1-1-2013

Renaissance Thomism at the University of Padua, 1465-1583

Matthew T. Gaetano
University of Pennsylvania, matthew.gaetano@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations

Part of the European History Commons

Recommended Citation
Gaetano, Matthew T., "Renaissance Thomism at the University of Padua, 1465-1583" (2013). Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations. 865.
http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/865

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/865
For more information, please contact libraryrepository@pobox.upenn.edu.
Renaissance Thomism at the University of Padua, 1465-1583

Abstract
Thomism had an official position at the University of Padua from the second half of the fifteenth century until the middle of the eighteenth century. Through lectures as well as published works, the Dominican professors who taught theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae made important contributions to the spread of the thought of Thomas Aquinas in Italy beyond the Dominican order. But the Thomists who taught at the University of Padua in the sixteenth century were also shaped by the Renaissance intellectual currents in this major academic center. They participated in a fruitful, even friendly, exchange with the so-called secular Aristotelians like Pietro Pomponazzi who taught natural philosophy at the university. In so doing, these Thomists refined their articulation of the relationship of philosophy to Christian faith. The connection between the Dominicans and humanism also contributed to Renaissance Thomism at Padua. While critical of certain perceived excesses in humanism, the Paduan Dominicans recognized and embraced the progress in Latin eloquence, Greek learning, and historical and textual scholarship over the past century or so. Their historical awareness even led to an acknowledgment that the circumstances of the “age of Thomas Aquinas” hindered medieval thinkers in certain ways, a perspective that required a nuanced defense of the achievements of the high scholastics.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Graduate Group
History

First Advisor
Ann Moyer

Keywords
Dominican Order, Renaissance Aristotelianism, Scotism, Thomas Aquinas, Thomism, University of Padua

Subject Categories
European History

This dissertation is available at ScholarlyCommons: http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/865
RENAISSANCE THOMISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PADUA, 1465-1583

Matthew T. Gaetano

A DISSERTATION

in

History

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2013

Supervisor of Dissertation

Signature __________________________

Ann Moyer, Associate Professor of History

Graduate Group Chairperson

Signature __________________________

Benjamin Nathans, Associate Professor of History

Dissertation Committee

Ann Moyer, Associate Professor of History

Margo Todd, Professor of History

John O’Malley, University Professor at Georgetown University
RENAISSANCE THOMISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PADUA, 1465-1583

COPYRIGHT

2013

Matthew Thomas Gaetano
Acknowledgments

Studying the history of universities has shown me the many differences between Renaissance universities and those of our own day. But a common feature is the zealous pursuit of knowledge and the way in which communities and deep friendships emerge from that common endeavor. The history department at the University of Pennsylvania has been a true community of scholars since I first arrived in spring 2005.

I want to give special thanks to my advisor, Ann Moyer. She encouraged my interest in intellectual history and substantially refined my approach to difficult questions regarding periodization, the relationship of texts and contexts, the history of scholarship on the humanist movement, and much more. While introducing me to all of the relevant theoretical approaches to the field of Renaissance intellectual history, Ann has also shown me how to integrate those approaches with a close reading of texts and has strengthened my confidence in the insights that such texts can provide. Despite the dissertation’s remaining flaws, inevitable in such an undertaking, it has improved immeasurably because of her extensive comments, which helped me see what this mountain of information might be able to tell us. In many conversations over the course of the past several years, Ann has always been ready to explain—whether in her office or at a café in Venice or Florence—how my sometimes unfocused discoveries in obscure Latin texts might be able to make a contribution to our understanding of the period.

Other professors at Penn and elsewhere provided great assistance to me as a fledgling historian. Margo Todd’s seminars are certainly among the highlights of my graduate career. Our conversations about the relevance of certain Spanish theologians to
major religious debates in England gave me confidence in the insights that the study of such figures might yield. John O’Malley of Georgetown University has been generous in his support since the Folger Seminar in spring 2008, but I will not forget his thoughtful advice in response to a random e-mail from a first-year graduate student that encouraged me to put the study of languages at the top of my list of priorities. Antonio Feros always had great patience with my evolving interests and convinced me that the breadth of Penn’s faculty would be a great place to continue this development. Conversations with Alan Kors never failed to demonstrate the thrill of discussing the history of philosophy, and they led me to the realization that the shifts within scholasticism might even shed light on the European Enlightenment. The guidance of Ed Peters, Ben Nathans, and Roger Chartier also provided me with needed confidence at critical points in my graduate career. And I also want to thank Marty Burke for frank advice about the profession and about the various approaches to intellectual and cultural history current in today’s academic culture.

It is remarkable how the study of history can nourish discussions about almost any topic and give some structure to wide-ranging conversations among people with very different interests. My own cohort of graduate students, despite the dearth of early-modernists, challenged me in various ways, especially long discussions over Indian food with Rob Goldberg. The Latin reading group, led by Ann Moyer, brought together many of the students of early-modern Europe. It is hard to exaggerate the value of conversations with all of those who shared in the reading of Olaus Magnus, Melchior Cano, Albertino Mussato, Polydore Vergil, and others, but I want to give special thanks
to Andrew Berns for all of his encouragement over the years. I was very thankful when a whole troop of early-modernists came to Penn in my second year. Frequent discussions at the old place on Chestnut St. with Tim Slonosky, Igor Knezevic, Kathryn Ostrofsky—joined in the following year by Anton Matytsin and Matthew Mitchell—made studying this period of history a joy. Ethan Schrum’s shared interest in the history of universities provided a basis for many, many thought-provoking conversations. And I cannot imagine my time at Penn without my dear friend, Dan Cheely.

Doing the research for the dissertation brought me into contact with many others. I want to thank librarians and archivists in Padua, especially at the Archivio Antico dell’Università di Padova, the Archivio di Stato, and particularly the the Biblioteca Universitaria, in Florence at the Laurenziana and the Archivio di Stato, in Rome at the Archivio Segreto and the Archivio Generale dell’Ordine dei Predicatori, in Venice at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana and the Archivio di Stato, as well as those at the Bertoliana and the Teresiana. Experts in the history of the School of Padua and related fields whom I met in that beautiful city furnished indispensable aid to this research, especially Marco Forlivesi, Riccardo Quinto, Gregorio Piaia, Caterina Tarlazzi, and Marco Sgarbi. I have appreciated the conversations with many others at conferences and other meetings and the friendships that have formed over the years with Danny Wasserman, John McCormack, Anne McGinness, Bronwen McShea, Jordan Ballor, David Sytsma, R.J. Matava, Ulrich Lehner, Michael Waddell, Michael Tavuzzi, Richard Oosterhoff, and many others.
I could not have written this particular dissertation without what I learned from my friends Evan Ragland, Lee Cole, and Stephen Gaetano. Evan Ragland helped me to understand the connection between Aristotelianism and the Scientific Revolution and the important role that Italians played in this story. Conversations with him deepened my skepticism about conventional ways of looking at these learned institutions and the texts that were the heart of the university curricula of that era. Lee Cole of Villanova University was the one who made it possible for me to write a history of a particular moment in the Aristotelian and Thomist traditions. I have had little formal training in theology and philosophy, but endless discussions over the course of years with a friend like Lee, who is also one of the smartest people that I have ever encountered, made me at least an adequate amateur. I give him credit (and perhaps blame) for any facility that this dissertation reveals with abstruse matters regarding possible intellects, common natures, and ens commune. He is certainly one of the sunergoi described by Aristotle as enriching and improving something that is already one of the highest human goods—the pursuit of wisdom. And my brother Stephen has been a constant source of inspiration and discipline when my commitment to this project lagged at times. My debt to him is inestimable. Indeed, how many people have the good fortune of calling their siblings to ask whether they have access to a first edition of Domingo de Soto’s De natura et gratia or whether they know anything about the master-general of the Dominican order, Serafino Cavalli! The years spent with Stephen translating Soto’s work mentioned above, my first real encounter with the scholastics of the sixteenth century, have been the best part of my intellectual life thus far.
The obligation of *pietas*—this unpayable debt that I owe to my brother—extends to others. I want to thank my teachers at Hillsdale College who first introduced me to the life of the mind and to historical thinking. This dissertation still reflects questions that I began asking as an undergraduate under the direction of many of my teachers, particularly David Stewart and Mark Kalthoff. All of my extended family has supported my intellectual pursuits since I was a small child. I vividly remember Aunt Christina, Aunt Pat, Aunt Kiki, and Uncle Tony coming to every school ceremony and performance. Even up to this day, this pillar in my life remains strong. My uncle, Dr. Anthony Zegarelli, read two drafts of this dissertation and gave me much advice throughout the process of graduate school. I cannot begin to thank my father and mother and sister—Larry, Donna, and Marialana—for the endless love and guidance that they have given me throughout my life. Perhaps my ability to see harmony and mutual respect in an academic community like Padua—one often characterized as acrimonious and filled with rivalries—reflects the warm environment that was our home. The foundation for anything that I might accomplish in life was built by my parents, who gave such high esteem to discussing ideas, to reading, and to all that cultivated the humanity of their children.

I want to dedicate this whole project to my dearest friend, Amy. Whatever the limits of his perspective on such matters, it is still fitting to quote Thomas Aquinas, who wrote, “The greater the friendship, the more constant and long-lasting it is. Between a husband and wife, there seems to be the greatest friendship.” When I first began to read academic writing, I was always struck by the unfortunately ubiquitous refrain found in
acknowledgments about the neglect of family that accompanies research. I am sure that this dissertation has at times posed challenges to the sort of life that we desired to have together and with our three children, Dominic, Cate, and Peter. Yet this work has also been the source of shared experiences. There were certainly somewhat laborious ones: Amy read three different drafts and offered her keen eye for clarity and good sense that have only partially been reflected in the dissertation’s current state. But our long stays in Padua and Rome, with journeys to beautiful places like Salamanca, Ferrara, Verona, Assisi, and Siena, have burned themselves into our common memory. I owe her more than I can express, so let me conclude with words from the orator so cherished by the humanists: *amici amor ipse delectat.*
ABSTRACT

RENAISSANCE THOMISM AND THE UNIVERSITY OF PADUA, 1465-1583

Matthew T. Gaetano

Ann Moyer

Thomism had an official position at the University of Padua from the second half of the fifteenth century until the middle of the eighteenth century. Through lectures as well as published works, the Dominican professors who taught theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae made important contributions to the spread of the thought of Thomas Aquinas in Italy beyond the Dominican order. But the Thomists who taught at the University of Padua in the sixteenth century were also shaped by the Renaissance intellectual currents in this major academic center. They participated in a fruitful, even friendly, exchange with the so-called secular Aristotelians like Pietro Pomponazzi who taught natural philosophy at the university. In so doing, these Thomists refined their articulation of the relationship of philosophy to Christian faith. The connection between the Dominicans and humanism also contributed to Renaissance Thomism at Padua. While critical of certain perceived excesses in humanism, the Paduan Dominicans recognized and embraced the progress in Latin eloquence, Greek learning, and historical and textual scholarship over the past century or so. Their historical awareness even led to an acknowledgment that the circumstances of the “age of Thomas Aquinas” hindered medieval thinkers in certain ways, a perspective that required a nuanced defense of the achievements of the high scholastics.
Table of Contents

Introduction.................................................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter 1: The Arrival of Theology in Padua ......................................................................................... 14

Chapter 2: The Dominican Order and the Via Sancti Thomae in Padua .............................................. 59

Chapter 3: Outside the Convent Walls: The Reputation of the Dominican Professors among their Colleagues and Students ................................................................................................................. 112

Chapter 4: Renaissance Thomism in the Lecture Hall.............................................................................. 164

Chapter 5: Faith and Reason at the University of Padua ....................................................................... 219

Chapter 6: Humanism and Thomism at the University of Padua ........................................................... 269

Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................. 337

Appendix ................................................................................................................................................... 349

Table of Abbreviations ............................................................................................................................. 352

Bibliography .............................................................................................................................................. 353
Introduction

Thomism became part of the Renaissance at the University of Padua. Examining the lives and works of the Dominican professors who taught at this university from 1465 to 1583 reveals clergymen devoted to medieval theologians actively participating in the most important university of the Italian Renaissance. Although Italian universities were dominated by law and medicine and a more or less secular approach to Aristotelian philosophy, what is not widely known is that, during the Renaissance, public professorships devoted to the thought of medieval theologians, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus in particular, were established by the university authorities. Scholars who have discussed these Paduan chairs have dismissed them as peripheral to the main activities of the university and have asserted that they did not participate in contemporary intellectual trends. But the lives of these forgotten mendicant professors and their works, particularly the extensive evidence from the actual lectures of the professors who taught from the 1540s to the 1570s, present a much different picture. Although the Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae were not the reason that foreign students flocked to the University of Padua and while they were at times critical of trends in European humanism and natural philosophy, these professors were certainly active participants in the intellectual milieu at Padua, arguably the leading university in the period. The academic activity of these friars reveals with profound clarity the extent of humanism’s far-reaching impact.

It is essential to understand the importance of the University of Padua before one can appreciate the significance of the integration of scholasticism into that intellectual
community. Founded in 1222, the University of Padua was the second oldest university in Italy and quickly became the sister school of the Mater Studiorum, the University of Bologna. Intellectual historians have claimed that, in the fifteenth century, Padua became what Paris was in the thirteenth century and Oxford in the fourteenth. Padua’s international renown was rooted in the greatness of her faculties of law and medicine; indeed, scholars have devoted entire studies to the English, German, Dutch, and Polish students who made the italica, often for the prestige of the training received in Venice’s Latin Quarter. Padua attracted famous non-Italians like Nicolaus Copernicus, Thomas Linacre, and eventually Andreas Vesalius, William Harvey, and others.

But the professors of law and medicine did not have a monopoly on Padua’s glory. The tenure of Pietro d’Abano, a contemporary of Dante and Giotto, was once considered the opening foray of what Ernest Renan famously had called the “school of Padua,” an important group of natural philosophers teaching at the university who approached Aristotle without any strong interest in harmonizing the Stagirite and

---

1 For the sake of clarity, I will use the Latin term universitas to describe the contemporary associations of scholars or professors. This study will generally shy away from the use of studium generale because this is the name for the educational establishments of the mendicant orders that are crucial to this inquiry. When I refer to the University of Padua or any other Italian university, I mean (somewhat anachronistically) the community of professors and students present in the city because of the special legal rights of the educational or degree-granting associations and institutions in that city. The term from the period most closely equivalent to the modern term university seems to be gymnasium.

Christian revelation. D’Abano knew Greek and perhaps Arabic, was a master of the philosophical, medical, and astrological learning of his day, and was a keen observer of natural phenomena. The feature of d’Abano’s thought, however, that supposedly made him the founder of a philosophical school was his challenge to “concordist” approaches to Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy; he has been seen as an early voice in the Paduan tradition of asserting the liberty of philosophy from religious dogma.

The dominance of a secular reading of Aristotle at the University of Padua has been the primary source of its interest for historians of philosophy. One might think of philosophy in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Padua as the Silver Age of Latin Averroism, if one understands the term merely to indicate an approach to Aristotle mostly unconcerned about Christian theology—and one perhaps nourished by medieval secular Aristotelians like Siger of Brabant and John of Jandun—rather than a devotion to the particular interpretations of Averroes himself. But even specialists of Paduan

---


4 See Nancy Siraisi, Arts and Sciences at Padua: The studium of Padua before 1350 (Toronto: PIMS, 1973).

Aristotelianism often regarded the contributions of these natural philosophers to the long history of Aristotelian interpretation as insignificant. These fifteenth- and sixteenth-century commentators on Aristotle lived only decades before the revolutionary achievements of Galileo Galilei and René Descartes; they were deemed to be relics of a previous era. Indeed, Ernest Renan dismissed a Paduan philosopher like Cesare Cremonini (d. 1631) as merely the “last of the scholastics.” These Italian philosophers, however, provided a useful counterpoint to the debates about Christian philosophy and Christian Aristotelianism arising from Leo XIII’s *Aeterni Patris* and the neo-scholastic revival of the late-nineteenth century. The professors of natural philosophy at Padua perpetuated the Parisian views that received a blow from thirteenth-century ecclesiastical censures, the most famous being the Condemnation of 1277. The opposition of the “Latin Averroists” to the scholastic theologians did not vanish. More than two centuries after 1277, Pietro Pomponazzi lambasted Thomas Aquinas and his disciples for attempting to Christianize the pagan Aristotle. Only this “secular” or “radical” approach

---

6 See Renan, 322-25, esp., 322: “L’université de Padoue mérite une place dans l’histoire de la philosophie, moins comme ayant inauguré une doctrine originale, que comme ayant continué plus longtemps qu’aucune autre école les habitudes du moyen âge.”
7 Ibid., 322.
8 See Pietro Ragnisco, *Della fortuna di S. Tommaso d’Aquino nella università di Padova durante il Rinascimento: Discorso per l’inaugurazione degli studi* (Padua, 1892), for the connection being made quite explicit. Ragnisco was a scholar who wrote important works on Nicoletto Vernia and other Paduan Aristotelians. But see ibid., 6-7, 13-14.
9 It is important to note that Latin Averroism had defenders after 1277 in Paris, most importantly John of Jandun.
10 It is true that Siger of Brabant did have an influence in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Padua. See Bruno Nardi, *Sigieri di Brabante nel pensiero del rinascimento italiano* (Rome, 1945).
to Aristotelian philosophy, some argued, could redeem the Stagirite from his corruption at the hands of religiously motivated Neo-Platonists and Latin Christian theologians.\textsuperscript{11}

This understanding of philosophy at the University of Padua is true in its broad outlines. To grasp the significance of the university, however, it is essential to know that the lay Aristotelians at Padua were part of the inspiration for other intellectual developments in early modern Europe. The radical Aristotelian reading of Aristotle’s \textit{De anima}, which asserted the mortality of the individual human soul, was part of the inspiration for fifteenth-century Florentines, particularly Marsilio Ficino and his circle, to retrieve the works of Plato, whose philosophy was thought to put the soul’s immortality on a surer footing.\textsuperscript{12} Indeed, Descartes opened his \textit{Meditations} with an invocation of the Fifth Lateran Council’s challenge to develop the best arguments possible for the soul’s immortality; most scholars have perceived this council’s decree as pitted against the secular Aristotelians at the universities of Bologna and Padua, Pietro Pomponazzi in particular. The Florentine Platonists had an apologetic motive for what they were doing. They thought that a certain form of Aristotelianism endangered Christendom. A few scholars have taken the perspective of these Platonists as well as other critics of the Italian Aristotelians quite seriously and have argued that some of these Paduan


philosophers rejected the dogmas of the Christian faith. Pomponazzi and Cesare Cremonini in particular have found a place in histories of libertinism and atheism.\textsuperscript{13}

What is entirely missing from all of these stories is the fact that scholars who approached Aristotle with interests in Christian theology actually co-existed with this lay Aristotelianism. Dominicans and Franciscans had prominent positions in the university from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In the conventional narrative, no latter-day Thomas Aquinas or Bonaventure rose to confront these radical Aristotelians in Italy.

Indeed, theology is said to have had little to no influence in Italian academic life. John Herman Randall argues that Italy’s distinctive approach to Aristotle resulted from the settled commercial prosperity the Italian cities had now achieved. They had long enjoyed and taught in their universities a thoroughly secular and anti-clerical philosophy expressive of the new culture of a this-worldly and commercial society. By 1400 that nice blend of Aristotelian science and Christian faith which Thomas and Duns Scotus had constructed had, in Italy at least, retreated into the monastic orders.\textsuperscript{14}

In his view, Paduan Aristoteliansm did not face any real challenge from the approaches to Aristotle developed at the University of Paris. Church authorities, Renaissance Platonism, and—if one were to adopt Giuseppe Toffanin’s perspective—Italian humanism were the


\textsuperscript{14} Randall, “Development,” 183.
only local challenges to the hegemony of radical Aristotelianism in the universities of northern Italy.\textsuperscript{15}

In fact, the so-called concordist approaches of Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas to Christian faith and Aristotelian science did not simply retreat to the monasteries. Rather, this study shows that the mendicants had prominent positions in the arts course of the University of Padua during some of its most glorious decades. From 1490 until the eighteenth century, there were two professorships—always held by Dominican friars—in the theology and metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas. Two Franciscans always lectured on the thought of John Duns Scotus. The professors of Thomism and Scotism were part of the arts course at Padua, which included professors in medicine, natural philosophy, logic, mathematics, moral philosophy, and Greek and Latin literature. Padua was also the first in Italy to establish a professorship in the arts curriculum devoted to the study of the Bible in 1551.

There is a substantial literature that deals with the history of the Franciscans in Padua, animated in part by the presence of St. Anthony of Padua in the convent which eventually would be simply called Il Santo. Scholars, led by Antonino Poppi, have covered some of the contributions of the professors of Scotist thought. Almost no attention has been given to the Dominican convent of Sant’Agostino and the Thomist professors who dwelt there; no modern scholar has addressed the history and

contributions of the Thomist professors in the sixteenth century. This almost complete neglect is one reason why this study focuses on the professors of theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae.

A more significant reason for the focus on the Dominicans at Padua is that they shed light on the broader phenomenon of the Thomist revival in fifteenth-century Italy and Europe in general. Thomas Aquinas (1225?–1274) was the first medieval theologian to be named a doctor of the Church (1567); he was the theologian most quoted at the Council of Trent after Augustine (1545-1563); and he became the official theologian of the Jesuit order. Even today, Thomas Aquinas is the token medieval thinker in general texts on the history of ideas. His elevation in the middle decades of the sixteenth century, however, is not a result of Thomas’s medieval preeminence. Historians have shown that Thomas’s intellectual authority—outside of his own Dominican order—was almost non-existent in the decades following his death in 1274. The fourteenth century has instead been characterized as one of “Franciscan hegemony,” as a period dominated by the

---

16 Antonino Poppi’s article on Girolamo Vielmi examines a very important moment in the history of this professorship, but it is focused on only a single figure. See Antonino Poppi, “Una difesa della teologia scolastica contro gli erasimiani: la prolusione di Girolamo Vielmi al corso di teologia in via Thomae” (1554),” in idem, Ricerche sulla teologia e la scienza nella Scuola padovana del Cinque e Seicento (Catanzaro, 2001), 69-86. Michael Tavuzzi’s essays on Valentino Camerino and Gaspare da Perugia are also extremely important achievements. The long history of these chairs provides useful context for these studies on individual figures. See Michael Tavuzzi, “Valentino da Camerino, O.P. (1438-1515): Teacher and Critic of Cajetan,” Traditio 49 (1994): 287-316; idem, “Gaspare di Baldassare da Perugia O.P. (1465-1531): A Little-Known Adversary of Cajetan,” The Thomist 60 (1996): 595-615. In Grendler’s general treatment of theology and metaphysics in Italian universities, he generally depends on this eighteenth-century work: Giambattista Contarini, Notizie storiche circa li pubblici professori nello Studio di Padova scelti dall’Ordine di San Domenico (Venice, 1769).

followers of the Franciscan theologians, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.¹⁸

Thomas’s emergence as a central intellectual authority in the Catholic Church during the sixteenth century, therefore, was not inevitable and must be explored as a contingent development in Renaissance intellectual culture. Receiving an official position in public university courses at Padua was part of the transmission of Thomism beyond the Dominican order.

These scholastic professorships at Padua are not well-known, even by specialists. But incidental remarks about these professorships and the Dominican teachers are frequently misleading or simply erroneous. Even those who have discussed them in some detail acknowledge that little is known about the individuals teaching Thomistic theology and metaphysics at the University of Padua. Nevertheless, sweeping judgments are offered that discourage rather than promote further inquiry. Paul Grendler’s The Universities of the Italian Renaissance is the most important work on Italian universities in the English language. It draws together the scholarship of the past several decades into a coherent narrative of institutional and intellectual changes in the Renaissance provoked especially by humanism. Grendler writes, “research on the rank and file of Italian theologians is sparse”—indeed, he says that “Italian theology of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is the least studied of all scholarly disciplines in the Italian

Renaissance.”\textsuperscript{19} Despite the limits in what we know about these professors, he asserts that “theology seems to have been the least innovative of university disciplines during the Renaissance,”\textsuperscript{20} and, in the conclusion of the book, Grendler states that, from the end of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century, “scholars at Italian universities produced innovations in every discipline except theology.”\textsuperscript{21} He writes elsewhere, “law and medicine professors often viewed with condescension the one or two members of the regular clergy from local monasteries who taught theology in the university.”\textsuperscript{22} Grendler is providing a clear statement of the standard scholarly judgments about scholastic theology in Renaissance Italy.

In examining the biographies of these professors, I have found many expressions of profound respect from contemporary humanists and lay natural philosophers concerning their mendicant teachers or colleagues. Dominicans were certainly not as important to the fame of the University of Padua as the professors of law, medicine, or natural philosophy. But the notion that they were dismissed or on the periphery of the university is incorrect, and evidence from their lives, their works, and especially their actual lectures supports this claim. These professors were not merely taken seriously by others in the intellectual milieu at Padua; indeed, these Dominicans themselves took

\textsuperscript{19} Grendler, \textit{Universities}, 392.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. He also says that “all the signs suggest that the vast majority of the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Servites in Italian universities continued to teach medieval Scholasticism of their predecessors with little originality.”
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 511.
\textsuperscript{22} Paul F. Grendler, “The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation,” in idem, \textit{Renaissance Education between Religion and Politics} (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2006), I: 11. This statement is an example of misleading claims that characterize discussion of this material. Not one of the Dominican professors covered in this study was a native friar of the local monastery.
seriously the major currents of their own day. Once scholars become aware of these individuals and once longstanding misunderstandings about them and their teaching are corrected, it should be possible to add greater nuance and complexity. But it is necessary to begin by excavating figures and texts of interest that have fallen into nearly complete oblivion.

Since the conventional scholarly portrait of these individuals is not based on primary sources, it is clear that the dismissal of them in the literature is based on our general assumptions about the period. The fact that these assumptions have been so misleading should give us pause. Almost every hypothesis about what we might expect to find in the lectures of these Dominicans has turned out to be incorrect. Some of these assumptions go back to the first great general histories of philosophy in the eighteenth century and back to the construal of scholasticism by some Protestant historians. To avoid complicating the story, however, it suffices to point to the discussion of Renan and Randall at the beginning of this study and their view of the school of Padua as anti-clerical and perhaps even heterodox or skeptical of religion. Although Charles Lohr has refined our understanding of “secular” Aristotelianism and Charles Schmitt has described the variety of Renaissance “Aristotelianisms,” one key element of this story remains the same. All these scholars argue that there was a fundamental difference between the natural philosophy cultivated in Italian universities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

---

and that of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus. Based on this assumption, it makes perfect sense to predict that conflict would break out at the university once the foreign, Parisian, theological approach to Aristotle entered the picture during the second half of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{24} If there was not conflict, then—on the basis of these assumptions—one would have predicted that the natural philosophers and friars were ignoring or dismissing one another. The problem is that neither hostility nor indifference characterized the attitude towards the Dominican professors at Padua, and the categories at our disposal do not provide much help in explaining why this was so.

