omnes a maximo usque ad minimum avaricie student* [Jer 6:13]; *Nemo ascendit in celum, nisi qui descendit Filius Dei* [John 3:13]; *Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos seducimus et veritas non est in nobis* [1 John 1:8]. Preterea, ista regula detrahit determinacionibus et usibus ecclesie catholice, ex revelacione enim seu inspiracione divina, et ex instructione Apostolorum in primitiva ecclesia multe exposiciones sacre scripture sunt tradite. *Sunt autem et alia multa, que fecit Jhesus, que si scribantur per singula, nec ipsum arbitror mundum capere eos qui scribendi sunt libros.* Johannis ultimo [21:25]."

[28] See Iohannes Gerson: *De examinatione doctrinarum*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 9, pp. 458–475: 463: "Est autem sensus litteralis, non solum grammaticalis, sed nec stricte logicalis, verum ille quem Spiritus Sanctus principaliter intendebat, qui ex circumstantia litterae, cum causis dicendi et modis exponendi, magis patet. Unde generaliter in parabolicis locutionibus sensus litteralis est, non qui per verba, sed per res et facta designatur"; *id.*: *De duplici logica*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 3, pp. 57–63: 59–60: "nullo modo in historicis narrationibus sicut nec in prophetiis et documentis moralibus exigitur vel attenditur veritas dictorum conformiter ad strictas regulas prioris logicae, sed sufficit quod modus loquendi communis, cui maxime se conformat rhetorica, servetur, ubi figuratae locutiones tropicae et transsumptae per parabolas et similitudines admittuntur, et amplius quam reliquae"; *id.*: *De sensu litterali sacrae Scripturae*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 3, pp. 333–340: 335: "Tertia [propositio]: sensus Scripturae litteralis iudicandus est prout Ecclesia, Spiritu sancto inspirata et gubernata, determinavit et non ad cuiuslibet arbitrium et interpretationem"; *id.: Response to the masters' consultation (Constance, 4 December 1415)*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 10, pp. 232–253: 239: "sensus litteralis cujuscumque locutionis est ille sensum quem principaliter et de directo intendit ipse loquens [...]. Cum igitur Spiritus Sanctus sit ille qui in Sacra Scriptura loquitur, erroneum est dicere quod sensus litteralis non sit verus aliquando et non semper tenendus." On this subject, see Dahan, Gilbert: "Le sens littéral dans l'exégèse chrétienne de la Bible au Moyen Âge", in ed. Olivier-Thomas Venard: *Le sens littéral des Écritures*, Paris 2009, pp. 237–262: 256; Froehlich, Karlfried: "'Always to Keep the Literal Sense in Holy Scripture Means to Kill One's Soul': The State of Biblical Hermeneutics at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century", in ed. Earl Miner: *Literary Uses of Typology, from the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, Princeton 1977, pp. 20–48: 46–47; Flanagin, Zach: "Making sense of it all: Gerson's biblical theology", in ed. Brian P. McGuire: *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, Leiden/Boston 2006, pp. 133–177, esp. 154–159.

cidation, over time, of the implicit Biblical content. Extra-scriptural tradition acquired here all of its relevance.[29]

Gerson's Biblical hermeneutics was consonant with his nominalist conception of divine omnipotence. The implicit content of the Scriptures corresponds to all that God could have said or done but was not revealed explicitly at once. The principle governing the chancellor's attitude towards new beliefs is founded on the same conviction: there are truths that God has chosen to reveal to men later in time; before then, the Church should tolerate 'pious truths' that, even if they do not directly derive from the Biblical text, do not contradict faith and serve to nurture charity. As the objections brought forth by Dominican opponents of the immaculist thesis made it clear, there were however potential pitfalls in arguments based on God's omnipotence.[30] The latter inevitably led to the field of the possible and consequently the unverifiable, thus raising the question of the normativity of such doctrines. Gerson was well aware of this. In an important treatise composed in 1416 on the question of the normativity of doctrinal opinions, the *Declaratio compendiosa quae veritates sint de necessitate salutis credendae*, he established six degrees (*gradus*) of truth according to a decreasing order of epistemic assent to a given proposition. He distinguished between those tenets pertaining to the truth of faith (*pure de fide*), which require necessary assent, and those 'pious beliefs' (*de pietate fidei*), which the Church simply tolerates.[31] Mary's immaculate conception is an excellent example of the latter. If this doctrine cannot be directly deduced from any scriptural passage, it can nevertheless be inferred from the intention of the divine author (Luke 1:28; Cant 4:7), as similar cases mentioned in the Bible show: indeed, Jeremiah and John the Baptist can also be said to have been sanctified *in utero*. The sacred text serves here as *exemplum*, in the double rhetorical sense of the term: as a moral norm illustrated by the deeds or words of Biblical figures worthy of imitation; and in its probative function, as warrant of the truth of merely probable prop-

[29] Oberman, Heiko A.: *The Harvest of Medieval Theology. Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, Cambridge MA 1963, pp. 361–382.

