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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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Archa Verbi
Subsidia, Vol. 24

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Yearbook for the Study of
Medieval Theology

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Annuarium Societatis Internationalis
pro Studiis Theologiae Medii Aevi promovendis

Annuaire de la Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Théologie Médiévale
Annuario della Società Internazionale per lo Studio della Teologia Medievale
Anuario de la Sociedad Internacional para los Estudios de la Teología Medieval
Jahrbuch der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Theologische Mediävistik
Yearbook of the International Society for the Study of Medieval Theology

Subsidia

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1. Auflage 2025

© 2025 The editors and authors. A publication by Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Münster
This book is part of the Aschendorff Verlag Open Access program.

Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG
Soester Straße 13
D-48155 Münster
buchverlag@aschendorff-buchverlag.de
www.aschendorff-buchverlag.de

ISSN 1865–2964
ISBN 978-3-402-10333-3 (Print)
ISBN 978-3-402-10334-0 (ePDF)
https://doi.org/10.17438/978-3-402-22688-9

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Just a Quarrel of Monks? Dominicans, Augustinians and the Early Reformation

Volker Leppin

It is commonly assumed in Reformation research that Pope Leo X saw the Reformation as nothing more than a "quarrel of monks" ("Mönchsgezänk"),[1] sometimes referred to as *rixae monachiales*.[2] As well-known as this quote seems to be, its foundation is equally slippery. Not only is Leo said to have spoken about this quarrel of monks, but some reports attribute this phrase to the knight Ulrich von Hutten as well. The reference here at least is easy to find: in his letter to Hermann of Neuenahr, Hutten praises Reuchlin and speaks of the contention about the Hebraist's works in connection with the new dispute coming from Wittenberg and spurred on by a monk.[3] In these words, one might find less excitement about Luther as compared to Hutten's admiration for the intellectual hero Reuchlin, but Hutten neither speaks here explicitly about something despicable, nor does he allude to it at all. As recent research has shown,[4] the remark is more neutral, maybe even disinterested in tone. It is not the historical person Ulrich von Hutten, but rather his representation on the 19th century stage, that would speak about the early Reformation with disregard as a pure quarrel of monks.[5]

This gives a slight hint that this idea in general might be more of an idea from the 19th century than from the 16th. Indeed, the same can be shown in the case of Pope Leo. It seems as if William Roscoe's biography of Pope Leo X was an important link to introduce the notion of "Mönchsgezänk" into nineteenth-century German historiography. The book, which recounts the first steps of the Reformation, refers to Leo's thinking of the Reformation as being mere "*invidie Fratesche*".[6] The footnote, presumably from the German editors,[7] cites the

1 See e.g., Schilling. Heinz: *1517. Weltgeschichte eines Jahres*. Munich 2017, p. 282. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Latin or Early Modern German are mine.

2 See Kalkoff, Paul: "Zu Luthers römischem Prozeß (Fortsetzung)", in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 32 (1911), pp. 199–258: 213–214.

3 Ulrich of Hutten: *Letter to Hermann von Neuenahr, April 3, 1518*, § 16, ed. Eduard Böcking: *Epistolae Vlrici Hvtteni equitis*, vol 1, Leipzig 1869, p. 167.

4 Wulfert, Heiko: *Die Kritik an Papsttum und Kurie bei Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523)* (Rostocker Theologische Studien 21), Münster 2009, pp. 204–208.

5 Ethé, Hermann: *Ulrich von Hutten. Historisches National-Drama in fünf Acten*, Leipzig 1870, p. 25: "Ein neuer Name strahlt auf meinen Fahnen, / Und Luther sei fortan das Feldgeschrei! Wie lange schaut ich spöttisch auf sein Treiben / Und hielt für nichtig eitles Mönchsgezänk / Wofür ich jetzt mein Alles freudig wage."

6 Roscoe, Wilhelm: *Leben und Regierung des Papstes Leo des Zehnten*, trad. Andreas F.G. Glaser, mit Anmerkungen von Heinrich Ph.K. Henke, vol. 2, Vienna 1818, pp. 375–376, note a.

7 The footnote is missing in chapter 15 of the original version (Roscoe, William: *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, vol. 3, Philadelphia 1806, pp. 169–222). Hence, Heinrich

doi.org/10.17438/978-3-402-22712-1

phrase from the exiled Huguenot Paul Colomiès, who in his *Recueil de Particularitez* of 1665 mentions a novel by Matteo Bandello containing exactly these words.[8] Bandello, in his preface to *Novella 25* from the third part of his novels, relates an episode about Leo X. After receiving the report of Silvester Prierias about Martin Luther, the pope, according to Bandello, attests the German reformer to be an outstanding mind ("bellissimo ingegno") and, as quoted above, stated that those contentions were mere "invidie Fratesche".[9]

Hence, the source for the papal quote is an impressive piece of Italian vernacular literature written by an author famous for delivering the plot of Romeo and Juliet to William Shakespeare.[10] That makes the case interesting, but not really reliable in terms of source criticism. This is because what goes for the novels themselves also goes for their prefaces: they are literature, and consequently part of a fictional scenery. It cannot be excluded here that some true remembrance is given in Bandello's retelling, but it is clearly insufficient to take the story for granted. This directs attention to the intention of the author, a Dominican monk, who wrote his novels after becoming Bishop of Agen in France at the time of the Council of Trent. Along with the fact that the other person he mentions, Prierias, was also a Dominican, the story serves as proof that the Dominicans were the first to see the principal relevance of the questions raised by the Reformation. In sharp contrast, the pope did not realize what hour had come and had to be brought to this insight by the same Prierias. In other words: the story tells us that in the view of a mid-sixteenth-century Dominican, the Dominicans had been the first to resist the Reformation properly. The tale might even aim at intimating that if the Pope had listened to the Dominicans, not only could the Reformation have been avoided, but also the founding of another order, that of the Jesuits, to fight against heresy would not have been necessary. The Dominicans had done their duty through the Middle Ages as well as at the beginning of the Reformation, which says much about Dominican self-fashioning in the early days of confessionalization. But it says almost nothing about what Leo X might have thought or said in about 1517. Historiographically, Bandello filled a void left by the pope's reluctant reaction to the Reformation, a reaction that might have had more to do with the upcoming election of an emperor than with seeing the Reformation just as a quarrel of monks.