The notion of Renaissance scholasticism might begin to address this difficulty. Scholasticism continues to be conceived as a medieval phenomenon. And our periodization suggests that these medieval and Renaissance intellectual currents were at odds with one another. On the contrary, these Dominican professors show how scholasticism could be a part of a leading Renaissance intellectual milieu. They learned much from their humanist and lay Aristotelian colleagues. These Thomists were valued for their expertise in theology, metaphysics, and medieval texts. The Dominican connections to Padua were almost always collegial and quite often friendly.

The category of Renaissance scholasticism may have its own difficulties, but it is crucial for addressing many of these concerns and for setting aside the problematic assumptions that have misled scholars in the past. Scholars have felt confident about asserting that theology taught in Italian universities was the least original subject because

they believe that scholasticism does not really have a history. These mendicants were teaching these subjects in via S. Thomae or in via Scoti; therefore, their teaching must have been limited to these medieval ways of thinking. But it was possible to teach, to explain, and to defend the fundamental claims of these major theologians while employing new humanistic approaches to history and scholarship, consulting the Greek text and newly available Greek commentators, and engaging the leading lights of the period like Leonardo Bruni, Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and Desiderius Erasmus. These friar-professors anchored their theology in the writings of Thomas Aquinas while considering with great care the relationship of faith and reason and the proper attitude of a theologian towards poetry and rhetoric. These Dominican professors were aware of the need to defend the medieval doctors in light of what they generally believed to be positive developments of the previous century—the cultural and intellectual shifts that we refer to as the Renaissance. Indeed, their historical awareness even led to an acknowledgment that the circumstances of the “age of Thomas Aquinas” hindered medieval thinkers in important ways, a perspective that required a nuanced defense of the achievements of the high scholastics. It is precisely for this reason that the Dominicans professors at the University of Padua serve as clear examples of a genuinely Renaissance Thomism.25

Chapter 1
The Arrival of Theology in Padua

Examining the teaching of theology at Padua sheds light on the institutional organization as well as the culture of Renaissance universities. One of the challenges to understanding these developments is the vast difference between the institutional character of universities in this period and those in our own day. Modern universities generally have a central administration that unifies the various colleges and faculties that come under its authority. Departments are constituted almost entirely by professors, referred to as faculty, who teach within a single discipline. A department has some power to determine the curriculum for students majoring in that subject and to make decisions about those who are to become members of that faculty. In medieval and Renaissance Italian universities, in contrast, students initially controlled the hiring and firing of professors, a role eventually taken over by the civic authorities, and there was very little independent administration. At least in the case of the University of Padua, the teaching professors had almost no institutional authority.¹ The power of degree-granting was located in the faculties or colleges whose members had degrees but generally did not involve themselves in actual teaching. This chapter shows how this important distinction between faculty and teaching professors clarifies how theology was incorporated into the University of Padua.

¹ In the decrees of appointment, these professors were often referred to as lettori. In the rolls of courses in arts and medicine, one generally finds a general reference to the “doctores and masters” who would be lecturing during that year. The clerical status of the professors under examination was acknowledged by referring to them as “reverend.”
Even referring to the University of Padua is rather anachronistic. All of the students, teachers, and degree-granting doctors in the various faculties remained loosely affiliated with one another, institutionally speaking. The designation for the broad community of scholars in a particular city was *gymnasium*. Theologians became a genuine part of the *gymnasium* in Padua in two distinct phases: the creation of a faculty of theology in 1363 and then the incorporation of theologians into the arts course in the latter half of the fifteenth century. These two phases, however, have very little to do with one another. The faculty of theology basically amounted to a confederation of the *studia* or schools of the mendicant orders in the city, which gave students of theology in Padua direct access to a degree in that discipline. It was the second phase—the incorporation of the friars into the arts course—which led to the increased interaction between Dominicans and their lay colleagues and students. Despite the decentralized institutional structure of the university, the scholars drawn to the city formed a community which contributed to major changes in the study of theology and philosophy in the period. These relationships led to the development of Renaissance scholasticism in Padua.

Setting the story of these two phases within the European and local context shows that theology did not remain on the outskirts of Italian university life. The connection between theology and the University of Padua took place alongside other major changes in the university that were central to that scholarly community's emerging identity. Most importantly, around the same time that the papacy created a faculty of theology in the city, the students of arts and medicine gained their independence from the jurists, who had dominated the University of Padua since its founding. The students of the liberal arts
supported theology's presence within the university at each step along the way towards the creation of stable professorships of theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae.

The Faculty of Theology

European universities were the major centers of Latin Christendom’s intellectual life from the twelfth century until the middle of the fourteenth century. But during the period of greatness for this medieval institution, the discipline of theology had no official relationship with any universities south of the Alps. Indeed, there were no theology faculties at all in Italy until 1343. Instead, the dominant faculties in Italy were law and eventually medicine. In the universities of Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge, the professors of the liberal arts and philosophy (“arts”) generally had an orientation towards theology. In Italy, this role was largely filled by medicine; in fact, students of arts and medicine were often members of the same corporation or universitas, and professors of these

---

3 Grendler, Universities, 70.
4 At Bologna medicine became an important part of university intellectual life with Taddeo Alderotti (d. 1295), who began teaching in Bologna around 1260. Students of medicine received certain privileges from the commune between 1274 and 1288, while the first recorded degree in medicine received after magisterial examination was awarded in 1268. See Nancy Siraisi, “The Faculty of Medicine,” in Universities in the Middle Ages, esp. 364-65.
subjects were listed on a single *rotulus*—the roll or list of professors and courses for the upcoming academic year. Indeed, many of the great theologians born in Italy such as Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Gregory of Rimini did much of their advanced study and teaching at the University of Paris, not in the schools closer to their native lands.

Italian universities, however, began to receive permission to establish faculties of theology at around the same time as universities north of the Alps. The vast majority of universities in the north did not have the right to grant degrees in theology. Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge were exceptions to the general rule. The foundation of the University of Prague in 1347, the first university in the Empire, marks the end of the Parisian-Oxonian monopoly on theology; the pope’s charter granted it the right to graduate students in all the traditional faculties. Theology thus did not serve as queen of the university disciplines for almost any ultramontane *studia* until the 1340s when Pisa and Florence were also founded with the authority to grant degrees in the sacred science.

The long wait for theology’s incorporation in Italy had more to do with the resistance of clergymen than the lay character of Italian universities. There is very little evidence of a general anti-theological disposition on the part of Italian academics or a

---


7 Kristeller, “Curriculum,” 87.


lack of interest in having a college of theologians in these cities.\textsuperscript{10} Italian student groups and academic governing bodies asked for such charters and celebrated when their requests were granted.\textsuperscript{11} Clergymen put up barriers to this development. The pope seems to have had a policy to maintain the central position of Paris in European theology.\textsuperscript{12} Only the struggles of the papacy in the middle of the fourteenth century compelled popes to break the Paris monopoly and spread the power to grant degrees in theology throughout Christendom.\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, a major historian of the Dominican order, William Hinnebusch, has offered a plausible suggestion that the absence of theology faculties from Italy was actually rooted in the desire of the mendicants to preserve their

\textsuperscript{10} Scholars have convincingly shown the problems with this view, frequently seen in the older literature on this subject. See Monfasani, “Aristotelians, Platonists, and the Missing Ockhamists,” 252; Kristeller, “Curriculum of the Italian Universities from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance,” \textit{Proceedings of the PMR Conference} 9 (1984), 5. See also idem, “The University of Bologna and the Renaissance,” \textit{Studi e memorie per la storia dell’Università di Bologna} n.s. 1 (1956), [check]: “theology was almost absent, not as a result of anticlericalism, but rather of ecclesiastical policy (which continued to favor Paris) and of institutional traditions.”

\textsuperscript{11} Brotta and Zonta, \textit{La facoltà teologica dell’Università di Padova}, pt. 1, secoli XIV e XV (Padua, 1922), 26, 253. Matteo Villani, \textit{Cronica} (Rome, 1980), vol. 4, bk. 9, chap. 58, 245-6: “Poco è da pregiare per onestà di fama che uno sia con le usate solennità, ne’ luoghi dove sono li studi generali delle scienze privilegiate dalla authorità del santo padres e dell’imperio di Roma, pubblicamente scolaio maestrato; ma essendo questo atto primo e nuovo, e più non veduto nella città che hanno di nuovo privilegi di ciò potere fare, bello pare e scusabile d’aluni farne memoria, non per nome dell’uomo, che per avventura non merita d’essere posto in ricordo di coloro che verrano, ma per accrescimento di tali cittadi, ove tale atto da prima è celebrato. In questi giorni per virtù de’ privilegi alla nostra città conceduti per lo nostro papa Clemente sesto, infra l’altri cose contenne di potere maestare in teologia, a dì 9 di dicembre nella chiesa di santa Reparata pubblicamente e solennemente fu maestrato in divinità, e prese i segni di maestro in teologia frate Francesco di Biancozzo de’ Nerli dell’ordine de’ frati romitani; e il commune mostrandosi grato del beneficio ricevuto di potere questo fare, per lungo spazio di tempo fece sonare a parlamento sotto titolo di Dio lodiamo tutte le campane del comune, e’ signori priori co’ loro colleghi, e con tutti gli ufficiali del comune, con numero grandissimo di cittadini furono presenti al detto atto di maestramento, che fu cosa notabile e bella.”


independence from theology faculties controlled by bishops.  

The struggles between secular clergy and the religious at Paris are notorious. The religious considered Paris and Oxford as “secular” universities—schools dominated by the secular clergy—which, in general, demanded that Dominicans, Franciscans, and other mendicants follow their statutes. It is not at all unreasonable that religious clergy in major centers for mendicant theology such as Bologna would not push hard to import the Parisian model of oversight by the secular clergy.

Theologians thus lived in Italian cities without faculties, colleges, or university status long before the fourteenth century. The houses of the mendicant orders (Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites, Servites) offered advanced theological instruction in their *studia generalia* and *studia provincialia*, although this instruction tended to be geared to their own members. Theologians also offered courses in cathedral schools and monasteries. One should not overlook that theologians trained in Paris and Oxford—again, especially from the mendicant orders—preached sermons for the laity in the many churches of Italy.

---

16 Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 352ff.
17 See Mulchahey, *Dominican*, for an excellent study on the importance of these *studia* in a religious order and their relationship to university education. See also Roest, *Franciscan Education*.
18 Brotta and Zonta, *Facoltà*, 3-4, 88-91; Hinnebusch, *History*, 12, 17, n. 71. This was still true in Padua in 1426. See MOPH VIII (Bologna, 1426): 190, where a Dominican was assigned by the general chapter to lecture on Scripture in Padua’s cathedral.
The religious orders had a prominent place in Padua long before the creation of a theology faculty in 1363. The Dominicans of S. Agostino engaged in debates about poetry with Albertino Mussato and received major scholars like Engelbert of Admont (d. 1331), a major thirteenth-century Benedictine intellectual, into their midst. The Augustinians of SS. Filippo e Giacomo patronized some of the most profound expressions of early Renaissance painting, most famously Giotto’s Scrovegni Chapel. The Franciscans of Il Santo had a dominant position in thirteenth-century Padua in part because of the memory of the great preacher and trusted friend and theologian at Francis of Assisi’s side, the Evangelical Doctor, known as St. Anthony of Padua.

Advanced instruction in theology took place in the city in these places. For the mendicant orders, the existence of a studium generale in a particular convent simply indicated that friars from across Europe could be sent to that location by the order’s general authorities. The Augustinian convent, also called the Eremitani, whose lectors and priors were dear friends of Francesco Petrarca during his time in Padua, hosted one of the first four studia generalia in Italy, along with Bologna, Rome, and Naples, beginning in 1287. The Franciscans of Padua had a studium generale in Padua by the

---

20 Ugo Mariani, Il Petrarca e gli Agostiniani (Rome, 1959).
21 See Acta of 1287, quoted in Eelcko Ypma, La formation des professeurs chez les Ermites de Saint-Augustin de 1256 à 1354 (Paris, 1956), 22, n. 45: “Statuimus et ordinamus iiii-or Studia Generalia ad minus in Ytalia, scilicet, in Curia Romana, Bononie, Padue et Neapoli.” See D’Alatri’s discussion of a controversy about the foundation of these early Augustinian studia on “Panorama,” 69. David Gutiérrez suggests that the creation of these studia occurred before 1270. The first mention of them in any source is 1287, though. D’Alatri believes the great historian of the Augustinian order to be mistaken on this point. See also K. W. Humphreys, The Book Provisions of the Mediaeval Friars, 1215-1400 (Amsterdam, 1964), 67-68.
middle of the fourteenth century, perhaps as early as 1310. Other orders eventually rose to prominence among Padua’s theology schools, but only after the creation of the theology faculty at the university. The Carmelites did not christen their Paduan convent as a *studium generale* until 1411. There does not appear to be strong evidence for a Servite *studium generale* until the middle decades of the fifteenth century.

15 April 1363 marked the commencement of Padua’s right to grant degrees in theology by virtue of Urban V’s bull, *Sane dum fructus*. This bull did not immediately affect the teaching of theology in Padua. Theology remained in the mendicant convents and their *studia*. But the creation of a faculty of theology did mean that the teaching of

22 The evidence for the date of an establishment of a Franciscan *studia generalia* in Padua is rather shaky. See Roest, *Franciscan Education*, 33, n. 118, for the relevant literature. See D’Alatri, “Panorama,” 66-67, for some disagreements about the identification of *studia generalia* in Italy. Roest, *Franciscan Education*, 33, attempts to synthesize these accounts in the following way: “Many of them first and foremost seem to have been custodial or provincial schools, sometimes with some ‘general’ traits, in that they sometimes attracted students from abroad (predominantly from neighbouring provinces).” All agree, though, that Padua was a “real” *studia generalia* by the middle of the fourteenth century.


24 More work needs to be done on the Servite system of education, but see *Monumenta ordinis servorum Sanctae Marie*, eds. Agostino Morini and Pérégrin Soulier (Brussels, 1897-1906), II: 53, 56, where the *studia* in Italy, including Padua, were reformed. But see Brotta and Zonta, *Facoltà*, 175-78, which shows Servites being incorporated into the Faculty of Theology, receiving decrees, and lecturing from 1429. See also *Monumenta* I: 159-60, which might shed some light on the real consequences of the Great Schism for Italian faculties of theology: “Omnia igitur sic prosperè procedebant, quando anno 1378 ortum est schisma inter Urbanum VI et Clementem VII, Universitate Parisiensi Clementis, Italia vero tota Urbani partibus adhaerente. Hinc factum est ut studentes Servorum vel in Italian ad suos reversi sint, vel alios ordines ingressi sint....Anno autem 1387 domus Parisiensis iam non existabat: nam in litteris ad fratrem Johannem de Florentia Clemens VII testatur nullam esse domum Servorum in partibus sibi subjectis....Atque ita, non obstantibus iteratis conatibus, ordo Servorum a tempore schismatis Parisiis nuncquam restitutus est.” See also Alexius-Maria Rossi, “Prospectus historicus studiorum in ordine Servorum B. Mariae Virginis,” *Studi storici dell’Ordine dei servi di Maria* 16 (1966): 156.

25 This point has rarely been made clearly even by the best scholars of the university. See Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences*, 18: “there was no public teaching of theology at Padua until 1363.” See also ibid., n. 16: “Permission to establish a chair of theology at Padua was given by Urban V in 1363....Theology appears to have been taught privately in the various convents in Padua well before 1363.” See ibid., 134-35: “Until the foundation of the faculty of theology in 1363, the only source of public teaching on metaphysics at Padua was the Faculty of Arts and Medicine.”
theology in the convents was now associated with the gymnasium in Padua, the community of doctors, professors, and students in the city in their various guild-like associations. Before 1363, the friars participated in Padua’s academic life, and at least some students living in the city took advantage of hearing well-trained theologians who were living in the city. These theologians in the Paduan mendicant houses, however, received their degrees from elsewhere for the entirety of the thirteenth and most of the fourteenth centuries. The language of the papal bull made this quite clear. The pope asked that the first members of the faculty be masters and bachelors with degrees from Paris or other famous studia of theology. Pope Urban V acknowledged that the University of Padua (studium Paduanum) had for a long time been an eminently bright star, diffusing its light far and wide in canon and civil law as well as in the liberal arts. With this papal bull, the University of Padua (Universitas studii Paduani) and the city itself (Cives Civitatis) was only now being augmented and honored with the gift of a faculty of theology. Most importantly, over the next several decades, the faculty or college of theology professors was identified numerous times as part of the University of Padua.


27 To quote Sane dum fructus in its entirety: “1363. 15 Aprile. - Urbanus episc. servus servorum Dei. Sane dum fructus uberes, quos studium paduanum, quod longis temporibus in se ipso, sicut perfulgida stella emicuit, et diffusa claritate longe, lateque refulgit in iure canonico et civili et liberalibus artibus, tanquam ager plenus, cui dominus beneditix copiosa fertilitate produxit factenus et producit, cum delectatione animi recensenum et exinde speramus et divinitus benedictus fructus et fecunditas in ibidem amplius propagari dumque fidei puritatem et devotionem eximiam, quam dilecti filii Universitatis studii paduani et cives civitatis eiusdem nostri et ecclesiae romane devoti ad nos et dictam ecclesiam habuerunt hactenus et habere noscuntur diligenter attendimus, dignum ducimus et equitati congruum existimamus, ut civitas et Universitas predicte, quas divina gratia magnis donis et gratis illustravit et honorum multiplicium fecunditate dotavit et loci amenitate non modica decoravit, huiusmodi scientiae teologie facultatis munera amplue et

28
The three most important institutions which contributed to developments in the *gymnasium* were the *universitates* or legal associations of students, the faculties or colleges of doctors, and eventually the civic authorities. The *gymnasium* itself or the *studium generale* was the more or less loosely affiliated community of scholars and teachers living in the city, which most closely resembles our modern word “university.” It is for this reason that the technical term *universitas*, which refers to the associations of students that were a fundamental part of the *gymnasium*, is kept in the original Latin.

Italian universities arose out of associations of non-local students, *universitates*, which gained legal recognition and had the authority to contract with professors in order to receive instruction. The professors thus had no powers as a group or any legal


28 Poppi, “Dibattito,” 15-17. Some examples: “collegium magistrorum in dicta theologiae scientia in civitate paduae et in studio paduano” (1385); “venerabiles theologice facultatis doctores eiusdem universitatis [alme universitatis paduane (very close to the modern usage of the term *university* in this case)] (1406); “Ut igitur etiam hec nostra patavina sacrorum theologorum facultas…dirigatur…nos Petrus Marcello de Venetiis Dei et apostolice Sedis gratia paduanus episcopus prefateque theologorum *aliarumque facultatum* in civitate paduae dignissime univeresitatibus Cancellarius…condidimus” (1424) (emphasis added); “alma universitas nostra sacrorum theologorum antiquissimi Studii patavini” (1510). See the relevant part of the full title of Giovanni B. Moncetto and sig.B6, *Questio aurea de distinctione rationis*, quoted in Edward P. Mahoney, “Duns Scotus and the School of Padova around 1500,” in *La tradizione scolista veneto-padovana*, vol. 2 of *Regnum Hominis et Regnum Dei*, ed. Camille Bérubé (Rome, 1978), 227, n. 79: “...composita et extracta per sacrae theologiae doctorem magistrum Josephum Benedictum Moncettum de Castilione Aretino ordinis Eremitarum divi Augustini ac gymnasii Patavini regentem dignissimum MCCCCCVIII...Anno 1509 die 12 Januarii dum essem regens in florido Gymnasio Patavino” (emphasis added).
relationship to one another. The student *universitates* and eventually the civic authorities hired them to teach a particular subject. They could assist students as they went to the faculties for their examinations. And that was all. In Italy, only some of the professors received some legal standing or association by becoming part of the faculties or colleges, the “doctors” or degree-holding men in the city. These faculties had other powers, but, for our purposes, their most important task was to examine students who were sponsored by one of the teaching professors and then to grant degrees. The implication here is that it is inappropriate to talk about the list of those teaching law, medicine, arts, or eventually theology as a faculty. The professors *qua* professors were not members of any body. They did not deliberate over future hires, salaries, or curriculum. They were hired experts in lecturing on a particular set of texts.

These institutions did not all come into existence in 1222. The gradual development of these institutions shows that the faculty of theology was not as late an arrival as scholars sometimes suggest.  

29 Official *collegia doctorum* or faculties for granting law degrees came long after the establishment of the *universitas legistarum* in Padua, which was constituted by students of law. Padua received its first papal recognition in 1264.  

30 The first official statutes for the two *universitates* of law

---

29 Gieysztor, “Management and Resources,” 110: “Although Padua most closely followed the Bologna pattern, it was only after two centuries of adaptation and reorganization. Padua was founded in 1222….A theological faculty arose there in 1363 on the fringe of the *studium*, and (as at Bologna) it was in the hands of the mendicants.”

30 The university was officially christened a *studium generale* by Clement VI in 1346. See Grendler, *Universities*, 22.
(ultramontane and cismontane) were compiled just a few years before in 1260. The basic “Bologna model” of student control operated in Padua until the early part of the fourteenth century, in which each student universitas made statutes, elected its own officials headed by the rector, chose professors, and established contractual relationships with them. But this system lasted for only a few decades; the commune and, in 1318, the Carrara family took over many of these responsibilities, though students still had rights as far as choosing some less important professors until a few decades into the sixteenth century. Indeed, the civic authorities always had more power over the university students in Padua than was true of the situation in Bologna.

Arts and medicine formed an alliance because of the supremacy of law in Padua. It took well over a century for the students of these subjects to establish an autonomous association. Teachers and students of arts subjects probably existed at Padua from the beginning of the community of scholars in 1222, but no formal association existed for them until 1262. This association (proto-universitas) of the students of arts and medicine was dominated by the jurist universitates until around 1350. The artisti had no right to choose their professors or even their own rector. The Paduan medical schools increased in importance throughout the first half of the fourteenth century, particularly during the tenure of Pietro d’Abano. In 1360 the universitas of arts and medicine and the jurist

31 Siraisi, Arts and Sciences, 20, n. 29. As much as scholars have emphasized that Italian universitates were universitates scholarum, that is, student associations or universities, rather than universitates magistrorum, there is some evidence that the jurist associations at Padua may have allowed masters.
32 Siraisi, Arts and Sciences, 27; Kibre, Scholarly Privileges, 61-66. But see Denley, “Recent Studies,” 198, for some important qualifications regarding the Bologna model.
33 Kibre, Scholarly Privileges, 61.
universitates had a conflict that was resolved by the bishop of Padua, Pileo da Prata.\textsuperscript{34} Only then did the jurists acknowledge the rights of the universitas of arts and medicine to elect their professors and officers, especially the rector. Despite this concession, the dominance of the associations of the students of law remained in place. The rector of the students of arts and medicine still had to swear an oath of loyalty to the statutes of the jurists in the presence of the jurist rectors. Furthermore, there was a mandatory fee for students in arts and medicine which had to be paid to the officers of the jurist universitates. Indeed, it was only in 1399 that Francesco da Carrara the Younger managed the negotiations that led to complete independence for the arts universitas.\textsuperscript{35}

The autonomy of the philosophers and physicians thus emerged a mere three years (1360) before the creation of Padua’s theology faculty (1363). The added institutional presence of theology in Padua came around the same time as other fundamental changes were taking place in the university. Theology was not necessarily a latecomer in Padua, though it is important to realize that the faculty of theology was not a universitas of students but a college of doctors. The universitates were formed for the sake of students who needed legal rights in a “foreign” city. The earliest statutes that survive (1465) did not allow for any Paduan citizen to vote in meetings of the association. Local students were eventually permitted to enroll officially but on a separate matriculation list, and they had to swear obedience to the rector. This was because the

\textsuperscript{34} Pileo da Prata emerges a number of times in this story. He was obviously a dynamic individual, taking a major part in the early events of the Great Schism that began in 1378. Because of his “versatility,” he eventually became known as the “cardinal of three hats.” See P. Stácul, Il cardinale Pileo da Prata (Rome, 1957).

\textsuperscript{35} Siraisi, Arts and Sciences, 22-24.
universitates were not formed for their sake. These students already had rights as citizens of Padua. Others excluded from voting were priests and friars as well as those with degrees in medicine and doctors of the colleges. The friars in the city who were studying theology, before and after the creation of the faculty of theology, already had legal standing by virtue of being members of their order. Like Paduans, they had no real need for the student associations that were so important to the institutional character of Italian universities.

The institutions truly parallel to the faculty of theology created in 1363 were the colleges of doctors. Although all or even most who studied at Padua did not want a degree, degrees were still the crowning achievement for a university student. The colleges were made up of doctors in the city in either law or arts and medicine, and they managed examinations and degrees. Citizens of Padua and some non-Paduan professors at the university were allowed to become members, but most professors were not members of the colleges of doctors. Professors generally played a role in the process by

37 Siraisi, Arts and Sciences, 23, n. 46.
38 These colleges of doctors must be distinguished from residential colleges. These colleges were less significant in Italy than in Northern Europe, but the general neglect and even dismissal of these institutions has been partly remedied by Peter Denley, “The Collegiate Movement in Italian Universities in the Late Middle Ages,” History of Universities 10 (1991): 29-91. For Padua in particular, see ibid., 41-43, 82-86. For our inquiry about theology and metaphysics at the university, see ibid., 84, where Denley shows that Pietro Garfrano, a Cypriot merchant in Venice, in 1393 left an endowment for four Cypriot students to study theology, law, and medicine/arts (two students). The money, however, only allowed for funding two of these chairs. See also ibid., 86: “In 1454 Taddeo de Adelmari of Treviso, another doctor of arts and medicine, made provision for eight students of theology. This is the only college of this period founded for theology students alone.”
39 Ohl, “University,” 27: “The College of Doctors of Arts and Medicine is mentioned about the same time [in the middle of the thirteenth century]; its number was limited to 12 with a later expansion to 20 members, a number confirmed by Doge Thomas Mocenicus in 1422. Membership in the colleges required, among other things, that a man be a citizen of Padua from a non-servile family; at least 22 years old with
sponsoring students before the college of doctors as they went through the exercises necessary to receive degrees. The College of Artists and Physicians (*collegio artistarum et medicorum*), whose name changed to the College of Philosophers and Physicians (*collegio philosophorum ac medicorum*) around the turn of the fifteenth century, accepted only twelve members at its origin in the thirteenth century, but it expanded to twenty members by 1422. Their duties did go beyond the important function of granting degrees—for instance, the Paduan College of Philosophers and Physicians oversaw the practice of surgery in the city.\(^40\) The fact that members were not predominantly the professors teaching in the university was actually a more or less distinctive feature of Padua. In Bologna, for example, the professors were mostly native to the city and thus many of them would have been a part of the College as well.\(^41\)

---

\(^{40}\) Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences*, 26, n. 63. This was true at least in the fifteenth century.