[30] See Jean Thomas: *Tractatus de conceptione Beate Marie Virginis 'Maledicta dies'*, ed. Krupa 2013, pp. 209–225 (*Tractatus I*) and pp. 226–257 (*Tractatus II*), here at pp. 240–241, ll. 350–358: "Set ista fuga non valet primo quia quicumque allegat privilegium debet ostendere illud, quod tamen non possent quia Scriptura sacra ubicumque de hoc loquitur universalem de omnibus sine exceptione profert sentenciam. Item peto ab eis si ipsi sciant quod quando Paulus dicebat *omnes in Adam peccaverunt*, quod ipse Paulus intendebat excipere beatam Virginem, vel nesciant? Si ipsi sciant, dicant modum: aut per revelacionem factam a Deo, vel a Paulo, vel ab angelo, aut per inspiracionem internam, aut per aliquam scripturam autenticam."

[31] Iohannes Gerson: *Declaratio compendiosa quae veritates sint de necessitate salutis credendae*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 6, pp. 181–189: 184–185: "in sexto gradu [...] collocantur veritates illae quae tantummodo faciunt ad nutriendam vel fovendam devotionis religiosam pietatem, quae scilicet magis inducuntur ad inflammandum affectum quam ad instruendum intellectum, ubi pietas devota magis inspicitur quam veritas certa, ubi hoc unum reprobatur si adesset assertionis temeritas priusquam elucidaretur alio modo vel rationem certam ipsa veritas [...]. Cadit existimatio vel pia credulitas non super veritate vel falsitate sed tantummodo super probabilitate vel apparentia [...] de talibus eligibilius est pie dubitare quam temere definire."

ositions, lacking in deductive certainty. The 'pious belief' in such propositions represents a minimal degree of assent and a warrant of the admissibility of doctrines on which the Church has not yet pronounced any dogmatic statement.

2.2 Immaculate Conception and Thomist Angelology

Propositions 1–5 constitute a rather Thomist reply—we shall see why—to what was perceived as the immaculists' doctrinal audacity. They concern the possibility of a "pure creature" such that, by nature, it can merit grace and benefit from the beatific vision.[32] Underlying this tenet is one of the main arguments advanced by the adversaries of the immaculist thesis, based on Rom 5:12 and 18:

> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned [...]. Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

The argument of the 'perfect Redeemer', implicit in propositions 10–13,[33] aimed at safeguarding the universal character of Christ's redemption, thus ex-

[32] *Schedula Facultatis theologiae*, pp. 493–494: "*Prima proposicio*: Major est unio hypostatica Christo, quam unio trium personarum in essentia increata. Istam dixit se dixisse recitative, nichil asserendo. *Secunda proposicio*: Possibile est esse aliquam puram creaturam, que in puris naturalibus ita posset sibi et homini mereri, sicut anima Christi, concurrente habituali gratia. Non est tamen aliqua possibilis, que tam convenienter, congruenter et sufficienter hominem posset redimere et salvare, sicut Christus. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, male sonans et erronea ad intellectum probacionis sue, videlicet de gratia anime Christi, quoad primam partem ejus. *Tertia proposicio*: Aliqua pura creatura racionalis potest in suis puris naturalibus Dei essentiam beatifice intueri. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, alias Parisius condampnata, et tanquam erronea in fide, maxime ad intellectum probacionis sue, videlicet de gracia anime Christi. *Quarta proposicio*: Aliqua pura creatura est possibilis, perfectior Christi anima in merendo, puta gracia anime Christi. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, erronea, absurda in theologia et philosophia, et theologice doctrine irrisiva. [...] *Quinta proposicio*: Videtur michi quod talis creatura, si poneretur, esset simpliciter extra genus. Revocanda est, ut immediate precedens."

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 494–495: "*Decima proposicio*: Non omnem hominem, preter Christum, contraxisse ab Adam peccatum originale, est expresse contra fidem. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, scandalosa et piarum aurium offensiva et presumptuose asserta, non obstante probabilitate questionis, utrum beata Virgo fuerit in peccato originali concepta. Item quia Eva non contraxit peccatum originale ab Adam. *Undecima proposicio*: Beatam Mariam Virginem et Dei genitricem non contraxisse peccatum originale, est expresse contra fidem. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, scandalosa, presumptuose asserta et piarum aurium offensiva. *Duodecima*: Tantum est contra sacram scripturam, unum hominem esse exemptum a peccato originali preter Christum, sicut si decem homines de facto ponerentur exempti. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, scandalosa, presumptuose asserta et piarum aurium offensiva. *Tertiadecima proposicio*: Magis est expressum contra sacram scripturam, beatam Virginem non esse conceptam in peccato originali, quam asserere ipsam fuisse simul beatam et viatricem ab instanti sue concepcionis vel sanctificacionis. Et postquam probavit correlarium, dixit quod pari modo videretur posse dici, quod magis est expressum, etc., quam ipsam fuisse unitam ypostatice. Revocanda est tanquam falsa, scandalosa, presumptuose asserta et piarum aurium offensiva, sicut precedentes."

cluding the possibility of any other creature (be it Christ's mother) being so pure so as to escape the scope of Christ's redeeming action. No consideration of Mary's purity could be understood as to place her beyond the need for a redemption by the merits of her Son. According to the propositions extracted from Monzón's writings, Christ's human soul is the only possible creature who can benefit from such a degree of purity that it can accomplish man's salvation *convenienter, congruenter et sufficienter*.

