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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 Iconography of Dominican Saints Found on the Claus Berg Altarpiece Made for the Priory of St Nicholas in Aarhus, Denmark[1]

Christian Etheridge

1. Introduction

In the center of the old Danish episcopal city of Aarhus lies a quite remarkable church complex dedicated today to the Virgin Mary ("Our Lady" or *Vor Frue* in Danish). In the Middle Ages, it lay just outside the west gate of the city (fig. 12.1).



Fig. 12.1: Vor Frue Church, view from south-east. Photo: National Museum of Denmark, Kirsten Trampedach.

[1] Any person who works with the Dominican Order in medieval Scandinavia is indebted to the great work of Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen on the Order of Preachers in the North. This corpus includes numerous articles and the online *Diplomatarium OP Dacie* collection of source material. I would like to thank him for his invaluable advice on this article. I would also like to thank the Novo Nordisk Fonden for funding my research for this article. I would furthermore like to thank Marteinn Helgi Sigurðsson, Justin Kroesen, Frederik Thede Schmidt-Hansen, Richard Cole, Mona Solsø Holm, Michael Andersen, Dánial Magnusson Haraldsen, Anna de Capitani, and Kristin Kausland for all their help and advice. All errors are my own.

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Fig. 12.2: Altarpiece in Vor Frue Church Aarhus. Made c. 1525–1529 by the workshop of Claus Berg in Odense. Photo: Vor Frue Kirke, Aarhus.

Now split between a Lutheran church and a retirement home, before the Reformation this complex formed the Dominican Priory of St Nicholas. Today it is one of the best-preserved medieval Dominican convents still surviving in Scandinavia, with the church, chapter house, sacristy, and a large part of the cloisters surviving. When one enters the church through the west door in the medieval tower and walks up the nave, one of the greatest art treasures surviving from any Dominican house in Northern Europe greets the onlooker (fig. 12.2). Here a monumental, gilded altarpiece dazzles the visitor with its powerful carved Golgotha scene and panoply of sculptures of saints. Included in this group of holy figures are those of the Dominican Order, namely St Dominic, St Thomas Aquinas, St Peter Martyr, St Catherine of Siena, and St Vincent Ferrer.

The great Aarhus altarpiece made by the workshop of Claus Berg just prior to the Reformation is the most complete testimony to Dominican saints and their iconography in Scandinavia, and thus forms the basis of this article. My recent research on the fourteenth century wall paintings in Birkerød Church near Copenhagen has shown that existing descriptions and identifications of Dominican saints in Scandinavia are often inconsistent.[2] Therefore, this article attempts to consider any problems of misattribution in the altarpiece of the Pri-

[2] Etheridge, Christian: "St Francis and St Dominic at the feet of St Peter and St Paul: Danish Mendicant Sponsorship of the Fourteenth Century Wall Murals in Birkerød Church", in *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture* 8 (2022), pp. 1–115.

ory of St Nicholas. Firstly, a brief historical overview of the Order of Preachers in Scandinavia will be given, followed by a succinct analysis of the iconography of the five Dominican saints mentioned above, after which the depictions of these saints in the Aarhus altarpiece will be looked at before arrving at a conclusion concerning their iconographical attributes.

2. The Dominican Order in Scandinavia

After an initial failure to set up a convent at Sigtuna in the Kingdom of Sweden in 1220 due to the reluctance of Archbishop Olof Basatömer of Uppsala (s. 1224–1234), the Dominicans were instead welcomed to the archdiocesan city of Lund, at that time part of the Kingdom of Denmark, in 1222 by Archbishop Anders Sunesen (s. 1201–1223), who gave them a house next to the cathedral. When Archbishop Olof died in 1234, his successor in Uppsala, Archbishop Jarler (s. 1236–1255) reversed the decision of his predecessor and established Dominican convents in all the Swedish dioceses. In fact, archbishop Jarler so revered the Dominican Order that he chose to be buried in the Dominican priory church in Lund.[3] During their rapid expansion in the thirteenth century, the Dominicans founded twenty-seven houses in Scandinavia. Sixteen of these were in the Kingdom of Denmark (one being in Estonia, then part of the realm), three in the Kingdom of Norway, and nine in the Kingdom of Sweden (one being in present-day Finland); two of these were nunneries.[4] The Dominican Province of Dacia thus covered all three Scandinavian kingdoms, while Nordic monarchs availed themselves of Dominican advisers, diplomats, and personal confessors.[5] The expansion of the Dominican Order slowed down in subsequent centuries with three more convents and a nunnery being built in Denmark together with a convent each in Sweden and Finland. The Dominican Order also influenced religious life in the North Atlantic region during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with four Dominican bishops serving in Iceland and one in the Faroe Islands, even though no convents were founded in either place.[6] The province of Dacia had several important centers of learning, such as the Dominican convent in Bergen, which had a *studium solemnium* or advanced school with two *lectores* documented as resident in the 1320s. The lectors' duties were to take

[3] Jakobsen, Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig: "Who Ordered the Dominicans? Initiators behind Dominican Convent Foundations in Northern Europe, c. 1216–1350", in eds. Lars Bisgaard/Sigga Engsbro/Kurt Villads Jensen/Tore Nyberg: *Monastic Culture, The Long Thirteenth Century: Essays in Honour of Brian Patrick McGuire,* Odense 2014, pp. 240–267: 242–244. For the history of the Province of Dacia see Gallén, Jarl: *La Province de Dacie de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs. I: Histoire générale jusqu'au Grand Schisme*, Helsinki 1946.

[4] For the foundations of these convents see the relevant entries in *Diplomatarium OP Dacie*, ed. Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen, http://jggj.dk/DOPD.htm (accessed on 24 July 2024).

[5] Jakobsen 2014, pp. 254–257.

[6] For the career of the Icelandic Dominican bishop Jón Halldórsson see Etheridge, Christian: "Canon, Dominican and Brother: The Life and Times of Jón Halldórsson in Bergen", in ed. Gunnar Harðarson: *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt* (Northern World 91), Leiden/Boston 2021, pp. 7–40.

on novices and be responsible for the education of the friars. Brothers from smaller Dominican convents in Dacia were sent to Bergen to learn theology and philosophy.[7]

The Dominican Order had a significant influence on the liturgical life of Scandinavia in the Middle Ages.[8] By the end of the thirteenth century, the cults of both St Dominic and St Peter Martyr were established in the Province of Dacia.[9] However, the Franciscan Order and it's saints were more favoured in Scandinavia. Anna Nilsén has noted that St Francis himself was venerated more than St Dominic in the Swedish dioceses. For example, in the diocese of Västerås, the feast of the Franciscan founder had the liturgical rank of *duplex (double),* while his Dominican counterpart's commemoration was only of *simplex (single)* rank.[10] This would mean that St Francis had higher rank and his antiphons would be recited in full on his feast day as opposed to the partial intonation for St Dominic. The only exception to this rule was in the diocese of Turku, where the ranks were reversed.[11] The popularity of the Franciscan Order in Scandinavia as compared to the Dominicans can also be seen in surviving medieval murals from Sweden, where there are five times as many surviving images of St Francis than of St Dominic.[12] This is also reflected in the proportion of images of the mendicant founders in other parts of Scandinavia.[13] Jakobsen notes that the only recorded altars dedicated to St Dominic are documented from the convents of Kalmar and Tallinn, while the Stockholm convent held a public procession for St Dominic on his feast day in 1511.[14] However, six short years after this event Martin Luther published his ninety-five theses and set in motion a series of events that would spell the end of the mendicant orders in Scandinavia.