\(^{41}\) Ohl, “University,” 93.
Padua hired mostly non-local professors, the locally based colleges of doctors and the teaching staff ended up being two rather distinct groups of people. It is worthy of note, for example, that not only members of the student universitas but also the professors of arts and medicine had to swear obedience to the College. The first evidence for the existence of a college of doctors in arts and medicine is from 1259; any statutes that may have existed before 1330 do not survive. Like the universitas of the students of arts, the College also had difficulty throwing off the yoke of the jurists. Doctors of law attended examinations in arts and medicine until 1360—another confirmation that the 1360s were a significant decade for the institutional makeup of the University of Padua.

The creation of the faculty of theology thus came three years after both the arts universitas and the College received greater independence from the jurists. A number of competent interpreters have linked these events: the arts students may have believed that a faculty of theology, with the power to grant degrees, would attract more students to Padua and strengthen their hand vis-à-vis the jurists. The civic authorities, Francesco Carrara “il Vecchio” in particular, took part in this effort with the pope. He was almost 42 Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences*, 24-25.

certainly motivated by the very recent papal establishment of a Bolognese faculty of theology in 1360.\textsuperscript{44}

The theology faculty at Padua seems to have taken a few decades to get underway.\textsuperscript{45} Part of the reason for this may be that some of the orders which were supposed to be fundamental parts of the theology faculty were not interested in this new institution. The very important Franciscan convent and \textit{studium generale} took a few decades to adjust to the changes. Franciscan statutes promulgated in 1373 actually forbade any friar from receiving degrees in most Italian universities, including Padua. It declared quite explicitly that degrees from Florence, Bologna, Padua, and Perugia would not be recognized by the order. The reason for this mandate was the order’s concern that the master’s degree would be cheapened if friars could receive it in so many places. Furthermore, the order’s central degree-granting \textit{studia} would lose their status, particularly the one in Paris. The ban was not lifted until 1421, and there was a significant

\textsuperscript{44} In the document found in Gloria, “Quot annos,” 1040, Federici also suggests that Petrarch, who was living in the Veneto at the time, had something to do with the request for a theology faculty. No evidence for this interesting possibility, however, has been found by later scholars. See Brotta and Zonta, \textit{Facoltà}, 25, for the suggestion that the claim remains unsupported. A chronicler writing in the second half of the fourteenth century wrote, “El ditto magnifico signor Messer Francesco [da Carrara] habbiando sempre in animo al crescimento della città di Pava azochè ella fosse ornada del fiore di tutte le scienze, con grande instanza ottenne dal papa Urban Quinto la grazia della scienza teologica.” See Gloria, \textit{Monumenti}, 82, n. 1. Bishop Pileo da Prata has also been linked to Padua’s request

\textsuperscript{45} Ohl, “University,” 104, says, “It was not until 1433 that degrees in theology were awarded by the College of Doctors of Theology to students who had received public instruction in the \textit{Studium},” but again he seems to be associating “public instruction” with professors teaching as part of the arts course, and 1433 did not end up marking the beginning of such instruction anyway. But see Brotta and Zonta, \textit{Facoltà}, 44-45: “In questo primo periodo di vita quale si presenta l’attività accademica della nostra Facoltà? Dal 1363 al 1405 restano tre incorporazioni di baccellieri e quattro lauree; da quest’anno all’inizio del 1424 troviamo 28 presentazioni alle letture, otto licenze, e una sola laurea del 27 ottobre 1417, che poi è senza il nome del laureato.” They ascribe a number of the difficulties understanding what took place in this period before 1424 to the loss of documents.
increase in the activities of Padua’s faculty around this time, including the drawing up of the “ancient statutes” in 1424.  

It also took the Dominicans some time to embrace the creation of a faculty of theology in Padua. There is no evidence that the Paduan convent of S. Agostino was a studium generale in 1363. Luciano Gargan’s extremely reliable scholarship falls into a frequently made error when it assumes that the creation of the theology faculty in 1363 elevated the local studium to one of the order’s major studia generalia.  

Italian studia generalia existed in non-university towns—S. Eustorgio in Milan, for instance. On the other hand, university towns, even those with theology faculties, were the environment for priories that only had provincial schools, not a studium generale. The most prominent example is probably Cambridge for the thirteenth and a good portion of the fourteenth century. The Dominican order made choices about schooling without too much regard for the status of the non-Dominican education in its host cities. There is thus no reason to assume that the elevation of S. Agostino to a Dominican studium generale took place immediately after the creation of the theology faculty.

---

46 This account comes from Roest, *Franciscan Education*, 39-42. See Poppi, *Statuti*, xi-xvii, 7-18, for earlier statutes.  
48 Note MOPH IV (Bourges, 1376): 433: “Declaramus autem, quod forma exponendi ad magisterium in universitatibus Oxonie et Cantabrigie alias observata per provinciam Anglie non preiudicat in aliquo potestati seu auctoritati reverendi patris magistri ordinis aut capitulorum generalium, quin videlicet ipsi possint in dictis universitatibus fratres intraneos ad magisterium exponere, sicut in alius universitatibus est fieri consuetum.” See also MOPH VIII (Nuremberg, 1405): 129: “Denunciamus, quod autoritate apostolica suprascripta de consilio et assensu provincialium et sacre theologie magistrorum atque omnium nostrorum solemniter previs actibus requisitis, magister ordinis in presenti nostro generali capitulo aulavit et doctoravit in sacra pagina fratrem Guilelmmum de Dio conventus Cantabrigieg provincie Anglie, qui exempcionibus gaudere debet et privilegiis omnibus, ac si Parisius magistratus esset.” See also Roest, *Franciscan Education*, 34.
Pinning down an exact date for when S. Agostino began to host a *studium generale* is difficult, but indications are that it may have taken a few decades after Padua was granted a faculty of theology. Scholars have suggested that the general chapter of 1380, which met in Bologna, made some specific references to professors at Padua, but these acts no longer exist.\(^{49}\) The first Dominican to receive a degree in theology at Padua was probably Giovanni Battista da Teolo di Padova in 1380.\(^{50}\) It is likely, then, that it took the Dominicans almost two decades before the University of Padua’s right to grant theology degrees made an impact on how they assigned their students.\(^{51}\) Indeed, it was only in 1421 that Padua was first made part of the list of *studia* assigned a regent and other academic officials by the general chapter of the order. In that year, the general chapter assigned friars to Padua to lecture on the *Sentences* for the master’s degree in theology.\(^{52}\) The order as a whole may have recognized the convent of S. Agostino as a *studium generale* at other points between 1363 and 1421, but records of such recognition, if they took place, no longer exist.\(^{53}\)

---

\(^{49}\) Gloria, “Quot annos,” 1040.

\(^{50}\) Gargan, *Domenicani*, 41. Degrees remained infrequent for the next twenty or so years.

\(^{51}\) This is certainly too late, but the first extant documentation from general chapters regarding the *studium generale* of Padua was when the *studium* was moved from Rimini to Padua in 1397. I have not been able to learn more about the place of Rimini in Dominican education. Now, Federici, repeated by Brotta and Zonta, *Facoltà*, say 1450: “Per i domenicani di s. Agostino con gli atti dell’università concorre a assicurarsi che quel monastero accoglieva numerosi studenti l’essere stato nel 1450 elevato dall’ordine a Studio generale della religione domenicana, diventando così un collegio al quale potevano accorare i giovani frati da qualsiasi provincia.”

\(^{52}\) MOPH VIII: 171. Note again that this date comes very soon before the important developments in Padua’s Faculty of Theology in 1424. Indeed, it is the very same year when the Franciscan ban on most Italian degrees was lifted.

\(^{53}\) Note MOPH VIII: 120, which seems to suggest that this level of recognition likely too place after 1405: “Nulli eciam doctores deinceps nominentur, qui non fuerint sacre theologie magistri; nec quisquam cursus studii reputetur complevisse, nisi per litteras testimoniales doceat, se in studio Bononiensi aut Parisiensi vel Oxoniensi pro IIa. forma ad minus uno integro anno laudabiler se gesisse actusque scholasticos consuetos exercuisse.”
The masters-general of the Dominican order, however, did realize the importance of S. Agostino a bit earlier. General Raymond of Capua explicitly recognized Padua as a *studium generale* in 1389 when on 13 June 1389 he made Federico da Venezia “lector or regent in the Paduan convent for two years at the *studium generale* existing there.” But challenges to this recognition lingered. Only a month later, the master-general had to clarify that degrees might be granted under his regency, Federico’s rule over Padua’s *studium generale*, and that no one should oppose Federico’s power to do so. On the following day, Raymond declared in a letter that no one inferior to the general in the Dominican hierarchy—probably the prior provincial or possibly those connected to the *studium generale* in Bologna—had the power to revoke the graces or the assignment of Federico to Padua made by the master-general. Even decades after the creation of the faculty of theology, Raymond still had to insist that the regent or ruling master of the *studium generale* in Padua had all the rights associated with such an office. By his authority, Raymond commissioned the prior provincial later in July 1389 to give the master’s degree in theology to a friar licensed in Padua, which confirms that Dominicans were already bringing themselves before Padua’s faculty of theology for examinations.

The Dominicans and Franciscans both took a few decades to welcome fully the change in the institutional status of theology in Padua. It is thus unsurprising that it may have taken until the 1420s for the faculty to take shape.

---

54 MOPH XIX, 23.
55 Ibid., 25.
56 Ibid., 26.
The Dominicans and the Arts Course

The creation of the faculty of theology in Padua encouraged the authorities of the Dominican order to create a *studium generale* in the Dominican convent of S. Agostino. This promotion drew more prominent friars to the city, and the result was much greater literary productivity than in the preceding decades. Friars studying in the city could now receive a degree. And yet the relationship between theology and the lay students in Padua remained fundamentally unchanged. Before the creation of the faculty of theology in 1363 and the subsequent recognition of the Dominican *studium generale*, lay students were permitted to attend theology lectures in the convents. After these developments, there were more highly trained teachers serving in the Dominican convent, but that was the only major difference. The relationship between the Dominicans and the lay students as well as professors was only “regularized” in the second half of the fifteenth century. Not until then did daily lectures on metaphysics and then theology become part of the courses supported by the civic authorities and geared to lay students in arts and medicine. At this point, the Dominican professors came into much closer contact with the other currents that characterized the Paduan intellectual milieu. The faculty of theology and the mendicant *studia generalia* were indeed part of the University of Padua, but the Renaissance scholastics who taught at the university made their impact as part of the arts course.

The 1430s were a crucial decade in theology’s relationship to the *universitas artistarum*. The increasing organization in the theology faculty, which laid down important statutes in 1424, may have had some connection to the growing connections
between the theologians and the arts students. Around this time, evidence from the
meetings of the Dominican general chapter suggests that the Dominicans (and possibly
the other mendicant orders) were involved in appointing friars to “the school of the
bishop.” Interestingly enough, the general chapter of the order was the entity that seems
to have made the appointment, even though this post—about which very little is known—
was under the auspices of the cathedral.⁵⁷

But this school of the bishop and the instruction in the mendicant studia were, for
some reason, insufficient for the lay students in the universitas artistarum. In 1433, the
artists made an attempt to put a theologian, a Franciscan Ludovico da Pirano, on the
rotulus that they submitted to the Venetian Senate, with a stipend of 40 florins.⁵⁸ Clearly,

---

⁵⁷ MOPH VIII (Bologna, 1426): 190: “In ecclesia katedrali ad legendum bibliam ibidem assignamus pro
secundo anno fratrem Nicholaum Venturella, quem pro primo anno facimus studentem honoris.”
⁵⁸ Ludovico Pirano, the friar who almost became the first public theologian at Padua, was an interesting
figure. He was probably born in the late 1380s. He was in the convent of S. Francesco in Rimini in 1408
and in 1412 at the Frari in Venice as lector of the Sentences. He became master in theology through a papal
bull of John XXIII. This degree, following an exam administered by Giovanni Pezazo of Verona, was
sufficient for aggregating to the theology faculty in Padua on 15 June 1415. Though Brotto-Zonta state that
Ludovico came from the schools of Paris, Caliò’s entry for him in the DBI does not leave much room for
this possibility. He had a number of administrative tasks in the order before being chosen by the artists:
probably inquisitor at Treviso, vicar provincial, and so on. Interestingly enough, he was likely named prior
provincial in 1433. The rest of his career was not unconventional for a prominent Franciscan in this period.
He gave a sermon on the Real Presence in the Eucharist at the Council of Basel and then he served as
bishop of Forlì (from 18 February 1437 to his death). As bishop, he was present at the debates with the
Greeks at Ferrara-Florence, intervening prominently on the Latin side in defense of the introduction of the
Filioque clause into the Creed in debate with Bessarion. But Ludovico’s specific position in some of these
activities may shed light on the sort of theologian desired by Padua’s arts students. His preaching received
splendid praise from the humanist, Antonio Baratella, he defended Bridget of Sweden from some of her
detractors among his confreres, and he wrote a treatise on the art of memory. According to Frances Yates,
while the treatise is clearly within the classical, Western tradition of ars memorativa, it has peculiarities
that confirm the statements of Francesco Filelfo and Sicco Polentone that Ludovico had knowledge of
Greek. Likely through contacts at the Councils (and possibly his time at the University of Padua), he
introduced new elements into this longstanding tradition, such as Democritus being called the inventor of
the art, using Aristotelian laws of association rather than merely Aristotelian psychology of memory,
discussing the usefulness of the art for remembering Greek words, which technique (memory for words)
was rejected by the cornerstone text, the pseudo-Ciceronian Ad Herennium, as “Greek.” Yates suggests that
this treatise reflects the “contact between Western and Byzantine traditions through the theological
the lay students wanted to have theology taught by friars as part of the lineup of instruction supported by Venice. The later incorporation of theology in the arts course might thus show little more than a greater willingness on the part of the Senate to pay a theologian’s salary. The creation of these mendicant professorships has often been explained as having complex ideological motivations—combatting Averroism, defending Christian orthodoxy, and so on—but the reality was generally quite mundane. On 28 September of that year, the Senate simply responded that someone lecturing on theology would not be permitted because such a thing was “uncommon.”59 The rejection of this innovation on the part of Padua’s Venetian rulers was rooted in a declaration of five years earlier (3 January 1428) that the Republic would only spend 4,000 ducats for funding the university. The students were asked to remove dispensable professors from the rotulus. If the students wanted other professors, the Venetian rulers permitted other teachers not on the rolls to lecture as long as it was clear that their payment would not come from the Senate.60 No substantial change took place in the place of theology in the arts course until the 1470s.


59 This story is reported in Facciolati, Fasti, II: 95; Contarini, Notizie, 10. See Grendler, Universities, 366.

60 In 1439 Andrea Donato, podestà of the city, asked Bishop Pietro Donato to make an appeal to the pope to allow funds from certain benefices to go towards six new chairs held by Paduan citizens. A special exception was made for theology, however. “If no worthy theologian of the city is found in the faculty of Theology (in faculata theologica),” Andrea Donato said, “which ought to be advantageous…for God’s honor,” the bishop could choose someone from outside of the city who would, nevertheless, lecture in the name of the city of Padua. Note the localism of certain figures in Padua despite patterns of internationalization that increased throughout the fifteenth century. See Grendler, Universities, 511. But it
About three decades after the attempt with Ludovico da Pirano, we finally see the beginning of one of the four mendicant professorships in the arts course which lasted into the eighteenth century. The first one to hold one of these professorships, the Dominican Francesco Securo da Nardò, did not teach theology in the arts course but Aristotelian metaphysics. The appointment of Securo, then, had nothing to do with the students’ desire for theology in the arts course. In fact, Dominicans did not teach theology with a public stipend from the Venetian Senate until 1490.

Because the use of this mendicant theologian in 1465 to teach metaphysics marks the beginning of an institutional reality at Padua that lasted around three hundred years, historians have attempted to offer grand explanations for it. The result has been mostly confusion. First of all, there have been some difficulties with dating the beginning of Thomist metaphysics. Most scholars have ascribed it to 1442 on the basis of a document from 22 August 1502. When a later Dominican metaphysician was appointed, the Senate observed that the “lecture of metaphysics in our University of Padua (in Gymnasio nostro Paduano) not only had its beginning with the friars of St. Dominic but also was for sixty years almost continuously lecture upon by friars of that order.”

Dating the chair of Thomist metaphysics to 1442, it turns out, comes from subtracting sixty years from the date of this decree. The problem is that no Dominican professor of metaphysics can be confidently associated with that date. Based on this questionable dating, some have said

---

is noteworthy that theology was assumed to be part of this “localist offering,” that officials in the city supported it, and that the bishop retained a great deal of authority. Furthermore, Donato seems to have been aware of difficulties with obtaining enough lecturers in theology who were citizens of Padua. See also Brotto-Zonta, Facoltà, 87-88.

61 AAUP MS. 660, 152r. Also quoted in Brottà and Zonta, Facoltà, 202, n. 2.
that the creation of a chair of Thomist metaphysics was a workable compromise between Venice and the arts students after the Senate rejected their plea in 1433 for theology instruction in their own schools.62 Setting aside the fact that the students asked for theology and not metaphysics—which were very different disciplines—this explanation becomes implausible once the date for the first professor of metaphysics is moved to 1465.

The old story continues with the establishment of chairs of Scotist metaphysics and theology in 1474 and 1476, respectively, followed by a chair of Thomist theology in 1490. This series of events raises a number of questions. Why exactly did metaphysics come before theology in both cases? Why was there such a gap between the creation of chair of Thomist metaphysics and Thomist theology? Why did Thomist metaphysics come before Scotist metaphysics and Scotist theology before Thomist theology? The problem is that all such questions are based upon a misunderstanding of how these events unfolded. The rolls did not reflect the language of the late-medieval viae or scholastic schools such as Thomism and Scotism until the sixteenth century. The first reference to the teaching theology and metaphysics being linked institutionally to Thomas Aquinas or John Duns Scotus was the creation of the second theology chair in 1490.63 More importantly, there is no evidence that the university authorities had any real intention to create new permanent professorships in theology and metaphysics until 1490. As for the three professorships before the call of a Dominican theologian in 1490, what seems to

---

63 See also Brotta and Zonta, 182, n. 5.
have happened was that Venice chose to pay some friars, who were much less expensive than their lay colleagues, to teach certain subjects useful for and attractive to the students in Padua. The Venetian Senate recognized the great skill or fame of a particular friar (who was usually in the region for other reasons), and it was willing to give him a stipend to teach the students for whom the Senate was ultimately responsible. There was no grand plan on the part of the Venetian Senate to incorporate medieval scholasticism into the university over the course of five decades.

The beginning of the Thomist presence in the university began with Francesco Securo da Nardò around 1465. The traditional dating of the beginning of the teaching of metaphysics at the University of Padua to 1442 should be abandoned. Desperate to find teachers to fit the statement regarding sixty continuous years of Dominican teaching based upon the senatorial decree mentioned above, scholars have turned to a number of possible contenders. Graziadio d’Ascoli, often believed to have been the first professor, spent time in Padua much too early—in the early fourteenth century. Battista da Fabriano was regent of S. Agostino in the early 1430s and then went to Siena, Florence, and Ferrara. Battista did lecture as part of the university arts courses in Florence and Ferrara, where he commanded a relatively high salary as professor of natural philosophy

---

64 Grendler, *Universities*, 367.
65 Kaeppeli, *Scriptores*, I: 138. Peter Denley, *Commune and Studio in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena* (Bologna, 2006), 77, n. 111, which shows that Battista’s position as professor of theology and philosophy was renewed in 1440. See also ibid., 143, n. 140, in reference to Simone Bocci’s autobiographical remarks which lament that teachers would bribe students, lend them books, and take them out to dinner to maintain good relations: “Simone cites the case of Battista da Fabriano who he says was short of the minimum number of pupils on several occasions because of such behavior by rival teachers.” See also ibid., 177, n. 246: “The cardinal of Piacenza, who wanted Battista da Fabriano for his personal service at the Council of Ferrara, was told that this would lead to the detriment of the Studio.”
and astrology. But did he teach as part of the arts course at Padua? An obituary says that he “honorably and famously was a regent of chairs for many years in philosophy together with theology and logic at Padua, Siena, and Ferrara with public stipends.” If Battista taught at Padua with a public stipend, it was likely after receiving his degree in 1431 and before 1435 when the order sent Battista to Siena. It is difficult to be sure of the details because only a few teaching rolls exist for the arts and medicine faculty in Padua for the entire fifteenth century, and none exist for the years of this century after 1442. If Battista taught philosophy with a public stipend, it was probably not metaphysics and it was almost certainly not the beginning of a permanent chair of Thomist metaphysics because the next contender, Alberto Galignani da Reggio, is not mentioned on the rotuli which survive from the mid-1430s.

The last serious contender was Giovanni di Giacomo da Camposampiero. He came from a major Paduan noble family; he was the son of Giacomo III da

---


68 The remark in *Nuovo giornale de letterati d’Italia* 43: 11, about him teaching sacred letters at Padua with a public stipend requires further investigation.


70 Rotuli survive for 1434-37. No metaphysician appears. See Jacopo Tomasini, *Gymnasium Patavinum* (Udine, 1654), 155-58. The documents can also be found in AAUP MS. 648, 79r-81v. But see below for the mention of a Dominican, Giovanni di Giacomo da Camposampiero.
Camposampiero and Orsoa di Giovanni Dondi dall’Orologio.\textsuperscript{72} He served as regent of S. Agostino in 1442 and 1443 as well as 1450. He was deacon for the College of Theologians from March to September of 1453 and was asked to teach at the school of the bishop in 1461. Giovanni actually does appear on \textit{rotuli} for the arts course, but he was teaching astrology rather than metaphysics in the 1435-36 academic year. In 1436 he taught astrology again and was also extraordinary professor of natural philosophy.\textsuperscript{73} Further evidence that Giovanni did not teach metaphysics comes from a Dominican student, Simone Bocci da Siena, who came to Padua in 1462 and described his course of study in the university and the convent. He said that the convent offered morning lectures on Aristotle’s \textit{Posterior Analytics} and afternoon lectures on Peter Lombard’s \textit{Sentences}. Giovanni was lecturing on philosophy but only in the convent and, interestingly enough, not on Aristotle’s \textit{Metaphysics}.\textsuperscript{74}

The future master-general, Gioacchino Torriani, has also been linked to the chair of metaphysics before 1465, but no contemporary evidence shows Torriani to have taught any subject in Padua on a public stipend, and there is similarly no evidence that he taught metaphysics \textit{in via S. Thomae}. One of the earliest mentions of Torriani teaching metaphysics was Francesco Sansovino, whose work on the history of Venice was first

\textsuperscript{72} For more on this family, see John K. Hyde, \textit{Padua in the Age of Dante: A Social History of an Italian City State} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), passim (index, Camposanpiero).


\textsuperscript{74} Gianfranco Fioravanti, “L’autobiografia di Simone Bocci da Siena (1438-1510),” in \textit{Studio e studia: le scuole degli Ordini Mendicanti tra XIII e XIV secolo} (Spoleto, 2002), 347. See also ibid., n. 14: “non sono riuscito a trovare notizie su Giovanni di Campo San Piero (con tutta probabilità un domenicano).”
published in 1581, which stated that Torriani “of the Order of the Preachers lectured on
metaphysics in Padua and illuminated Aristotle’s Physics.” Sansovino was perhaps
associating Torriani, who taught theology in S. Agostino’s studium generale, with the
public chair of metaphysics that had grown famous over the sixteenth century. When a
Dominican professor at Padua in the 1540s, Sisto Medici, reflected back on the history of
the Dominican presence in the university, he observed that a number of the professors
taught at Padua during Torriani’s time as master-general. He seems to have been unaware
of the notion that Torriani, a native of the same Venetian convent as Medici, was also a
professor in the university. Medici began his list of Thomist professors with Securo.

Francesco Securo was born around 1410 in Nardò, which was a cathedral city in
the Kingdom of Naples. He first taught in the Dominican convents near his native city—
Venosa, Foggia, and Lucera. But one of his students reported hearing the lectures of
this “crown of our religion” at Siena in the early 1460s before spending a short time with
him in Padua in 1465. Indeed, as a master of theology, he was a representative of the
Province of the Kingdom of Sicily for the 1462 general chapter in Siena. His teaching

---

75 Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia, città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice, 1581), 252v.
76 Sisto Medici, *Oratio de humanae industriae praestantia* (Venice, 1555), sig.a2v-a3r: “Proximus nempe
temporibus dum Ioachinus Turrianus Venetus, non minus linguarum ac scientiarum cognitione, quam
morum probitate clarissimus, totius Dominicalis sodalitatis Magistrum Generalem ageret; In Patavino
Gymnasio Methaphysicam professi sunt Franciscus de Neritono, Valentinus de Perusio, ac Thomas
Caietanus postea Cardinalis, clarissimo vir ingenio, quem nullum scientiarum genus credimus non exacte
calluisse.” Another apparently strong argument comes from the 1465 statutes that do not mention
metaphysics; the subject was mentioned in revisions around 1495. See, e.g., *Statuta*, Book 2, chap. 5 (21v-
22r). Note the remarks about the election of priests or friars to lectures in the arts course. For the new
statutes that did mention theology and metaphysics, see ibid., 37v.
79 MOPH VIII: 280.
of metaphysics seems to have begun very soon after his arrival in Padua in 1465.\textsuperscript{80} In the same period, he often taught theology as regent of the \textit{studium generale} in S. Agostino (1466-73 as well as 1475, 1479, 1482, and 1485-89). A departure from Italy for Hungary in 1479 would have likely been the only interruption in his tenure as metaphysician between the mid-1460s and his death on 17 July 1489.\textsuperscript{81}

The contemporary evidence for his public teaching in the arts faculty begins with two interesting decrees of the Senate regarding his salary. On 21 September 1484, it was noted that “the Venerable and most famous professor of Sacred Theology Francesco da Nardò has for twenty years now served our Dominion by reading in the University of Padua (\textit{Gymnasium nostrum Patavinum}) the lecture of Metaphysics to the singular satisfaction of all with a meager and quite scanty recompense, which he never asked to be increased.”\textsuperscript{82} The date of 1464 or 1465 for the beginning of Securo’s tenure comes from subtracting twenty years from the date of this decree. Despite my hesitation regarding the use of such evidence to ascribe the beginning of metaphysics to 1442, the significantly shorter time span and the fact that it dealt with a single professor seems to give it greater weight. It is also confirmed by the autobiographical remarks of Fra Simone Bocci, who said he was in Padua from 1462 and 1465. He described himself as coming to the city before Securo, and it appears that he left very soon after Securo’s arrival.\textsuperscript{83}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[80] Early biographers suggest that he was summoned to Padua for this very purpose, though that seems unlikely because of the apparent absence of metaphysics in the university’s public offering up to this point.
\item[82] Quoted in Brotta and Zonta, \textit{Facoltà}, 195.
\item[83] Fioravanti, “Autobiografia,” 345, 348, though Simone made no reference to Securo’s teaching of metaphysics and only made reference to him as his \textit{praeeptor} and the \textit{dignissimus regens} of the Dominican \textit{studium}.
\end{footnotes}
The considerations of the Senate in regard to funding the university are worth lingering over. It is clear that his low salary, which the decree later mentions as being 80 florins, was not a result of this subject being at the very fringes of the university. Students were extremely pleased with his lectures on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. The Senate sensibly observed that Securo could tolerate a relatively low salary because “his expenses have been supplied by the convent of his brothers,” the Dominican friars of S. Agostino. This piece of evidence should make it clear that scholars ought not to read too much into a low salary for a “begging” friar. The only reason that his salary even came up was that Francesco was getting older by this time—he was about seventy-four years old—and it was becoming difficult for him to make the long trek to the schools from the convent. The additional seventy florins that he was receiving would allow him to pay for a small residence outside of the convent, nearer to the place of his lectures, which would allow him to “lecture and teach diligently as his singular and excellent teaching deserves.”