Having deconstructed the story of the pope seeing the Reformation this way, the question still remains open as to whether those who followed in Bandello's track and interpreted the Reformation against the background of inter-order struggles were completely wrong in doing so, or whether the history of the orders nevertheless had an impact on the course of Reformation. The first two sections in what follows will address exactly this question, focusing on the role of order-specific theologies in the first two or three years of Reformation. Then, a

Ph.K. Henke, who admits to have added some sources (Roscoe 1818, p. 2), might have done so in this case.

8 Paulus Colomesius: *Opera, Theologici, Critici et Historici argumenti*, Hamburg 1709, p. 322.

9 Matthaeus Bandellus: *Novella LXII*, in: *La terza parte de le novelle del Bandello*, vol. 8, London 1792, p. 311.

10 Moore, Olin Harris: *The Legend of Romeo and Juliet*, Columbus, OH 1950, p. 75.

third section will focus on those aspects of history that might disrupt the image of orders having an immense impact on the development the Reformation.

1. Drawing up the Case: the Augustinians

Primarily, the Wittenberg movement seems clearly to have been a movement of the Augustinian Order. This can even be substantiated with Luther's own words: when he describes his early years as being a search to find a gracious God in a sermon from 1537,[11] this is nothing less than a quotation of his own celebration of profession as a young Augustinian. When asked at profession what he was looking for, the novice had to answer: "God's mercy and yours."[12] Obviously, the Augustinian spirituality had left a deep mark on Luther, so much so that when he entered the Order, he took the name Augustinus,[13] and the self-identification as an Augustinian became a part of his standard subscription for letters. Among others, this is true for the letter he wrote to Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz on October 31st, 1517, accompanying his 95 theses against indulgences.[14]

What is more, Luther's first attempt at carrying out reforms at the University of Wittenberg made direct reference to Augustine. The later so-called *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* of September 1517 starts with a statement about the bishop of Hippo:

> Saying that Augustine has spoken excessively against heretics, means saying that Augustine has lied almost everywhere. This is directed against a common conviction.[15]

Actually, this was not aimed at attacking any other order, but rather against Aristotle in general. Nevertheless, one might see here evidence of the close ties between Luther's monastic background and his academic program. This is even more obvious in a letter he wrote some months earlier to his spiritual brother Johann Lang in Erfurt:

> Under God's assistance, our theology and Saint Augustine make good progress and reign at our university. Aristotle declines gradually and tends to his eternal doom. Astonishingly, the lectures on the *Sentences* are despised. Hence, no one may hope for auditors without

[11] Martin Luther: *Das XIV. und XV. Kapitel S. Johannis*, in *D. Martin Luthers Werke. I: Schriften* [*WA*], 73 vols., Weimar 1883–2009, vol. 45, p. 626, ll. 34–35.

[12] Johannes de Staupitz: *Constitutiones OESA pro reformatione Alemanniae*, in eds. Lothar Graf zu Dohna/Richard Wetzel: *Sämtliche Schriften. Abhandlungen, Predigten, Zeugnisse. Vol. 5: Gutachten und Satzungen* (Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Texte und Untersuchungen 17), Berlin et al. 2001, pp. 103–360: 186, ll. 13–14.

[13] Martin Luther: *Vorlesungen über 1. Mose*, in *WA* 44, p. 213, l. 5: "Ego in baptismo nominatus sum Martinus, postea in Monasterio Augustinus."

[14] Martin Luther: *Letter to Albrecht of Mainz, October 31, 1517*, in *D. Martin Luthers Werke. IV: Briefwechsel* [*WA.B*], 18 vols., Weimar 1930–1985, vol. 1, no. 48, p. 112, l. 70.

[15] Martin Luther: *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam*, in *WA* 1, p. 224, l. 7: "Dicere, quod Augustinus contra haereticos excessive loquatur, Est dicere, Augustinum fere ubique mentitum esse. Contra dictum commune."

reading about this theology, i.e., about the Bible, about Saint Augustine or another doctor of authority in the church.[16]

Seeing close ties between academic enterprise and Augustinian interest was not too far-fetched at a university like that at Wittenberg, where the Augustinian Order had from the beginning formed a major part of the Faculty of Theology, with the general of the Order, John of Staupitz, serving as its first dean.

The picture becomes even more cohesive when we look at what happened beyond Wittenberg. Famously, in Nuremberg, Humanists in 1516/17 had gathered in a *sodalitas Staupitziana* which changed its name and alignment in 1518 to that of *sodalitas Martiniana*.[17] This did not mean a break with Staupitz's late medieval monastic background, but only a focus on what seemed to bring some fresh wind of reform. Still, the hero of the association was an Augustinian, just as Staupitz had been. Staupitz had clearly presented himself as an Augustinian to the Nuremberg public. In 1516, he held sermons about predestination in the imperial city's Augustinian church,[18] and when time came to publish them, he signed the preface at the Augustinian monastery there.[19] Clearly, the issue was an Augustinian program: speaking about predestination and justification, Staupitz set the themes of his Order's patron, and he did so in terms of a theology of grace.

> Because justification is grace and not nature, the accepting of works is grace through grace for merit and Christ's merits are made ours through grace; appropriately, the entire Christian life is attributed to grace.[20]

The step from a *sodalitas* formed by Augustinian theology to a *sodalitas Martiniana* following Luther's evolving idea of justification by grace alone was not a big one. And the person to make visible this smooth transition was himself an Augustinian and a friend of both Staupitz and Luther: Wenzeslaus Link, who had known Luther since his time in Wittenberg.[21] The Augustinian framework was maintained, but Luther inserted a combative element into it against scholasticism and indulgences.

16 Martin Luther: *Letter to Johannes Lang, May 18, 1517*, in *WA.B* 1, no. 41, p. 99, ll. 8–13: "Theologia nostra et S. Augustinus prospere procedunt et regnant in nostra universitate Deo operante. Aristoteles descendit paulatim inclinatus ad ruinam prope futuram sempiternam. Mire fastidiuntur lectiones sententiariae, nec est, ut quis sibi auditores sperare possit, nisi theologiam hanc, id est bibliam aut S. Augustinum aliumve ecclesiasticae auctoritatis doctorem velit profiteri."