In the early 14th century, John Duns Scotus turned the 'perfect Redeemer' argument against its own proponents in order to bolster the immaculist thesis. He stated that the most perfect mediator should accomplish the most perfect act of mediation, that is, the preservation of his own mother from original sin *at the very instant* at which the rational soul is being infused.[34] The notion of preventive redemption harks back to 13th- and 14th-century immaculists such as Robert Grosseteste[35] and Peter Auriol,[36] who proposed a scale of six modes of redemption in which the preventive mode occupied the highest degree. The Scotist solution was to be highly influential among 15th-century immaculists, in particular Gerson, as the sermon *Tota pulchra es* testifies:

> It is suitable that you [God] should be the most perfect Redeemer and that you should save at least one person in the most excellent way. You know that among six modes of redemption, the most perfect is the preservation of a person from stumbling in subjection to any kind of sin, original or actual, such that without your preservation she would inevitably fall. For we do a greater favour to a man by preventing him from falling in the mud than in lifting him once he has fallen. But who else should you save in the most perfect way than your own mother and beloved friend?[37]

The chancellor maintains that in virtue of her privilege, Mary does not regain the prelapsarian state of original justice, but rather a special state of grace,[38] such that there is substitution of original justice and not simple exemption from

[34] Iohannes Duns Scotus: *Ordinatio* III, d. 3, q. 1, ed. Josephus R. Carballo: *Opera omnia*, vol. IX, Rome 2006, pp. 171–177.

[35] Robert Grosseteste: *Tota pulchra es*, ed. Servus Gieben: "Robert Grosseteste and the Immaculate Conception: with the text of *Tota pulchra es*", in *Collectanea Franciscana* 28 (1958), pp. 211–227, esp. 221–222. On Grosseteste, see Lamy 2000a, pp. 344–405; Krupa 2013, pp. 107–123.

[36] Peter Auriol: *Tractatus de conceptione Mariae*, cap. 4, in *Fr. Gulielmi Guarrae, Fr. Ioannis Duns Scoti, Fr. Petri Aureoli quaestiones disputatae de Immaculata conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Quaracchi 1904, pp. 23–94: 54.

[37] Iohannes Gerson *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1065: "[D]roit est que tu [Dieu] soyes tres parfait racheteur et que du moins tu rachetes une personne tres excellemment. Tu scez que entre six manieres de racheter, la plus parfaicte est preserver une personne tellement que point ne trabuche en la subjection de pechié quelconque, originel ou actuel, qui autrement sans ta preservacion telle y encherroit comme on fait plus grant grace a ung homme le garder de cheoir en la boue que le relever depuis quil y est embatus. Mais quelle autre personne devras tu racheter plus parfaictement que ta mere et amie singuliere?" See also Lamy 2000a, p. 150.

[38] Iohannes Gerson: *Definitiones terminorum theologiae moralis*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 9, pp. 133–142: 138: "Gratia specialius est habitus aliquis animae supernaturaliter infusus ad finem beatitudinis mediate vel immediate consequendum."

the common law.[39] Indeed, she who was predestined to crush Satan's head and abolish his rights on man cannot herself be subject to the common law.[40] Mary's utter purity is thus intimately connected to her participation in the economy of salvation as bearer of God. For an immaculist like Gerson, the Verb must assume the flesh of a previously purified body, such that the action of sanctifying grace on Mary must be preventive and not simply curative.

If the purport of the condemned propositions is mainly Christological, the concept of a 'pure creature' capable by nature to merit beatitude is reminiscent of Aquinas's doctrine on angelic impeccability. Based on an analogy between free will receiving grace and matter receiving form, Aquinas maintains that in angels "it is one and the same movement of conversion the one preparing free will to receiving grace and the one meriting glory insofar as it is informed by grace."[41] Just as matter receives the substantial form in the same instant as it acquires a disposition to receiving that form, so in angels the movement of the will that disposes them to receiving grace takes place in the same instant as they merit glory. In other words, the meritorious act resulting in glory and the reception of sanctifying grace constitute in angels one and the same act.[42] The way a formal cause operates explains the fact that justification occurs in an instant. Indeed, divinely infused grace gives the will a new configuration not by restructuring some other configuration present in the will, but by expelling the former and adding a new configuration, so that the transition from one endpoint (privation of grace) to the other (form of grace) does not occur successively, but in an instant.[43] Those who accepted grace were instantly beatified, while those who rejected it were irredeemably damned, their love of sin having definitively

[39] Iohannes Gerson *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1077: "licet Virgo non habuerit fomitem, vel extinctum, tamen iustitia originalis non fuit in ea sed loco illius gratia, sicut nobis baptismum"; *id.*: *Subtiliter aperitis*, pp. 325–326: "doctores pii et subtiles arguunt e necessitate redemtionis Mariae quod ipsa cum fuerit perfectissima debuit perfectissime redimi. Est autem inter quatuor modos redemptionis iste perfectissimus ut fiat preservatio ne quis peccaturus de lege communi peccet, ex concessione privilegii. Exemplum dant de casuro in foveam qui retinetur ne cadat, aut de filio proditoris exhaeredendo quem rex ante nativitatem dignificat ad haereditatem paternalem [...]. [N]ecessitas incurrendi peccatum originale et redemptionis ab eo incumbebat beatae Virgini de lege communi. Sed privilegiata per praeventionem modo dicto fuit aut esse potuit; unde non caruit poenalitibus debitis peccato originali"; *id.*: *Definitiones terminorum*, p. 136: "Lex privata est lex per divinam revelationem accepta ad regimen personae singularis vel paucorum."