---

84 For a later source confirming the fact that the payment friars operated according to different considerations, see a letter written in regard to an appointment of a metaphysician at the University of Pisa after the death of the Dominican professor, Gianfrancesco Beato, in 1547: “Il Panciatichi mi disse ieri che la Duchessa di Ferrara li ha scritto raccomandandoli che vedesse d’ottenere che alle lezione della metafisica in Pisa fusse condotto dal Duca nostro Signore Mess. Ludovico Pallavicino, il quale dice essere valentissimo huomo, e haver letto in Ferrara fin che vi è stato lo Studio frequente con grandissima satisfacione degli auditori, e perchè io gli dissi, se gli è buono, perchè non lo tengono per se: riposemi che ha non poco pizzicato di scandalo per Evangelico, di che io m’andai immaginando subito che intesi la raccomandazione della Duchessa, ma alla metafisica credo non importi molto, come neanco alla medicina l’Argenterio, e prima il Giachino, e hoggi qualche d’un altro: quell che più importa è, come io dissi a lui, questa letione si suol servire da un Frate con 100 o 150 ducati, o quando sia excellentissimo fino a 200, come fu il Beato, che un altro non si contenterebbe, nè forse potria vivere con questa provissione.” (emphasis added). The letter was written on 28 November 1548, quoted in Angelo Fabroni, *Historiae academiae pisanae* (Pisa, 1792), II: 129, n. 1. The point is clearly made that the most prestigious friar teaching the subject, receiving a relatively high salary, would be paid less than what another professor could even live on!

85 Both quotations are found in Brotta and Zonta, *Facoltà*, 195: “Exacti sunt jam annis XX quod ven. et famosissimus sacre theologie professor, magister Franciscus de Nardò inservit nostro Dominio legens in Gymnasio nostro patavino lecturam metaphisice, cum singulari omnium satisfacione, cum exiguo et
little more than a year later, his stipend was increased to 200 florins. Further contemporary evidence of his teaching—and perhaps the earliest one—is a record of a controversy about almsgiving and the sacrifice of the Mass. A number of the leading theologians of the region, all mendicants, seemed to have met on 12 May 1469 to discuss the matter. Master Francesco Securo was introduced first as a Dominican, then as regent of his order’s Paduan studium, and finally as lector of “first philosophy” in the University of Padua (Universitas Patavina). 86

A number of famous individuals reflected upon their experience as his students. The testimony of Pietro Pomponazzi, the most famous of the so-called secular Aristotelians at Padua, is especially noteworthy. He frequently referred—often quite positively—to his praeceptor, Francesco Securo da Nardò. He mentioned his debates about Aristotelian philosophy that took place on walks between Securo’s place of residence and the schools. Antonio Trombetta, one of the earliest Franciscan metaphysicians teaching in the arts course, began his Opus in Metaphysicam Aristotelis with an identification of himself as being the concurrent of Francesco Securo. 87

What were the motivations for beginning to pay a friar to teach metaphysics?

Documentation for the initial appointment of Securo (or perhaps some unknown

tenuissimo premio, nec unquam aliquid petiit sibi augeri, cum a conventu fratrnum suorum, sumptus sibi subministraretur. Impresentiarum autem cum ob ingravescentem etatem cogatur, ex longitudine itineris a conventu ad scolas, inhabitare apud scolas predictas, necessse est, ut ibi proximum domicilium habeat, et taliter sibi provideatur quod vivere extra conventum, et diligenter legere docere valeat, sicut singularis et prestans eius Doctrina meretur.”

86 Brotta and Zonta, Facoltà, 197.
predecessor) in the arts faculty does not exist, so if an explanation of this new professorship was given, the explanation does not survive. But the context of other Italian universities and an understanding of the development of Aristotelian philosophy in Padua may shed light on the subject. The little-known Baldassare da Cesena may have taught metaphysics along with natural philosophy in 1406-07 at Bologna, though the documentary basis is a bit shaky. Metaphysics may have been taught along with astrology in 1415-16 and 1416-17, but it is absent from the rotuli until 1507. A lay professor of metaphysics appears on the rotulus of 1473-74 in Ferrara. The University of Rome only offered instruction on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* sporadically in the 1470s.

---

88 But note the formulation in Brian P. Copenhaver and Charles B. Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 109: “When the friars came to Italy to establish Scotist and Thomist chairs of philosophy, they brought their theologized metaphysics with them.” A similar statement can be found in Charles H. Lohr, “Sixteenth-Century Transformation57-58: “It was only about the middle of the fifteenth century that the Dominican and Franciscan friars succeeded in having chairs erected in the arts faculty for Thomistic and Scotistic metaphysics” (emphasis added). It is possible that I am over-reading Lohr’s use of the word succeeded, but it is misleading.


90 Grendler, *Universities*, 381-82, though see ibid., 269-70: “The Bolognese statutes of 1405 prescribed the texts to be taught for natural philosophy….In the third year the ordinary professors of natural philosophy were to teach book 1 of Aristotle’s *De anima* ‘except the errors found therein.’ *De anima* dealt with the general features of living beings. They were also to teach parts of the *Metaphysics*: the prelude only of book 1, followed by books 2, 5-10, and 12….The extraordinary professors of natural philosophy also followed a three-year cycle without duplicating the teaching of the ordinary professors….In the third year of the cycle, the extraordinary professors were to teach part of book 4 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, plus *De longitudine*, and *De motu animalium*.” Though, note what follows: “Despite this smorgasbord of Aristotelian texts, the rolls suggest that professors of natural philosophy increasingly concentrated on the *Physics* and *De anima*, and paid less attention to other works, in the next two hundred years.” Learning more about why lectures on the *Metaphysics* by the natural philosophers did not succeed as planned by the statutes would be very illuminating for the goals of this study.

91 Ibid., 383.
through 1520s. Metaphysics combined with the teaching of natural philosophy occurred with some frequency during the first four decades of the fifteenth century, and this became a separate holiday lecture offered by the ordinary theologian in 1441-42. It only began to be taught as a daily lecture in Rome in 1496-97. Thus, no metaphysicians taught at any other Italian universities as ordinary professors until Securo’s tenure at Padua was well underway. Padua was only the second university in Italy to offer metaphysics with any consistency, and the first to do so with a daily lectureship focused exclusively on that subject. Therefore, the call to Securo, even if not part of some grand plan, was certainly innovative; the rulers of the university were not merely imitating their competitors.

In their still fundamental work on the subject, Brotto and Zonta hint that the Dominican approach to metaphysics was introduced in the university to combat the Averroist doctrines that were being taught by Gaetano da Thiene, the successor of Paul of Venice. More recent scholarship has shown, however, that Paul and Gaetano were not

---

92 Ibid., 377, though Grendler observes that “upon reopening after the sack of 1527, the university had 2 or 3 theologians….By midcentury it [had] 5 theologians….A single metaphysician, occasionally joined by a second and a third, also taught.”

93 Ibid., 375: “Florence never had a professorship of metaphysics,” 376: “When the University of Pisa reopened in 1543, it had 2 theologians and 2 metaphysicians,” 380: “the university resumed a full existence in Turin in 1566. From that date through the end of the century, Turin had a theologian (usually a Dominican) and a metaphysician (usually a Franciscan),” 380, n. 121: “The roll of 1492–93 [in Siena] had no theologians but did have four ’philosophers’ and one metaphysician,” 381: “Catania never had a professor of metaphysics or Scripture,” 381: “Messina had a theologian and a metaphysician at the end of the sixteenth century,” 381: “Parma had a theologian and a metaphysician, both Jesuits, when it began in 1601,” 384: “Perugia also had an extraordinary vacation lecturer in metaphysics in the sixteenth century,” 384: “The University of Naples had…in the fifteenth century…no metaphysician. In the sixteenth century the university had a single ordinary professor of theology, an ordinary professor of metaphysics, and an extraordinary professor of metaphysics between 1575 and 1581,” 384: “Salerno had no religious studies professorships in the late sixteenth century.”

94 See Brotta and Zonta, Facoltà, 93-94: “Per noi esiste invece stretto rapporto fra l’istituzione di questa cattedra e l’importanza che la nostra università andava acquistando per gli studi filosofici, così da diventare la sede di una delle scuole aristoteliche più rigoglose, a cui da tutte le parti d’Europa accorrevano forti ingegni per addottirarsi. Insegnava allora filosofia ordinaria Gaetano Thiene. Filosofo, medico, teologo, se
Averroists. At the same time, the general idea that the teaching of the friars somehow sanctified the universities did emerge during the intense controversy over the immortality of the soul at the end of the fifteenth century. In 1504 Bishop Pietro Barozzi, a humanistically inclined bishop, made an appeal to the Venetian Senate on behalf of Maurizio O’Fihely, an Irish Franciscan teaching theology, so that he could receive a raise. Although O’Fihely was not teaching metaphysics, Barozzi’s point may still be illuminating:

The lecture of theology according to the *via* of Scotus is like a medicine for the errors about the eternity of the world, the unity of the intellect, that nothing comes from nothing, and other matters similar to this which swarm from the philosophers. Without [this lecture] one could say that nothing would be read in this university which is not also read in the university of pagans.

These mendicant professors were essential, in the bishop’s mind, to make the University of Padua fit for a city in Christendom.

---


96 Federico Stefani, ed., *I diarii di Marino Sanuto* (Venice, 1881), III: cols. 884-85: “L’officio mio del cancellariato del studio et de el vescovado, el quale per gratia di vostra sublimità ho tenuto et tegno, me fa parere importuno in le cosse pertinent al Studio, et praeципue a la lectura di theologia secondo la via de Scoto, la quale è come una medicina de li errori de eternitate mundi, de unitate intellectus, et de hoc quod de nihilo nihil fiat et altri simili, i quali pullulan o da li philosophi: senza la quale el se poteria dire che in quel Studio non se lezesse cossa la quale non se lega anche in Studio de’ pagani, de raxon canoicha in for a; cossa aliena da la mente de vostra sublimità, la quale zerchade governar li subditi soi a Dio, da cui ha il governo, come christianissimo.” See also Patricia H. Labalme and Laura Sanguineti White, eds., *Venice, Città Excelentissima: Selections from the Renaissance Diaries of Marin Sanudo*, trans. Linda L. Carroll (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 450.
But the strongest argument for the appointment of Securo is that universities in this era had a strongly Aristotelian curriculum and the *Metaphysics* is one of the great works in the corpus. Padua in particular became increasingly famous as a center for Aristotelian natural philosophy during the teaching careers of Paul of Venice and Gaetano da Thiene. The rulers of the university believed that many students were coming to the university to learn Aristotelian philosophy, and it is not difficult to understand why they would offer lectures on one of Aristotle’s most important works, the *Metaphysics*. Francesco Securo’s talents as a teacher received praise throughout his career, and as a Dominican he came at a bargain rate.

This rather simple explanation is perhaps not immediately convincing because of the idea that the “school of Padua” had an anti-metaphysical approach to Aristotle, a notion in need of more serious re-examination. It may have been the case that some medical students had little interest in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, but this was certainly not true of the natural philosophers teaching at Padua before Securo’s professorship began. One of the earliest figures associated with a distinctively Paduan approach to philosophy was Pietro d’Abano. With regard to the training of physicians, d’Abano stated that, even if this subject is not the most “necessary” for them, “metaphysics is…also necessary since it defends the real principles (*realiter defendat…principia*) of all sciences…, and, therefore, all sciences are finally elevated in it.”

---

97 Pietro d’Abano, it should be noted, was arguing for the usefulness of almost all disciplines to the physician. But see *Conciliator differentiarum philosophorum et praecipue medicorum* (Venice, 1476), sig.a5v: “Metaphisica quoque ei sicut alii est necessaria: cum defendat realiter omnium scientiarum principia methaphisice quart. Et ideo omnes tandem elevantur in ipsam scientie….Amplius probatur rationibus: cum rebus existentibus scientias acceprimus in predicamentis. Sicut enim res se habet sic et
the *Metaphysics* and made notable contributions to this field. In his commentary on *De anima*, Gaetano da Thiene wrote, “As far as its nobility and the certitude of demonstration, [metaphysics] exceeds every natural science….Demonstrations of the divine science are more certain, simply speaking, and this certitude is greater, absolutely speaking.” It is thus unsurprising that the rulers of the university would call upon a learned friar nearby, someone, unlike many of the doctors of medicine and even arts, who had direct training in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in the educational programme in the Dominican convents. Securo could be hired—without much expense—to teach

---

scientie de quibus extant. res vero omnes connexe sunt et coniuncte non solum que sunt unius generis vel materie verum que diversorum ita ut suprema inferiorum.” See also Siraisi, *Arts and Sciences*, 109, 135.


99 Quoted in Silvestro da Valsanzibio, *Vita e doctrina di Gaetano di Thiene: filosofo dell Studio di Padova (1387-1465)*, 2nd ed. (Padua, 1949) 17-18. Valsanzibio explains the fact that Gaetano did not teach metaphysics by referring to the supposed fact that he was not assigned this material; instead, this was given to the friar-professors. Since it appears now that this was not the case, a different explanation for these facts must now be given.

100 He was probably already in Padua teaching in the convent, though it is possible that he was summoned from Siena.

101 For the period before 1350, see Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 272: “This sort of categorization by discipline of sub-field helps to clarify the way in which the Roman diffinitors visualized their province’s philosophy program as a revolving three-year curriculum. No matter at which point in the cycle a Dominican student entered the program, he would find his lector covered one or two basic areas of natural philosophy during each of his three years in the *studium*. One year he was introduced to Aristotelian metaphysics and psychology; another he spent learning physics; a third was devoted to further study of metaphysics, this time complemented by—or contrasted with—a course in biology…The…course…lingered on the bridge between physics and theology: metaphysics” (emphasis added). For some indications on the teaching of metaphysics after 1400, see the important statement on education in the 1405 general chapter at Nuremberg (MOPH VIII: 120): “pro lectura vero logice, qui parva logicalia et veterem logicam et novam audierit, et prius grammaticam saltem per biennium docuerit. Pro lectura quoque philosophie, qui audierit libros physicorum de anima et metaphysice, deputetur; alioquin huismodi studia et lecture pro suo cursu nullatenus aliqui computentin.” See also MOPH IX: 333, MOPH X: 86.
material recognized as important by the leading philosophers of the university’s past and present.\(^{102}\)

One last point is worth making here. Lay students could attend lectures on theology in the convent. But if a student sought the interpretations of Aristotle from a famous friar teaching at a convent in town, access would be much more limited; Dominican lectures on natural philosophy were still closed to the public.\(^{103}\) It is not implausible that the Venetian Senate and other rulers of the university arranged for a famous figure like Securo to teach in the schools on a public stipend to address this difficulty.

It is difficult to know for sure why the establishment of a professor of metaphysics took place when it did. But it may be relevant that Gaetano da Thiene, one of the most important Paduan natural philosophers of the fifteenth century, died just around the time that Securo apparently began to teach metaphysics Padua—on 18 July 1465.\(^{104}\) While Cristoforo da Recanati apparently succeeded Gaetano immediately,\(^{105}\)

---

\(^{102}\) Note that the natural philosopher teaching during Securo’s professorship, Nicoletto Vernia, has remained associated with an anti-metaphysical Aristotelianism even in recent scholarship. See Ennio de Bellis, *Nicoletto Vernia e Agostino Nifo: aspetti storiografici e metodologici* (Lecce, 2003), 104: “Nicoletto Vernia, il quale, come è noto, è uno dei più convinti sostenitori dell’avverroismo interpretato come filosofia dichiaratamente naturalistica, lontana da ogni condizionamento metafisico o teologico.”

\(^{103}\) More study of this point is certainly necessary. Little work has been done on the details of Dominican education after 1350. See David A. Lines, “Pagan and Christian Ethics: Girolamo Savonarola and Ludovico Valenza on Moral Philosophy,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 17 (2007): 429, n. 8. See Sisto Medici, *Oratio in funere Aloisii Dragani, Mercatelli, Grifalconii, in aedibus DD. Ioannis et Pauli de Venetiis* (delivered in January 1555) (Venice, 1555), sig. [**]2r: “saepius flore senatorum atque peritorum hominem collecto, nunc in Divi Georgii, nunc in Cruciferorum, frequentissime vero in Coenobio hoc nostro Lectiones omni scientiarum copia referriissimas, easdemque candidis Mercurii salibus iucundissimas perlegetab.”

\(^{104}\) Valsanzibio, *Vita*, 77.

Nicoletto Vernia only became Gaetano’s (more permanent) successor as ordinary professor of natural philosophy in October of 1468.\textsuperscript{106} Thus, there was some turnover in the teaching of natural philosophy just at the time when Securo began his tenure at the university. Furthermore, there was a plague in 1465 that apparently drove a significant segment of those associated with the university out of the city.\textsuperscript{107} Might these factors have contributed to summoning Securo at this moment? Is it possible that the teaching of metaphysics, just as much as the teaching of Thomism, was a more gradual development rather than part of some plan on the part of the rulers of the university? It seems odd that a new subject, never before seen as a daily lecture in Italy, was instituted in the midst of a somewhat unstable moment for the university. Might Securo have taught natural philosophy and metaphysics, as seen in the University of Pavia, only moving to a more formal position as professor of “first philosophy” or “metaphysics” when Vernia and others took their place as ordinary professors of natural philosophy? These questions cannot be answered with the evidence currently available, but they are better formed questions than those that have been asked up to this point.

The lectureship in Thomist theology was formally established by the Venetian Senate much differently than the Thomist metaphysics chair and the two professorships eventually held by the Francisciscans. The chairs in metaphysics and theology in \textit{via Scoti} that lasted until the eighteenth century were not created with the Scotistic

\textsuperscript{106} Bellis, \textit{Nicoletto Vernia e Agostino Nifo}, 9

\textsuperscript{107} See Fioravanti, “Autobiografia,” 348, esp. n. 17. This claim is based on the testimony of Simone Bocci.
designation made explicit. Indeed, it was an Augustinian, Thomas Penketh, not a Franciscan, who first held both of these chairs.\textsuperscript{108} There is no evidence that Thomas Penketh, an Oxford-trained friar, was seen as initiating a new, permanent lectureship in the university. He was the last Augustinian Hermit to teach theology or metaphysics. Penketh was a well-known theologian and an expert in the works of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century theologians who came to the Veneto to publish a number of those works. In the mid-1470s, the Venetian Senate chose to pay him a salary to teach the students who were in their care.\textsuperscript{109} Antonio Trombetta, a Paduan Franciscan, probably succeeded Penketh as metaphysician around 1477. But there is not another theologian teaching with a stipend from the Venetian Senate until around 1484 or perhaps until 1488 with the appointment of Graziano da Brescia, the first Franciscan to teach theology at the

\textsuperscript{108} A case has been made that Francesco della Rovere (later Pope Sixtus IV) should really be considered the first public professor of Scotist theology in the university. In an oration to the pope, the poet Naldo Naldi said, “When you were teaching Franciscans theology in the convent (domus), such a great crowd of hearers was popularly made that the duty was charged to you to hand down the precepts of philosophy also in the public institutes of that city with the result that many excellent men, even some from Greece, took part.” The famous Greek philosopher, John Argyropoulos, confirms Naldi’s point, as he was one of Francesco della Rovere’s students during his time studying philosophy and medicine in Padua in the early 1440s. See Antonio Sartori, “Gli studi al Santo di Padova,” in Problemi e figure della Scuola Scotista del Santo, ed. Antonino Pophi (Padua, 1966), 145-46, and Monfasani, “Averroism of John Argyropoulos,” 161-62. But even if this were true, Francesco della Rovere was not at the beginning of a continuous tradition of Scotistic teaching in the arts course. There was, at the very least, an interruption between his teaching and the emergence of this teaching in the 1470s.

University of Padua as part of the arts course. Indeed, these professorships might have been perceived as existing in some sort of continuity with the older episcopal school of theology; there is evidence that Penketh may have lectured in the cathedral. But while Graziano was teaching theology at Padua, what may have begun as *ad hoc* professorships of theology in the cases of Thomas Penketh and Graziano da Brescia arguably achieved their basic shape as the chairs of theology *in via Scoti* and *in via S. Thomae*. In a decree issued on 21 October 1490, the Venetian Senate called Ludovico Valenza of Ferrara to teach at the university. This is the only instance supported by evidence of a formal effort to establish one of these chairs in scholastic theology or scholastic metaphysics.

The Venetian Senate laid out its reasons for doing so. It observed that theology was the basis of “our whole Catholic faith” and lectures on the subject would be “useful for the students.” A “good quantity of these students” and their “outstanding rector,”

---

110 Historians have assumed that Graziano succeeded Penketh immediately, but there is no reason to believe that this was the case unless we think of the Venetian Senate as having created a permanent professorship in the 1470s with the appointment of Thomas Penketh, something that I believe to be incorrect. Furthermore, we know that Graziano was regent of the Franciscan *studium* in Bologna in 1479-81 and 1483-84. See F. Bacchelli, “Graziano da Brescia,” DBI 59 (2003).

111 Brotto-Zonta, *Facoltà*, 183. The bishops did, at least at times, pay a salary to theologians teaching in the cathedral, with an apparent hope that the Senate would take over this expense. See Acta Cancellarie (1436-41), f. 78, where a Master Giuliani of Sicily was promised thirty gold ducats if *La Serenissima* did not remunerate him. Quoted in Brotto-Zonta, 89, n. 1. Donato’s successor, Fantino Dandolo gave a stipend to a theologian named della Porta for lecturing on the Bible for one year and on the *Sentences* for two. These funds were drawn from the *camera pauperum Christi*.

112 See Grendler, *Universities*, 369, esp. n. 59, who gives the rector of the artists, the captain of Padua, and the bishop a key role in the creation of this professorship. All three parties may have been involved. Indeed, it would be highly unlikely if the bishop and the rector were not involved. But the specific evidence that they have for this claim is the testimony of Leonardo Ubriaco, rector of the artists. The problem is that Ubriaco was rector in 1495-96, quite a few years after the Senate’s call to Valenza. It is more likely that Ubriaco was referring to the revival of the chair after a few years’ vacancy between its creation and the appointment of Girolamo d’Ippolito da Monopoli. See ASVe, *Senato-Terra*, Reg. 11, f. 29. in Brotto-Zonta, *Facoltà*, 266-67. It is noteworthy that Valenza’s cell in Ferrara was vacant on 7 August 1490. See AGOP IV, reg. 9, 62r.
probably Donato Civalelli, had “insistently entreated” that this chair be created.113 The Senate paid close attention to the honor that this would bring to the University of Padua and to “our most religious and most Christian Senate.” The Venetian Senate hoped that this professorship would allow Padua to share in the fame of the University of Paris: “it is primarily the lecture of theology that renders the University of Paris (Gymnasium Parisinum) famous.” The decree thus outlined all of the benefits of theology for the university, but it also noted that Graziano already taught theology and that he lectured iuxta doctrinam Scoti. The Senate stated that it would be useful and honorable that the “doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas” also be read in the gymnasium. This was the beginning of the chair of theology in via S. Thomae.114

The reference to Scotus and Thomas Aquinas in this decree was the first association of these chairs with the medieval viae. There is very little reason to believe that this decision was rooted in the intense rivalry or conflict for which some northern universities were famous as much as in a desire to give some formal position for the


114 For further confirmation of this chair’s origins at this moment, see Timoteo Toti’s funeral oration for Ludovico Valenza, which stated, “Illustrissimus quoque Venetorum senatus ad tradendam in florentissimo Patavino gymnasio theologiam honestissimo salario conduxit: ac eius nomine novam lecturam instituit. Non enim alias in doctrina sacra ordo noster locum habuerat in illa universitate.” See Timoteo Toti, Oratio in funere Ludovici de Ferraria (Rome, after 4 May 1497), [3]. Note Toti’s statement that “our order” had no position in sacred doctrine in the university before this time. Of course, Toti knew about the studium of S. Agostino. It is also noteworthy that the title, “Angelic Doctor,” part of the 1490 decree, was attributed to Aquinas only in the second half of the fifteenth century and by an Italian, St. Antoninus of Florence. See P. Mandonnet, “Les titres doctoraux de saint Thomas,” Revue thomiste 17 (1909): 606.
theology of Thomas Aquinas in the education of students at the University of Padua. In the 1495 revision of the statutes for the universitas artistarum, it stated the following:

“We desire that those assigned for lecturing on theology do the following—that one reads according to the via of St. Thomas and the other according to the via of Scotus. And we desire the same for those assigned to metaphysics.”

But the rotuli and other decrees did not reflect the language of the viae until after the re-opening of the university in 1518 after the War of the League of Cambrai. Before that time, these friars were simply identified as teaching theology or metaphysics, sometimes with the added note that they lectured on this subject in the first or second position based upon seniority.

---

115 Statuta, 38v: “Volumus quod deputati ad legendum theologiam unus legat secundum viam sancti thome alter secundum viam scoti. Et similiter deputati ad metaphisicam.” Note what follows: “deputati vero ad sophistariam teneatur legere logicam pauli veneti questiones strodi cum dubis pauli pergulensis et pro tertia lectione regulas seu sophismata tisbexi. Deputatii vero ad alias lectiones de mane teneatur legere textus aristotelis. Videlicet pro prima lectione totam artem vetere. pro secunda librum priorum. pro tertia librum posteriorum.”