17 Hamm, Berndt: *Lazarus Spengler (1479–1534)*, Tübingen 2004, p. 66.

18 zu Dohna, Lothar Graf/Wetzel, Richard: "Einleitung", in *Johann von Staupitz, Sämtliche Schriften. Abhandlungen, Predigten, Zeugnisse. Vol. 2: Lateinische Schriften 2* (Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Texte und Untersuchungen 14), Berlin/New York 1979, pp. 23–52: 25.

19 Johannes de Staupitz: *De executione aeternae praedestinationis*, Pref., eds. zu Dohna/Wetzel: *Staupitz, Sämtliche Schriften 2*, p. 74.

20 *Ibid.*, VII.52, p. 140: "Cum autem iustificatio gratia est, non natura, acceptatio operum in gratia ad meritum gratia, et Christi merita nostra sunt facta gratia, merito universa vita christiani gratiae trubuitur."

21 Hamm 2004, p. 67.

Luther's label of being an Augustinian at this time was such common knowledge that Kaspar Güttel, an Augustinian at Luther's birthplace Eisleben who published Luther's sermons in 1518, could refer to him simply as "the former Mansfeldian, now Wittenbergian Augustinian" without mentioning his name outright.[22] This is further evidence that outside Wittenberg, the Augustinian stamp on the movement was clearly seen and even helped to identify it to the reader.

In these early years of the Reformation, Luther's case was an Augustinian one, not least in legal terms: when a Roman trial against Luther was looming, Staupitz made him appear at the Heidelberg chapter of the Order in April 1518, thus preparing the stage for the Heidelberg Disputation. Its impact resulted mainly from the seminal idea of a *theologia crucis* laid out in it. For the purpose here, it seems more relevant that at that time Luther reassured his allegiance to Augustine in the midst of his brethren and before the University of Heidelberg's Faculty of Arts, even though setting the bishop a seat behind the Apostle Paul. According to the introduction to the disputation, Augustine was the truest interpreter of Paul.[23] Luther's adherence to Augustine is also proven by the arguments he adduced for his theses, which in several cases were aligned with the introductory notes, combining a quotation from Paul with one from Augustine.[24] Read with the focus on the Order's history, the Heidelberg Disputation put Augustinian theology on center stage. In terms of the mutual support given by Luther and the Augustinians to each other, though, Heidelberg was a turning point. Strictly speaking, the invitation for Luther to explain himself had been ambivalent at least: for the Order, this invitation opened up the chance for him to clarify his views, after Pope Leo X had urged the newly elected general minister of the Augustinian Hermits, Gabriel Venetus, to bring calm to the Luther issue.[25] What can be seen on the one hand as protecting Luther, seems to have been a kind of getting control over him on the other. It fits quite well into this picture that Luther resigned from his office as a provincial vicar of the Order at the very same convention, and handed it over to Johannes Lang.[26] He was now free of the burden of administrative duties, and conversely, the Order was free from having a rebellious vicar in its administrative ranks.

A further step in the development is shown by the Order's own interest in loosening ties with its most prominent, yet at the same time most provocative, theologian: as Luther later reports in his *Table Talks*, Staupitz released him from obedience to the Augustinian rule when they met in Augsburg for the exam-

22 Kaspar Güttel: *Jhesus Ein fast fruchtbar buchlein von Adams wercken vnd gottes genaden mit vnterricht wie recht beichten, busszen, vnd das hochwirdigst Sacrament selig tzu entpfahen im Augustiner Closter tzu sandt Anne vor Eisleben dise heiligste fasten gepredigt vnd gegeben*, Leipzig 1518, f. C3r: "Mansfeldischen, ytzt Wittenbergischen Augustiner".

23 Martin Luther: *Disputatio Heidelbergae habita*, in *WA* 1, p. 353, l. 13.

24 See, e.g., *ibid.*, p. 356, ll. 2–4 and 29–31.

25 Delius, Walter: "Der Augustiner Eremitenorden im Prozeß Luthers", in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 63 (1972), pp. 22–42: 22.

26 Winterhager, Wilhelm-Ernst: "Martin Luther und das Amt des Provinzialvikars in der Reformkongregation der deutschen Augustiner-Eremiten", in eds. Franz J. Felten/ Nikolas Jaspert: *Vita religiosa im Mittelalter. FS Kaspar Elm*, Berlin 1999, pp. 707–738.

ination by Cardinal Cajetan.[27] According to Luther's later recollection, Staupitz said there: "I absolve you from my obedience and commend you to God the Lord."[28] As stated above, this not only freed Luther from being obliged to follow the Order's statutes, but it also freed Staupitz from being responsible for a renitent member of his Order at a time when he himself was struggling with how to integrate the reformist wing into the body of the entire Order in diplomatic fashion.

Luther did not cease being an Augustinian with this. On the contrary, when he published his treatise *On Christian Liberty* more than a year later, he accompanied this text with a letter to Hieronymus Mühlfort in which he identified himself as "D. Martinus Luther Augustiner".[29] Moreover, as Wolf-Dietrich Schäufele has shown, he even experimented with being a Protestant monk for some months in Wittenberg.[30] Nevertheless, Augsburg marked the preliminary end of the time during which we might think of the early Reformation as a "quarrel of monks". However, even if Luther might have continued feeling like an Augustinian, he could no longer have been regarded as someone speaking in the name of his Order. So, if we want to look at quarreling orders, we have to concentrate approximately on the year between the publishing of the Ninety-Five Theses in October 1517 and the Diet of Augsburg in October 1518.

2. Staging the Conflict: the Dominicans

There are some reasons for seeing the Dominicans as particular opponents of Luther in these twelve months. At least three of his major adversaries belonged to the Order of Preachers: Johannes Tetzel, Sylvester Prierias (Silvestro Mazzolini) and Thomas Cajetan.

2.1 Johannes Tetzel

Johannes Tetzel came to Luther's attention not primarily as a Dominican, but rather as a salesman of indulgences. As Lothar Vogel has shown, we do not know much about how Luther became aware of Tetzel's propaganda.[31] It is obvious,

[27] Martin Luther: *Table Talks*, no. 225, in *D. Martin Luthers Werke. II: Tischreden* [*WA.TR*], 6 vols., Weimar 1912–1921, vol. 1, p. 96, ll. 5–10: "Ego ter sum excommunicatus, primo a Doctore Staupizio, is Augustae me absolvit ab observantia et regula ordinis, ut, si papa urgeret, ut me caperet aut mihi mandaret silentium, posset se excusare, quod non essem sub sua oboedientia; secundo a papa ipso, tertio ab ipso caesare."