In 1519, a provincial chapter was held at the convent in Næstved on the island of Zealand, and Fr. Hans Nielsen was elected as the prior provincial, the last to be elected to this office in the Dominican province of Dacia before the

7 Hommedal, Alf Tore: "Monks, Nuns, Canons and Friars in Medieval Bergen", in eds. Manfred Gläser/Manfred Schneider: *Lübecker Kolloquium zur Stadtarchäologie im Hanseraum IX. Die Klöster,* Lübeck 2014, pp. 613–628: 624.

8 See for example the appearance of St Dominic in the Torstuna Missal made in Paris between 1320–1340 and used in the diocese of Uppsala; Björkvall, Gunilla: "The Construction and Liturgical Content of the Missal", in eds. Gunilla Björkvall/Olle Ferm/Mia Åkestam: *The Torstuna Missal: A Dominican Manuscript Produced in 14th Century France and its Fate in Sweden* (Runica et mediævalia. Facsimilia 1), Stockholm 2017, pp. 21–28.

9 Hallberg, Svante: "Petrus Martyrens död: ett sfragistiskt bidrag till helgonets äldre ikonografi", in *Fornvännen: Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research* 55 (1960), pp. 239–259: 240.

10 Nilsén, Anna: *Program och funktion i senmedeltida kalkmåleri: Kyrkmålningar i Mälarlandskapen och Finland 1400–1534*, Stockholm 1986, p. 434.

11 Heikkilä, Tuomas: "The Arrival and Development of Latin Literacy on the Edge of Europe: The Case of Medieval Finland", in eds. Lars Boje Mortensen /Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen/Alexandra Bergholm: *The Performance of Christian and Pagan Storyworlds: Non-Canonical Chapters of the History of Nordic Medieval Literature* (Medieval Identities: Socio-Cultural Spaces 3), Turnhout 2013, pp. 67–108: 82–91.

12 Nilsén, 1986, pp. 434–435.

13 Etheridge 2022.

14 Jakobsen 2019a, p. 195.

Reformation.[15] Research by Jakobsen, as indicated above, has shown that there was no significant dip in support among the Dominicans in Denmark in the first few decades of the sixteenth century. However, support now mainly came from the monarchy, nobility, secular clergy, and the wealthiest of the rural peasantry. Since the 1460s, the reform movement in the Order of Preachers had severed many personal ties with local burgher families, and urban support for the Dominicans had subsequently dropped.[16] When the support of the monarchy, along with that of much of the nobility, shifted away from Catholicism to Lutheranism, there were no longer any significant protectors for the mendicants in Scandinavia. The Baltic Sea convents began to be closed from 1524 onwards, with Tallinn being the first one in the province of Dacia to close in 1525. The year 1527 proved to be momentous for the Dominican Order in Scandinavia. That year, a Dominican friar traveling between the convents of Vejle and Viborg (each about seventy kilometers from Aarhus to the south-west and north-west respectively) was attacked by two of King Frederick I's (r. 1523–1533) men, being hacked to pieces in the brutal attack.[17] On January 6th of that year, the first Dominican convent in the Danish realm was closed, this was Haderslev in the Duchy of Schleswig. Meanwhile, on June 25th–27th in 1527, severe restrictions were introduced in Sweden by King Gustav I Vasa (r. 1523–1560). The following year, more convents were closed in Denmark and Sweden. In 1529 the hammer fell on the convent in Aarhus and the brothers left. In 1536 during the October 30th Copenhagen Recess, King Christian III (r. 1534–1559) abolished Catholicism in favor of Lutheranism. The Church Ordinance of September 2nd, 1537 prohibited mendicant monasticism, and the last Dominican convents in Denmark were dissolved, thus ending the three hundred year history of the Dominican Province of Dacia.

Of the thirty-two Dominican convents and nunneries in Dacia, only the churches of the convents of Aarhus, Ribe, Sigtuna, Viborg, and Tallinn, and of the nunnery of Gavnø, survive today. Of these, only Aarhus and Sigtuna have surviving images of Dominican saints. However, there are also some images on seals surviving from the convents of Skänninge, Strängnäs, and Västerås , as well as from the nunnery that was also founded at Skänninge. Fortunately, medieval images of Dominican saints survive today in twenty-six Scandinavian churches: nineteen from the Kingdom of Sweden, six from the Kingdom of Denmark, and one from the Kingdom of Norway. Of these, the images found in the Priory of St Nicholas in Aarhus are the most complete. Before moving on to the surviving images of St Dominic, St Thomas Aquinas, St Peter Martyr, St Catherine of Siena, and St Vincent Ferrer, let us first examine the key iconographic features of each saint before looking at how they were depicted in Scandinavia.[18]

[15] Jakobsen, Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig: "The Dominicans and the Reformation in Northern Europe", in eds. Per Seesko/Louise Nyholm Kallestrup/Lars Bisgaard: *The Dissolution of Monasteries: The Case of Denmark in a Regional Perspective*, Odense 2019, pp. 75–104: 75 (= 2019b).

[16] Jakobsen 2019b, pp. 77–79.

[17] *Diplomatarium OP Dacie*, ed. Jakobsen, 1527.

[18] Jakobsen 2019b, pp. 94–97.

3. Dominican Art

Initially, St Dominic did not have a cult, and the Dominicans avoided any kind of iconic art in the first few years following his death. However, the earliest images of St Dominic, which are found in Santa Maria della Mascarella, the first Dominican friary in Bologna, already date from c. 1230–1240. Legislation issued in 1254 and in 1256 urged Dominican churches to display images of St Dominic and St Peter Martyr. Later in the same century, St Thomas Aquinas stressed that art could excite devotion, and so by the fourteenth century, Dominican art became more profuse.[19] Amy Neff emphasizes that a mendicant saint's portrait was both a visual aid to help preachers and to also assist inner prayer and meditation.[20]

3.1 The Iconography of St Dominic

Domingo Félix de Guzmán (1170–1221), founder of the Dominican Order, was canonized in 1234 by Pope Gregory IX (r. 1227–1241).[21] As St Dominic he is represented iconographically wearing the habit and tonsure of the Order that he founded. A common attribute found on images of St Dominic is a lily flower that he holds in his hand, which refers to his chastity. Several other characteristics that appear in the iconography of St Dominic are noted in the *Legenda Aurea*. In one story, St Dominic's mother dreams that she will give birth to a dog with a torch in its mouth that will set fire to the fabric of the world.[22] In this case, the dog is a pun on the name of the order, *Dominicanus*, conflated with the phrase *domini canis* ("the dog of the lord"). Therefore, a dog, often with a burning flame, is a common symbol of St Dominic. Another story says that when St Dominic was a baby, his godmother saw a star on his forehead at his baptism, which she believed meant that he was to shed light on the world.[23] Therefore, a star often appears with St Dominic: either on his forehead, above his head, or on his doctor's hat if he is wearing one. The book and staff that according to the *Golden Legend* were given to St Dominic in a vision to preach with by St Peter and St Paul are other common attributes. In this vision, St Peter gave him a staff, and St Paul gave him a book and said, "Go forth and preach, for God has chosen you in this ministry."[24]

In Constantine of Orvieto's *Legenda Sancti Dominici* from 1246–1247, one story tells of St Dominic and a church: Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216), in

[19] Kennedy, Trinita: "Sanctity Pictured: The Art of The Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 1–18: 9–16.