116 Brotto-Zonta, Facoltà, 182, 186: Senatorial degrees used the following language: “doctores…pro legendis operibus Scoti…pro operibus S. Thome”; “lecturam Theologiae, secundum doctrinam Scoti”; “lecturam sancti Thome in Theologia.” See also Bishop Barozzi’s 1504 letter to the Venetian rulers where he referred to “la lectura di theologia secondo la via de Scoto” as a medicine for the university in Stefani, ed., I diarii di Marino Sanuto, III: cols. 884-85. But note the generic references to the “lecturam Theologiae” and the fact that Merlino “Metaphisicam docebat” in a Senatorial degree in the summer of 1503 (Brotto-Zont, Facoltà, 189) and “lectio Metaphysicae,” even if associated with the Dominicans, and “lectionem Theologiae” (ibid., 202). It was merely said that Trombetta “legit metaphysicam in Gymnasio nostro paduano” in 1492. See also the decree that remarked upon Securo’s death and confirmed his successor’s appointment on ibid., 197, n. 3: “Defuncto superioribus diebus ven. famosissimo theologo magistro Francisco de Neritone, vacavit, et adhuc vacat lectura ordinaria metafisica Studii nostri paduani, quam ipse legebat.…vadit pars quod prefatus magister Valentinus deputetur ad lecturam predictam metafisice, cum eodemmet stipendio quod habet eius concurrens magister Antonius Trombeta”; Antonio Favaro, “Lo Studio di Padova nel Diarii di Marino Sanuto,” Nuovo archivio veneto, 3rd ser., 36 (1918): 75.

117 Pace Facciolati, Fasti, 94, 98, 100. See Brotto-Zonta, Facoltà, 182, n. 4, which transcribes a document in which Vincenzo Merlino, the Thomist metaphysician, was identified as teaching ad secundum locum. See also AAUP MS. 660, 154r: “Legit in Gymnasio nostro Puduanio lectionem Theologiae in primo loco Venerabilis, et Erudissimus Magister Mauritus Ordinis Sancti Francisci, non solum cum maxima attentione, numero ingeni studentium, commoditate, satisfacitone, et universale beneficio, verum etiam cum non mediocri laude et commendatione Domini nostri, cum sit lectio necessaria, tendens ad verificationem, conservationem, et stabilimentum orthodoxae fidei nostrae Christianae, quemademmodum suis litteris attestantur ille Reverendus Dominus Episcopus Puduanus, neon Rectores nostri” (emphasis added). See also AAUP MS. 660, ibid., 159r, for a discussion of the salaries of these four professors on 30 October
Conclusion

Over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Dominicans became an official part of the University of Padua. From 1222 until 1363, theology had no official connection to the university. With the creation of the faculty of theology in 1363, the doctors of theology in Padua who were members of the college of theologians had the right to confer degrees. A few decades later, the studium in the Dominican convent of S. Agostino was elevated to a studium generale rather than a studium provinciale, and friars from across Christendom could then participate in the advanced theology instruction in the city. But a regularized relationship between the Dominicans and the students of arts and medicine began only in the mid-1460s. The Venetian Senate loosened the purse strings to pay friars to teach courses in metaphysics and eventually theology, despite some resistance earlier in the century. In 1490 the rulers of the university expressed an interest in sharing more completely in the honor that theology instruction bestowed upon the University of Paris, and the academic theology of the only scholastic saint, Thomas Aquinas, was something that the arts students apparently desired. After 1490, with only a few interruptions, instruction in metaphysics and theology became a permanent part of the arts course. From the early-1520s until a few decades into the eighteenth century, four friars found themselves at the top of the University of Padua’s list of professors in arts and medicine, and they were associated with the thought of Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus. The association between the Dominican professors and their lay students

1535. The most interesting part is when the Scotist metaphysician received a raise of ten florins “for having read more than fourteen years,” while the Thomist metaphysician received no raise at all because he had lectured for only a very short time.
and colleagues in the arts course became the basis for a particularly Paduan form of Thomism that reflects the shifts in scholastic thought referred to as Renaissance scholasticism.
Chapter 2
The Dominican Order and the *Via Sancti Thomae* in Padua

Thomism came to the University of Padua by way of inexpensive, well-trained Dominican professors. The Venetian Senate did not decide to incorporate Thomism into the curriculum of the arts course and then turn to Aquinas' confreres. On the contrary, Francesco Securo’s tenure as professor of metaphysics from the 1460s until his death in 1489 had much more to do with the attractive price tag for expanding the range of offerings in Aristotelian philosophy than with his Thomistic outlook. Something similar appears to be the case for the English Augustinian Thomas Penketh’s teaching of metaphysics and then theology in the 1470s. Nonetheless, what began as lectures on metaphysics by a Dominican friar in the 1460s, who would have merely happened to be a Thomist, eventually became two professorships required by university statutes to teach metaphysics and theology according to the “way” of Thomas Aquinas.

The rulers of the university almost certainly had no profound ideological motivations for appointing these friars, and they generally drew upon the well-trained mendicants who were on hand. The available friars, though, had a particular social and educational background which had a substantial impact on their teaching in the university. All of the professors were Italian, and many of them were from noble families. Furthermore, it so happened that the major Dominican *studia generalia* in the Veneto were unreformed or Conventual. The differences between the Thomism of Conventuals and Observants have not been closely studied, though it appears that the Conventuals had a less aggressive approach to contemporary literary and philosophical
currents than their Observant confreres. This context provides an essential foundation for an examination of the lectures and university activities of these friar-professors.

*S. Agostino and Dominican Education*

None of the seventeen Dominican friars who taught theology and metaphysics in our period were native to the Paduan convent, S. Agostino. Although they joined the order elsewhere, most of them did study or teach at some point in the *studium generale* that was established in S. Agostino around the turn of the fifteenth century. This house thus played a major role in the formation of the professors who created Paduan Thomism.

The Dominican house of S. Agostino had a long history and participated in Padua’s civic and the university’s intellectual life since the origins of the University of Padua. The Preachers located themselves at Padua in October of 1226 only about a decade after the establishment of the order by Pope Honorius III, quickly dedicated a simple church to Saint Augustine, and built a convent no later than 1229 near the Porta di S. Giovanni by the Riviera Paleocapa.¹ S. Agostino was part of the Province of Lombardy, whose center was in Bologna, the eventual location of Dominic’s remains. This province, until it was divided into Upper and Lower Lombardy in 1303, encompassed all of northern Italy from the Alps to Tuscany and the Marche, its boundary with the Roman Province. Establishing itself as one of the leading priories in the province by the end of the thirteenth century, probably only behind Bologna, Milan, and possibly

Venice in prestige, S. Agostino hosted the provincial chapters in 1289 and 1300. In 1308, the then annual general chapter, bringing together friars, at least ideally, from every province of the order, met in Padua. The Dominicans also held the prestigious office of the Inquisition for the diocese of Padua and Vicenza, which was removed from the Franciscans by Boniface VIII in 1303 and only returned to the Minorites in 1479 by the Franciscan pope (and Padua theology graduate), Sixtus IV. Although relations between friars and the medieval Italian communes were contentious at times, S. Agostino played a significant role in the city’s religious life, at least by the early part of the fourteenth century. Padua gave significant honor to the Dominican church by holding communal events there for the feast days of St. Peter Martyr, first held in the city on 4 March 1323. It is especially noteworthy that the city established the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas on 2 January 1324, shortly after his canonization. Nobles and high-churchmen, moreover,

---


3 It is interesting to note the warning in the Province of Lombardy’s chapter of 1278 (Milan) that friars assist inquisitors and their vicars and remain favorable towards them in all that pertains to their office. The warning closes by stating that “none should dare to impede them in any way.” Reading such mandates is notoriously difficult, but the language suggests that inquisitors were at times receiving some resistance from Dominican friars, who would frequently be their confreres. See “Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,” 155. For Sixtus IV and Padua, see Jill Elizabeth Blondin, “Pope Sixtus IV at Assisi: The Promotion of Papal Power,” in Patronage and Dynasty: The Rise of the della Rovere in Renaissance Italy, ed. Ian Varstegen (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2007), 19-21. See also Holly Grieco, “Pastoral Care, Inquisition, and Mendicancy in the Medieval Franciscan Order,” in The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies, ed. Donald Prudlo (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 144.


5 Prudlo, Martyred Inquisitor: The Life and Cult of Peter of Verona (†1252) (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 141. The Province of Lombardy received encouragement from its chapter to promote devotion to Dominic and Peter Martyr among the people in the Bologna chapter of 1280. See “Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,” 157. For the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, see Del culto di S. Tomaso d’Aquino in Padova (Padua, 1882), 5-9. Relevant documents are printed in ibid., 27-32.
were buried at S. Agostino since the consecration of the Cistercian-Gothic church on 11 April 1303 by Cardinal Niccolò Boccasino, the future Pope Benedict XI. Prominent among those buried in the Dominican church were a significant number of the Carrara, the family that ruled Padua from the end of communal autonomy in 1318 until the Venetian conquest of 1405. Indeed, it has been plausibly suggested that the Carrara’s pronounced devotion to these early Dominican saints and their patronage of the Dominican church and convent sought to cultivate “new cultic allies.” St. Anthony of Padua, a famous Franciscan preacher, remained central to the identity of the commune. The Carrara, in Donald Prudlo’s vivid description, “seized upon Peter and Thomas” as “counterbalances to the Franciscans and the cult of Anthony.”

This was a typical intertwining of the political and cultic dimensions of Italian cities in this period that has earned them Augustine Thompson’s vivid appellation, “cities of God.”

Padua’s Dominican convent does not appear to have had a prominent place in the academic life of its province, the Province of Lombardy, until the final decades of the thirteenth century. In the beginning, however, S. Agostino, as all other full-fledged convents that operated in keeping with the Constitutions of the Order, had a schola. These were the schools originally envisioned by Dominic himself, which were to instruct the friars in the study of Scripture and basics of theology essential to the order’s preaching mission. The basic curriculum for every convent, at least once things

---

6 Prudlo, Martyred Inquisitor, 141.
7 Thompson, Cities of God.
8 This is an important point since scholars sometimes suggest that a conventual studium was a studium generale simply by virtue of its presence in a university city. Grendler seems to make this mistaken connection in Universities, 355.
9 This discussion is much indebted to Mulchahey, Dominican Education, esp. 132-184.
developed over the course of the thirteenth century, was based on two daily lectures (one on the Bible and one on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, the fundamental textbook of scholastic theology from the Central Middle Ages until the sixteenth century). There was, moreover, a daily review of these lectures, a weekly disputation, and a weekly *repetitio generalis*, which reviewed the scholastic activity of the previous week.10 *Lectio*, *disputatio*, and *repetitio* clearly show the links of conventual *scholae* with the scholastic theology practiced in the secular *studia generalia*, particularly the University of Paris, even though the goals of the conventual *scholae*, such as the one in Padua, had quite different horizons.11 The lectures on Scripture were intended to cover the whole of Scripture. All four books of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* received the attention of lecturers.12 Other fundamental texts in the *scholae* included Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica*, Raymond of Peñafort’s *Summa de casibus*, and other writings of the saints, which were also some of the same texts encountered by the friars during their novitiate.13 Ideally, every day, from profession as a youth to the infirmities of old age, all brothers

---

10 Mulchahey persuasively argues for this position against a widespread view among Dominican historians of the past who thought that conventual lecturers were involved only in practical theology, especially continuous wrestling with issues pertaining to the sacrament of penance. Evidence of this supposedly comes from the widespread availability of Raymond of Peñafort’s *Summa de casibus* in conventual libraries. See Angelus Walz, “S. Raymundi de Penyafort auctoritas in re penitentiali,” *Angelicum* 12 (1935): 346-96. It turns out that conventual education was more ambitious than one might have expected. As Mulchahey aptly puts it, “It was a difference in degree rather than content” (138).

11 Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, chap. 2.

12 At Paris in this period, the great masters felt at liberty to skip around, focusing on *quaestiones* in the Lombard that were most interesting to them for a number of possible, varying reasons. For both lectures, conventual teachers were asked to remain close to the texts. Humbert of Romans who stated that Scripture and the *Sentences* as well as Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica* should be read literally (*litteram tantum legere*). See Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 137-41. Conventual lectures on Scripture focused on the literal or historical sense, one of the four senses of Scripture central to medieval biblical exegesis. Mulchahey also argues that this kind of reading would be parallel to the so-called cursory lectures undertaken in university contexts.

were to attend classes in the conventual school and participate in its exercises. The only official exceptions to this rule were those who were previously lectors or those who had gone on to study theology in an advanced course, whether at a *studium generale* or a *studium particulare*, and they were still required to attend lectures on Scripture. General chapters frequently emphasized the priority of lectures on the Bible in a conventual *schola* like the one in Padua.

For the first two decades or so after its founding, the Dominican order only had these conventual *scholae* scattered generously throughout Europe and its *studium* in the University of Paris. In the general chapter of 1248, the order significantly expanded the number of its *studia generalia*. These advanced schools were not the same as the secular *studia*. They were called “general” because they were administered, at least *de jure*, by the master-general of the order and the general chapters. Furthermore, their general character was also rooted in their international student body; provincial priors had the power to send two worthy brothers to any of these general schools. The *studium* closest

---

15 MOPH III (Bordeaux, 1277): 191: “Monemus. quod lectores ordinarii in conventibus suis plus legant de textu biblie quam solent. et semper lectio biblie aliis lectionibus premittatur.”
16 When one puts this extensive network into the larger context of all mendicant and monastic schools outside of the university, one can appreciate the words found in Roger Bacon’s *Compendium studii philosophiae*, chap. 1: “nunquam fuit tanta apparentia sapientiae nec tantum exercitium studii in tot facultatibus in tot regionibus, sicut jam a quadraginta annis. Ubique enim doctores sunt dispersi, et maxime in theologica in omni civitate, et in omni castro, et in omni burgo; praecipue per duos ordines students, quod non accidit nisi a quadraginta annis, vel circiter.” It should be noted, however, how Bacon completes this discussion: “Cum tamen nunquam fuit tanta ignorantia, tantus error, sicut ex hac scriptura finaliter manifestissime apparebit, et nunc manifestum est hoc per effectum. Nam plura peccata regnant his temporibus quam unquam temporibus; sed peccatum non potest stare cum sapientia.” See Roger Bacon, *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita*, vol. 1, ed. J. S. Brewer (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), 398. Also quoted in Mariano d’Alatri, “Panorama geografico, cronologico, e statistico sulla distribuzione degli Studia degli ordini mendicanti: Italia,” in *Le scuole degli ordini mendicanti (secoli XIII-XIV)* (Todi, 1978), 49.
17 Comparisons to secular *studia generalia* are based on Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 352-78.
to S. Agostino was the Dominican *studium generale* in Bologna, which had the prestige of being an early center for the order and the location for the founder’s remains. The location of Bologna for the *studium generale* of S. Agostino’s province may give the impression that these new *studia* were intentionally founded in university centers to take part, if not to imitate entirely, the advanced instruction of the great medieval universities of Europe. But Bologna had no faculty of theology at this point. Some of the other choices for the location of these early *studia generalia*, particularly Cologne and later Barcelona, clearly show that having an established university in the city was not a major factor in the order’s choice of locations. Cologne did not have any university until 1388 and Barcelona until 1450.18

When the number of convents became too unwieldy for Lombardy’s provincial administration around the turn of the fourteenth century, Padua’s convent of S. Agostino was assigned to the Province of Lower Lombardy, which still included Bologna. Since there was apparently a requirement in the thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries that there be only one *studium generale* per province, Padua was passed over until much later in the that century.19 But other changes in the Dominican educational framework took place about a decade after the establishment of the *studium generale* in Bologna. New approaches to Dominican education emerging in the Province of Rome and the Province

---

18 Jacques Verger, “Patterns,” 64.
19 In the Province of Upper Lombardy, the Milanese convent of S. Eustorgio became the location of another northern Italian *studium generale*. This provides further evidence that these mendicant *studia generalia* should not be conceived as firmly linked to the European universities. The university city in this region was Pavia. It is clear that S. Eustorgio played a significant role in the first century of the Lombard Province’s life, hosting provincial chapters in 1255, 1258, 1261, 1270, 1274, 1278, 1283, 1291. 1293 is the last year in which we have available records for the provincial chapters of the undivided Province of Lombardy. See “Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,” 138-72.
of Provence led to the establishment in the middle of the thirteenth century of
intermediate *studia* managed by the province, culminating in a significant overhaul of the
standards for students and teachers in the general chapter of Genoa in 1305. In addition
to offering intermediate courses in theology and Sacred Scripture, provincial *studia*
focused on propaedeutic courses in arts or logic (*studia artium*) and natural philosophy
(*studia naturarum*).

Unfortunately, little is known about the details of these schools in the Province of
Lombardy. Most information about Dominican education during this period is found in
records of the provincial chapters’ deliberations, which survive in only the sparsest form
for this important province. Nevertheless, from information regarding the nearby Roman
Province as well as other contemporaneous Dominican provinces in northern Europe, it is
almost certain that no house, including Padua’s S. Agostino, had a claim to any of these
intermediate *studia*. But an important convent like S. Agostino almost certainly hosted
intermediate *studia* with some frequency.

The Province of Lombardy took time to include non-theological subjects in the
education of its friar-students. In 1261, the brothers of the Province of Lombardy were
reminded to study the text of the Bible with diligence. In the following year, in the
chapter meeting in Bologna, the brothers were warned that no friar was permitted to
study “in arts” or “in the other teachings of the Gentiles” without a special license; a

---

20 Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 277, 337, 375.
22 “Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,” 143.
further license was needed for studying any of the quadrivial arts. These restrictions were typical, though Albert the Great, Humbert of Romans, and Thomas Aquinas were then involved in spreading the notion that a philosophical education was essential to the Dominican mission. Albert, Aquinas, and others had met only two years before this warning to hammer out the so-called ratio studiorum of the Dominicans in 1259. In 1261, the order required each province to have at least one studium artium for training promising friars in logic.

The hesitation of the Province of Lombardy with friars reading the books of Gentiles or pagans does not comport well with our general picture of Dominican attitudes towards learning in the middle of the thirteenth century. This was the era of Albert the

---

23 The provincial chapters of Lombardy appear not to have used the term studia artium. Friars were forbidden from studying arts subjects (in artibus) in 1262, but when the chapters referred to the schools themselves, they were called in logicalibus (144), studia logicalia (158). There was, however, a reference to studia artium after the division of the Lombardies in 1303. See “Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,” 171 (Ferrara, 1312). Ibid., 143-4. On the basis of Andezeno’s Memoriae historicae provinciae s. Petri Martyris, 59 (AGOP XXIII, 411), Daniel Antonin Mortier concludes that 1262 saw the creation of the first studium artium in the Province of Lombardy. See Histoire des Maitres Généraux de l’Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs, II: 15, n. 4 (Paris, 1903-20). This opinion is followed in Hinnebusch, History, II: 28. See also Mulchahey, Dominican Education, 234, particularly n. 54. Andezeno writes, “1262. Capitulum Provinciale Bononiae. Hoc anno inventum est Studium Logicae in Provincia Lombardiae, et primo cepit in Conventu S. Eustorgii Mediolani.” It seems unlikely, though, that this was the first formal effort of the province with intermediate provincial education. First of all, it is unlikely that Lombardy, a leading province, would have been years behind the Spanish, Provence, and Roman Provinces in providing logic schools. Less speculatively, this warning about receiving licenses to study logic and natural philosophy came a year after the general chapter of 1261 ordered the provinces of Spain, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Scandinavia as well as the Roman Province in Italy to arrange for the instruction of teachable (docibles) friars in logic. Lombardy is not on the list, but neither is the Province of Provence, where studia artium originated in 1241 and developed continuously in the intervening decades. Was Lombardy left off the list because the Roman Province was sufficient for Italy? This is possible, but I think it is more probable that studia artium already existed in the province, though supporters of a broad philosophical education certainly received important support in the general chapters of 1259 and 1261, which likely contributed to the important foundation at Milan’s S. Eustorgio in 1262.

24 Incidentally, what may possibly be somewhat unusual in regard to these provincial chapters is the frequent warnings about friars practicing medicine. The combination of Dominican recruiters’ targeting educated young men and the prominence of medicine in northern Italy likely contributed to this difficulty. See “Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,” 142, 145. For detailed treatment of this topic, see Angela Montford, Health, Sickness, Medicine and the Friars in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), especially chap. 5.
Great and Thomas Aquinas, along with William of Moerbeke and others, when
Dominicans were leading players in Europe’s recovery of the Aristotelian corpus. But
this “progressive” direction in Dominican learning stood in tension with the original
constitution of the order. Historians often overlook the fact that, despite Dominic’s
apparent enrollment in the theology lectures of Alexander Stavensby in Toulouse’s
cathedral school, the founder had hesitations about involving significant numbers of his
friar-recruits in the university milieu. The order’s constitutions were quite hesitant
about secular philosophy; indeed, the Constitutions declared that young as well as old
friars were forbidden from studying “the books of the pagans and philosophers, though
they may examine them briefly.” “They should not learn secular sciences,” the
Constitutions continued, “not even the arts that they call liberal, but young and old should
only read theological books.” Dominic’s successor and biographer, Jordan of Saxony,
wrote this about the founder:

When he felt that he had learned enough of the arts, he abandoned them
and turned to the study of theology, as if he were reluctant to waste his
limited time in these less fruitful studies. He began to develop a passionate

25 See Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 54: “The friars, and especially the Dominicans, are often
categorized as having deployed themselves in the vanguard of the new philosophical movements which
comprised so much of the intellectual history of the thirteenth century. Aquinas and Thomism are the
watchwords for a progressive attitude towards the emergent Aristotelianism and a catholic interpretation of
which disciplines should be considered propaedeutic to the pursuit of theological science.” In contrast to
this conventional view, she argues for a “deeply-rooted conservatism in Dominican thought”: the
Dominicans “had good reason to be extremely circumspect in their educational goals, and not only during
the first rains of the Aristotelian storm but later, well into the second half of the thirteenth century, even in
the age of Aquinas.”
26 Hesitant acceptance of this episode is supported M. Michèle Mulchahey, “Dominican Educational
Vocabulary and the Order’s Conceptualization of Studies before 1300: Borrowed Terminology, New
Connotations,” in *Le vocabulaire des écoles des Mendiants au moyen âge*, ed. Maria C. Pacheco (Turnhout:
Brepols, 1999), 89-90.
27 Quoted in ibid., 92-93: “[Studentes] in libris gentilium et philosophorum non studeant, etsi ad horam
inspiciant. Seculares scientias non addiscant, nec etiam artes quas liberales vocant, sed tantum libros
theologicos tam iuvenes quam alii legant.” See also Marangon, *Origini*, 48-49.
appetite for God’s words, finding them “sweeter than honey to his mouth.” He spent four years in these sacred studies during which time he drank avidly and incessantly from the streams of Holy Scripture.\textsuperscript{28}

Dominicans were involved in a delicate balancing act, as can be seen in modifications to the original strictures in the Constitutions, such as allowing the study of pagan literature if a superior gave a dispensation or license.\textsuperscript{29} This shift may have been inevitable due to the kind of learned men that the order attracted. Jordan of Saxony and other leading recruiters targeted those lettered men of Europe’s young universities. Indeed, in the earliest days of the University of Padua, Jordan probably recruited a well-respected, brilliant “Hungarian” whom we now know as Albert the Great.\textsuperscript{30} Even if these new friars turned quickly to theology, they had nevertheless been shaped, as Mulchahey puts it, “by precisely the sort of secular studies which would henceforth be off-limits to them.”\textsuperscript{31}

This sort of education went a long way towards explaining why these very individuals eventually promoted the expansion of Dominican education and a significantly different attitude towards pagan texts than during the order’s founding era only a few decades before.

A significant change in attitude had taken place in the Province of Lombardy between 1262 when no one could study the “teachings of the Gentiles” without a special license and 1283 when philosophy became more or less a required diversion during the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{28} Quoted in Mulchahey, \textit{Dominican Education}, 55. I follow Mulchahey’s translation in its entirety.
\textsuperscript{29} In 1228, the general chapter meeting in St-Jacques (Paris) amended the Constitutions’ original statement on secular studies with the following quotation: “unless on occasion the master of the order or the general chapter would want to dispense otherwise.” For further discussion, see Mulchahey, \textit{Dominican Education}, 59-60.
\textsuperscript{30} Mulchahey, \textit{Dominican Education}, 69, though see Simon Tugwell, \textit{Albert and Thomas: Selected Writings} (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 4-7.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 70.
\end{flushleft}
summer months. These secular studies, though, could encourage pursuits even further afield from the original Dominican mission. Warnings had to be given against involvement in the magical arts or alchemy as well as the art of making whiskey!\textsuperscript{32}

The purpose of this education in logic and natural philosophy was to prepare friars for advanced instruction in theology so that they might become lectors in the conventual \textit{schola}. Talented friars were sent for training in logic at a \textit{studium particulare} in the province. The privilege of being assigned to years of study in natural philosophy was reserved for those men for whom there was hope of eventual success as a lector. Part of the training was to teach in these \textit{studium particulare} of logic and then natural philosophy. The Dominicans were deeply concerned that such lectors were of high quality. With the \textit{studium generale} of Paris as an important exception, even studying theology in a \textit{studium generale} after years of education in logic and natural philosophy did not immediately qualify the student-friar for the basic lectorship in the convent \textit{scholae}. Upon returning from Montpellier, Oxford, Cologne, or another \textit{studium generale}, the student in the Province of Lombardy needed to read the \textit{Sentences} in one of

\textsuperscript{32} “\textit{Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae},” 162: “Item prior provincialis de voluntate et assensu diffinitorum precipit in virtute obedientie omnibus et singulis fratibus huius provincie quod nullus teneat aliqua experimenta pertinientia ad artes magicas seu sacramenta sacrilega; et si aliquis, quod absit, repertus fuerit huiusmodi experimenta tenere vel docere vel exercere vel alicui tradere, in arto carcere recludatur et ibidem disciplinis et abstinentiis puniatur.” It should be made clear that misbehavior mentioned in chapter meetings stretched beyond study. One noteworthy rebuke addressed friars producing hard liquor in their convents. See “\textit{Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae},” 163. For more on mendicant misbehavior and the penalties that it entailed, see G. Geltner, “Brethren Behaving Badly: A Deviant Approach to Medieval Antifraternalism,” \textit{Speculum} 85 (2010): 47-64. See also “\textit{Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae},” 172: “Item ego frater Conradus prior provincialis provincie Lombardie inferioris ordinis fratrum Predicatorum precipio de eorumdem conscilio et assensu in virtute spiritus sancti et obedientie fratibus nostre provincie universis et singulis cuiuscumque conditionis vel status existant, monendo omnes et singulos primo, secundo et tercio peremptorie quod nullus pertinencia ad artem alcimicam doceat vel adiscat, operetur, iuvet vel faveat talibus intendenti. Quicunque autem contra aliquod predictorum ordinacionis inscius fecerit, ipso facto sit excommunicatus; quam sentenciam ex nunc prout ex tunc profero in hiis scriptis.” For further discussion of these and related points, see Montford, \textit{Health, Sickness, Medicine, and the Friars}. 
the provincial theological *studia* or to be sent for further study in the province’s own *studium generale* at Bologna. The Lombard province wanted to make sure that the studies elsewhere had truly established their learning and, more importantly, that it translated into the ability to communicate as an effective lector. Of course, as so frequently was the case in these Dominican rules, exceptions were allowed for those whose competence and learning were evident (*plene constaret*).³³

S. Agostino thus had highly trained lectors from the beginning. The convent held the *studium particulare* in logic and natural philosophy and may have been one of the few convents to have the intermediate provincial *studium* in theology. The official relationship to the university did not exist until 1363 and in some ways until the 1460s, but the convent was a center of intellectual activity from the thirteenth century onward. The leading Dominicans in Padua from the 1260s were well-trained in logic and natural philosophy like the students in arts and medicine, even if the ultimate goal was the study and then the teaching of theology.