[28] *Ibid.*, no. 409, p. 177, l. 36: "Absolvo te ab oboedientia mea et commendo te Domino Deo."

[29] *Id.*: *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, in *WA* 7, p. 20, l. 5.

[30] Schäufele, Wolf-Friedrich: "'...iam sum monachus et non monachus'. Martin Luthers doppelter Abschied vom Mönchtum", in eds. Dietrich Korsch/Volker Leppin: *Martin Luther – Biographie und Theologie* (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation 53), Tübingen [2]2017, pp. 119–139.

[31] Vogel, Lothar: "Zwischen Universität und Seelsorge. Martin Luthers Beweggründe im Ablassstreit", in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 118 (2007), pp. 187–212.

though, that Tetzel's campaign prompted Luther to make his protest after musing for a while on the matter of indulgences.

Luther did not see this as a matter pertaining to their respective orders, though; nor did Tetzel. This can be seen in their exchange on authorities: after sending his theses to the bishops and seeing them appear in print either with or without his assent,[32] Luther published a sermon on indulgences and grace in the spring of 1518.[33] Though called a sermon in its title, the text resembled in form more a series of theses, twenty in total. In the very first thesis, Luther directly attacked the central scholastic authorities Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas together with their adherents ("yhre folger").[34] In the situation given, one might immediately think of Tetzel, who as a Dominican might rightly be considered among the adherents of Aquinas. The position that Lombard and Aquinas are evoked for is anything but specifically Dominican, though. It is nothing more than the understanding of penitence as a threefold act constituted by contrition, confession and satisfaction.[35] Thomas, here, was a proponent of overall scholastic and ecclesiastical convictions, not of specifically Dominican ones.

Equally, Tetzel in his answer claimed to stand rather in the consensus of the Church than in that of a particular order-specific tradition. Just a few weeks after receiving Luther's sermon, he published a *Rebuttal* of it (*Vorlegung*). In it, he responds to Luther's critique of Thomas not by defending the Dominican brother, but by referring to "the old and new saintly scholars, of whom many thousands are extant".[36] Likewise, in his preface and throughout the text, Tetzel claims that he submitted his propositions to the judgment of the "pope, the entire Christian Church and all universities".[37] Even when referring explicitly to Thomas Aquinas, he does not point out the scholar's being a Dominican, but rather his sanctity. He explicitly mentions Urban VI (1261) and Innocent VI (1352–1362) as having accepted Thomas's teaching as being authentically Christian.[38] The lack of any mention of John XXII, who canonized Thomas, is a bit striking here. It might reflect the precarious status of John XXII as an Avignonese pope and, even more so, as a pope whose orthodoxy was questioned on account of his teaching on the beatific vision. However, the argument is

[32] For the question of nailing the theses, see Ott, Joachim/Treu, Martin, eds.: *Faszination Thesenanschlag – Faktum oder Fiktion* (Schriften der Stiftung Luthergedenkstätten in Sachsen-Anhalt 9), Leipzig 2008.

[33] For the dating see Leppin, Volker: "Vertiefung des Glaubens – Erneuerung der deutschen Freiheit. Luthers frühes gedrucktes Werk zwischen interiorisierter Frömmigkeit und humanistischer Nationalbewegung", in eds. Danz, Christian/Tück, Jan-Heiner: *Martin Luther im Widerstreit der Konfessionen. Historische und theologische Perspektiven*, Freiburg et al. 2017, pp. 30–55: 38, note 39.

[34] Martin Luther: *Sermon von Ablass und Gnade*, in *WA* 1, p. 243, ll. 4–6.

[35] *Ibid.*, ll. 5–7.

[36] Johann Tetzel: *Vorlegung*, eds. Peter Fabisch/Erwin Iserloh: *Dokumente zur Causa Lutheri (1517–1521). 1. Teil: Das Gutachten des Prierias und weitere Schriften gegen Luthers Ablaßthesen (1517–1518)* (Corpus Catholicorum 41), Münster 1988, p. 343: "die alden und nawen heyligen Doctores, der gar vil tawsenth seyn".

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 342: "Setze das uff erkenthnus Bepstlicher heylikeyth der gantzen cristlichen kirchen und aller Universiteten." Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 344, 345 etc.

[38] *Ibid.*

clear: Tetzel is not arguing as a member of a specific order per se, but more as a teacher of overall Christian truth.

Luther did the same when he in turn responded to Tetzel in his text *Defense of the Sermon on Papal Indulgence and Grace* (*Eine Freiheit des Sermons päpstlichen Ablass und Gnade belangend*) in June 1518. He reduced the thousand scholars referred to by Tetzel to "not many more than three", naming four of them: Thomas Aquinas (again), but with him the Franciscans Bonaventure and Alexander of Hales, as well as Peter Lombard (who never joined any order).[39] Even though he mentions his own monastic affiliation in the first lines of the treatise,[40] Luther does not make an altercation among orders out of his case. Like Tetzel, he claims to advocate a common concern, based not on a particular opinion, but rather on universal truth. Hence, he can say about Tetzel's argument of Thomas being accepted by several Popes:

> I allow that Saint Thomas is affirmed. It is known in all universities how far this affirmation extends. Hence, I accept what the Holy Father confirms with Scripture or reason. Everything else I attribute to his own delusion.[41]

In the end, the exchange of treatises between Luther and Tetzel proves to be a principally theological debate. Obviously, both are members of different orders, but they did not write as representatives of their respective orders, but rather as agents of the truth of the Gospel: as they understood it, each in his own way.