[20] Neff, Amy: "Painting, Devotion and The Franciscans", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 33–46: 42.

[21] Jakobsen 2019a, p. 194.

[22] Jacobus de Voragine: *Legenda aurea 113,* ed. and trans. William Granger Ryan, Princeton 2012, pp. 430–431.

[23] Jacobus de Voragine *Legenda aurea 113,* p. 431.

[24] Jacobus de Voragine *Legenda aurea 113,* p. 433.

a dream, is said to see St Dominic save the papal church on the Lateran from collapsing by supporting it with his body.[25] According to Amber McAlister, this became a popular theme appearing in churches, altarpieces, and manuscript illuminations of St Dominic.[26] A later attribute is a rosary supposedly given to him by the Virgin Mary. McAlister notes that the observance of the rosary began towards the end of the fifteenth century with the Dominican Alain de la Roche, who preached that the rosary was given to St Dominic by the Virgin Mary as a devotional item. By 1478, a papal indulgence had been given to those who used the rosary in prayer.[27]

3.2 The Iconography of St Peter Martyr

Also known as Peter of Verona, St Peter Martyr (1205–1252) was canonized by Pope Innocent IV (r. 1243–1254) in 1253, one year after his martyrdom. His attributes are his Dominican habit, with a book in one hand and a martyr's palm in the other. Most depictions show him with a sword in his skull and a dagger in his chest. These attributes are quite clearly seen in the panel painting of St Peter Martyr from the altarpiece of Uggdal Church in Vestland in Norway, made in Northern Germany, c. 1520 and now in the University Museum of Bergen (fig. 12.3).[28] In a gradual made around 1270–1280, probably in Naples and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the saint's martyrdom is displayed with his major iconographic features and four key figures. The assassins hired by the Cathar heretics whom St Peter Martyr was trying to convert are on the left; their names were Carino de Balsamo and Alberto Porro da Lentate and they are armored, carrying buckler shields and wielding



Fig. 12.3: St Peter Martyr depicted on the altarpiece (MA 193) from Uggdal, Norway. Made c. 1520 in Northern Germany. Photo: Universitetsmuseet i Bergen, Adnan Icagic.

25 Constantinus de Urbe Vetere: *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, ed. Heribert C. Scheeben, in *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica* 16 (1935), 261–352: 301–302.

26 McAlister, Amber: "36: Cutting from a Gradual, Initial A with Saint Dominic Saving the Church of Saint John Lateran, Mid-Fifteenth Century", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 173–174.

27 McAlister, Amber: "47: (a) Group of Men with Rosaries, probably between 1481 and 1487/(b) Group of Women with Rosaries, probably between 1481 and 1487", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 199–201: 199.

28 Engelstad, Eivind S.: *Senmiddelalderens kunst i Norge*, Oslo 1936, pp. 225–226. See also Kroesen, Justin/Kuhn, Stephan, eds.: *The Medieval Church Art Collection: University Museum of Bergen* (*Norway*), Regensburg 2022, cat. 99, pp. 208–209.

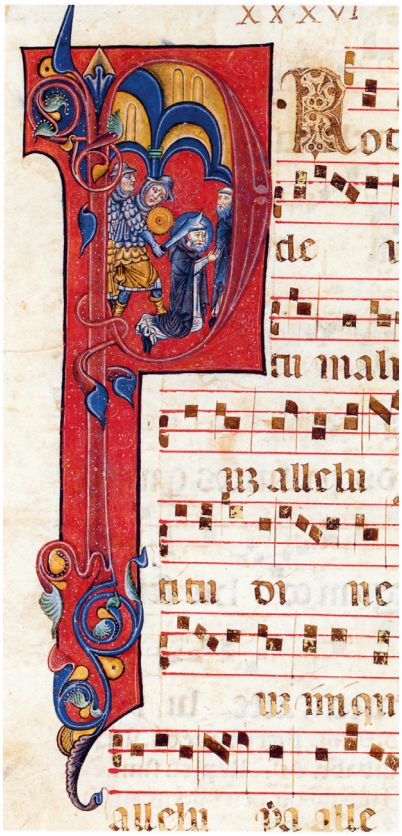

Fig. 12.4: Manuscript Leaf (2005.273) with the *Martyrdom of St Peter Martyr* in an Initial P, from a Gradual. Made c. 1270–1280, probably in Naples. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 12.5: Woodcut (1964.8.33) of St Thomas Aquinas. Made c. 1460–1480 in Venice. Photo: National Gallery of Art in Washington.

falchion blades. To the right is St Peter Martyr and *frater* Dominic. Here, Carino uses his falchion blade to split St Peter Martyr's skull (fig. 12.4). Trinita Kennedy has shown that this image bears strong similarities to the earlier martyrdom of St Thomas Becket in 1170 (canonized in 1173).[29] In the panel painting by Gherardo di Giovanni (di Miniato) del Fora (1445–1497) and now kept in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, St Peter Martyr is shown with three crowns. Holly Flora has indicated that they are the triple crown of the martyr, virgin, and doctor.[30]

[29] Kennedy, Trinita: "9 (a) Leaf from a Gradual: Initial P with the Martyrdom of Saint Peter Martyr, ca. 1270–80/(b) Leaf from a Gradual: Initial I with the Translation of the Body of Saint Dominic, ca. 1270–80", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy*, Nashville 2014, pp. 108–110: 108–109.

[30] Flora, Holly: "Saint Mary Magdalen between Saint Peter Martyr and Saint Catherine of Siena, probably ca. 1475" in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy*, Nashville 2014, pp. 197–198: 198 (= 2014a).