Non-Dominicans in Padua took part in the theology lectures at S. Agostino long before the creation of the faculty of theology. This was one of the points of contact

---

³³ “*Acta capitulorum provinciae Lombardiae,*” 161: “*Ordinamus quod illi qui mittuntur ad studia generalia extra provinciam Lumbaride [!], illis dumtaxat exceptis qui ad Parisiense studium destinantur, postquam ad suam provinciam fuerint revocati, immediate ad legendum in aliquo conventu non ponantur, sed aut ponantur ad legendas Sentencias in aliquo studio preterquam in studio Bononiensi, aut Bononianam ad studium revertantur, ut ibi exercitari possint et de eorum scientia amplius constare possit, ut sic suo tempore ad legendum exponi possint, prout videbitur expedire, nisi forsitan tales essent de quorum sufficientia ac scientia plene constaret.” See a further admotion from the same chapter of 1286 (Brescia): “*Item illi qui ponuntur per conventus ad legendas Sentencias extraordinarie, non exponantur statim sequenti anno ad legendum ordinate in aliquo conventu, sed Bononianam ad studium revertantur et suo tempore exponantur, nisi tales essent de quorum sufficientia plene constaret.*” Some time spent in the *studium generale* of Bologna (or Paris, as the previous item made clear) was thus a precondition for being an ordinary conventual lector in the province.
between the Dominican theologians in the city and the university community in these early days. Bishops in Italy often gave dispensations for their priests to participate in theology courses in mendicant schools. For instance, Federico Visconti, bishop of Pisa, declared that his secular priests should receive some advanced theological instruction in the schools of the Dominicans and Franciscans. Examples abound of non-Dominicans taking part in conventual academic exercises in other cities. Thomas Aquinas’ defense of the mendicants from the attacks of the secular clergy in his *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* depends on this being the case. He wrote,

> It is necessary that those who attend to the salvation of souls should be outstanding both in life and knowledge. It is not easy to find so many priests of this sort to take charge of all the parishes throughout the whole world. Neither is it possible, among secular priests, to observe the statute of the Lateran Council, which enjoins that there should be some who

---

34 Scholars have argued that Pope Boniface VIII’s encouragement of clerical education in constitutions such as *Cum ex eo* (1298), though directed to the *studia generalia*, may have led the Roman Province to expand its network of advanced theology schools to seven in 1299, aligning themselves with the pope in his desire for better educated clergy, especially in the face of heretical movements of that time. Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 325-28. See also Leonard E. Boyle, “The Constitution ‘Cum ex eo’ of Boniface VIII: Education of Parochial Clergy,” *Mediaeval Studies* 24 (1962): 263-302. Mulchahey’s emphasis on the connection of the Dominicans, particularly the Roman Province, with Boniface VIII is convincing. It might be noted that the general and provincial chapters at the end of the thirteenth century certainly did emphasize the legitimacy of the pope in the face of a number of cardinals (around the Colonna family) who argued that Celestine V’s abdication was illegal and had been forced by Boniface when he was a cardinal. The chapteres accomplished this by forbidding any friar from taking part in discussions about the invalidity of his election. In complex and sometimes divergent ways, major Dominicans like Tolomeo Fidoni (Ptolemy of Lucca), Jean Quidort (John of Paris), Hervé de Nédellec (Hervaen Natalis), and others, however, were public opponents of aspects of Boniface VIII’s teaching and rule, even if they did not question his legitimacy as pope. See James M. Blythe, *The Worldview and Thought of Tolomeo Fidoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 91; Oliver O’Donovan and J. L. O’Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought, 100-1625* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 397-99; Jean Dunbabin, “Hervé de Nédellec, Pierre de la Palud and France’s Place in Christendom,” in *Political Thought and the Realities of Power in the Middle Ages*, eds. Joseph Canning and Otto Gerhard Oexle (Göttingen, 1998), 163.

35 D’Alatri, “Panorama,” 52. See Roesch, *Franciscan Education*, 45, for Franciscans in Bologna teaching secular clergy; he refers to them as public schools and cites a papal bull of 1249 which allowed secular clergy studying at the Franciscan school to receive a dispensation from residing in the area of their benefice. In 1257 the pope extended this privilege to all *studia generalia*.

might teach theology in every metropolitan church. Nevertheless, through the religious, by the grace of God, we see that much more was fulfilled than this statute. Indeed, it seems that the words of Isaiah [11:9] have been fulfilled, “The earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord.” Thus, it is highly beneficial that a religious [order] should be instituted in which the brethren are lettered and with leisure for study in order to help priests who are not as sufficient for the task.37

In Aquinas’ view, the mendicants fulfilled the intention of the Fourth Lateran Council to expand access of priests—and, through them, the laity—to theological learning. The diocese of Padua would not have been under any obligation to respond to Lateran IV’s requirement for bishops to provide a master of theology for priests because this decree only pertained to metropolitan sees, and Padua was under the metropolitan Patriarchate of Aquileia. Nevertheless, clear evidence exists that outsiders participated in Dominican theology courses in in Padua. The most famous participant was probably Engelbert of Admont (d. 1331), a major thirteenth-century Benedictine intellectual, who received his theological education during four years learning from the “master lectors” in S. Agostino.38

38 “Deinde post quinquennium audivi theologiam Paduae in domo Praedicatorum sub magistris lectoribus. Tunc ibidem in eodem studio continuo quattuor annos mansi,” quoted in George Bingham Fowler, *Intellectual Interests of Engelbert of Admont* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1947), 23, n. 21. Although outsiders also took part in the daily lectures of the priory school, one would assume that a brilliant mind such as Engelbert would only spend that amount of time in a more advanced study of theology. See D’Alatri, “Panorama,” 52-54, for emphasis on the public character of Dominican schools. See MOPH III (Lyon, 1274): 174-75, for the Dominicans making use of the public vs. private distinction in reference to different sorts of teaching within the Dominican schools: “Quod quando non possunt inveniri sufficientes ad publice legendum; saltem providatur de aliquibus. qui legant privatam lectiones vel ystorias vel summam de casibus. vel huieusmodi; ne fratres sint ociosi.” See MOPH XX (1308), 169: “inhibemus districte ne aliquis secularis ad lectiones alias quam ad theologicas admittatur sine prioris provincialis licentia speciali.” Emphasis added. See also Marangon, *Origini*, 81-82.
Laymen also participated in mendicant academic life, though there is no direct
evidence of this in the case of S. Agostino. The most famous Italian example of such
general involvement is almost certainly Dante Alghieri, who wrote in the Convivio that,
after the death of Beatrice, he began to go to “le scuole de li religiosi” between 1291 and
1294. Though the Dominicans were told not to allow “seculars” into lectures on natural
philosophy, disputations on natural philosophy as well as theology courses were open to
the public. And it was taken for granted that seculares would take part in the theology
lectures held in the priories.

The strong relationship of S. Agostino to the community of scholars at the secular
university began very early and played an important role in the survival of the university
when it was faced with political challenges. Debates about the founding of the university
depend in some ways on interpretations of the letters of Jordan of Saxony, who reveled in
the conversion of students from Padua to the order in the second half of the 1220s. Albert the Great probably joined the order when Jordan was preaching in Padua in
1233. Shortly after the traditional founding date of the university in 1222, a man

---

39 Convivio 2.12.7.
41 Ibid., 119.
remembered as Ezzelino the Tyrant began his reign of terror in the city from 1237 to 1256, targeting the Guelphs in the city and their clerical supporters, which included the Dominicans of S. Agostino. Girolamo Arnaldi, an important historian of early Italian universities, suggests that S. Agostino played an essential part in guaranteeing the continuity of the local university studium during this difficult period for the city.

The longstanding informal relationship between the students and the Dominicans at Padua took on a more official character in 1436. In 1436 the universitas of arts and medicine, under the rector, Giovanni de Mansono da Napoli, struck a deal with the Dominicans of S. Agostino. While the city had made St. Thomas Aquinas one of its patrons on 2 January 1324, mere months after his canonization, he was only one of many. It is also unclear how exactly this civic devotion fared after the Venetian conquest of 1405 since the Carrara family was key to the patronage of the Dominican convent and its saints. But the students of arts decided to choose for themselves a saintly patron. The patron of the theologians was St. Jerome, St. Catherine of Siena that of the jurists, and the physicians in the universitas of arts and medicine were devoted to the physician and evangelist, St. Luke. On the condition that the Preachers would take care of burials and other religious needs of arts students who died during their studies, the artists would go to

and the Studio Patavino in the Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries,” in Albertus Magnus and the Sciences, 537-38. See also Siraisi, Arts and Sciences, 16-18.
46 See Acta Nationis Germanicae Artistarum (1616-1636), ed. Lucia Rossetti (Padua, 1967), 397, for a reference to the feast day of Aquinas as the festum medicorum.
S. Agostino on Thomas Aquinas’ feast day and arrange for an oration in praise of Thomas Aquinas. This event continued, with fluctuating commitment no doubt, at least until the second half of the seventeenth century.

While no clear evidence exists for the claim, it is plausible that a yearly feast day of the arts students in honor of Thomas Aquinas might have had something to do with the pleas by the arts students to establish a chair of theology in via S. Thomae in 1490. They perhaps wanted an exponent of the teaching of their patron to be a part of the arts course.

Yet it must be made clear that the decree of 1490 made no reference to the Dominicans of...
S. Agostino. They already had advanced theology instruction—directed to them and to their goals as friars—in the convent’s studium generale. The decision of the Venetian Senate to create a chair of Thomist theology was not a further incorporation of the Dominicans of S. Agostino into the University of Padua but a response to the appeals of the universitas artistarum. The Senate chose a friar from Ferrara, Ludovico Valenza; indeed, no filius of S. Agostino taught at the University of Padua in the period of this study. The Dominicans of S. Agostino had had a relationship to the University of Padua since the beginning of both institutions in the first half of the thirteenth century. But, while S. Agostino would provide a more or less temporary home for almost all the professors and a place of formation for many, the local convent had little to do with the creation of these chairs and the development of Renaissance Thomism in Padua.

Dominican Thomism at Padua

Thomism at Padua, therefore, was not a result of the transfer of the activities of S. Agostino to the arts course at the university. Indeed, S. Agostino did not have much to do with it. A better way of conceiving of the development of the via S. Thomae at Padua is to focus on subject-matter rather than late-medieval viae, mendicant rivalry, or school traditions. In the case of metaphysics, Francesco Securo was probably just an inexpensive yet effective teacher available for teaching Aristotelian metaphysics. It just so happened that he was a Dominican who would have been trained to use the commentaries of his confrere, Thomas Aquinas. The Dominicans were instructed not to contradict Thomas Aquinas since the order came to his defense after the posthumous condemnation of some
of his teachings in 1277 and the intra-Dominican struggle with Durandus de Sancto Porciano in the 1310s. Securo then would have almost certainly taken a Thomistic approach to metaphysics in his lectures, but there is no evidence to suggest that this was the reason why he was chosen for the task.

The rather mundane character of the choice of Securo in the 1460s is important because the University of Padua is often seen as a battleground of divergent approaches to philosophy. Scholars have asserted without much evidence that Thomists and Scotists were added to the curriculum of the artists to resist secular approaches to Aristotle, whether Averroist or Alexandrian. On the contrary, metaphysics was not formally associated with Thomism or Scotism until the 1490s. The first official association of any chair with Thomas Aquinas in 1490 simply stated that “it would be useful to students but also an honor to this gymnasium…that the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, Saint Thomas, also be lectured upon, since the foundation of our whole Catholic faith consists in the science of theology.” The students and the university authorities wanted a complement to the teaching of theology that had been supported—with some interruptions—since 1477, and they thought that theology lectures anchored in the thought of Thomas Aquinas would be particularly beneficial.

49 Brotto-Zonta, Facoltà, 267.
Set within the broader perspective of medieval thought, the choice of Thomas Aquinas as a guide for theology in Padua was not as obvious as it might appear to be today. Indeed, one of the goals of this study is to illuminate the Renaissance background of Thomas Aquinas’ rise to the level of a doctrinal authority in the Counter-Reformation. Thomas Aquinas did not truly attain the status of “Common Doctor” in Catholic theology until the middle of the sixteenth century. His teachings were fundamental to the decrees of the Council of Trent, the Jesuit order chose him as the basis of theological teaching in their schools, and Pius V made him one of only eight Doctors of the Church in 1567.\(^{50}\)

Thomas’ prominence in the sixteenth century and his central position in Roman Catholic thought after the late-nineteenth-century Thomistic revival have at times misled historians about Thomas’ position in the Middle Ages. Some of his key positions were condemned in 1277, just a few years after his death. Heiko Oberman has characterized the fourteenth century as one of “Franciscan hegemony.”\(^{51}\) In the major centers for academic theology, Thomas Aquinas remained, at best, one prominent figure among many. And, besides, it is probably best to avoid reading back well-defined schools of thought into the fourteenth century, which has been shown to be one of individual achievement in major academic centers.\(^{52}\) The future chancellor of the University of Paris, Pierre d’Ailly, made it quite clear at the end of the fourteenth century that Thomas

\(^{50}\)See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, rev. ed., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 325, for Tolomeo of Lucca saying in 1317 that Thomas was already called *communis Doctor* at the University of Paris.


\(^{52}\)See especially Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars*. 
was not an *auctoritas*.\footnote{See Chenu, “‘Maitre’ Thomas,” esp. 193.} Even when fifteenth-century scholars began to look back to the great thirteenth-century scholastic *summae* and commentaries on the *Sentences* as part of the movement of the *via antiqua*, John Duns Scotus Scotus, Giles of Rome, Albert the Great, and Bonaventure all had followers along with Thomas Aquinas.

But there were developments that pointed towards Thomas’ later prominence. His canonization in 1323 was a key moment, followed in 1325 by the University of Paris recognizing that the so-called Parisian Articles or the Condemnation of 1277 should no longer raise any questions about the orthodoxy of Thomas Aquinas.\footnote{Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas*, 324.} While thinkers in the Later Middle Ages wanted to separate the sanctity of Thomas from his teachings, the distinction was often blurry in practice.\footnote{See Marie-Dominique Chenu, “‘Maitre’ Thomas est-il une ‘authorité’?: Note sur deux lieux théologiques au xiv\textsuperscript{e} siècle,” *Revue thomiste* 30 (1925): 187-194, esp. 193, quoting Pierre d’Ailly: “Ecclesia sicut canonizando aliquem sanctum, non per hoc approbat omnia ejus facta, ita approbando ejus doctrinam, non per hoc approbat omnia ejus dicta vel scripta.”} That blurriness is reflected in the famous legend of Pope John XXII, the pope who oversaw Thomas’ elevation to sainthood, who supposedly said that Thomas wrought as many miracles as there are articles in the *Summa theologiae*.\footnote{See Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas*, 321. See also ibid, n. 23: “ad theologie…magisterium …assumptus…per multorum annorum curricula cathedram (regit) magistralem (…) profecto vacans studio, intendebat Deo…premittebat divina ut roboraretur in scola.” The ellipses are in Torrell’s text. Here he also makes the fascinating claim that canonizing theologians seems almost to have been a policy of the Avignon popes. One may wonder how this policy might relate to the creation of the faculties of theology in Italian universities.}

Aquinas’ teaching was institutionalized in the Dominican order rather soon after his death but eventually gained traction among secular theologians as well. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Aquinas’ thought was taught in the *scholae* and
studia of his order, a requirement rooted in devotion to their saintly confrere and the “safety” of his teaching. But in the middle decades of the fifteenth century—around the same time that Aquinas became patron for the artists at the University of Padua—Thomas was receiving substantial attention in institutions throughout Europe. In Cologne, colleges or bursa of secular professors and students devoted themselves to the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, locked in a long polemic with other lay and Dominican followers of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas’ teacher. Cologne Thomism spread to other universities in central Europe such as Heidelberg, Basel, and eventually Wittenberg. The major Polish university in Krakow also saw Thomas Aquinas becoming an academic authority for theologians and philosophers outside of the Dominican order. Even at Paris, John Versor (d. after 1482) and others were important secular supporters of the via

---


60 Although the work of these figures has been outlined by Władysław Tatarkiewicz, his works on the history of philosophy have not yet been translated into English. I should observe here that there have been some criticisms of his approach to the history of philosophy. But see André Goddu, *Copernicus and the Aristotelian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), esp. 15. See Goddu’s discussions of important Thomistic figures like John of Gogovia, Albert Piotrkow of Swolszowice, and others in the book.
antiqua in general and a kind of eclectic Thomism in particular. Louis XI famously prohibited nominalism in 1474 at the University of Paris and supported antiqui like Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Alexander of Hales, Duns Scotus, and Bonaventure, even if these measures did not last long. Thomas Aquinas thus had academic and political supporters outside of the Dominican order in the very period in which the arts students at Padua were asking for a professor of Thomist theology.

Padua’s choice of Thomas Aquinas in 1490 made the city the third in Italy to give a special place to a famous Italian theologian and one of the only canonized scholastic doctors. Since 1479, there was a chair of Thomistic theology at the University of Pavia (ad lecturam operum beati Thomae), almost always held by the regent-master of the studium generale in that city. Rome was also a major center of Italian interest in Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, scholars have somewhat misleadingly given almost exclusive

---


63 Geronimo Taiapietra, Summa divinarum ac naturalium difficilium quaestionum (Venice, 1506), proemium, identified Thomas Aquinas and Giles or Rome as ex regione nostra, though Geronimo also claimed the Swabian, Albert the Great, for Italy. Quoted in Mahoney, “Albert and the Studio Patavino,” 560. Nicoletto Vernia called Aquinas his conterraneus in his De subiecto naturalis philosophiae. Bonaventure was canonized in 1482.

64 Tavuzzi, Renaissance Inquisitors, 130.
attention to the Curia’s role in the revival of Thomism in Italy. After the crises of the Babylonian Captivity and especially the Great Schism, the papacy, as it emerged from the Council of Constance, apparently turned to the Angelic Doctor for safe teaching. The fact that the Dominicans, Thomas’ most devoted supporters, were the leading theorists of a hierocratic, papalist ecclesiological theory cannot be overlooked. Personal reasons are also relevant here. Nicholas V, whose baptismal name was Tommaso and who was elected to his high office on March 6, the day before Aquinas’ feast, arranged for an annual sermon to praise the Dominican theologian. The Roman celebration of St. Thomas Aquinas on March 7 was rivaled only by Padua for its consistency and long duration. Humanists actually tended to be the ones offering these orations, always in the Dominican church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. The most famous of these orations today is Lorenzo Valla’s “encomium,” where he compared Aquinas unfavorably to the Church Fathers and criticized him for mixing theology and philosophy, but of course Valla’s oration was the exception. The critical point, however, is that, though some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that the papal support was the only basis for

---

65 See Charles Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, pbk. ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 143. How Thomas was “tamed” between 1277 and this period is a story worthy of further exploration. Many scholars have noted this irony, but the particular ways in which it took place, in distinct intellectual milieux, has not been satisfactorily accounted for in the literature.


Thomism in the period, these Roman celebrations were not unique to the papal court. The prominent position of Thomistic theology at the major university centers of Pavia and Padua—governed by cities, Milan and Venice, often hostile to papal policies—shows that Italian interest in Thomas Aquinas was not merely based in curial maneuvering.

This background indicates that the choice to give a formal position to Thomistic theology in 1490 was, while not inevitable, certainly not out of keeping with other European developments. And the explicit association of the chair of theology with Aquinas had local supporters. The key players involved in the decision were the rector of the universitas of arts students and the bishop. The universitas artistarum had chosen Thomas Aquinas as their patron fifty years before. For decades, the professors and students of these subjects, along with other officials of the university, had been going to the Dominican church of S. Agostino and had listened to an annual oration in praise of the Thomas Aquinas. This affiliation seems to be at least one plausible basis for the interest in having a chair of theology based in the thought of Aquinas. The decree of 1490 made explicit reference to the insistent requests of the students of arts and mentioned no other party outside of the Senate as influencing its decision. The bishop of Padua, Pietro Barozzi, also played a role in the early development of Thomistic theology at Padua. His position in other contemporary controversies has often suggested, somewhat misleadingly, that the creation of this chair might have been part of a campaign against secular Aristotelianism. In the year before the creation of the chair of Thomistic theology,

---

69 Forlivesi, “A Man,” 54. See also Grendler, Universities, 391.
70 Brotto and Zonta, Facolta, 267: “spectabilis rector artistarum cum bona quanitate scolarium id instanter peteriet.”
Barozzi’s profound concern about the discussion of the mortality of the soul and the unicity of the intellect led him to ban public debate on this point in Padua on 14 May 1489.\footnote{Grendler, \textit{Universities}, 283-84; Monfasani, “Missing Ockhamists,” 250.} A few years later, in 1504, Barozzi observed that the lectures on the work of Duns Scotus were fundamental to the Christian character of the university. They were a “medicine” to correct and heal the errors of radical Aristotelianism. The errors that he mentioned were the eternity of the world, the unity of the intellect, and nothing coming from nothing. If the chair of Scotist theology was essential for distinguishing the University of Padua from any “school of pagans,” a professor lecturing on the theology of Thomas Aquinas would only further contribute to its Christian character. Indeed, Barozzi’s library was generously stocked with the works of Thomas Aquinas.\footnote{Monfasani, “Missing Ockhamists,” 266.} In Barozzi’s view, the creation of this chair was almost certainly tilting the scales in his struggle with radical Aristotelianism.

Conflict between ideological currents, however, was probably not the primary motivation for the introduction of Thomism at the University of Padua. The Venetian Senate continued to employ natural philosophers and logicians who offered interpretations of Aristotle without substantial concern about their implications for Christian doctrine. The decree merely said that theology would be a fitting subject for the students and would bring glory to the university as it had for the University of Paris. There is no evidence that the other professors perceived this development as a threat. For decades, the leading natural philosophers in the faculty of arts, while obviously critical of
Thomas at times, respected him a great deal. At Padua, Aquinas was called “The Expositor,” especially because of the clarity of his literal commentaries of Aristotle. Over the course of the next several decades, the theologians, metaphysicians, and natural philosophers had regular, seemingly fruitful debates in the “circles” of the arts professors held in the evenings. There is an abundance of evidence of collegial relationships, even strong friendships, between Dominican and lay professors, students, and colleagues.

Certain institutional factors might have played a role as well. Many of the subjects in the arts course had at least two professors who lectured on the same text at the same time in the day. They were called concurrents. Having a Thomist concurrent for Graziano, who, as the decree made clear, lectured according to the doctrine of Scotus, seems altogether sensible. Even though Securo’s tenure as metaphysician began in 1465 without an official association to Thomism, he was recognized as a Thomist by colleagues and students. Regular debates in the 1470s and 1480s between Securo and Antonio Trombetta, a leading Franciscan Scotist, might have shaped expectations that the Scotist theologian, Graziano, should have a Thomist interlocutor as well. And perhaps the death of Securo just a few months before in July 1489 had something to do with the timing of the establishment of a chair of Thomist theology. Securo commanded a relatively high salary of 200 florins when he died. In total, the mendicant professors in the arts course were then paid 360 florins. After his death and the replacement of Securo.

75 The professor of humanistic subjects often did not have a concurrent.
with Valentino da Camerino in the chair of metaphysics at only 100 florins, hiring Ludovico Valenza at 60 florins still ended up saving Venice 40 florins.

Thomistic theology at Padua nearly died on the vine because of how difficult it was to fill the post. The first Thomist theologian, Ludovico Valenza, only served as professor at Padua for one academic year, leaving for Rome some time before 15 July 1491 to become the new procurator-general of the order. On that date, Bernardo Granelli da Genova was called with the same salary “for the lecture of St. Thomas in theology,” but he refused the appointment. Vincenzo Merlino, who would eventually teach Thomist metaphysics at the university, was apparently recommended by Bernardo and, in the words of the Senate, “vigorously commended to our Dominion by the whole convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo,” but he also appears to have refused.  

76 Not until 1495 was someone found to fill this position, Girolamo d’Ippolito.  

77 On 17 September of that year, the Senate observed, “customarily, there have always been two excellent concurrent doctors—one of the Order of Minorites to lecture on the works of Scotus and the other of the Order of the Preachers on the works of St. Thomas.”  