Again, this is not completely detached of any background in order-specific traditions: when Luther referred to Scripture and reason a few years later at the Diet of Worms,[42] he was following a pattern set forth by his Order's patron Augustine and integrated into universal Church Law. In the *Decretum Gratiani* I, d. 9, cap. 5, Gratian quotes a sentence from Augustine's letter to Jerome:

> I have learned to encounter only those scriptures which are called canonical with the reverence and honor to believe that no one in writing them has fallen into error.[43]

This quotation shows that Luther's scriptural principle, which took some years to evolve,[44] is evidently rooted in Augustine and the Augustinian tradition, but

39 Martin Luther: *Eine Freiheit*, in *WA* 1, p. 384, ll. 15–17: "nit vill vbir drey".

40 *Ibid.*, p. 383, l. 6.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 390, ll. 29–32: "das sanct Thomas bestetigit ist, laß ich seyn. Man weyß aber yn allen universiteten, wie weyt die bestetigung sich erstrecket. Darumb was der heylig vatter mit schrifft adder vornunfft beweret, nym ich an, das ander laß ich seynen guten wahn geweßen seyn."

42 *Verhandlungen Luthers auf dem Reichstag zu Worms*, in *WA* 7, p. 838, ll. 2–9.

43 *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. Emil Friedberg, Leipzig 1879, vol. 1, p. 17: "Ego solis eis scriptorum, qui iam canonici appellantur, dedici hunc timorem honoremque referre, ut nullum eorum scribendo errasse audeam credere"; cf. Augustinus: *Epistola 82*, ed. Alois Goldbacher (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 34), Prague et al. 1898, p. 354.

44 See Leppin, Volker, ed.: *Reformatorische Theologie und Autoritäten. Studien zur Geschichte des Schriftprinzips beim jungen Luther* (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation 85), Tübingen 2015.

this is nothing distinct to Luther's Order alone. Rather, it brings him into the broad stream of dealing with authorities in medieval Christianity.

One can legitimately and necessarily question whether Luther himself knew about the Augustinian framing of his use of Scripture as the outstanding source for theology; this can easily be answered in the affirmative. Luther himself explicitly mentioned the quotation from the *Decretum* when referring to the sentence quoted above at the beginning of his response to Sylvester Prierias's *Dialogus*.[45]

2.2 Sylvester Prierias

This leads us to a second Dominican who was rather important in the early controversies in the Reformation era, and was mentioned above as exactly the person to whom Leo is said to have spoken about a "quarrel of monks": Sylvester Prierias. Prierias was the second and much more important Dominican to chime in on the debate about the Reformation. Nevertheless, he did so not in his role as a Dominican friar, but rather as the Master of the Sacred Palace, who was accountable for the prosecution of heretics. Early in 1518, he composed a bill of indictment against Luther. Even if the bill itself has not survived, we are well informed about it by a text communicating its content to the public: namely, the aforementioned *Dialogus*. It contains a fictitious dialogue between Prierias himself and Luther, referred to as Martin. The text examines the Ninety-Five Theses, with Prierias showing the German monk their shortcomings. More interesting is the introduction in which Prierias determines four "fundamentals" (*fundamenta*) to be held regarding the Church, among them being the assertion that the Roman Church and the Roman Pope are the infallible rule from which even Scripture draws its authority.[46] This was the clearest opposition possible against Luther claiming the authority of Scripture in his rebuke of indulgences, which by extension for Prierias would mean actually rebuking the deeds and doctrines of the current pope. In terms of church politics, this obviously exceeded what could be said about the pope's role. Up to the sixteenth century, there had been some pleas for papal infallibility, but they had never remained unquestioned, let alone affirmed by official doctrine.[47] Prierias here presented his own conviction as a yardstick for orthodoxy or heresy. As the edition by Iserloh and Fabisch shows,[48] this was mainly based on Prierias's reading of Juan de la Torquemada's *Summa de ecclesia* and of Thomas Aquinas. Since both authors were famous Dominicans, we can indeed say with some reason that Prierias pitted the Dominican tradition against Luther's Augustinian approach. Nevertheless, as in the case of Tetzel, so too must we admit here that Prierias was not the Dominicans' mouthpiece, but rather acted in an official role for the universal

[45] Martin Luther: *Ad dialogum Silvestri Prierati*, in *WA* 1, p. 647, ll. 22–24.

[46] Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio: *Dialogus*, eds. Fabisch/Iserloh: *Dokumente zur Causa Lutheri*, p. 55.

[47] For the debate see Tierney, Brian: *Origins of Papal Infallibility 1150–1350. A Study on the Concepts of Infallibility, Sovereignty and Tradition in the Middle Ages*, Leiden ²2019.

[48] See the footnotes in Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio *Dialogus*, eds. Fabisch/Iserloh, pp. 53–56.

Church. Order-specific traditions might have provided the background for his argument, but they were not the driving power behind it.

Luther's case is quite similar. The Augustinian clearly sensed the Thomistic background of Prierias's writings. He repudiated them as being "scholastic and Thomistic, even Aristotelian",[49] clearly signifying that the Dominican Thomas was not the only problem, but instead that Luther denied the overall Aristotelian framing of theology as he had done in his *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* in September 1517. In contrast to the usual scholastic approach, Luther upheld Scripture, the Fathers, the canons and reasons as authorities.[50] Remarkably, including elements of Church tradition as authoritative presents a broader range of sources of authority than is the case in his *Defense of the Sermon on Papal Indulgence and Grace*. Luther was not yet at the stage of seeing Scripture as the one and only authority for theology. His thoughts even seem to have been somehow shifting, a notion usually not applied to the Wittenberg reformer, but obviously applicable here. Likewise, Augustine was the major, but not the only authority, referred to against Prierias. As in earlier cases, Luther appealed to him in combination with Paul,[51] but elsewhere he also introduced the authority of the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux for his argument.[52]

The impact of order-specific traditions cannot be overlooked in either author, particularly in Luther's negative perception of Thomas, but the agenda is another one. At the least, reducing the altercations to simply a question of religious orders would miss the goal of both authors, namely the proclamation not of the perspective of an order alone, but rather that of universal Christian truth.

2.3 Thomas Cajetan

This overall observation is not changed by the third Dominican to be commented on here: Thomas Cajetan. He served as the Order's minister general from 1508 to 1518 and later wrote a comprehensive commentary on Aquinas's *Summa*; the continued regard for this latter work is shown by it being repritned in the *Editio Leonina*. Cajetan's encounter with Luther had to do neither with his position in the Order nor with his theological enterprise, but with the fact that he was one of Pope Leo's counselors. The pope sent him to Germany to calm the upheavel caused by the Reformation. He met Luther at the Augsburg Diet in 1518 well prepared, having worked through the matter of the Reformation agenda and had come to a clear conclusion: Luther's understanding of penance meant nothing else than the establishing of a new church.[53] This seems somehow prophetic, but it was just the conclusion Cajetan drew from analyzing Luther's sacramental theology, as far as it could be perceived at the

[49] Martin Luther *Ad dialogum Silvestri Prieratis*, *WA* 1, p. 648, l. 18: "Scholastica et Theologica, immo Aristotelica".