3.3 The Iconography of St Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) was canonized in 1323, and the attributes associated with him are a book, a light shining from his chest, and a monstrance. Rangsook Yoon has cited an example of a Venetian woodcut from 1460–1480, now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, that depicts St Thomas Aquinas holding up a book in his hand with light shining behind it (fig. 12.5). In this image the saint points to a passage from Wis 7:7, "I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me" (*Invocavi et venit in me spiritus sapientiae*). This is part of the liturgical reading for St Thomas Aquinas's feast day on March 7th. The light radiating from St Thomas Aquinas comes from a vision of Albertanus of Brescia. In this vision, Albertanus was praying at an altar of the Virgin Mary



Fig. 12.6: Panel painting (Cat. 101) of *Saint Thomas Aquinas Submitting His Office of Corpus Domini to Pope Urban IV.* Made by Taddeo di Bartolo c. 1403 in Siena. Photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

when St Thomas Aquinas appeared to him with a glowing precious stone in his chest. This signified St Thomas Aquinas's righteous spirit in defending the faith.[31] St Thomas Aquinas is sometimes shown with a monstrance representing his doctrine of transubstantiation. This stems from an incident in 1264 when Pope Urban IV (r. 1261–1264) requested that Thomas Aquinas compose the liturgical office for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The feast celebrated the real presence of Christ's body within the Communion host. This event as described in detail by Sheri Saneyfelt is depicted in a scene of St Thomas presenting his office to Pope Urban IV from a panel painting made by Taddeo di Bartolo (1362/63–1422) around 1403 and now kept at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (fig. 12.6).[32]

3.4 The Iconography of St Vincent Ferrer

Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419) was a Spanish Dominican friar who was canonized in 1455.[33] Mark J. Zucker points out that images of St Vincent Ferrer were and often are confused with those of St Dominic, or indeed other male Dominican saints by scholars. This is due to male Dominican saints being depicted in late medieval and early Renaissance art as friars wearing the black and white habit of the Order and holding books. The key to understanding which Dominican is St Vincent Ferrer, Zucker notes, is the inscription written in the book that the saint is holding. In images of St Vincent Ferrer, the saint most often points to the passage *Timete Deum et date illi onorem quia venit hora* taken from Rev 14:7.[34]

Zucker notes that the work of art historian Creighton E. Gilbert was instrumental in this analysis. Gilbert analyzed a late-fifteenth-century Italian panel painting of a Dominican created c. 1480 by Lorenzo d'Alessandro da San Severino (c. 1445–1501) and now held at the Yale University Art Gallery. This figure had previously been misattributed to St Antonius, a Dominican archbishop of Florence (s. 1446–1459). Gilbert showed that the Domincan holds a book open with the relevant passage from Revelation (fig. 12.7).[35] Zucker further notes that St Vincent Ferrer is often shown pointing to an image of the resurrected Christ. This is from his sermon on the Last Judgement at Salamanca or possibly from his time preaching at Perpignan. Zucker gives as an example a panel painting now in the Hermitage in St Petersburg and made by Sandro Botticelli or his school. Here, St Vincent Ferrer, earlier misidentified as St Dominic, is pointing

[31] Yoon, Rangsook: "43 (a) Saint Dominic, 1460–80/(b) Saint Thomas Aquinas, 1460–80", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 189–191: 190.

[32] Saneyfelt, Sheri: "33 (a) Saint Thomas Aquinas Submitting his Office of Corpus Domini to Pope Urban IV, ca. 1403/(b) Saint Dominic Revives Napoleone Orsini, ca. 1403", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 164–167: 165–166.

[33] Zucker, Mark J.: "Problems in Dominican Iconography: The Case of St Vincent Ferrer", in *Artibus et Historiae* 25 (1992), pp. 181–193: 181.

[34] The full passage reads *Dicens magna voce timete Deum et date illi honorem quia venit hora iudicii eius* (Saying with a loud voice: Fear the Lord and give him honor, because the hour of his judgment is come).

[35] Zucker 1992, p. 181. Gilbert, Creighton: "An Addition to Lorenzo d'Alessandro da San Severino" in *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 40 (1987), pp. 20–25.



Fig. 12.7: St Vincent Ferrer in a panel painting (1937.341) of *Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus with Saints and Angel*. Made by Lorenzo d'Alessandro c. 1480 in Marche.
Photo: Yale University Art Gallery.

up to an image of Christ in the heavens.[36] Therefore, we can see that the attributes of St Vincent Ferrer are the pointing to Rev 14:7 in a book and pointing to a figure of the resurrected Christ.

3.5 The Iconography of St Catherine of Siena

St Catherine (1347–1380) was the daughter of a cloth dyer in the city of Siena, and at the age of sixteen, she joined a local community of female penitents.

[36] Zucker 1992, p. 183.

They were known as *mantellate* or wearers of the Dominican habit, but not as nuns. St Catherine of Siena ministered to the poor and sick, and in her later life, she became involved and was influential in ecclesiastical politics. She was canonized in 1461 by Pope Pius II (r. 1458–1464), himself a native of Siena. Flora notes that the Dominican Order had their equivalent of the female Franciscan St Clare of Assisi from this point on.[37] St Catherine of Siena became popular amongst women as a helper against sickness and miscarriages.[38] The crown of thorns that she is often depicted as wearing came from a passage taken from Raymond of Capua's (c. 1330–1399) biography of the saint, compiled in 1395. In it, St Catherine refused a golden crown and instead wore a crown of thorns like Christ.[39] St Catherine of Siena is also depicted in art with her attributes of a lily, which symbolizes her purity, and the crucifix, which is the symbol of the crucified Christ.[40]

Another important symbol of St Catherine of Siena is the habit of the Dominican Order.[41] One of the most significant depictions of her life is the series of panels painted by Giovanni di Paolo (c. 1403–1482) in the 1460s and believed to be from an altarpiece that stood in the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena. The eight surviving panels form the earliest artistic depiction of the saint's life and date from around the time of her canonization.[42] These scenes are also based on the biography of Raymond of Capua and are important visual indications for the saint's later iconography. In one scene, now held at the Cleveland Museum of Art, St Catherine of Siena has a vision of three saints: St Dominic, St Francis, and St Augustine, who all offer her a habit of their respective orders (fig. 12.8). St Catherine chooses the Dominican habit and rejects the other two. Flora notes that dress, such as the Dominican habit, is extremely important for female saints as it shows their repudiation of the vanity of fashion.[43]

St Catherine was also depicted as having a mystical connection with Christ which involved her receiving stigmata. This never appears in the saint's own writings, but again comes from her biographer Raymond of Capua. The depiction of St Catherine's stigmata was controversial, especially amongst the Franciscans who believed that St Francis was the only true stigmatic. In 1472, Pope Sixtus IV (r. 1471–1484), a Franciscan, prohibited references to St Catherine's

37 Flora, Holly: "Order, Gender and Image: Art for Dominican and Franciscan Women", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 63–76: 65 (= 2014b).

38 Jakobsen 2019a, p. 196.

39 Kennedy, Trinita: "34: The Procession to Calvary, 1437–44" in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 168–170: 170. Raymundus Capuanis: *Legenda sanctae Catharinae Senensis* II, 3, ed. and trans. Conleath Kearns, Wilmington 1980, pp. 151–152.

40 Flora 2014a, p. 198.

41 Flora 2014b, p. 66.

42 Flora, Holly: "42 (a) Saint Catherine of Siena Invested with the Dominican Habit, 1460s/ (b) Saint Catherine of Siena and the Beggar, 1460s", in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 186–188: 186–187 (= 2014c).