[40] Iohannes Gerson *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1067: "Mais a la parfin justice est que celle royne, dame et maistresse des angelz qui selon la promesse divine doit froissier et casser le chief du serpent c'est assavoir de l'ennemy d'enfer, ne soit en temps quelconque membre de luy et sa subjecte, car autrement toudis luy pourroit reprocher et par moquerie dire: Veez cy la femme qui m'a cassé le chief, ce dit, mais par avant sur le sien je marchay par pechié originel."

[41] Thomas de Aquino: *Scriptum super Sententiis* II, d. 5, q. 2, a. 2, co., ed. Pierre Mandonnet, Paris 1929, p. 154: "Unde unus et idem conversionis motus est praeparatio ad gratiam secundum quod est ex libero arbitrio, et meritorius gloriae, secundum quod est gratia informatus: et iterum fruitionis actus, secundum quod completur per habitum gloriae."

[42] Thomas de Aquino: *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 8, ed. Marietti, Turin 1953, p. 401–402 and q. 28, a. 7, ad 5, ed. Marietti, Turin 1953, p. 547.

[43] *Ibid.*, q. 28, a. 9, pp. 551–552. On this subject, see Stump, Eleonore: *Aquinas*, London/New York 2003, pp. 389–404.

turned them away from God. Unlike humans, therefore, angels are the only creatures who can merit glory in the same instant they receive grace.

What I intend to argue here is that Thomist angelology was pivotal to the construction of the concept of a 'pure creature' capable of competing with, or rather rendering superfluous, the immaculist thesis. Although differently conceptualised, Aquinas's position on angelic impeccability broadly reminds one of the Scotist argument in favour of Mary's privilege. Against the Thomist objection that Mary could not have been sanctified before being animated because the subject of grace is the soul or a rational creature,[44] Scotus recurs to a logical order of 'instants of nature': before its infusion in a human nature, the nature of the soul (*natura animae*) precedes original justice, such that it is only affected by original sin in the first instant of its creation. Endowed with a special grace from conception, Mary is thus exempt from original sin, even if by nature her soul was supposed to have contracted it.[45] In a way similar to Aquinas's angels, the nature of Mary's soul received sanctifying grace in the very same instant it was infused and before being affected by original sin. In other words, Mary was beatified by the same act by which she received sanctifying grace.

2.3 materia subjecta *and Philosophical Necessitarianism*

The angelological subtext in the condemned propositions reveals that governing the debate on the Marian privilege were divergent conceptions of the relation between theology and philosophy. Thomist angelology was founded on a methodical separation between philosophical and theological discourse, conferring each its own value without dismissing their ultimate compatibility. Each type of discourse constitutes a different 'mode of knowledge', such that philosophy does not contradict the truth of faith but simply obeys to a different epistemology, one based on discursive reasoning. Aquinas's angels belong to that kind of epistemology, governed by Greco-Arab noetics rather than Biblical testimony: they are *philosophical* objects. Philosophical reasoning produces the *sui generis* concept (prop. 5)[46] of a 'pure creature', sort of philosophical homologue to Biblical 'saints'—first among them, Mary, 'full of grace' in virtue of her divine maternity. Both concepts remain compatible insofar as the notion of a 'pure creature' only states a philosophical option, whereas Biblical saints affirm a revealed fact, thus compelling adherence as a matter of faith. In this perspective, Thomist angelology seemed indeed the Dominican riposte to the immac-

[44] See for example Thomas de Aquino: *Scriptum super Sententiis* III, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 2, ed. Marie F. Moos, Paris 1956.

[45] Iohannes Duns Scotus *Ordinatio* III, d. 3, q. 1, pp. 187–188: "Quando ergo arguitur quod 'prius naturaliter fuit filia Adae quam iustificata', concedo quod illam naturam—in primo instanti naturae sic conceptam—consequebatur esse filiam Adae et non habere gratiam in illo instanti naturae; sed non sequitur 'ergo in illo instanti naturae fuit privata', loquendo de omnino primo instanti, quia secundum illam primitatem natura ita naturaliter praecessit privationem iusticiae sicut ipsam iusticiam". On this subject, see Krupa 2013, pp. 113–114.

[46] See prop. 5 of the *Schedula Facultatis theologiae*, p. 494: "Videtur michi quod talis creatura, si poneretur, esset simpliciter extra genus. Revocanda est, ut immediate precedens."

ulist thesis and, more profoundly, the trademark of the Dominican conception of the relation between philosophy and theology. Very revealing of this is the insistence, voiced by Gerson and the Franciscan tradition, on Mary's place at the summit of the angelic hierarchy.[47]

The methodological dimension of the controversy and its connection with Thomist angelology is confirmed in propositions 6–8 on the compatibility between ontological necessity and creaturality.[48] According to Aquinas's metaphysics, immaterial substances such as angels enjoy real identity between nature and *suppositum* in virtue of their immateriality, which in turn explains their immutability and incorruptibility. However, such metaphysics ran counter to the nominalism prevailing at the University of Paris at the dawn of the 15th century. Suffice it to recall the Parisian Statute of 29 December 1340: embedded in the controversy between realists and nominalists at the University, this Statute intended to promote a relativization of the "proper" and "improper" sense of a proposition by relating it to a specific discipline.[49] Of Aristotelian origin, the