[50] *Ibid.*, l. 34.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 649, ll. 5–8.

[52] *Ibid.*, ll. 17–19.

[53] Thomas de Vio Cajetanus: *De fide ad fructuosam absolutionem sacramentalem necessaria*, ed. Charles Morerod: *Cajetan et Luther en 1518. Édition, traduction et commentaire des opuscules d'Augsbourg de Cajetan*, Fribourg 1994, p. 336.

time. According to the Dominican cardinal, Luther had added a fourth step to the three stages of penance (contrition, confession and satisfaction), namely confident faith on the part of the penitent.[54] This might not exactly match what Luther said, but at least it shows that Cajetan grasped the importance of faith for Luther's understanding of the efficacy of the sacraments.

In Augsburg, though, Cajetan's aim was less complicated. He did not want to discuss theological matters with the monk from Wittenberg, but merely wanted to bring Luther to silence, presenting him with three demands to restore peace: he should revoke his errors; pledge to refrain from the issue in the future; and, finally, keep distant from everything that could disturb the Church.[55] Luther was not ready to follow this seemingly paternal directive. Instead, he started discussing with the cardinal how some papal decrees regarding indulgences were to be understood, suggesting that for him, Cajetan served as the pope's proxy. Luther could dispute with him and wanted to do so, but there was no reason to see in him the brilliant Thomist theologian he was. Like Prierias, Cajetan represented the Pope rather than his Order.

In sum, three eminently important encounters of Luther with Dominicans, both in person and in writing, took place in the early years of the Reformation, but none of them was focused on something we could attribute to a typical quarrel of monks hailing from different orders. Certainly, in Prierias as well as in Cajetan, we can observe a strong Thomist impact on the encounter; in the case of Prierias, leading to his juxtaposition to Luther. But even with the *magister Sacri Palatii*, the dispute was only about Thomas and Dominican theology to a certain degree, and even then, mostly about how theology and Church doctrine should be construed in an overall sense. On the other hand, we see the strong Augustinian heritage in Luther's theology, but he did not argue for his Order, but rather claimed to be promulgating universal Christian truth. There might be some reason for someone not deeply involved in the debate to see it as a quarrel of monks, and we still cannot completely rule out that Leo X may have done so, but in a general estimation, the question of orders was no more than a sideshow for the great story revolving around the Bible, the Fathers and the Church.

3. Disturbing the Image Further

The picture becomes even more unsettled when we broaden the perspective a bit, looking at other conflicts in the early Reformation. Obviously, not every Dominican resisted Reformational ideas. The most famous case here is that of Martin Bucer, who as a Dominican friar witnessed the Heidelberg disputation. In a letter to Beatus Rhenanus, he even reported having met Luther on the day after the disputation and having asked him in detail about some of his theses.[56]

[54] *Id.*: *De confessione*, in *Opuscula omnia*, vol. 1, Lyon 1588, p. 111.

[55] See *Acta Augustana*, in *WA* 2, p. 7, ll. 24–26.

[56] Martin Bucer: *Letter to Beatus Rhenanus, May 1st, 1518*, ed. Jean Rott: *Correspondance de Martin Bucer*, vol. 1, no. 3, Leiden 1979, pp. 58–72.

In the long term, the encounter with Luther led to Bucer leaving his Order, not because he preferred a different one, but because he refused to be a monk at all and became a Protestant preacher.[57]

Bucer's case may show that there was no completely coherent Dominican attitude against the Wittenberg reformers; thus, it seems even more important to understand that the Dominicans were not the only monastic adversaries of the Reformation. If there is any debate as to whether the reformers were opposed not only by single persons from an order, but also by an entire order en masse, in the course of the early years of Reformation, one need look no further than the Franciscans. On October 4, 1519, a Franciscan chapter was held in Wittenberg. On the previous day, a disputation had taken place, the report of which survives in a booklet rediscovered in 1976.[58] Here, indeed, questions directly concerning interests of the Order were raised, turning on the Order's founder Francis and his stigmata as well as on basic questions of the ascetic life. For example, Melanchthon disputed a Franciscan about the correct understanding of the common life as depicted in Acts 4: while the Franciscan disputant saw the foundation for monastic life here, the "Graecus"—as he was referred to in the report—argued that the Book of Acts spoke about the Christian congregation holding everything in common.[59] This is not only interesting with regard to the argument raised here, but even more so to the *dramatis personae*: not only was Melanchthon present (besides, of course, Luther), but so was Johannes Dölsch,[60] Nicasius Clasii,[61] Nicholas of Amsdorff,[62] and Andreas Karlstadt.[63] This means that at this stage of development at least—one year after the Augsburg interrogation—the Wittenberg scholars acted as a group and did so as a university group, not as representatives of any order. The Augustinian reform, as started in 1517 at the latest, framed itself as an academic reform and was far from being only a "quarrel of monks".

This becomes even clearer when we bring into the picture those adversaries who themselves were not affiliated with any order, which is the case with the most famous and maybe shrewdest opponent of Luther, Johannes Eck, who argued with Luther between 1517 and 1519.

This is not the place to delineate the entire (and complex) contention between Eck and Luther; as he was neither a Dominican nor a member of an order at all, some few remarks will suffice to point out the close relations between both sides, which began quite amicably. On April 1, 1517, the Nuremberg legal counsel Christoph Scheurl wrote to Martin Luther about his friend Johannes Eck who, "eager for your friendship", had Scheurl send some letters and a print

[57] A fine overview over the Dominican convents in Germany confronted by the Reformation can be found in Springer, Klaus-Bernward: *Die deutschen Dominikaner in Widerstand und Anpassung während der Reformationszeit* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens 8), Berlin 1999.

[58] See *WA* 59, p. 606; for the text of the disputation, *ibid.*, pp. 678–697.