43 Flora 2014c, p. 187.



Fig. 12.8: Predella panel painting from an altarpiece showing *St. Catherine of Siena Invested with the Dominican Habit.* Made by Giovanni di Paulo c. 1460–1469 in Siena. Gift of the John Huntington Art and Polytechnic Trust 1966.2. Photo: Cleveland Museum of Art.

stigmata in sermons or images.[44] Flora notes that the Franciscans led a long campaign to have the images of this be repressed, further stating that images of St Catherine of Siena receiving stigmata are rare outside of her home city of Siena. She mentions the example of the panel painting by Domenico Beccafumi (1484–1551), painted c. 1513–1515 and now held at the Getty Museum (fig.

[44] Flora 2014b, p. 68.



Fig. 12.9: Panel painting (97.PB.26) of *The Miraculous Communion of Saint Catherine of Siena.* Made by Domenico Beccafumi c. 1513–1515 in Siena. Photo: Getty Museum.

12.9). In this painting, beams of light strike St Catherine of Siena's body from a crucifix before which she is praying. The beams strike her on the hands, feet, and side. Flora notes that Beccafumi's painting, following Raymond of Capua's account, shows the saint being struck by Christ's spear wound straight on, rather than on the right side, where St Francis was struck.[45]

3.6 Multiple Dominican Saints Depicted Together

In addition to individual appearances of Dominican saints in medieval art, there are notable occasions where multiple Dominican saints appear together, as in the Aarhus altarpiece. An important example from roughly the same time of the Aarhus altarpiece created by the workshop of Claus Berg is the painting of the *Genealogical Tree of the Dominican Order* executed by the Bernese Carnation Master (fl. 1479–1510) in 1495 for the chancel screen of the Dominican convent (now the French Reformed Church) in Bern, Switzerland.[46] Here St Dominic is

[45] Flora, Holly: "Saint Catherine of Siena Receiving the Stigmata, ca. 1513–15" in ed. Trinita Kennedy: *Sanctity Pictured: The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy,* Nashville 2014, pp. 214–215.

[46] See Gutscher-Schmid, Charlotte: Nelken statt Namen: Die spätmittelalterlichen Malerwerkstätten der Berner Nelkenmeister, Bern 2007, pp. 97–100 and 215–218. See also Opitz, Christian Nikolaus: "Genealogical Representations of Monastic Communities in Late Medieval Art", in eds. Eirik Hovden/Christina Lutter/ Walter Pohl: *Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia: Comparative Approaches* (Brill's Series on the Early Middle Ages 25), Leiden/Boston 2016, pp. 183–202: 185–191.



Fig. 12.10: Chancel screen painting of the *Genealogical Tree of the Dominican Order*. Made by the Bernese Carnation Master c. 1495 in Bern. Photo: Olivier Schopfer.

depicted in his sleep. Growing from his body is a tree with branches each terminating in a red flower, on which a Dominican saint sits (fig. 12.10). In the centre of the tree are the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. The iconography of this image is based on the Tree of Jesse, of which a fine example can be found on another part of the same chancel screen also painted by the Bernese Carnation Master.

Charlotte Gutscher-Schmid notes that the models for these Dominican genealogical trees can be found in earlier woodcuts. Christian Nikolaus Opitz gives an example of such a woodcut based on a series of now lost frescoes painted in the cloister of the Dominican convent of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome and published in the *Meditationes* by the Spanish Dominican Johannes de Turrecremata (1388–1468), first printed in Rome in 1467.[47] Gutscher-Schmid further notes the frescoes from the Chapter House in the Dominican convent of Treviso, completed by Tommaso da Modena (c. 1326–1379) in 1352, which shows forty saints of the Dominican Order.[48] To this, Opitz adds the example of the frescoes in the Cappella Spagnola in the Dominican convent of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, executed by Andrea Bonaiuti (1319–1377) in 1366–68, which also shows a large number of Dominican saints.[49] As a further example of multiple saints on an altarpiece I would add the well-known panel paintings by the Dominican artist Fra Angelico (1395–1455) for the high altar of the convent of San Domenico in Fiesole, just outside of Florence. Here the two pilasters of the predella, now kept in the National Gallery in London, show the eighteen blessed (bottom left of panel) and the seventeen blessed (bottom right) of the Dominican Order with two Dominican tertiaries respectively.[50] These examples illlustrate the iconography of large numbers of Dominican saints, which is extant in frescoes, panel paintings, and printed books from the early 16th century. They therefore provide a rich source for the iconography of the Aarhus altarpiece.

4. The Priory of St Nicholas in Aarhus

The bishopric of Aarhus is one of the oldest in Scandinavia with Bishop Reginbrand being recorded as in attendence at the Synod of Ingelheim in 948. The diocese took its medieval form under the reforms of King Svend II Estridsen (r. 1047–1076) in 1060. The crypt of of the 11th century cathedral survives today beneath the medieval Dominican convent.[51] In 1203, the then Bishop Peder Vognsen (s. 1191–1204) chose a new site for the cathedral a few hundred metres further to the east of the old site. Once the new cathedral had been built, the old site lay vacant until it was occupied by the Dominican Order. The first writ-

47 Gutscher-Schmid 2007, p. 100 and Opitz 2016, pp. 191–193.

48 Gutscher-Schmid 2007, p. 100.

49 Opitz 2016, pp. 194–196.

50 See Strehlke, Carl Brandon: *Fra Angelico and the rise of the Florentine Renaissance*, London 2019, pp. 116–129.

51 Pajung, Stefan: "Krypten under Aarhus Vor Frue: inspiration fra Köln-området eller Flandern?", in *Århus Stifts årbøger* 94 (2011), pp. 92–96: 92.

ten source concerning the convent dates from 1246, when two friars were sent from the Aarhus house along with ten others by the provincial chapter in Ribe to the convent in Tallinn. These were Fr. Michael de Horsnes and Fr. Angelus from the convent of Aarhus.[52] Fr. Michael came from the modern-day town of Horsens, 45 km south of Aarhus. This shows both the local recruitment by the Dominicans and the international outreach of the Order of Preachers.

The archival material surviving from the Priory of St Nicholas is sparse. Still, enough survives to give us a sense of the extent of patronage over the years of its existence. The first example is from March 10th, 1304, when Lady Cecilie Nielsdatter of the noble and powerful Galen family gave money to several Dominican convents in Denmark including one mark in her testament to the Priory of St Nicholas in Aarhus and one mark personally to Fr. Thorstanus the Elder.[53] Further evidence of patronage from later in the fourteenth century comes from the powerful nobleman Stig Andersen Hvide (d. 1369), the eponymous grandson of the notorious *Marsk* ("marshall") Stig Andersen Hvide (d. 1293), who together with his wife Tove funded the building of the gothic vaulting in the Dominican church in the mid-fourteenth century. This act of donation can be seen in a surviving inscription which also shows Hvide kneeling in the donor position at the feet of the patron St Nicholas, while his family's coat of arms is depicted above his head.[54] The Dominican church in Aarhus is one of the richest in Denmark with regard to its heraldic display. These coats of arms appear in four rows of armorial friezes, three from the fourteenth century and one from 1515–1520. Among them are those of King Valdemar IV Atterdag (r. 1340–1375), great magnates such as Erik Nielsen Rosenkrantz (fl. 1355), and the coats of arms of other noble families.[55]