[47] See Iohannes Gerson *Gallia que viris*, p. 486: "Eam queso non communi hominum legi immisceas quam super homines, dicam amplius super angelos Dei gracia tot gradibus evexit; da ei aliquid unde perfectissima a perfectissimo redemptore perfectissima redempta sit; quod nec singulare filialis conceptionis privilegium tollat, nec matrem gracie inferiorem faciat Eva, matre culpe, quod denique decem aut 30ta hominibus, quemadmodum predicas [prop. 5 of the *Schedula*], non equalem ipsam constituat"; *id.*: *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1067: "Mais a la parfin justice est que celle royne, dame et maistresse des angelz qui selon la promesse divine doit froissier et casser le chief du serpent c'est assavoir de l'ennemy d'enfer, ne soit en temps quelconque membre de luy et sa subjecte [...]."

[48] *Schedula Facultatis theologiae*, p. 494: "*Sexta proposicio*: Ponere aliquod creatum vel aliqua creata esse simpliciter et absolute necesse esse, non est in aliquo contra fidem. Revocanda est tanquam falsa et male sonans in fide secundum modum loquendi communem theologorum, nec est ex dictis S. Thome asserenda in sensu quem reddit, attenta prima proposicione, quam assumit ad declaracionem dicte proposicionis, in qua dicit quod aliqua res creata est simpliciter et absolute necesse esse, equippollet isti: aliqua res creata impossibile est non esse. *Septima proposicio*: Necesse esse non repugnat esse causatum. Revocanda est tanquam falsa et erronea in fide, attento primo correlario ejusdem proposicionis cum sua probacione, in qua dicit quod necesse esse est illud, quod est immutabile tam secundum substanciam, quam secundum accidens, quod soli Deo congruit. *Octava proposicio*: Magis est consonum fidei ponere aliquid citra primum esse absolute et simpliciter necesse esse, quam ponere ipsum sine aliqua addicione esse necesse esse. Revocanda est tanquam falsa et erronea propter falsam implicacionem et erroneam comparacionis, que includit, quod aliquam rem creatam esse necesse esse, est consonum sacre scripture, et per consequens aliquod creatum esse increatum, quod contradiccionem includit."

[49] The Statute is found in CUP, vol. 2, n. 1042, pp. 505–507. On this subject, see Kaluza, Zénon: "Les étapes d'une controverse. Les nominalistes et les réalistes parisiens de 1339 à 1482", in ed. Alain Le Boulluec: *La controverse religieuse et ses formes*, Paris 1995, pp. 297–317; *id.*: "La crise des années 1474–1482. L'interdiction du nominalisme par Louis XI", in eds. Maarten J. F. M. Hoenen/J. H. Josef Schneider/Georg Wieland: *Philosophy and Learning. Universities in the Middle Ages*, Leiden 1995, pp. 293–327; *id.*: "Les sciences et leurs langages. Note sur le statut du 29 décembre 1340 et le prétendu statut perdu contre Ockham", in ed. Luca Bianchi: *Filosofia et teologia nel trecento. Studi in ricordo di Eugenio Randi*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1994, pp. 197–258, esp. 233–255; Hoenen, Maarten J. F. M.: "*Via antiqua* and *via moderna* in the fifteenth century: doctrinal, institutional and church political factors in the *Wegestreit*", in eds. Russell L. Friedman/Lauge O. Nielsen: *The Medieval Heri-*

Parisian Statute insisted on the importance of the *materia subjecta* (what belongs to the subject) in order to assess the truth value of a proposition beyond its literal sense.[50] A pivotal idea in Gerson's work,[51] the method of the *materia subjecta* sought to prevent confusion between real being and objective being (*esse obiectale*), the latter alone constituting the true object of science.[52] This methodological feature was already manifest in Gerson's 1389 treatise against Monzón, in which he denounced the Dominican's metaphysical ambiguity derived from his fallacious logical analysis of the value of propositions.[53] The methodological shortcoming that Gerson identifies in Monzón touches precisely upon his angelology, of Thomist persuasion, in particular the exceptional status he attributes to angels in virtue of their immateriality. In Gerson's eyes, by applying principles that are only valid in philosophy, this doctrine jeopardizes in one and the same movement divine omnipotence and angelic creaturality. Indeed, like any other creature, angels naturally tend to non-being, such that it is only in virtue of the first cause and not by some intrinsic necessity that they are kept in being. Monzón's position—Gerson concludes—is not only erroneous but also inappropriate in its formulation.[54]

Admittedly, since 1325 the 1277 Parisian condemnation had lost all authority in what concerned Aquinas's doctrine; but the spirit of the condemnation had been conveyed throughout the decades in the desire to spare theology of a

tage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory, 1400–1700, Dordrecht 2003, pp. 9–36; *id.*: "Jean Wyclif et les *universalia realia*. Le débat sur la notion de *virtus sermonis* au Moyen Âge tardif et les rapports entre la théologie et la philosophie", in eds. Jean-Luc Solère/ Zénon Kaluza: *La servante et la consolatrice. La philosophie dans ses rapports avec la théologie au Moyen Âge*. Paris 2002, pp. 173–192.