[59] *Franziskanerdisputation*, in *WA* 59, p. 691, ll. 15–24.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 682, ll. 25–30.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 681, l. 36.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 684, ll. 7–10.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 688, l. 4.

of some of his disputations, presumably Eck's Vienna disputation.[64] This was a typical way among Humanists to make friends, and, initially, it worked quite well. One can even argue that Andreas Karlstadt as well as Martin Luther adopted some formal elements of Eck's brilliant Vienna disputation in shaping their own academic theses.[65]

Yet this convergence ended abruptly when only seven months later, Luther published his theses against indulgences. Eck soon became his fiercest opponent, clear in his argumentation and with a barely hidden agenda of proving Luther to be a heretic. The reason for this sudden shift might be that Eck felt personally assaulted by at least two theses, and he might have been right in seeing them directed against himself. Even if Luther in the theses did not mention any specific scholar by name, the wording he used in some cases seems to allude to the very print of disputations he had received from Eck in the spring.

Eck could hear an allusion to his own thoughts as expressed not in the Vienna disputation, but rather in his disputation from Bologna and contained in the same print, when Luther highlighted that the pope did the very best in stating that he could redeem souls only by means of intercession ("per modum suffragii") and not by means of the keys in any way.[66] One could, indeed perhaps even had to, see this as a direct response to Eck's claim that the pope could issue indulgences for the deceased "not only by means of intercession, but also with authority" ("non tantum per modum suffragii, sed autoritative").[67] In another thesis, Luther even seems to have adopted the same exact verbal phrase found in Eck's thesis. The latter's tenth Bologna thesis stated that the pope was able to evacuate ("evacuare") Purgatory or at least the larger part of it.[68] Luther, rhetorically posing possible questions from the laity in his 82nd thesis, thus asks:

> Why does the pope not evacuate (*Cur Papa non evacuat*) Purgatory for the most holy charity and the highest need of the souls as the most righteous reason, while, for the lowest reason, he redeems an innumerable number of souls for the sordid money to build a church?"[69]

Eck did not need to be oversensitive to see an assault against his amicable gift here. However, this personal involvement might not have been the only reason

64 Christoph Scheurl: *Letter to Martin Luther, April 1st, 1517*, in *WA.B* 1, no. 36, p. 91, l. 3: "amicitiae tuae percupidus".

65 See for this Leppin, Volker: "Der Einfluss Johannes Ecks auf den jungen Luther", in *Luther* 86 (2015), pp. 135–147.

66 Martin Luther: *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum*, I.21[II.1], in *WA* 1, p. 234, ll. 27–28: "Optime facit papa, quod non potestate clavis (quam nullam habet) sed per modum suffragii dat animabus remissionem."

67 Johannes Eckius: *Disputatio Viennae habita*, ed. Therese Virnich: *Johannes Eck, Disputatio Viennae Pannoniae habita (1517)* (Corpus Catholicorum 6), Münster 1923, p. 47, ll. 9–11.

68 *Ibid.*, ll. 20–22: "Quare papa pro maiori parte de plenitudine potestatis purgatorium evacuare posset, non tamen totum, sicut Christus fecit in resurrectione, at tamen residuis per modum suffragii prodesse potest."

69 Martin Luther *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum*, IV.7, p. 237, ll. 22–25: "Cur Papa non evacuat purgatorium propter sanctissimam charitatem et summam animarum necessitatem ut causam omnium iustissimam, Si infinitas animas redimit propter pecuniam funestissimam ad structuram Basilice ut causam levissimam?"

for him to turn friendly solicitation into rivalry. From now on, he was one of the fiercest opponents of the reformer, in parallel to Johannes Tetzel, but on a higher intellectual level.

Eck put great weight on his attempt to avoid a public conflict, though. According to his report, it was the Bishop of Eichstätt, Gabriel of Eyb, who asked Eck to put his opinion about indulgences into writing after the two had talked about the issue. He did so, but did not publish the eighteen articles he drafted.[70] The aforementioned Wenzeslaus Linck apprised Luther of them.[71] The reformer called them "daggers" ("obelisci"), and responded with "little stars" ("asterisci"), likewise in manuscript form.[72] The debate came to the public via Andreas Karlstadt's *Apologeticae Conclusiones*.[73] As early as in his *Obelisci*, Eck made his mark on the subsequent debate, accusing Luther of following the Bohemian (i.e., Hussite) heresy and of showing a lack of reverence for the pope.[74] Thus, a longlasting altercation between Eck and the Wittenberg reformers started, with a first peak at the Leipzig disputation of 1519[75] and, later on, coming to a head in the debates around the Augsburg Diet.

This future development will not be pursued here, as that would divert from the question about the roles of orders. The argument drawn from it is fairly clear at this point, however: Johannes Eck was one of the major figures in the conflict around the new movement sparked by Martin Luther, yet he was not a monk. Consequently, seeing the early Reformation controversy only as a quarrel of monks would exclude this important actor from the field, which obviously goes counter to the historical evidence.

In fact, this turns attention to another line of conflict lying somewhat apart from the focus on orders: both Eck's aim of befriending the Wittenberg group and the ensuing sharp conflict might be a consequence of the rivalry of two universities open to new ways of thinking. Ingolstadt, being the older one, embraced Humanist reform just as Wittenberg had, and Eck was one of the protagonists of this movement in Ingolstadt.[76] To him, Humanism did not overturn scholastic education, but rather refined it somehow, an opinion that makes him a less radical champion of Humanism than for example the authors of the "Letters of Obscure Men" who directly attacked scholasticism. Hearing about the Wittenberg movement before it had become public knowledge might have had raised his hopes of finding allies there for a new formation of philosophy and

[70] Johannes Eckius: *Defensio contra amarulentes D. Andreae Bodenstein Carolstatini invectiones*, ed. Joseph Greving (Corpus Catholicorum 1), Münster 1919, p. 36, l. 26–p. 37, l. 4.

[71] Martin Luther: *Letter to Wenzeslaus Link, 1518*, in *WA.B* 1, no. 76, p. 177, l. 3.

[72] Martin Luther: *Letter to Georg Spalatin, December 20, 1518*, in *WA.B* 1, no. 124, p. 281, l. 1; *id.*: *Letter to Prince Elector Frederick, August 18, 1519, ibid.*, no. 192, p. 466, ll. 39–41.