78 This was in reference to the concurrent chairs of theology that had only existed for five years and with some significant interruptions. The statement about what was “customary” and “always” true of the university perhaps might have pertained to the future. The teaching of theology was no longer ad hoc, based on a willingness to pay a theologian with an international

76 A transcription of the Senate’s decree is found on Brotto-Zonta, Facoltà, 186, n. 2.  
77 It appears that metaphysics was more attractive for these Dominican friars at this stage.  
78 Brotto-Zonta, Facoltà, 182, n. 4: “…semper solent esse duo prestantes doctores concurrentes, alter scilicet ordinis Minorum pro legendis operibus Scoti, et alter ordinis Predicatorum pro operibus s. Thome.”
reputation, as in the case of Penketh.\textsuperscript{79} These were permanent chairs that the Venetian Senate would maintain as part of the normal offering of the University of Padua’s faculty of arts and medicine, and it did so for almost three hundred years.\textsuperscript{80}

\textit{The Friars and the Observant Movement}

Seventeen Dominican friars taught in the arts course at the University of Padua from the time of Francesco Securo until the accession of Tommaso Pellegrini to the chair of

\textsuperscript{79} But see ibid., n. 5, for information about the bishop’s response to the difficulties of maintaing theology as part of the arts course at this moment: “Rectoribus Padue. Litteris vestris nec non litteris istius v. d. Episcopi intellleximus lecturam Theologie, secundum doctrinam Scoti, cui deputatus est ven. frater Gracius, impresentiarum esse sine lectore: quoniam videtur ipsum Gracium pro nunc minime esse dispositum venire, gratumque nobis fuit, sicque nostro nomine laudabilitis prefatum v. d. Episcopum, quod nixus fuerit, quod ininititur persuadere prefato magistro Gratie, ut accedat ad lecturam suam, et propterea persuadebitis Dominationi sue ut pergat opus ceptum, apud prefatum magistrum Gracium, ob doctrinam suam, cuncto isti Gymnasio gratissimum, et desideratissimum, ut cunctis studentibus fiat satis. Sed ne interim lectura ipsa vacet cum studentium incommodo: facti cerciores in isto conventu S. Antonii reperiri quendam magistrum Mauritium anglicum legentem in ipso conventu, impresentiarum theologiam, de quo prefatus D. episcopus, et alii complures optimam reddunt testificationem, statuimus cum nostro Consilio rogatorum, sicque per presentes vobis mandamus, constituere debeatis ad lecturam predictam magistri Gracie, ipsum magistrum Mauritium, cum salario florenorum 60 in anno et racione anni, sicut reservavit, et reservata ex nunc intelligitur lectura predicta, cum salario, et conditionibus iam deliberatis per hoc Consilium, sicuti convenit honestati et existentie Gymnasii predicti.” Brotto-Zonta believe this document may provide some evidence that Grazia taught in the cathedral. See ibid., 183.

\textsuperscript{80} A few other important institutional details include payment and timing of lectures. The fact that these professors were mendicant friars made an impact on their pay. The rulers of the university knew that they could get well-trained professors on the cheap. But the increasing and decreasing amount paid to these professors still tells us something. For instance, at the end of our period, a Dominican professor of metaphysics, Tommaso Pellegrini, received a raise that brought his salary to 300 florins after more than twenty years of distinguished teaching at the University of Padua. The average salary for the Dominican professors of metaphysics was just under 110 florins between 1481 and 1582. The average salary for Thomist theology from its creation in 1490 until 1582 was around 75 florins. The highest salary ever paid to a Dominican theologian was 100 florins, while the highest paid to a Dominican metaphysician, as just noted, was 300. The metaphysicians, both Dominican and Franciscan, were generally paid better throughout the period, which suggests, I would think, the closer association of Aristotelian metaphysics to the arts curriculum. As for the timing of the lectures, little clear evidence exists until after our period. For the 1592-93 academic year, both theologians taught in the third hour of the morning (at the same time as the lecture of surgery and anatomy), while the metaphysicians taught in the second hour of the morning (at the same time as the extraordinary lectures of practical medicine and the lecture \textit{ad humanitatem Graecam et Latinam}). The lectures on Sacred Scripture, discussed below, were held during the second hour of the morning on feast days. This remains quite consistent over the next several decades. See AAUP MS. 651, 329r.
metaphysics in via S. Thomae in 1560. It is useful to begin with a table that gives the
basic information about who taught which subject as well as the years of their official
appointment at Padua:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metaphysics</th>
<th>Theology</th>
<th>Sacred Scripture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1465</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1470</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1475</td>
<td>Francesco Securo da Nardo (1465?-1489)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1480</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1485</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1490</td>
<td>Valentino da Camerino (1489-1494)</td>
<td>Ludovico Valenza (1490-1491)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1495</td>
<td>Cajetan (1494-1495)</td>
<td>Vacancy (1491-1495)</td>
<td>Girolamo d'Ippolito da Monopoli (1495-1502)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Vincenzo Merlino (1495-1502)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1505</td>
<td>Girolamo d'Ippolito da Monopoli (1502-1510)</td>
<td>Vacancy (1502-1503)</td>
<td>Gaspare da Baldassare da Perugia (1503-1509)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Name and Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1510</td>
<td>Vacancy (1510?-1518)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Vacancy (1509-1517)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1519</td>
<td>Gaspare di Baldassare da Perugia (1517-1531)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1520</td>
<td>Alberto Pasquali (1518-1531)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td>Gianfrancesco Beato (1531-1533)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530</td>
<td>Tommaso Ognibene (1531-1536)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1535</td>
<td>Alberto Pasquali (1533-1535)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1540</td>
<td>Gianfrancesco Beato (1535-1543)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1545</td>
<td>Bartolomeo Spina (1536-1545)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550</td>
<td>Adriano Valentico (1543-1551)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1555</td>
<td>Sisto Medici (1545-1553)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1560</td>
<td>Girolamo Vielmi (1551-1552)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1565</td>
<td>Gianmatteo Valdina (1552-1560)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1570</td>
<td>Girolamo Vielmi (spring 1554-1560)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1575</td>
<td>Tommaso Pellegrini (1560-1583)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1580</td>
<td>Gianambrogio Barbavara (1561-1573)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1585</td>
<td>Santo Cittino (1573-1582)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Girolamo Vielmi (1565-1570)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Girolamo Quaino (1571-1581)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All seventeen of the Dominican professors in our period were born in Italy.\textsuperscript{81} Four were from the Mezzogiorno,\textsuperscript{82} the other thirteen were from northern or central Italy.\textsuperscript{83}

Though the University of Padua generally turned to non-local professors, six of these thirteen northern Italian friars came from Venice itself.\textsuperscript{84} Where information is available, 

\textsuperscript{81} It was not until 1679 that a non-Italian, Nicolas Arnou, born near Verdun, took one of these chairs. For more information and bibliography, see J. Schmutz, “Arnou (Arnu), Nicolas,” in Scholasticon, URL = http://www.scholasticon.fr/ (30 May 2012). Recall that Maurice O’Fihely was one of the early Scotist theologians. See also Grendler, Universities, 370.


\textsuperscript{84} 1) Vincenzo Merlino (unknown): Gargan, Studio, 150; Contarini, Notizie, 150. 2) Gianfrancesco Beato (1475): see Biblioteca Bertoliana MS.1305, 94r (though pagination is somewhat inconsistent); Luigi Ferrari, Onomasticon: reportorio biobibliografico degli scrittori italiani dal 1501 al 1850 (Milan, 1947), 85; Vlb, MS. 1378, 14: “1538.Vicarius Provincialis Magister Joannes Franciscus de Beatis Venetus publicus Metaphysicus” (emphasis added); ASPd 261, 11v: “Fr. Joannes Franciscus de Beatis Venetis
it is clear that at least a majority of these professors were also well-born.\(^{85}\) While we know almost nothing about the early schooling of these future professors of theology and

---

\(^{85}\) One must be careful with the pre-modern historians of the Dominican order who have a tendency to associate prominent friars with elite families. I am rather hesitant about the following claim regarding Francesco Securo da Nardò in Altamura, *Bibliothecae*, 204: “nobilibus ortus parentibus, ex Baronibus de Sancto Baslio.” See also Anastasio, “Francesco”; Contarini, *Notizie*, 133. Better information exists for Ludovico Valenza, born to Giovanni, a civil lawyer, and his wife Agnese. Toti: *Oratio*, [1]: “Nascitur Ludovicus Valenta ex honestissimis parentibus patre Joanne iuris civilis peritissimo: matre Agneta.” See also Kaeppeli, *Scriptores*, III: 92-93. For Girolamo d'Ippolito, see Testone, “Girolamo,” 219: “da famiglia benestante.” For Cajetan, see Jared Wicks, ed. and trans., *Cajetan Responds: A Reader in Reformation Controversy* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1978), 3, which states that the De Vio family was lower nobility in the Kingdom of Naples. See also Tavuzzi, *Prierias*, 92. See Eckehart Stöve, “De Vio, Tommaso (Tommaso Gaetano, Caetano),” DBI 39 (1991): “quarto e ultimo figlio di Francesco e Isabella de Sieri.” For Gaspare da Perugia, see Tavuzzi, “Gaspare,” 597-98, which states that he was long erroneously associated with the Perugian noble family of De Mansueti and was actually from a family that controlled the milling of paper, printing, and the book trade in Perugia. His brother, Francesco, served as Prior of the Commune of Perugia in 1493, and his nephew was the most prominent printer in Perugia for the first few decades of the sixteenth century. But contemporary university documents do refer
metaphysics, one might infer from the character of their families that, before they entered the order, these northern Italians of good birth had a solid humanist formation.\textsuperscript{86} It was a requirement for novitiates of the Dominican order, albeit not always upheld, that they entered with knowledge of Latin. Consequently, their education in Latin generally took place outside of the Dominican order; they would have received substantially the same

to him as Gaspar de Mansuetis de Perusio. See, e.g., AAUP MS. 660, 155r. For Bartolomeo Spina, see Gabriella Zarri, “Spina, Bartolomeo della (1475/1479-1546),” in Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, vol. 4: Q-Z (Denver: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 1081. For Sisto Medici, see Agostini, Notizie, 372: “Si trapiantò in Venezia la civile famiglia de’ Medici dalla Città di Brescia prima del secolo XV. e siccome da buona fonte ebbe origine, così in ciascun tempo produsse uomini si per pietà, che per dottrina eccellenti…Fregiata pertanto di molti meriti codesta famiglia, mercè di una offerta generosissima satta al Dominio in tempo di guerra, si meritò nel MDCLIII. à IX. di Marzo, vedersi tra molte pur ella ascritta nel ruolo degli Ottimati, o sia dia patrizi nella persona di Ottaviano de’ Medici, che fu di Francesco, Segretario allora del Senato.” But Medici’s parents died when he was a baby: “rimasto privo, mentre era ancora pargoletto, cura si presero di bene allevarlo l’Avola, ed una sua Zia” (Contarini, Notizie, 40). For Adriano Valentico, there appears to have been some confusion about his parentage. See Contarini, Istrianas, 15. But his mother, Domenica di Giambattista di Oderzo, did own a villa called Valentigo that she left to her son’s convent, S. Domenico di Castello. His father was Giovanni Berezio, who was from the Dalmatian coast. See also Contarini, Notizie, 110-11. Girolamo Vielmi came from a Venetian noble family of second rank. See Maccarinelli, “Commentarius,” 12: “ex ingenua, & illustri familia,” though Contarini, Episcopis, 47, provides more reliable details: “Ex Vielmia gente, quae saeculo Christi VIII. ab Eraclea ad proximam Venetiarum urbem domicilium transtulerat, prodiit Hieronymus; at non ex ea, quae inter patricias familias olim recensita, iam saeculo XIV omnino defecerat, sed ex iis potius Vielmis, qui inter nobiles secundi ordinis, Cives Venetos nuncupatos, enumerabantur.” Gianmatteo Valdina and Gianambrogio Barbavara both came from eminent Italian noble families. See Contarini, Notizie, 82; Nicola Raponi, “Barbavara, Francesco,” DBI 6 (1964). Alberto Pasquali apparently came from a modest family according to Paschini, “Alberto,” 39. As far as I can tell at this point, nothing is known about the families of Valentino da Camerino, Vincenzo Merlino, Tommaso Ognibene, Gianfrancesco Beato, and Tommaso Pellegrini. Concerning Ognibene, see Contarini, Notizie, 30: “Non esprime il [Sisto] Medici il nome, e la condizione del di lui padre, ma lo celebra però per un uomo dotato di ammirevole ingegno, e di singola probità: onde congetturare si può fondatamente che molto pensiero ci si prendesse per l’avanzamento eziandio del figliuolo si ne’buoni studi, che ne’cristiani costumi.” See also BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 65, 178r.

\textsuperscript{86} Paul F. Grendler, Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), esp. chap. 2 on “Venetian Schools in the High Renaissance.” There is some evidence, not always reliable, about early education. For Securo, note with caution the claims of Altamura, Bibliothecae, 204: “a puero grammaticen doctus, nondum duodecimum annum attingens, appulit animum ad Rhetoricam. Hanc consequutas, caepti diversari cum musis. Cum ex ingeni, ex morum suavitate, ex animi rectitudine adolescentulus permagna promitteret stirpi, saeculo se subduxit, nostrum Ordinem amplexatus.” For Valenza, see Totis, Oratio, [1]: “Is cum splendido et eleganti ingenio natus esset a patre pecunia pro emendis puerilibus rebus accepta libellum sibi potius quam quicquam aliud comparari iussit: et prima statim litterarum elementa didicit. deinde immenso bonarum artium amore captus: sacro pontificum iuri ac cesareo operam egregie impendit.”
humanistic instruction as other Italians who came from the same social order and region. This training before entering the order probably contributed in some way to the differences between Thomists in Padua and those in Salamanca, Paris, or Cologne.

But the Dominican professors who taught at Padua also had a different formation within the order than many of the most famous Thomists of the period. Of these seventeen professors, between five and seven, depending on how one counts them, were native sons of Venice’s venerable Dominican convent, SS. Giovanni e Paolo.\(^\text{87}\) Although it is striking that not one native son of Padua’s S. Agostino ever rose to these professorships during this period, at least twelve of the seventeen professors studied or taught in the *studium generale* in that convent.\(^\text{88}\) This is noteworthy because SS. Giovanni e Paolo and S. Agostino were two of the leading unreformed convents in northern Italy. There has been almost no research on the different approaches to Thomism inside and outside of the Observant reform of the order, but the unreformed Conventuals appear to have been more open to other intellectual currents in the university

---

\(^\text{87}\) All of the Venetians were *filii* of SS. Giovanni e Paolo except for Adriano Valentico, who was a *filius* of S. Dominico di Castello. Girolamo Vielmi apparently joined the order with the Greek Province and underwent his initial formation at Verona’s Sant’Anastasia, but the council of SS. Giovanni e Paolo elected him as a *filius* in August 1545 when Vielmi was in his mid-twenties. The act was confirmed on 2 September by the vicar-general of the vicariate of St. Dominic, Giulio Soncinas, who wrote, “he has shown forth with such incredible doctrine, with such gravity of morals, and with such conspicuous faith that the eyes of all are turned to him. Furthermore, he has been gifted with such incomparable modesty and probity that nothing can be added to his goodness.” See Maccarinelli, “Commentarius,” 14-15. See also Contarini, *De episcopis*, 49-50. The seventh would be Girolamo d’Ippolito, who had his filiation transferred to SS. Giovanni e Paolo at the end of 1512. See MOPH IX: 116: “Approbamus translationem fratris Hieronymi de Monopoli magistri et diffinitoris praesentis capituli de conventu Monopoli sanctae Mariae provinciae regni Siciliae ad conventum sanctorum Ioannis et Pauli de Venetiis provinciae sancti Dominici.” See also AGOP IV, reg. 28, 246r (24 January 1545).

\(^\text{88}\) One might argue that this was rooted in the University of Padua’s general tendency towards non-local professors, but the significant number of Venetian Dominicans teaching at the university show that this is not a satisfactory explanation. There were certainly some Franciscan professors who were natives of S. Antonio—most famously, Antonio Trombetta.
community. Indeed, Paduan Thomism was one of the few centers of Dominican intellectual activity in this period untouched by the Observant movement.

Padua provides an important counter-example to the general tendency of scholars to associate the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century revival of Thomism with the Observant movement.  

By the middle of the sixteenth century, the University of Padua was arguably the most important intellectual center for unreformed Dominicans in Italy and perhaps in Europe. Bologna was to be the only studium generale in one of the most influential reformed congregations, the Congregation of Lombardy. The studia generalia of Ferrara and Pavia were thus suppressed when they joined the Congregation.  

Pisa’s great convent was part of the Tuscan-Roman Congregation, with its complicated connection to Savonarola’s more radical reform movement. The studium generale of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome remained unreformed for a good part of the sixteenth century and became a major center of Dominican theological education in Rome.  

Another Italian studium that might rival Padua as an unreformed studium connected to a major university center was the studium in Naples’ S. Domenico, which did not accept the observance until later in the century.  

The Dominican professors at Cologne, Paris, and Salamanca were all generally drawn from Observant congregations

---

89 William A. Hinnebusch, *The Dominicans: A Short History* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1975), chap. 6, though it should be pointed out that he was responding to the negative views towards Observant intellectual achievements in the work of Pierre Mandonnet and others.  

90 Tavuzzi, *Renaissance Inquisitors*, 41, n. 136: “The Congregation of Lombardy had the explicit policy of avoiding the multiplication of masters of theology in its ranks….When it annexed and reformed a convent that had been the site of a studium generale (such as Ferrara in 1519 and Pavia in 1530) it immediately suppressed the studium.” See also Michael Tavuzzi, “Giovanni Rafanelli da Ferrara OP (†1515): Inquisitor of Ferrara and Master of the Sacred Palace,” AFP 67 (1997): 128.  


or were at least part of communities substantially in keeping with the Dominican constitutions, and the *studia generalia* in Oxford, Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Leipzig ceased to exist because of the Reformation. The Dominicans at the University of Padua, if not unique, were somewhat unusual in the middle of this turbulent century.

Some background on the Observant movement is crucial for understanding Dominican intellectual life in this period. Reform in the Order of the Preachers was spearheaded by Raymond of Capua (c. 1330-1399), Catherine of Siena’s confessor, at the end of the fourteenth century, in the midst of the Great Western Schism. He found an effective ally in Giovanni Dominici, and the movement advanced substantially under the generalate of Barthélemy Texier. The Observants found many ecclesiastical and civic authorities to support their reforming efforts, though unreformed convents remained very strong in Italy for decades. It is customary, despite the fact that this terminology,

---


strictly speaking, arose from the even more complex Franciscan Observant movements, to refer to unreformed Dominicans as Conventuals. The basic goal of the Observants was to restore “primitive” discipline, a re-formation of the order as Dominic had established it. What this entailed was greater attention to fasts, locking the gates at the appropriate time, greater control on who was allowed into the priory, abstinence in the eating of meat, uniformity in the assignation of cells and the choice of dress, and especially no individual property. Michael Tavuzzi explains it quite well:

The difference between the observant and the conventuals was first expressed by Raymond of Capua rather generally in terms of the former’s resolution to fulfill the letter of the Dominican constitutions. The fundamental issue was, however, different interpretations of the practical import of the vow of poverty. The conventuals accepted a certain measure of individual ownership of such goods as books and clothing and, especially, the custom of friars being allowed to have a personal fund (peculium), of which the order retained radical ownership, for approved, necessary expenditures.  

97

Many of the “abuses” arose from the development of the Dominican education system.  

Masters before the Observant movement and in conventual priories were given special licenses to have some degree of individual control over certain goods, such as books and a portion of the salary from any public teaching. Their garments carried indications of their magisterial status. They were permitted to eat meat in the privacy of their quarters,

97 Tavuzzi, Prierias, 4.
98 “Abuses” is in quotation marks not only because there were disagreements over the proper interpretation of the Dominican constitutions and thus what constituted an abuse. I am hoping to bring attention to the strange habit of modern historians to become invested in the movements of reform, often accepting the polemical descriptions of Conventuals as lax and without apostolic fervor. This was not the case. Tavuzzi also warns historians that the biased attitude towards the Observants, that is, not recognizing that “the difference between the observant, ‘regular life’ friars and the conventual, ‘common life’ friars was not at all a matter of different degrees of apostolic fervor and efficacy or of intellectual dedication and prowess,” results from the “ideological preoccupations of writers of Dominican history during the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. They sought to support and justify the character of the order during the revival of the Dominicans after the French Revolution.” See Silvestro, 3-4.
served to them by a personal servant (socius) from among the common friars. It is precisely the difficulties of running a studium generale with the imposition of strict discipline that provided the friars of S. Agostino their excuse to return to conventuality just decades after being reformed.99

Despite their later leadership in resisting the Observant movement, the two great houses in the Veneto, SS. Giovanni e Paolo and S. Agostino, were actually reformed rather early in the movement’s history. Dominici himself reformed SS. Giovanni e Paolo. But the reforms here did not last long. The Paduan friars actually attained the support of one of the greatest canon lawyers in the Middle Ages and a future cardinal, Francesco Zabarella. He wrote an important defense of conventuality, which made reference to the burdens of combining strict observance and the convent’s educational programme.100

The Observant houses in Italy gathered together rather quickly, even while Raymond of Capua still lived, and formed the Congregation of Lombardy, which ended up becoming a kind of super-province, linking houses from outside the Provinces of St. Dominic (the old Province of Lower Lombardy that included SS. Giovanni e Paolo and S. Agostino) and St. Peter Martyr (the old Province of Upper Lombardy). Some priories in the Roman Province joined the Congregation, including the venerable Santa Sabina in Rome. Florence’s famous San Marco was founded as an Observant house within the Congregation. The center of this Observant congregation was Bologna, and the

---

99 See Hinnebusch, *Short History*, chap. 6: “[T]he Observant priory of Erfurt, in the province of Saxony, obtained the same privilege [of eating meat once a day three times a week]. As a house of studies it found the expense of providing…fish…and other abstinence-foods for a student body of about eighty friars too much for its budget. It faced the alternative of closing the school of going into debt.”

congregation was controlled by a vicar-general, who answered only to the master-general of the order. This vicar was extremely powerful and often became master-general at some point during his life. With the approval of Pope Pius II, the congregation became a distinct juridical entity in 1459. The Congregation of Lombardy permitted only one studium generale, located at S. Domenico in Bologna. Whenever a convent with a studium generale became part of the Congregation, the studium was almost always suppressed, explaining some of the seemingly mysterious, sudden shifts in Dominican influence at certain universities.

In 1531 the Congregation of Lombardy was elevated by Clement VII to a true province: the Provincia Utriusque Lombardiae Regularis Vitae. The Provinces of St. Peter Martyr and St. Dominic, the latter often being led by the friars in Venice and Padua, were downgraded to mere vicariates who were supposed to report to the provincial of the now quite large Lombard province. This remained the state of affairs until 1580—at

---

101 Tavuzzi, Priérias, 3. The office of vicar general did exist before 1459. See Bailey, “Religious Poverty,” 473, n. 50: “The office of vicar was a special position created by the master general of the order and answerable directly to him. Houses under the supervision of a vicar were effectively removed from the control of the provincial. The office thus roused much opposition. In 1391 the chapter general had sought to eliminate all observant vicars, but Raymond of Capua had resisted.”

102 In BOP IV: 488-89, on 2 September 1531, Clement VII said, “olim nonnullae Domus Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum, tam S. Dominici, quam S. Petri Partyris Provincialum, secundum morem eiusdem Ordinis ab obedientia suorum Priorum Provincialium, qui de laxiori vita erant, reformationis causa, et ut in eis regularia observantur instituta, Apostolica auctoritate, subtractae fuerunt, et ex eo quod sub capite primum deformato cetera membra reformari non poterant, et multitudo irremotorum, qui tunc plurimi erant, religiosum propositum impedire, et multis modis perturbare valuisset, una Congregatio Lombardiae nuncupata instituta extitit, ac postmodum, auxiliante Domino, reformatio in dictis Provinciis multorum ipsius Ordinis patrum laboribus plurimis adeo crevit, ut vice versa reformati Fratres, non reformatos, non virtute solum, sed numero etiam superent, ac in dictis Provinciis majoris, et principaliiores Domos obtineant, et ad ceteras reformatias sufficientes existant....[Quod Capitula Generalia desiderare Nobis reformatione universi ipsius Ordinis sincere...ac quod dicta Congregatio Lombardiae adeo tam in D. Dominici, et S. Petry Martyris, quam Romana, Regni Siciliae, et terrae Peregrinationis Provinciis, secundum morem eiusdem Ordinis adeo dilatata est, quod per unum caput regi non solum aliae non reformatae Domus, ut expediens esset, aut reformari nequeunt, verum etiam vix, et commode, tam a se
the very end of our period—when the Province of St. Dominic was restored as the

*Provincia Sancti Dominici Venetiarum*, though it fell significantly in its rank within the

order.\(^{103}\)

The Dominican house with the most native sons who taught in Padua’s arts course in this period, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, was sometimes quite aggressive in its hostility to the Observant movement. Beginning in the fifteenth century, several decades after this convent’s rejection of Dominici’s reform, the convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo was singled out for its laxity by the Observants. Consider the description of the convent by a Dominican pilgrim of Ulm from the 1480s:

> Here there are always over 100 friars and many doctors. But the rule is poorly observed there and the place has not yet been reformed, and the friars live in some worldly pomp and splendor, and on festival days they sing Mass and Vespers and Compline with figured music and worldly ceremonial. Hence a great crowd of young men and women flock to these services, not to hear the divine office, but rather to listen to the music and the singing….Several Doges of Venice are buried in the Church. I have never seen more opulent tombs or more ostentatious monuments; even those of the Popes in Rome cannot equal the tombs of the Doges of Venice….The images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the apostles and martyrs and other saints whom everybody loves are placed in the middle distantes Domus, etiam reformatae visitari, et in observantia conservari possint, ac propter a nonnulli etiam dictae Congregationis patres, et Religiosi disiderent, ut vita regularis in omnibus Domibus Ordinis hujusmodi non solum converetur, sed per novam etiam reformationem, augeatur….et ex dicta Congregacione S. Dominici, et S. Petri Martyris Provincias praeclarae paulatim reformare….Congregationem Lombardiae praeclaram, cum omnibus exemptionibus…penitus, et omnino supprimimus, et exiguimur, ac Angelum de Faventia, moderum dictae suppressionis Congregationis Vicarium Generalem, necnon Gabrielem Patavinum S. Dominici, amoto provinciali Provinciae, Vicarium, a Vicariatus, ac Johannem Baptistam de Axereto S. Petri Martyris Provinciae Priorem Provincialem a Provincialatus, officii auctoritate, et tenore praedictis absolvimus, necnon Angelum olim suppressionis Congregationis vicarium S. Dominici.” The pope claimed that the principal houses were reformed, but a number of the most venerable houses, such as SS. Giovanni e Paolo, S. Eustorgio, S. Agostino, and others were not part of the Congregation. See also BOP IV: 493-94, for Clement’s bull of 23 September 1531. See Tavuzzi, *Prierias*, 3.

