

## Reviews

**THE MEDIEVAL DOMINICANS: BOOKS, BUILDINGS, MUSIC AND LITURGY** [Medieval Monastic Studies 7] edited by Eleanor J. Giraud and Christian T. Leitmeir, *Brepols*: Turnhout, Belgium, 2021, pp.404, £85.00, hbk

This volume is the fruit of an international, interdisciplinary conference, *The Influences of the Dominican Order in the Middle Ages*, hosted in 2015 at the Taylor Institution, Lincoln College, and Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, ahead of the 800<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the Order in 2016. Gathered here are the contributions on the material culture and liturgical life of the medieval Dominicans: books, buildings, music, and liturgy, in short. The helpful bibliographical information at the end of each chapter and in the foot-notes reveals the current vitality of scholarship in Dominican history and identity, which admittedly has hitherto lagged far behind research on similar orders, such as the Franciscans. Noteworthy are Dominik Jurczak OP, *Vangelo e la Liturgia Domenicana dopo la Riforma di Umberto di Romans* (2021), and Eleanor J. Giraud and J. Cornelia Linde (eds), *A Companion to the English Dominican Province: From Its Beginnings to the Reformation* (2021).

Books first. Richard and Mary Rouse discuss bookmaking in thirteenth-century Paris in a breezy tone without loss of substance. The Dominicans are credited with some important inventions: the *pecia* system of copying manuscripts (a kind of industrial process long before Adam Smith observed the pin-makers) and the biblical concordance (thanks to Hugh of Saint-Cher). The Order pushed other novelties it found to hand: the one-volume pocket bible; the ‘Paris Bible’; chapter and sub-chapter biblical referencing. This enabled the rapid dissemination of both liturgical books (after Humbert’s reform) and the works of Aquinas. All this was possible thanks to close collaboration with Guillaume de Sens and his bookmaking family.

As Laura Albiero shows in her vast research into pocket breviaries, Dominicans avoided becoming scribes themselves but took close interest in how their books were structured and illustrated, often with a smaller line height and greater margins for aesthetic reasons, while double columns per page helped keep the volume compact. Dominican brothers had to acquire a breviary before the novitiate and kept it when reassigned elsewhere. It is reassuring to see how the Dominican weakness for book acquisition and retention is nothing new and even encouraged by the Order’s legislation from the outset. Albiero is puzzled (pp. 60–1) by the division of breviaries into separate quires: perhaps this was to facilitate

replacement after wear-and-tear, or to add new feasts in the sanctoral cycle (see Giraud's comment on p. 313, n. 44)? Alison Stones then explores illustrated Dominican books in France up to 1350, aided by beautiful colour reproductions. Pictorial and textual sources are cross-referenced to chart common themes in the developing iconography of St Dominic and St Francis as the mendicants became popular, attracting the patronage of laypeople who owned such books for private devotion.

On buildings and architecture, Panayota Volti takes the reader to the Eastern Mediterranean where the Dominicans spread as early as the 1220s, ministering to local populations in both Latin and Greek. Good relations between Latins and Orthodox were built on intellectual exchanges without proselytism: the Kydonès brothers translated Aquinas, and Volti goes so far as to state that such contacts 'instilled definitively the practice of scholastic discussions in Orthodox theology and Greek philosophy' (p. 114). The chapter studies the influence of Dominicans such as William of Moerbeke on church architecture, with Latins adopting Byzantine features. The Dominican emphasis on the Emmaus episode is intriguing, though Volti's reading of two *spolia* as foreshadowing future missions is somewhat speculative (p. 129). A footnote (p. 125, n. 58) misquotes the argument of Guy Sanders in an unfortunate doctrinal slip: 'the Father and the Son, both of whom proceed from the unseen Holy Spirit' is neither Latin nor Greek theology. Haude Morvan examines the reasons why Dominicans restructured their churches in 15<sup>th</sup>- and 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, relocating the brethren's choir behind the altar. More than Renaissance aesthetics, the architectural shift was driven by contact with laity: to increase the space for pilgrims at Dominican shrines; to foster lay devotion and proximity to the Eucharist (the first confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament was founded at the Minerva in Rome in 1539); and to allow lay patrons to build their mausolea in the sanctuary (the Order was quick to ingratiate itself with the wealthy Florentines in Lyon).

Liturgical matters come to the fore in the following chapters. Emily Guerry traces the fascinating story of Louis IX's acquisition of the Crown of Thorns, thanks to the near-miraculous efforts of two Dominican friars (including the brilliant diplomat André de Longjumeau), racing against an impending Venetian mortgage of the relic. The major source, *Historia Susceptionis Coronae Spineae*, is critically weighed here with other evidence to examine the motivations of Louis IX, the saintly king who wanted to be a friar. Humbert of Romans, godfather to the king's son, was instrumental in establishing a new liturgical cult of the Crown through the Order.