[73] Andreas Karlstadt: *CCCLXX et apologeticae conclusiones pro sacris literis*, Wittenberg 1518.

[74] Johannes Eckius: *Obelisci*, eds. Fabisch/Iserloh: *Dokumente zur Causa Lutheri*, p. 435.

[75] Mattox, Mickey L. et al., eds: *Luther at Leipzig. Martin Luther, the Leipzig Debate, and the Sixteenth-Century Reformations* (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 218), Leiden/Boston 2019.

[76] Walter, Peter: "Johannes Eck (1486–1543) und der Humanismus", in eds. Jürgen Bärsch/Konstantin Maier: *Johannes Eck. Scholastiker – Humanist – Kontroverstheologe* (Eichstätter Studien 70), Regensburg 2014, pp. 106–130.

theology. Against this background, he perceived Luther's allusions as a harsh and unexpected rebuke, showing him that the respective ways in which Wittenberg and Ingolstadt as institutions had taken up Humanism meant a parting of ways. The situation seems to have shifted dramatically in his view. At the latest, by the time of the Leipzig Disputation, he was convinced that there was no longer any common Humanist interest for finding new ways, but instead that Wittenberg had set itself on the side of well-known heretics. To him, this meant that he had to look for allies elsewhere, and he found them in the traditional, conservative universities in places like Cologne, Paris or Leuven. There, he wanted to continue the disputation if necessary.[77] Two of these places would align with Eck in condemning Luther soon: Cologne and Leuven.[78] Heiko Augustinus Oberman has suggested that the reason for their common condemnation could be the predominance of Dominicans at both universities.[79] Indeed, this might be a reason for the convergence, but it should not displace the observation that the authors of the reviews acted primarily as members of a university. A new coalition of academics emerged, with Ingolstadt becoming part of a conservative alliance against Wittenberg. This means that the Reformation was more than a quarrel of orders; it was also a refashioning of the educational landscape.

4. Conclusion: Beyond Orders

The picture drawn here does not have much to do with a quarrel of orders. Obviously, this phrase, whether it derive from Leo or not, falls short when it comes to explaining the contentions that were decisive for the early Reformation. Deconstructing a famous sentence like this one does not mean excluding the history of orders entirely from any reconstruction of the Reformation. Obviously, there are some hints giving a place to it. The commitment of Tetzel, Prierias and Cajetan is only one part of it, while the disputation with the Franciscans is another, and the connection of Leuven and Cologne with the Dominicans might be a third one.

One might ask if all these different hints at Dominicans fighting the Reformation have a common ground in the theology of Thomas Aquinas. There is no question that Luther rejected him, while his adversaries admired him. Yet, some restraint seems to be necessary again: there is no evidence that Luther's rejection of Aquinas was rooted in the tradition of the Augustinian Order to which he had belonged. Something different is true: Luther would later on refer to himself as someone who in his youth had been a member of "Ockham's sect".[80] As already shown, this did not lead him to any closeness with the Fran-

[77] Johannes Eckius: *Letter to Prince Elector Frederick the Wise, July 22, 1519*, in *WA.B* 1, no. 192, p. 460, ll. 38–41.

[78] The texts are to be found in Martin Luther: *Responsio ad condemnationem doctrinalem*, in *WA* 6, pp. 175–180.

[79] Oberman, Heiko A.: *Werden und Wertung der Reformation. Vom Wegestreit zum Glaubenskampf*, Tübingen [2]1979, p. 334.

[80] Martin Luther: *Table Talks*, no. 6419, in *WA.TR* 5, p. 653, ll. 1–2; *ibid.*, no. 2544a, in *WA.TR* 2, p. 516, l. 6.

ciscans. So, it was not meant as a statement about following a Franciscan teacher in particular. Rather, Luther thought more about Ockham's teaching in the *via moderna* at the University of Erfurt, where Ockham had been taught as mediated through the writings of Gabriel Biel, again a scholar without any order affiliation. This leads us back to the issue touched on at the end of the last section: university traditions playing a major role in forming intellectual identities. This was obviously the case for Martin Luther, who followed the *via moderna* with his teachers Jodocus Trutfetter and Bartholomaeus Arnoldi of Usingen. Again, the fact that Arnoldi would become an Augustinian does not matter regarding the question of how important order affiliations were or were not for the Reformation, because he entered the Order late, in the year 1512, when Luther had already moved from Erfurt to Wittenberg.[81] Hence, we come to the conclusion that the academic tradition of the two *viae* was more important for Luther's defying Thomas than was any question of orders.

Luther was not only formed by his academic teachers, but as we know from recent research, the spiritual tradition was of great importance for him as well. Sure, he found important thinkers in his own Order, John of Staupitz being the first of them, but also John of Paltz. But he did not only refer to his own Order for spiritual advice. Here, the Dominicans come in again: as has been shown elsewhere,[82] an important source for Luther's development was John Tauler, a member of the Order of Preachers. Luther knew about Tauler being a Dominican and mentioned this fact explicitly.[83] But this was neither alluring to him nor abhorrent. Tauler was a witness of true, interior spirituality, and so could inspire the Augustinian, regardless of his own order affiliation.

Bringing this together with other observations, in the end it is clear and evident that the Reformation was not a mere "quarrel of orders"; in fact, it was more than this. It was something deeply rooted in late medieval spiritual formations and social conflicts. The rivalry between orders was one of these polarities that could be observed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As such, it took part in framing the Reformation. Just as the Reformation cannot be reduced to such a monastic quarrel, so too can it not be understood without the Orders' contribution to late medieval spirituality and theology. In some cases, as in that of Tetzel or Prierias, this contribution might even have triggered some conflicts, even if not forming the whole of their content. Yet while the Reformation was not just about inter-order squabbles, including the Dominicans, the case of Luther and his writings show that the Reformation nevertheless bears Dominican heritage.

[81] See Bäumer, Remigius: "Bartholomäus von Usingen (ca. 1464–1532)", in ed. Erwin Iserloh: *Katholische Theologen der Reformationszeit 2* (Kirchenreform im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung 45), Münster 1985, pp. 26–37: 26–27.

[82] Leppin, Volker: *Die fremde Reformation. Luthers mystische Wurzeln*, Munich ²2017.

[83] Martin Luther: *Vorrede zur Theologia deutsch*, in *WA* 1, p. 153.