50 Aristoteles: *Ethica Nicomachea* I, cap. 1, ed. René-Antoine Gauthier (Aristoteles Latinus XXVI.1–3), Turnhout 1972–1974, 1094a21–b22: "Dicetur autem utique sufficienter si secundum subiectam materiam manifestetur. Certum enim non similiter in omnibus sermonibus querendum, quemadmodum neque in conditis." For Gerson on *materia subjecta*, see Schüssler, Rudolf: "Jean Gerson, moral certainty and the Renaissance of ancient Scepticism", in *Renaissance Studies* 23 (2009), pp. 445–462, esp. 453.

51 Iohannes Gerson *De duplici logica*, pp. 57–63; *id.*: *De concordia metaphysicae cum logica*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 9, pp. 632–642.

52 Iohannes Gerson *De concordia* 25, p. 636, and 49, p. 642.

53 Iohannes Gerson *Gallia que viris*, p. 479: "ut preceptoris mei verbum est [...] qui maximam vim ingenii reputabat quam lucidissime rem dicere, Quidem, inquit, spreta logica, ad rem—ut aiunt—ire volentes, in totam rei ignorantiam involuti prolabuntur, nodos quoque ambiguos, quos logicalis ars facile vereque resolvit, nescio quo pacto metaphisicare volentes, magis ac magis intricant."

54 *Ibid.*, p. 482: "Creatura itaque omnis potenciam habet passivam ad non esse, alioquin illam active destruere Dei omnipotencia nequiret. Hec enim mutuo se inferunt activa passivaque potencia, quod si activam respectu desinitionis creature Deo tribuis, separare non vales a creatura potenciam ad non esse quemadmodum nec dependenciam; quin eciam, quanto creatura perfectior est, tanto in ea maiorem potencialitatem ad dependenciam reperiri [...]. Quod si iste dicat—sicut dicit—angelum non posse non esse a sua causa intrinseca et essenciali, quero quid aliud est hoc, secundum eum, dicere quam quod angelus a causa sua intrinseca et essenciali sit necesse esse, que loqucio et falsa et impropria est, cum a seipso angelus non sit, nec causalitatem super se habet ullam. Ast creaturas immateriales quasdam esse et contraria non habentes aliquis acclamabit, ac exinde necessitatem earum concludet."

certain philosophical necessitarianism. In this respect, the 1340 Statute was entirely in keeping with the Parisian condemnations from the 1270s and brought to the fore the debate's methodological dimension. Indeed, Gerson's treatise testifies to the embarrassing situation to which the University had fallen victim since Monzón's blunders. For the Dominican claimed Aquinas's authority in order to vouch for his position, an authority which the University was in an obligation to recognize since the Angelic Doctor's canonization in 1323. An eloquent proof of this is proposition 6 of the University *schedula*, on the concept of a necessary creature (*aliqua creata esse simpliciter et absolute necesse esse*). The masters' final sentence attempts to show that Monzón's statement not only runs counter to faith, but that it also misinterprets Aquinas's thought. Indeed, he reads it as asserting that it is *impossible* for such a creature to fall into non-being.[55] As Gerson himself denounced it in his *tractatus*, such gross misrepresentations succeed in bringing out heresies of Aquinas's doctrine. In this light, Monzón comes out as a *pessimus imitator, immo corruptor*[56] of the recently canonized doctor, inspiring dismissal rather than approval of his writings. The choice of words is neither trivial nor fortuitous: the 'Monzón affair' suddenly emerged as the culminating episode of the *Correctoria* controversy, where the Aragonese friar becomes associated not to the Thomist supporters, but to the 'corruptors' of the Angelic Doctor's thought. Gerson was conveying here the University's official (but hardly justifiable) position, according to which Aquinas would have endorsed the immaculist thesis.[57] If Aquinas certainly maintained that Mary was sanctified before birth, and so never committed personal sin,[58] such immunity was abusively understood as a preservation from sin from the time of conception. The 'Monzón affair' had thus brought to the fore the question of divergent interpretations of Aquinas's writings and their doctrinal implications.

3. Thomist Orthodoxy and Theological Authority

This aspect comes out clearly in Pierre d'Ailly's 1388 *Tractatus ex parte universitatis studii Parisiensis*,[59] which exerted great influence on Gerson's own treatise, mentioned above. As his young bachelor did later, d'Ailly criticized the Thomist method in the spirit of the 1340 Statute: the attempt to apply to theology the de-

55 *Schedula Facultatis theologiae*, p. 494: "[N]ec est ex dictis S. Thome asserenda in sensu quem reddit, attenta prima proposicione, quam assumit ad declaracionem dicte proposicionis, in qua dicit quod aliqua res creata est simpliciter et absolute necesse esse, equippollet isti: aliqua res creata impossibile est non esse."

56 Iohannes Gerson *Gallia que viris*, pp. 480–481.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 487: "Ipsi namque miselli dicuntur inscii, indocti, non sancti si secum non senciunt; non veritus in hoc sanctis suis Dominico, ut fertur, ac Thome dentes infigere, quorum ultimus–de primo enim nil certum habeo–Mariam ab originali immunem ait, ex qua radice super omnes eius extollit puritatem." On this subject, see Krupa 2013, p. 105.

58 See for example Thomas de Aquino: *Expositio salutationis angelicae*, ed. Giovanni F. Rossi, Piacenza 1931, p. 32; *id.*: *Summa theologiae* III, q. 27, ed. Pietro Caramello, Turin 1948, pp. 177–186.