On October 28th, 1485, a wealthy farmer named Peder Michelsen from the nearby village of Skjoldelev donated 300 silver marks to Prior Thomas Johannis, the lector and subprior Georgius, and the entire convent of the Priory of St Nicholas in Aarhus. This was to allow for three perpetual masses for Peder and his family: one on Monday for All Christian souls, one on Tuesday for St Anne, and one on Friday for the Five Holy Wounds of Jesus Christ. Peder Michelsen and his wife Cecilie were also to be buried in the priory in the manner of the other brothers, in addition to being written into the book of souls and prayed for as long as the priory should stand.[56] In the choir is an inscription from 1490 that mentions that the same Prior Thomas Johannis was responsible for painting a mural there. This was probably the now overpainted Doomsday image dating from this time.[57] Up until the beginning of the sixteenth century, the complex of the Priory of St Nicholas was still expanding physically. On January 7th, 1499, Per Pedersen, a shoemaker from Aarhus, sold his vegetable garden and orchard

52 *Diplomatarium OP Dacie,* ed. Jakobsen, 1246.

53 *Diplomatarium OP Dacie,* ed. Jakobsen, 1304 10/3. See also Etheridge 2022, pp. 90–91 for analysis of Lady Cecilie's will and her donations to Danish mendicant houses.

54 *Danmarks Kirker XVI: Aarhus Amt,* eds. Vibeke Michelsen/Kield de Fine Licht, Copenhagen 1968–2008, p. 1005.

55 *Danmarks Kirker XVI,* pp. 1091–1097.

56 *Diplomatarium OP Dacie,* ed. Jakobsen, 1485 28/10.

57 *Danmarks Kirker XVI,* p. 1087.

to Prior Niels Pedersen Krag on behalf of the priory. This garden was situated between the priory and the nearby hospital of St Catherine.[58] The Dominican convent of Aarhus lasted until 1530, when it was sold to the Lutheran reformer King Frederick I (r. 1523–1533).[59] By c. 1540, the convent had become a hospital and nursing home.[60] Still surviving within the now Lutheran church are the great Dominican altarpiece and some interesting late medieval murals, all of which depict Dominican saints and to which we will now turn.

4.1 Decoration in the Priory around the Time the Altarpiece was Made

In the choir, a new series of murals were made between 1510–1520, perhaps in connection with the new altarpiece made by Claus Berg.[61] The mural consisted of a row of apostles painted on the north wall of the choir, while a corresponding row of saints was painted on the south wall. Unfortunately, all the figures are lost today except that of St Lawrence and some accompanying floral decorations.[62] However, the well-preserved mural of two Dominican saints can be found today on the south wall of the nave (fig. 12.11). They seem to have been painted around 1500–1525 and formed part of an altar for these saints.[63] Sissel F. Plathe identifies these saints, both of whom she notes as wearing Dominican habits, as probably being St Thomas Aquinas and St Peter Martyr. The St Thomas Aquinas figure has a walking staff in his right hand and in his left hand a little bag, while the image of St Peter Martyr has a little book held with book clasps in his right hand and a martyr's palm in his left. His skull is half cloven with a curved knife, and he has a dagger sticking in his chest.[64] Axel Bolvig believed that the figure to the right was St Peter Martyr, while the other figure was either St Thomas Aquinas or St Vincent Ferrer.[65] Ulla Haastrup further noted that in her opinion the figures are St Peter Martyr and St Dominic, as does the entry



Fig. 12.11: Wall painting of Dominican Saints, Vor Frue Church, Aarhus. Made c. 1500–1525. Photo: National Museum of Denmark, Kirsten Trampedach.

58 *Diplomatarium OP Dacie,* ed. Jakobsen, 1499 07/01.
59 *Danmarks Kirker XVI*, p. 1004.
60 *Danmarks Kirker XVI*, p. 1003.
61 See below at p. 218.
62 *Danmarks Kirker XVI*, p. 1088.
63 *Danmarks Kirker XVI*, p. 1006.
64 Plathe, Sissel F./Bruun, Jens, eds.: *Danmarks Middelalderlige Altertavler I–II*, Odense 2009, p. 1296.
65 Bolvig, Axel: *Politikens bog om Danmarks kalkmalerier*, Copenhagen 2002, p. 96

in *Danmarks Kirker*, but neither clearly explains why.[66]

Jakobsen reminds us, as noted above, that in 1256 the General Chapter ordered images of St Dominic and St Peter Martyr to be put in every church of the Order. Therefore, he concludes that these are the two saints that can be seen in the Aarhus mural.[67] Jakobsen further explains that confusion can occur, as for instance in some Swedish images of Dominican saints that can be seen in the former Dominican church in Sigtuna and the cathedral of Västerås. These images depict a friar holding a book, sometimes a cross and doctor's hat, which have been interpreted as St Dominic but which could also be St Thomas Aquinas.[68] My understanding of the mural in Aarhus is that the figure on the right is undoubtedly St Peter Martyr, whose iconography is relatively straightforward. One could compare this image to the contemporary image of St Peter Martyr from the altarpiece of the church in Uggdal mentioned above.[69] The figure on the left, I believe, is St Dominic. Closer inspection of the little bag held in his left hand as noted by Plathe shows that it is not just a little bag, but a girdle book. Therefore, the figure has the two key attributes St Peter and St Paul gave to him to help him preach with, namely the staff and the book. These attributes can be clearly seen in an engraving of St Dominic by the German artist Israhel van Meckenem (c. 1445–1503) that he made in c. 1470 and which is now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. (fig. 12.12).[70] Van Meckenem depicts St Dominic with a doctor's hat, book, and walking staff: the same attributes that can be found in the St Dominic image in Aarhus, even down to the shape of the walking staff.



Fig. 12.12: Engraving (1943.3.135) of St Dominic. Made by Israhel van Meckenem c. 1470 in Germany. Photo: National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

66 Haastrup, Ulla: "Danske kalkmalerier 1500–1536", in Ulla Haastrup: *Danske kalkmalerier: Sengotik 1500–1536,* Copenhagen 1992, pp. 14–75: 52; *Danmarks kirker XVI*, p. 1006.

67 Jakobsen 2019a, p. 195.

68 Jakobsen 2019a, p. 196.

69 Engelstad 1936, pp. 225–226.

70 Shestack, Alan: *Fifteenth Century Engravings of Northern Europe from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Exhibition Catalogue*, Washington, D.C. 1967, no. 159.



Fig. 12.13: Golgotha Scene from the altarpiece in Vor Frue Church, Aarhus. Made c. 1525–1529 by the workshop of Claus Berg in Odense. Photo: National Museum of Denmark, Jens Bruun.