Another very Dominican feast, that of Corpus Christi, is the subject of two chapters with overlapping but complementary perspectives. M. Michèle Mulchahey revisits the attribution of one office of Corpus Christi (*Sacerdos in aeternum*) to Thomas Aquinas and finds it chimes well with his career as a theologian and teacher. The analysis is rich in detail and persuasive. Aquinas may rightly refrain from speaking of a localised *praesentia corporalis* in the Eucharist (pp. 242–3), but to criticise his scholastic

contemporaries as being ‘at odds... with the Patristic understanding of the Eucharist’ (p. 221) does not stand up. The real, fleshly Eucharistic presence is clear in Augustine (p. 237) and could be corroborated by Cyril of Alexandria (especially since the seminal work of Henry Chadwick) or John Chrysostom, whom the Latin Church would applaud as *Doctor Eucharistiae*. Barbara R. Walters then focuses on Aquinas’s own prayer, including his mystical experiences, to draw out an eschatological reading of the Corpus Christi feast: the human person made for the beatific vision. The feast’s interweaving of biblical texts, musical ascension through the Gregorian modes, and the moral dimension of virtues and gifts, is remarkable. The recycling of chant melodies (‘contrafaction’) may create resonances with other feasts (pp. 276–8), though it might be too much to expect the actual friars to be conscious of these while singing the office.

Innocent Smith OP contributes two chapters, the first showing that Dominican Mass prayers were substantially similar to the wider Roman tradition while manifesting some particular variations, not least the unique formulary for preachers (*Pro praedicatoribus*). An online appendix is indicated to encourage future studies. His second chapter turns to the liturgical life of Dominican nuns, so closely bound to the friars in prayer. While friars pray the liturgy ‘briefly and succinctly’ (*breviter et succincte*) before resuming study, the nuns do so ‘slowly and distinctly’ (*tractim et distincte*) though the latter is how friars absent from choir must pray in private, presumably resisting the temptation to cut corners. In all cases the object is also to foster real devotion.

The co-editor Eleanor J. Giraud takes soundings in Dominican Mass texts to find that the pre-Humbertian Dominican liturgy was indeed Cistercian in inspiration, with less diversity than is normally assumed, but sensibly acknowledges that the picture may be different for the Office texts. Humbert’s reform was explicitly motivated by a need for uniformity, but (intriguingly) perhaps also meant as a ‘rebranding exercise’ to stand apart from the Franciscans (p. 317). The priority of study is evoked again, but could there be an overlooked play of words in Humbert: ‘Better a short office with eagerness (*cum studio*) than a long one with hindrance of study (*cum impedimento studii*)’, rather than translating *studium* by ‘study’ both times (p. 317)? Two final chapters consider the encyclopedic *De Musica* of Jerome of Moravia. Christian Thomas Leitmeir, Lay Dominican and co-editor of the volume, explores the specifically ‘Dominican’ characteristics of the work, in content and compilatory intent. He shows that Jerome does for Dominican cantors what St Thomas does for theologians. Błażej Matusiak OP, like Leitmeir, highlights the textual borrowings of Jerome from Thomas (anonymously) and situates the work as a ‘thematic summa’ combining ancient authorities like Boethius with the latest knowledge such as mensural theory and polyphony.

The rich diversity of this volume makes it impossible to summarise, but some general themes seem to emerge. The medieval Dominicans were at the cutting edge both in their material culture and in their thinking,

adopting highly practical solutions to new problems across the board. The premium they placed on study equipped them for foreign-language missions abroad and encyclopedic research projects closer to home, pushing the frontiers of knowledge wherever they worked. Their commitment to preaching for the salvation of souls put them in close contact with the laity, whose devotion they promoted and whose patronage they sought, while maintaining their monastic/canonical structures to safeguard their liturgical and study life. Finally, the impressive Humbertian unification of the Dominican liturgy in the 1250s fits with wider patterns of medieval Dominicans forging their distinct identity as an Order of Preachers in a remarkably pluralistic and rapidly-changing society. If our own times could be characterised in similar terms, the Order today should continue to learn from its past and encourage further studies on the medieval Dominicans, preferably with the quality and breadth displayed in this volume.

MATTHEW JARVIS OP  
*Blackfriars, Edinburgh*

**SUMMISTAE: THE COMMENTARY TRADITION ON THOMAS AQUINAS' *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE* FROM THE 15TH TO THE 17TH CENTURIES** edited by Lidia Lanza and Marco Toste, *Leuven University Press, Leuven, 2021, pp. 456, €120.00, hbk*

St. Thomas famously wrote the *Summa Theologiae* for beginners (*ST* Prologue). He did not write it to supplant the Sentence-Commentary's role in the training of Masters. Nor was it ever likely that he envisaged scholars writing commentaries about it. Yet from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards precisely that happened, and this collection of essays edited by Lidia Lanza and Marco Toste explores that tradition.

The first four chapters deal with the commentary tradition's history. Hence in chapter one the editors provide a helpful summary of its historical and geographical development whilst in chapter two Monica Brînzei and Chris Schabel examine the period prior to its emergence. In chapter three Ueli Zahnd examines the earliest commentary literature whilst in chapter four Matthew Gaetano discusses the commentary tradition at the University of Padua whose context was renaissance humanism. None of these chapters determine what precisely accounted for the emergence of a distinct *Summa Theologiae*-commentary tradition two centuries after Aquinas's death. Zahnd suggests the Reformation (p.151), but one of the implications of Gaetano's chapter is that this could not have been the only cause. One is left to wonder what contribution Trent might have made.

The more speculative part of the collection begins with two chapters on the existence of God. In chapter five Igor Agostini examines the work