59 Petrus de Alliaco *Tractatus ex parte universitatis*, pp. 75a–129a.

monstrative approach proper to philosophy can only result in heresy. Tellingly, while admitting the official approval of Aquinas's teaching, d'Ailly maintained that this endorsement did not necessarily imply that *all* of his doctrine was true.[60] In other words, the *doctrina Thomae* was not coextensive to the truth, for the latter, contrary to the Dominican doctor's teaching, is indivisible. Acknowledging that Aquinas's doctrine comprised parts of unequal value was tantamount to admitting its subjective character—that is, one informed by the author's intention and context of writing. The saint was one thing, his doctrine another: Pierre d'Ailly's view was thus diametrically opposed to that of Thomist Dominicans. In his *Propositio facta in consistorio contra Ioannem de Montesono*, also from 1388, d'Ailly insisted on the same point: the teaching of the Dominican doctor had admittedly been approved by the Church, but that did not preserve it from incurring errors. In evidence of this, he quoted a few contradictions identified in Aquinas's work, drawn from one of the numerous collections of this kind that circulated in the 14th century.[61] This aspect is not without significance, for the exercise of *concordantiae* current in Dominican milieus constituted an attempt to harmonize the different *loci* of Aquinas's work by inquiring into the intention of the author and the contextualization of his statements. They betray strong methodological affinities with the 1340 nominalist Statute, in particular their common concern in identifying the language specific to each discipline.[62] In a similar way to the *concordantia* procedure, the University's reaction to the 'Monzón affair' manifested both an acknowledgement of Aquinas's increasing authority, and a greater sensitivity to issues involving the interpretation of his work. Symptomatically, subsequent *concordantiae* of the Dominican's work would reserve a prominent place to his angelology, notably the question of the real identity between nature and *suppositum* accounting for angels' necessary nature and the impeccability resulting from their exceptional status.[63]

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 116b: "S. Thomae doctrina non est [...] per Ecclesiam approbata sic videlicet, ut oporteat credere, quod ipsa in omni sui parte sit vera"; and p. 117a: "S. Thomae doctrina non est [...] per Ecclesiam approbata sic scilicet, quod oportet credere, quod ipsa in nulla parte sit in fide erronea vel haeretica." On Pierre d'Ailly's understanding of Aquinas's authority in this context, see Brinzei, Monica/Schabel, Chris: "Thomas Aquinas as Authority and the *Summa theologiae* as *Auctoritas* in the Late Middle Ages", in eds. Lidia Lanza/Marco Toste: *Summistae. The Commentary Tradition on Thomas Aquinas's* Summa Theologiae *from the 15th to the 17th Centuries*, Leuven 2021, pp. 95–125, esp. 104–107.

[61] A famous example of this kind of collection has been edited by Gauthier, René A.: "Les 'Articuli in quibus frater Thomas melius in Summa quam in Scriptis'", in *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 19 (1952), pp. 271–326. Composed in the end of the 13th century, this anonymous collection has more than 20 manuscript witnesses. Gerardus de Monte produced a commentary of it entitled *Decisionum s. Thomae quae ad invicem oppositae a quibusdam dicuntur concordantiae*, ed. Gilles G. Meersseman, Rome 1934. On this subject, see Grabmann, Martin: "Hilfsmittel des Thomasstudiums aus alter Zeit", in *id.*: *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, vol. II, Munich 1936, pp. 424–489; Salembier 1932, pp. 74–75.

[62] An eloquent example of the application of this method to the harmonization of Aquinas's work is Petrus de Bergamo: *Ethimologiae id est Concordantiae conclusionum in quibus Thomas de Aquino videtur sibimet contradicere*, Venice 1497.

[63] Thus for example, on the lemma *angelus* (f. 327r-329v), Peter of Bergamo identifies some 50 discordances, among them the thesis according to which angels are necessary creatures insofar as their nature is identical to their *suppositum*. On this subject, see Iribarren,

In the context of the schism in which the debate is embedded, the question of the theologians' authority became pressing. According to Gerson and d'Ailly, while it is the theologians' responsibility to define faith *doctrinaliter* and thereby condemn errors and confirm the truth, it is the duty of prelates (bishops and popes) to define faith *judicaliter*. On both counts, the Aragonese bachelor had abused his power: he pretended to determine *judicaliter* the dogmatic value of a thesis he was supposed to discuss only *doctrinaliter*.[64] As Gerson's treatise against Monzón testifies, the question of the theologians' authority assumed the form of a panegyric of the University of Paris during the immaculist controversy: never defiled by error (*sola Gallia monstro caruit*), champion of orthodoxy, and defender of true faith, the beauty of Paris remains untouched by heresy.[65] It is by its privileges that the University is bound to guarantee the common good and fight against heresy, just as Mary—one would be tempted to add—privileged as well, serves the common good in removing the devil's power on man.[66] Without sparing the Marian overtones, in a sermon addressed to the king in 1405, the chancellor defined the University as "the king's daughter, fountain of science, light of our faith, the beauty, the ornament, the honesty of France, indeed of the whole world."[67] Suffice it to recall by comparison Gerson's words in his sermon *Tota pulchra es* regarding Mary's creation: "We would give her Abel's innocence and virginity and Abraham's faith, Joshua's perseverance, Salomon's wisdom; she will be beautiful as Rachel, fertile as Lea, wise as Rebecca, pious as Elijah, noble as David; she will surpass Moses in clemency, Job in patience".[68] If we consider the eminent role Gerson entrusted to the University as guardian of orthodoxy, warrant of peace and *fille du roy par civile adoption*, the association with Mary's wisdom, purity and noble lineage had an easy handle to it.