4.2 The Altarpiece of the Priory of St Nicholas

The high altarpiece is a triptych that measures 227.5 x 228 x 21.5 cm and, in open position, contains a beautifully carved and gilded scene of Golgotha (fig. 12.13).[71] Sixteen saints flank this scene on the wings, with eight on each side in two rows: namely, St Nicholas, the church's patron saint; three Dominican saints; and the Twelve Apostles.[72] St John the Evangelist, St Paul, St Peter, and St Nicholas are on the north wing top row. St Bartholomew, St Philip, St James the Younger, and St Thomas Aquinas are on the north wing bottom row. St Dominic, St James the Elder, St Andrew, and St Judas Thaddaeus are on the south wing top row. Finally, St Peter Martyr, St Matthias, St Thomas, and St Matthew are on

[71] Described in Richter, Jan Friedrich: *Claus Berg: Retabelproduktion des Spätmittelalters im Ostseeraum*, Berlin 2007, p. 61.

[72] Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1294.



Fig. 12.14: Panel paintings in the everyday position from the altarpiece in Vor Frue Church, Aarhus. Made c. 1525–1529 by the workshop of Claus Berg in Odense. Photo: National Museum of Denmark, Jens Bruun.

the south wing bottom row.[73] The open position of the predella presents four Dominican saints, about which more will be said below.

The altarpiece in the everyday position has panel paintings on the wings (fig. 12.14).[74] St Anne, Mary, and the Christ Child are on the left wing, while the right wing shows St Olaf. In ordinary position, four scenes are depicted leading up to the coronation of the Virgin. These depict the coronation of the Virgin as queen of heaven, with Christ as judge of the world. Next to the Virgin Mary is Mary Magdalene, while next to Christ is John the Baptist. Below them is St Barbara sitting with St Catherine. St Barbara sits with a closed book while St Catherine sits with an open book. The final image is of St Christopher with the Christ Child and St Lawrence reading a book. [75] The predella in the ordinary position has four Church Fathers: St Jerome has a banderole that reads: "Je(re) mias atten(dite) (et) videte si est (d)olor si(mi)lis si(cut) dolor meus", from Lam 1:12 ; St Ambrose has a banderole that reads: "Isias Ipse vulne(ra)t(us) set p(ro)p(ter) iniq(ui)tates nostra(s)", from Isa 53:5; St Gregory has a banderole that reads: "Dauit super dolore(m) vulneru(m) meoru(m) addideru(n)t", from Ps 68:27; and St Augustine has a banderole that reads: "Zacha(ri)as dederunt in escam meam fel et in siti meo potaue(ru)nt me aceto", from Ps 68:22.[76]

[73] Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1295 and Richter 2007, p. 62.
[74] For description see Richter 2007, pp. 184–185.
[75] Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1295.
[76] Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1296.

4.3 The Maker of the Altarpiece

The altarpiece has been ascribed to the workshop of Claus Berg on the grounds of stylistic and technical criteria, as no written sources survive about its creation. Berg was an artist born in Lübeck in 1475 but who is named as a burgher of the Danish diocesan city of Odense in 1507.[77] His workshop created some of the greatest works of late medieval art in Denmark. His most monumental work is the great altarpiece made in 1515–1523 that now stands in the choir of Odense Cathedral but which had initially been in the Franciscan convent in the city.[78] Other dated works include the altarpiece in Tirstrup Church, forty kilometers east from Aarhus, and dated to 1522.[79] Another is the great crucifix made in 1527 for the Cistercian Abbey of Sorø on Zealand.[80] There are further stylistic connections to the altarpiece in Bregninge Church on Ærø dated to c. 1530.[81] The altarpiece in Sanderum Church on Funen is also stylistically connected to the Aarhus altarpiece although this is dated earlier to c. 1515.[82] Plathe dates the Aarhus altarpiece to c. 1530 on stylistic grounds.[83] At the same time, the entry in *Danmarks Kirker* lists the date as 1500–1525. [84] Jan Friedrich Richter dates the altarpiece from before 1530 to 1535.[85] The dating will be discussed further below, but first, we will look at the depictions of the Dominican saints on the altarpiece.

4.4 Scholarship on the Dominican Saints Found on the Altarpiece

The Dominican saints on the wings can be straightforwardly identified since they are named. We begin with the statue of St Thomas Aquinas (S[anc]t[us] tomas) on the north wing bottom row standing with tonsure, in a Dominican habit and holding a book. The statue of St Dominic (S[anc]t[us] dom[in]ic[us]) is to be found on the south wing top row with Dominican habit, tonsure, holding a book, and with a dog at his feet. Finally, the statue of St Peter Martyr (S[anc]t[us] petrus) is found on the south wing bottom row with a tonsure, Dominican habit, and cloven bleeding head (fig. 12.2).[86] The saints on the predella are not named and thus have been far harder to identify especially as the male Dominicans all look alike (figs. 12.15 and 12.16).

77 For his life and historiography see Richter 2007, pp. 11–14.

78 See Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 717. For a detailed description see Christensen, Lars: *Claus Bergs fynske altertavler*, Odense 2018, pp. 47–128. For a full interpretation of the iconography of this altarpiece see Rasmussen, Jørgen Nybo: *Claus Bergs kongelige altertavle og franciskanerne*, Copenhagen 1996, pp. 46–93.

79 Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1023.

80 *Danmarks kirker XVI*, p. 1138.

81 Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 144. For a detailed description see Christensen 2018, pp. 129–156.

82 Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 854. For a detailed description see Christensen 2018, pp. 15–46.

83 Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1294.

84 *Danmarks kirker XVI*, pp. 1122–1126.

85 Richter 2007, p. 367; on the different dating methods used by scholars see *ibid.*, pp. 63–66.

86 Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1295.




Figs. 12.15 and 12.16: Predella paintings showing St Vincent Ferrer and St Catherine of Siena (left), and St Thomas Aquinas and St Dominic (right). From the altarpiece in Vor Frue Church, Aarhus. Made c. 1525-1529 by the workshop of Claus Berg in Odense. Photos: National Museum of Denmark, Jens Bruun.

Plathe has interpreted the four saints on the predella as follows. The first saint she believes is St Vincent Ferrer, pointing to a picture of Christ as judge on Doomsday. He wears a Dominican habit and is tonsured. Next to him is St Catherine of Siena, depicted as wearing a Dominican nun's habit. She has a crown of thorns and is bleeding. She has a wound on her side, and in her left hand is holding a heart, while in her right hand, she is holding a nail. The third figure Plathe believes is possibly St Thomas Aquinas, who is tonsured and wearing a Dominican habit. She notes that he has two burning hearts in his hands, one of which is almost consumed by the flames. The final figure is St Dominic, also tonsured and wearing a Dominican habit. He has an open book and a processional crucifix in his hands. A dragon-like creature is by his feet instead of his more common attribute, a dog.[87] Richter follows Plathe on the ordering of the saints on the predella.[88] Jakobsen identifies the same four saints as Plathe and Richter, but sees a different order (from left to right): St Thomas Aquinas, St Catherine of Siena, St Vincent Ferrer, and St Dominic.[89]

4.5 A Revised Interpretation of the Dominican Saints on the Altarpiece

The first saint from left to right is, I believe, St Vincent Ferrer, who is pointing not to the text of Rev 14:7 as is the most common interpretation but instead is pointing to an image of Christ in his role as the judge of the Apocalypse (fig. 12.15). Here Christ has a lily coming out of the right-hand side of his mouth and a sword coming out of the left. The lily represents his mercy and the sword his judgment or righteousness. Christ sits on a rainbow with his feet upon the earth. The image of the sword comes from Rev 1:16, "And from his mouth came out a sharp two-edged sword. And his face was as the sun shineth in his power" (*et de ore eius gladius utraque parte acutus exiebat et facies eius sicut sol lucet in virtute*

87 Plathe/Bruun 2009, p. 1296.
88 Richter 2007, p. 185.
89 Jakobsen 2019a, p. 197.



Fig. 12.17: Panel painting (64.215) of the Sermon of St Albertus Magnus. Made c. 1470–1490 by the circle of Friedrich Walther in Nordlingen. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

sua). An analogy to this is the image titled *Sermon of Saint Albertus Magnus* from the circle of Friedrich Walther (c. 1430–1495), dated ca. 1470–1490 and held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 12.17).[90] Although this image is entitled "St Albertus Magnus", following the criteria laid out by Zucker—although not in his examples—it is possible to see that the person depicted is instead St Vincent Ferrer, as he points to the same image from Revelation.[91] This would also explain some of the other scenes in this painting, such as the figures coming to life and the child in two halves as miracles associated with St Vincent Ferrer.[92] The figure of St Vincent Ferrer points to the same image of Christ as the judge on Judgement Day as does the figure of St Vincent Ferrer on the predella in Aarhus, on which the saint is sitting next to St Catherine of Siena, who is unmistakable as the only female Dominican saint. This makes a good pairing as they are more recent Dominican saints, both canonized around the mid-fifteenth century. One important thing to note here is the stigmata that St Catherine of Siena has received, namely the wound on the right-hand side of her chest (fig. 12.15). As stated above, the depictions of stigmata were forbidden by Pope Sixtus IV and only occasionally appeared in Siena, the center of her cult. This is not the case in Scandinavia. Besides the Aarhus predella, St Catherine of Siena's stigmata can be seen in a wall painting—now lost—and in a panel painting from Sweden as well as in a possible wall painting in Finland. The lost wall painting is from Tegelsmora Church in Uppland and was painted by Erik Östensson in

90 Husband, Timothy B.: "54. Sermon of Saint Albertus Magnus" in eds. Maryan W. Ainsworth/Joshua P. Waterman: *German Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350–1600,* New Haven/London 2013, pp. 232–234.

91 Zucker 1992, p. 181.

92 See Smoller, Laura Ackerman: *The Saint and the Chopped-Up Baby: The Cult of Vincent Ferrer in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Ithaca/London 2014.



Fig. 12.18: Panel painting of St Catherine of Siena. Made c. 1500–1525 by Haaken Gulleson in Forsa Church in Hälsingland. Photo: Lennart Karlsson.



Fig. 12.19: Manuscript illumination of St Dominic, MS Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ludwig IX 18 (83.ML.114). Made c. 1510–1520 by the Master of James IV of Scotland in Bruges or Ghent. Photo: Getty Museum.

1504.[93] The wall painting was lost in the nineteenth century but not before it was copied and published by Nils Månsson Mandelgren.[94] It shows St Catherine pointing to the stigmata wound in the same way that the Aarhus image does. Likewise, a mural from Turku Cathedral in Finland shows St Catherine of Siena, where there are no stigmata, but she points with her finger to the area of the wound. This was painted by an unknown artist between 1470–1490.[95] The final image of St Catherine of Siena is from an altarpiece in Forsa Church in Hälsingland (fig. 12.18). This panel was painted in 1500–1525 by Haaken Gulleson and shows St Catherine of Siena before she received the Dominican habit, just like in the mural in Turku. In the Forsa painting, she is receiving full stigmata.[96]

My interpretation would then continue to the next panel (fig. 12.16), and I would identify these figures as St Thomas Aquinas to the left, with St Dominic to the right. St Dominic has all his attributes such as the cross, book, and sitting on the Devil. These attributes can be seen in the contemporary miniature of Saint Dominic illuminated by the Master of James IV of Scotland (c. 1465–1541)

93 Nilsén 1986, p. 141.

94 Mandelgren, Nils Månsson: *Monuments Scandinaves du Moyen Âge: Avec les Peintures et Autres Ornements qui les Décorent*, Paris 1862.

95 Hiekkanen, Markus: *Finlands medeltida stenkyrkor*, Stockholm 2020, p. 269.

96 Andersson, Aron: *Medieval Wooden Sculpture in Sweden, Volume III: Late Medieval Sculpture*, Uppsala 1980, p. 257.

in the *Spinola Hours* in Ghent or Bruges (c. 1510–1520; fig. 12.19).[97] The other figure in the Aarhus predella shows no signs of any head wounds, so I do not believe it to be St Peter Martyr; it may very well therefore be St Thomas Aquinas. In the hands of St Thomas Aquinas are on the right a flaming tongue, the symbol of St Vincent Ferrer, and on the left the heart, the symbol of St Catherine of Siena. The symbols on the right-hand panel mirror the sitting positions of St Vincent Ferrer and St Catherine of Siena on the left-hand panel. Therefore, my interpretation of the predella as a whole would be that St Thomas Aquinas is showing the symbols of the younger Dominican saints to the head of the Order who is raising his hand in approval while looking up to heaven. The devil beneath St Dominic is glaring at the symbols of these great Dominican saints as he knows that they will help to destroy him and all his nefarious works.

5. Conclusion

The altarpiece is very interesting if we look at its context chronologically. Previous scholarship has given a date of c. 1530 for its creation. The 1520s were a critical time for the Dominicans in Denmark. Their brothers in Sweden and Schleswig had already begun to have been expelled from their houses. It would only be a few years until the Lutheran ax fell on the Dominicans in Denmark. The altar must have been of paramount importance for the Dominicans as a symbol of their faith and a storehouse of iconography during the growth of Lutheranism. However, due to the Dominicans being expelled from their convent in 1530, the altarpiece must be dated to the years before this, possibly 1525–1529. The eve of the Reformation also involved a new mural in the church in Aarhus with Dominican saints and the now lost images of the apostles and saints, all dating to the same time. It is tempting to see all these murals as supporting the great altarpiece in an iconographic display which would act as a shoring up of their faith in the era of Lutheran reform. Jørgen Nybo Rasmussen has noted something similar with the great Franciscan altarpiece in Odense, also made by Claus Berg.[98] Therefore, one could speculate that the Dominicans of Aarhus would have heard of the Franciscan altarpiece and would have commissioned Claus Berg to make a similar one for them depicting all five of the Dominican saints found in Scandinavia, including St Catherine of Siena with her peculiar Scandinavian iconography of stigmata.

[97] Kren, Thomas/Teviotdale, Elizabeth C./Cohen, Adam S./Barstow, Kurds: *Masterpieces of the J. Paul Getty Museum: Illuminated Manuscripts*, Los Angeles 1997, p. 117.

[98] Rasmussen 1996.