Isabel: "Le thème *Angelus* dans les *Concordantiae* de Pierre de Bergame (c. 1476). L'agencement de la contradiction dans l'histoire du thomisme au Moyen Âge: une étude comparative", in eds. Mario Meliadò/Silvia Negri: *Widersprüche und Konkordanz: Peter von Bergamo und der Thomismus im Spätmittelalter*, Leiden 2020, pp. 146–189.

64 Iohannes Gerson: *Pro unione ecclesiae*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 6, pp. 1–21: 15. On Gerson's conception of doctrinal authority, see Kaluza, Zénon: "La doctrine selon Jean Gerson", in eds. Philippe Büttgen/Ruedi Imbach/Ulrich J. Schneider/Herman J. Selderhuis: *Vera doctrina. Zur Begriffsgeschichte der Lehre von Augustinus bis Descartes/L'idée de doctrine d'Augustin à Descartes*, Wiesbaden 2009, pp. 115–140.

65 Iohannes Gerson *Gallia que viris*, pp. 472–478, esp. 474–475: "'Sola Gallia monstro caruit', quod a Ieronimo [*Adversus Vigilantium* IV, 2] dictum recte ad id tractum est quod illam fidei pulcritudinem quam Gallia semel est professa, monstris heresum indeformatam assidue custodivit, cum ubilibet pene terrarum tot errorum duces narrentur tot actores."

66 *Ibid.*, p. 477: "Huius tamen clemencie ita moderamen tenet ut privilegiis ac legibus suis sua sit integritas suaque fidei orthodoxe reverencia, neque enim ut proprias sic communes iniurias in rei publice perniciem dissimulare licet, cum hoc sit boni civis ac mansueti sibi illatam condonare iniuriam, in detrimentum vero fidei aut rei publice liberalem ac indulgentem esse hostilitas perniciosissima."

67 Iohannes Gerson: *Vivat rex*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 7.2, pp. 1137–1185: 1137: "la fille du Roy, la fontaine de science, la lumiere de nostre foy, la beauté, le parement, l'honnesteté de la France, voir de tout le monde."

68 Iohannes Gerson *Tota pulchra es*, p. 1062.

4. Denouement and Conclusions

The Dominicans were finally banished in 1389 by an alliance of the University and the king, who saw the 'Monzón affair' as an abuse of doctrinal power by the mendicant orders and a violation of university privileges jealously guarded by the masters since the bull *Parens scientiarum* in 1231. Years later, in a letter addressed in 1400 to the members of the Collège of Navarre during his sojourn in Bruges,[69] Gerson regretted this outcome, which he considered detrimental to university life and theological studies. He pleaded for the return of the "stray flock" by the mercy of the "good mother, the University" who, imitating Christ's example as the "good shepherd", can alone bring them back to unity. The sermon *Bonus pastor*, preached by Gerson in 1408, some years after Dominicans were readmitted within the University, synthesizes several centuries of quarrel with the mendicants and his high conception of the task entrusted to the secular clergy, which he identifies with the University at large.[70] It is indeed regrettable—Gerson adds—that to meet the needs of the dioceses we have to recur to substitutes (*substitutos*) such as mendicants or poor theologians (*mendicantium vel pauperum theologorum*), leaving the faithful at the mercy of poor, despicable people (*pauperes apud eos contemptibiles*). In Gerson's view, the Gospels' leading message lay not so much in the renunciation of temporal goods and a life of poverty; the Gospels carry a new law, a law of grace, where mercy and privileges are in good agreement.

Such secular antagonism constituted both the backdrop and the doctrinal accelerator for the ultimate reduction of Dominican theological culture to Thomism. As I have attempted to show, the 'Monzón' episode of the Immaculate conception controversy brought to the foreground a series of issues that largely surpass conflicting claims between what Krupa calls a "realist theology attached to the content of the history of salvation in the Scriptures" and "a rather idealist theology concerned with safeguarding God's perfect freedom."[71] Three main notes intervene in the Dominican corporate and doctrinal construction of Thomism: firstly, a particular methodology governing the relation between philosophy and theology, of which Aquinas's angelology is an emblematic example; secondly, a narrow conception of the normative value accorded to the scriptural text in the determination of the truth of faith at the expense of a certain doctrinal latitude allowing some place for 'pious beliefs'; finally, a conception of theological authority that challenged the secular clergy's distinction between juridical and doctrinal power in matters of faith, a distinction blurred by Aquinas's promotion to sainthood.

[69] Iohannes Gerson: *Letter to the members of Collège de Navarre*, pp. 36–42.

[70] Iohannes Gerson: *Bonus pastor*, ed. Glorieux, vol. 5, pp. 126–146. On this subject, see McLoughlin, Nancy: "Gerson as a Preacher in the Conflict between Mendicants and Secular Priests", in McGuire 2006, pp. 249–291.

[71] Krupa 2013, p. 308.