103 See, e.g., MOPH IX: 317. The list begins with the Provinces of Spain, Toulouse, France, and Both Lombardies. The vicariates of St. Dominic, St. Peter Martyr, and Rome are at the very bottom. See MOPH X: 216: “In provincia sancti Dominici noviter erecta approbamus…”
of the tombs, as the most important figures; but around the edge are the images of pagans, of Saturn, Janus, Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mars, and Hercules, with emblems of their fables….There are naked gladiators with swords and spears in their hands and shields about their necks, but without cuirass or breastplate or helmet, and these really are idols. There are naked boys with wings on…and many such symbols of paganism are inserted among those of our redemption. Simple people think these are images of saints, and they honour Hercules, thinking him Samson, and Venus, mistaking her for the Magdalen, and so forth.\(^{104}\)

Similar descriptions arose from Marino Sanudo’s famous diary. For instance, on 28 February 1522 he wrote that there was little worth remarking upon except a lottery worth 6,000 ducats. The drawing was to happen on the following Sunday in the monastery of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.\(^{105}\) Furthermore, Gianpietro Carafa, the future Pope Paul IV, a major exemplar of the scholarly category of *intransigenti* and the Counter-Reformation itself, expressed his unhappiness with the behavior of these friars while living in Venice.\(^{106}\) One episode from 1534 particularly incensed him: he heard about two Dominicans dressed up for Carnevale in the company of four women.\(^{107}\)

Around 1530, things were bad, if one were to take the perspective of strict Dominican reformers and Roman authorities. These Dominicans certainly do not conform to any standard image of inquisitorial Dominican friars of the sixteenth century.

The masters-general made a number of major efforts to reform SS. Giovanni e Paolo in

\(^{104}\) *Venice: A Documentary History*, 198-99.

\(^{105}\) Labalme and Sanguineti, eds., *Cità Excelentissima*, 350. It should be noted that a preacher in SS. Giovanni e Paolo and Sanudo himself opposed these lotteries, but the editors argue in ibid., n. 168, that the preacher was “undoubtedly a visiting preacher who spoke out against the practice in his host church.”


the first half of the sixteenth century. Vincenzo Bandello was quite aggressive in his 1502 visitation. Bandello appointed Sylvester Prierias, a prominent friar in the Observant Congregation of Lombardy, as SS. Giovanni e Paolo’s regent on 17 May 1502. \(^{108}\) Exactly one year and one day after this appointment, Bandello simply incorporated SS. Giovanni e Paolo into the Congregation of Lombardy, giving the vicar-general of the Congregation the authority to remove the prior and any other officials and to appoint those whom he chose. \(^{109}\) This effort on the part of the reformed congregation never came to fruition.

Cajetan visited as master-general in 1513. Sanudo noted that the friars of SS. Giovanni e Paolo were well-aware of papal support of their Observant confreres in Venice’s S. Domenico di Castello and elsewhere. \(^{110}\) But SS. Giovanni e Paolo was one of the leading Conventual houses in northern Italy. Its conversion to the regular life would be quite the coup for the Observants. In SS. Giovanni e Paolo’s Liber consiliorum, however, it was recorded that “the most reverend general should be made certain of the impossibility of this sort of reform.” Letters were written to the Senate and to the Venetian ambassador to the Holy See. \(^{111}\) The following was the record of a meeting of the conventual council on 13 November 1518:

> With the council gathered in the room of the reverend prior provincial, [he] proposed to the reverend masters and fathers of the convent the final

\(^{108}\) AGOP IV, reg. 15, 44v: “Magister Silvester de Prierio assignatur in regentem in conventum S. Iohannis et Pauli de Venetiis usque ad capitulum generale et praeceptitur sibi ut intra decem dies iter arripiat, etc. 17 Maii [1502].” See also Tavuzzi, Priérias, 151, n. 96.


\(^{110}\) See Aikema, “Lorenzo Lotto,” 128.

\(^{111}\) Alce, “Riforma,” 341.
Almost a year later (2 September 1519), some willingness to consider the possibility emerged because of how much pressure was being exerted by the leaders of the order. The prior proposed that the convent be reformed somehow (aliqua liter) in order to obey the will of the most reverend father general, and all decided to think about what to do about “reformation” until a future meeting of the council, but this discussion appears never to have happened. In the same year that the Congregation of Lombardy was made a true province and that the old provinces of St. Dominic and St. Peter Martyr were reduced to vicariates (1531), the authorities from Rome ramped up their efforts. They sent Gianfrancesco Colonna da Venezia and Leonardo da Udine on 27 January 1531; they had been ordered to impose the Observant rule on the convent. Delegations of friars pleaded their case before the Doge, asking for the support of Venice. According to Sanudo, the friars said that they would become Lutherans rather than accept the reform! The Venetian authorities did not take kindly to the threat, but SS. Giovanni e Paolo appears to have avoided any imposition of reform at that time.

---

112 Quoted in ibid. 342.
113 “Veneno li frati di San Zane Polo, con una suplichation, dicendo il suo provintial maestro Damian fo dismesso di l’officio haveva, et noveter è venuto uno breve che siano incorporati con la congregation di Lombardia et fatti observant, cosa che per niente voleno soportar, più presto si fariano lutherani, dicendo volersi apellar in Rotha, pregando la Signoria nostra scrivesse al suo orator in Corte in sua recomandatione a darli favor, come fu fato altre volte, dil 1505. Et il Serenissimo il rebuffò, dicendo dipenasse quelle parole di devintar lutherani, et che facesseno un’altra suplichation, et rechiedesno poi.” Quoted in Aikema, “Lorenzo Lotto,” 128.
114 It should be noted here that historians have suggested that S. Agostino in Padua did undertake reform in this very year, almost certainly under the same sort of pressures. See Gargan, Studio, 6. See also Casella
Besides laxity and this fierce defense of the common life, the ancient Dominican convent in Venice also became a meeting-place for heterodox individuals in Venice.¹¹⁵ A number of individuals around 1530, ranging from a friar and a notary to an egg-vendor and a weaver, gathered in SS. Giovanni e Paolo around a carpenter, Antonio, later arrested and tried for Lutheranism. Interestingly enough, they said in their testimonies that they especially enjoyed the Dominican sermons, which were focused on the teachings of Paul. Antonio and his motley band denied purgatory, auricular confession, the rosary, and the invocation of saints.¹¹⁶ And Antonio was not the only one to notice the preaching at SS. Giovanni e Paolo. The prior of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Damiano Loro, raised the suspicions of the papal nuncio, Girolamo Aleandro. Aleandro wrote in 1534 that “he preaches bad things.”¹¹⁷ This was troubling enough—even worse was the fact that he did so in the vernacular. Incidentally, Loro was then serving as provincial prior just before the fierce resistance to the imposition of the Observance in 1531.¹¹⁸ One can only imagine that he confirmed some of Aleandro’s suspicions when in 1533 he edited Paul’s epistles for the printing house of the de Sabio family in Venice: Epistolae divi

¹¹⁵ Other orders had similar difficulties. See, e.g., Ottavia Niccoli’s discussion of the Augustinian Andrea Baura da Ferrara who preached in Venice on Christmas Day 1520, who apparently spoke ill of the pope and the Roman curia and was said to be a follower of Martin Luther. See Prophecy and Peope in Renaissance Italy, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 89-91.


¹¹⁸ Aikema, “Lorenzo Lotto,” 128. See AGOP IV, reg. 21, 59r (29 August 1531), which shows that Damiano was absolved from the provincialiate and replaced by Gabriele da Padova.
Pauli apostoli cum triplex editione ad veritatem Graecam. The three translations were those of Jerome, Erasmus, and Lefevre d’Etaples, though he did not name them.\textsuperscript{119} He was clearly not liked by the papal legate, Girolamo Aleandro, an inveterate enemy of Lutheranism since his travels to Germany in the early 1520s, who said of Loro: “For a meal and a penny, that Epicurean pig would not care about ruining the faith.”\textsuperscript{120} One should probably not make too much of the specifics of this attack. Damiano Loro, though, was someone despised by guardians of orthodoxy in the 1530s, and he was a friar


\textsuperscript{120} Quoted in Aikema, “Lorenzo Lotto,” 128. Loro strikes an interesting figure. His life is another piece of evidence for the inadequacy of the intransigenti vs. spirituali model of Italian religious life. SS. Giovanni e Paolo emphasized the importance of the “traditionalist” dynamic in sixteenth-century Italian religious life. Here I do not mean those looking to tradition, which could describe both reformist sides, but those who opposed the kinds of institutional reforms espoused by those like Carafa and those like Gasparo Contarini. In the case of Loro, we are apparently dealing with a Dominican who wanted to keep things institutionally the way that they were, protecting the privileges and practices that made SS. Giovanni e Paolo an exemplum malum for Dominican and other ecclesiastical reformers. At the same time, Loro was apparently learned in Greek, preached (quite eloquently) in the vernacular in a mode attractive to heterodox Venetians across the social order, and published Erasmus and d’Etaples. Unlike Girolamo Seripando or Bernardino Ochino, commitment to humanistic approaches to Scripture cannot be understood in any way as a natural trajectory of Observantism. And he edited one of Thomas Aquinas’ great summae. Further study of Loro may be rewarding. See SOP, I, 86, which points to his Greek learning and eloquence. See also the references to him in the parts of SS. Giovanni e Paolo’s Liber consiliorum edited by P. Molmenti, “Alcuni documenti concernenti l’autore della Hyperrotomachia Poliphili,” Archivio storico italiano 38 (1906): 313, , where Loro was called “the reverend father fra Damiano Loro da Venezia, doctor of theology and most worthy prior of the convent also for his merits.” See ibid., 313 where he was unanimously appointed preacher because of the refusal of Gioacchino da Pavia. See also ibid., where the document states that Loro was prior of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in 1524. A little over a decade before, he had received his doctorate in theology from the University of Ferrara (27 June 1513), which magisterium was approved by his order in 1515 (Naples). See Bolani, Historia almi Ferrariae gymnasi, II: 479; MOPH IX: 144. See also MOPH IX: 216, where he was present in 1530 (Rome) as prior provincial of Saint Dominic. Scholars have said that he was prior provincial until after 1531, but in 1531 there is evidence that Gabriele da Padova was provincial prior. He was the one demoted to vicar. See BOP IV: 489. See also AGOP IV, reg. 21, 59r.
elected to major positions by Conventual Dominicans in the Veneto. Priors and prior provincials were elected by their confreres. Those who knew him well in his local convent and the electors in the province believed him worthy of these important offices in the order. The fact that Dominicans in this province thought a friar like Loro was worthy of high office—a man with remarkable learning in Greek, with sympathies for Northern Christian humanism, and with qualities somewhat attractive to heterodox Venetians—might offer suggestions about the environment of unreformed friars in the region, the same milieu that shaped a good number of the professors of theology and metaphysics at the University of Padua. At the very least, Dominicans in this region certainly should not be assigned too readily to the intransigenti-side of sixteenth-century Italian religious history. Powerful Dominican friars in the Veneto continued to arouse the suspicions of Counter-Reformation authorities into the next century when many of them gave substantial support to Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella.

121 A final piece of evidence for the hints of heterodoxy at SS. Giovanni e Paolo is the fact that Lorenzo Lotto, an artist whose complex religious attitudes are the subject of significant scholarly debate, wanted to be buried in SS. Giovanni e Paolo in a Dominican habit. Lotto had close relations with them during the times in which he worked in Venice. See Firpo, “Lorenzo Lotto,” esp. 24; Aikema, “Lorenzo Lotto.” See also Raymond B. Waddington, “Aretino, Titian, and ‘La Humanità di Christo,’” in Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy, eds. Abigail Brundin and Matthew Treherne (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 184, as well as the scholarship cited there. He was closely associated with one of the Dominican professors, Sisto Medici. Some scholars associate him with a shift away from Loro and towards reform, but the evidence is rather sparse. See Angelo Mazza, “La pala dell’Elemosina di Sant’Antonino nel dibattito cinquecentesco sul pauperismo,” in Lorenzo Lotto: atti del convegno internazionale di studi per il V centenario della nascita, ed. P. Zampetti and V. Sgarbi (Treviso, 1980), 354.

122 The odd position of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in the ecclesiastical life of the Veneto did not end with the Counter-Reformation. Consider Ingrid D Roland’s thought-provoking statement in Giordano Bruno: Philosopher Heretic (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 233. Bruno’s comfort with his confreres at SS. Giovanni e Paolo extended also to those at S. Agostino. In his inquisitorial deposition, the famed heretic wrote, “I went to Padua, where I found some Dominican fathers I knew, and they convinced me to resume my habit, although I hadn’t wanted to return to religious life, but it seemed to them that it was better to travel with the habit than without it, and with this thought I went to Bergamo.” Quoted in ibid., 96.
Not all Conventual Dominicans in the Veneto were like Damiano Loro, but the professors at Padua formed in this culture were generally friendly with major exponents of secular Aristotelianism as well as humanism. This argument is confirmed by the intellectual activities of one of the few Observants to teach at the University of Padua in this period, Bartolomeo Spina. Spina was one of only three friars of the seventeen professors who had a strong connection to the Observant movement. In many ways, he seems to fit well the standard image of sixteenth-century Dominican friars. He fiercely opposed Pietro Pomponazzi’s view of the mortality of the soul in the 1510s. Indeed, he freely associated Pomponazzi’s dangerous view with that of his prominent confrere, Tommaso de Vio, “Cajetan,” who studied and taught in Padua in the 1490s. For this

---

123 One of the two others was Gaspare da Perugia (S. Marco, profession on 7 September 1486). He did transfiliate to S. Domenico in Perugia on 21 May 1499 but remained associated with S. Marco and the Tuscan-Roman Congregation: Tavuzzi, “Gaspare,” 598, 603-04. Bartolomeo Spina (Santa Caterina in Observant Tuscan-Roman Congregation, profession on 4 February 1494): F. Bonaini, “Excerpta annalium conventus Sanctae Catharinæ de Pisis ordinis praedicatorum,” Archivio storico italiano, s. 1, t. 6, p. 2 (Florence, 1845): 616-17. Note that the Dominican historian, Emilio Panella, has warned that this edition must be used with caution. See http://www.e-theca.net/emiliopanella/pisa/8500.htm (accessed 4 June 2012). For his transfer to the Congregation of Lombardy, see Bonaini, “Exerpta,” 617, but, more importantly, Registrum litterarum Fr. Thomae de Vio Caietani O.P. Magistri Ordinis 1508-1513, ed. A. De Meyer (Rome, 1935), 115, n. 98, as well as Tavuzzi, Prierias, 101. He was eventually made a filius of Venice’s S. Domenico di Castello 1 January 1515. See Tavuzzi, Prierias, 72. The other figure was Adriano Valentico (S. Domenico di Castello, reception on 14 May 1523, profession on 15 May 1524): Giovanni D. Armano, Monumenta selecta conventus Sancti Dominici Venetiarum (Venice, 1729), 97, pace Contarini, Notizie, 111, who gives the date as 1533, corrected in De episcopis, 15. A few other friars were more loosely connected to major reform efforts such as Valentino da Camerino, who was vicar of three reformed convents in the Roman Province. See Tavuzzi, “Valentino,” 293-94. A number have been erroneously connected to the reform, a tendency of some older scholarship on the Dominican order. Cajetan and Tommaso Pellegrini are just two examples. See Tavuzzi, “Valentino,” 295, as well as Prierias, 5, and Contarini’s refutation of the widespread claim regarding on Pellegrini on Notizie, 164. But on Cajetan, see Spina’s statements in “Les premières biographies,” 451. Ludovico Valenza initially entered the order at the great Observant convent of S. Domenico in Bologna, but he, apparently because of poor health, asked for and did receive permission from the pope to transfiliate to the unreformed convent of S. Domenico in Ferrara: ASV, Fondo Domenicani 429. See also Tavuzzi, Renaissance Inquisitors, 100.
action, he was reprimanded by his superiors in the Congregation of Lombardy.\textsuperscript{124} Thus, Spina’s severity might not have been typical even for the Observants. During this same period, he was inquisitorial vicar of Modena.\textsuperscript{125} He played a literary role in spreading the views of Heinrich Kramer’s *Malleus maleficarum* in Italy with his *Quaestio de strigibus*, published in 1523.\textsuperscript{126} After teaching at the University of Padua for about ten years, Bartolomeo Spina left to become Master of the Sacred Palace in the summer of 1545.\textsuperscript{127} As the pope’s official theologian, he played a rather important role in the first phase of the Council of Trent. Spina commented, rather critically, on a number of the drafts of the important decree on justification. At the very end of his life, he sought to condemn Copernicus’ *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, dedicated to Pope Paul III, but never achieved his goal because of his death around January 1547.\textsuperscript{128} This sort of *curriculum vitae* stands in marked contrast to most of the Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics who taught at the University of Padua. The struggle of Conventuals and Observants over the proper shape of religious life seems to have spilled over into their attitude towards the intellectual culture of their day.

\textsuperscript{125} Tavuzzi, *Renaissance Inquisitors*, 28.
\textsuperscript{126} Some discussion of his views may be found in Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).
\textsuperscript{128} Despite the problem with the date of Spina’s arrival in Rome, Westman, *Copernican Question*, 197, 538, n. 171, provides a useful introduction to the debate about this event in the literature.
Conclusion

The shared life of many of the Conventual Dominicans who studied and taught at Padua went some way towards the emergence of a “school” of Paduan Thomism. Over the course of this period, there were frequent occasions where a number of current and future professors could be found together in S. Agostino’s studium generale. And there is evidence that strong friendships developed. Vincenzo Merlino and Girolamo d’Ippolito were officers in S. Agostino’s studium while Francesco da Nardò was regent; Cajetan was bachelor of the Sentences when Valentino da Camerino was regent. And Valentino da Camerino is the only teacher linked by contemporaries to Cajetan’s major achievements.129 Alberto Pasquali remembered d’Ippolito fondly from the time when he was a student in the studium and d’Ippolito was public professor.130 The clearest evidence of such relationships exists for the last several professors, most of whom were linked to SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Sisto Medici offered the eulogy for Tomasso Ognibene, his predecessor in the chair of theology and fellow filius of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Medici fondly remembered the good fortune of having Gianfrancesco Beato and Tommaso Pellegrini in Tuscany—they were both teaching at the University of Pisa—while he was regent at Santa Maria Novella in 1544-45. On a number of occasions, Beato and Pellegrini were associated with one another as teacher and student by leading figures in Florence. The closest connection was probably that which existed between Girolamo

---

Vielmi and Gianambrogio Barbavara and their teacher, Medici. The latter called Vielmi and Barbavara his “two sons.”

The latter figures—Medici, Beato, Vielmi, Barbavara, and Pellegrini—were all Renaissance Thomists. They were all well-respected by major humanists and natural philosophers in the Veneto. These five professors—all of whom were strongly associated with SS. Giovanni e Paolo—were heavily influenced by humanism and secular Aristotelianism. This influence shaped their contributions to the intellectual milieu of the University of Padua and beyond. Girolamo Vielmi in particular brought this formation to bear in one of the few substantial critiques of humanism set forth by an Italian theologian, and it was—perhaps unsurprisingly—one of the most subtle assessments of the humanist movement written in the period. The Paduan Thomists learned innovative approaches to Aristotle from the humanists, the secular Aristotelians, and others, which had a substantial impact even on their theological writings. For instance, one does not often find commentaries on Genesis based upon conversations with fishermen and peasants, wide reading in ancient, medieval, and contemporary natural histories, consultations with major botanists, and personal scientific observations. But that is what finds in the 1570 lectures of the Venetian friar, Girolamo Vielmi, who was a filius of SS. Giovanni e Paolo and a student in the convent of S. Agostino and in the arts courses at the University of

Padua. Vielmi exemplifies the Paduan Thomism rooted in the humanistic education of Italian young people, Dominican conventuality, and the intellectual culture of Venice’s university.

Thomism became a part of Padua’s arts course almost accidentally. There is basically no evidence that its incorporation was part of any ideological programme of the Venetian Senate, the university authorities, the Dominican order, or anyone for that matter. Its introduction probably had more to do with the fact that the students wanted metaphysics and theology, and Dominican friars like Francesco Securo were competent and affordable. But the fact that these friars were Dominicans meant that they were also Thomists. By the 1490s, the longstanding discussions between Dominican Thomists and Franciscan Scotists, the interest of the students in the saintly patron of their universitas, and other institutional developments made the teaching of Thomas Aquinas on metaphysics and theology an official part of the curriculum. The University of Padua became one of a very few institutions other than the Dominican order to give such prominence to the Angelic Doctor. This provided an institutional context for the development of Paduan Thomism, but it was also a key moment in Thomas Aquinas’ rise to the status of the Common Doctor that took shape in the Renaissance and culminated in the Counter-Reformation.
The relationships that Dominicans teaching in the arts course at Padua formed with their colleagues and students in the university ranged from mere acquaintance to deep friendship. Yet, as Aristotle himself says, “there is nothing so characteristic of friends as living together…, but people cannot live together if they are not pleasant and do not enjoy the same things.”\(^1\) The Dominicans had a profound admiration for what the various currents present at the University of Padua offered to their students. Likewise, while the humanists and lay natural philosophers in Padua might have attacked mendicant friars or medieval scholasticism at times, they seem always to have had respect for their Dominican colleagues and professors. These strong associations set the stage for the intellectual contributions of these Renaissance scholastics to debates about philosophical conflict, faith and reason, language, and so on. The University of Padua was a community of lay students and professors; they nonetheless welcomed these clergymen into their midst and respected what the Thomistic training of the friars offered the university. Indeed, the term *Renaissance Thomism* is employed to make this reality less surprising to us. These Dominicans were not necessarily humanists or secular Aristotelians themselves, but their articulation of Thomistic ideas was suited to a Renaissance intellectual milieu like Padua and, in the judgment of these Dominicans, was entirely harmonious with the intellectual and cultural developments of the previous century.

---

\(^1\) *Nicomachean Ethics* 1157b20-24.
Humanist Students and Colleagues

The associations of Dominicans in Padua with laymen began long before the creation of the chairs of metaphysics and theology in the second half of the fifteenth century. In the early fourteenth century, one of the earliest controversies regarding the divine character of poetry between a humanist and a scholastic took place in Padua between Albertino Mussato and Giovannino da Mantova. Pier Paolo Vergerio remarked upon the eloquence of the Dominican regent of S. Agostino, Federico Renoldo da Venezia. There was also Gioacchino Castiglioni Marcanova, who, before receiving his degree from Padua’s faculty of theology and serving as regent of the Dominican studium, attended the school of Guarino da Verona.

The creation of the chairs of metaphysics and theology became the foundation for stronger connections between the friars and humanists. Leading players in Italian intellectual culture—humanists to one degree or another—attended the courses offered by these Dominicans. In the early days of these professorships, evidence is more tenuous, but for centuries scholars have said that Gasparo Contarini was a student of the first Dominican professor at Padua, Francesco Securo. Domenico Grimani, future cardinal, patron of arts and letters, and frequent dedicatee from authors across the intellectual spectrum, also studied with the first Dominican metaphysician. Grimani’s friend, Antonio Pizzamano, once remarked upon Grimani’s extensive knowledge of Thomas

---

2 I employ the term *humanism* in the Kristellerian sense of an educational programme based upon the *studia humanitatis*: grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy.
3 Gargan, *Studio*, 76-78.
Aquinas. Indeed, Pizzamano, friend of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Angelo Poliziano, future bishop of Feltre, and editor of Thomas Aquinas’ *Opuscula*, was also Securo’s student.⁶ A later professor of theology *in via S. Thomae* who eventually moved to the chair of metaphysics, Girolamo d’Ippolito, taught Domenico Grimani’s nephew, Marino Grimani, future Patriarch of Aquileia but also an avid book collector, patron of painters, dedicatee of Agostino Steuco’s *Recognitio veteris testamenti ad hebraicam veritatem*, and author of a commentary on Romans and Galatians.⁷ Even in these early days of the Thomistic professorships, humanistic figures in the Veneto apparently saw no contradiction between their support of Italian Renaissance art or of Platonizing philosophical currents and their affection for the Thomist professors at Padua.

Evidence of contacts between humanists and the Dominican professors beyond generic (and often rather late) reports begins to emerge in the 1540s. The academic activity of the Dominican professor, Gianfrancesco Beato, not only shows the respect that humanists had for the professor of Thomist metaphysics but also the surprising ways in which the friar was remembered by his students. He was often invoked by his students for challenging Aristotle rather than for being a staunch defender of a Thomistic approach to the *Metaphysics*. One of Beato’s students was the great Florentine humanist historian and

---


poet, Benedetto Varchi, who also translated Aristotle into Italian. At the beginning of a lecture in Florence, he recognized Beato’s presence there—“not without blushing.” Beato was “precettore mio osservandissimo.” 8 On a more substantive level, Varchi later remembered that Beato had disproved the Aristotelian view that the velocity of an object’s fall is proportionate to its weight. 9 Indeed, there is some suggestion that there was an experimental foundation to this claim. 10 This was, of course, the conclusion of

---


9 Benedetto Varchi, Quaestioni sull’alchimia: codice inedito (Florence, 1827), 34: “E sebbene il costume dei filosofi moderni è di creder sempre, e non provar mai tutto quello, che si trova scritto ne’ buoni autori, e massimamente in Aristotile, non è però, che non fusse e più sicuro, e più dillettavole fare altramenti, e discendere qualche volta alla sperienza in alcune cose, come verbi gratia nel movimento delle cose gravi, nella qual cosa e Aristotile, e tutti li altri Filosofi senza mai dubitarne hanno creduto, et affermato, che quanto una cosa sia più grave, tanto più tosto discenda, il che la prova dimostra non esser vero. E se io non temessi d’allontanarmi troppo dalla proposta materia, mi distenderei più lungamente in provare questa opinione, della quale ho trovati alcuni altri, e massimamente il Reverendo Patre, non men dotto Filosofo, che buon Teologo, Fra Francesco beato Metafisico di Pisa, e Mess. Luca Ghini Medico, e Semplicista singularissimo, oltra la grande non solamente cognizione, ma pratica dei Minerali tutti quanti, secondo che a me parve quando gli udii da lui pubblicamente nello Studio di Bologna.” For Varchi’s other ally on this point, see “Ghini, Luca,” Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography, vol. 5 (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2008), 383-384. Ghini (ca. 1490-1556) was a physician and botanist active in the creation of the botanical garden for the University of Pisa in the mid-1540s. He studied and taught at Bologna as well.

10 William A. Wallace, “Natural Philosophy,” in CHRP, 222; Thomas B. Settle, “Galileo and Early Experimentation,” in Springs of Scientific Creativity: Essays on Founders of Modern Science, eds. Rutherford Aris, H. Ted Davis, and Roger H. Stuewer (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 8-10, 19, n. 20. Varchi made specific reference to the fact that the prova showed this to be false. This came immediately after a discussion of Albert the Great and the appropriate course that philosophy should take. Albert was “not only a philosopher but a very great experimenter (perimentatore grandissimo), that is, according to my poor judgement, a true and perfect philosopher…And who would doubt that if philosophy could rouse itself from its laziness and from the shade and get out in the dust under the sun…that it would not be much more esteemed and much more fruitful than it is….Even if the custom of modern philosophers
Galileo Galilei’s famous experiment in Pisa, whether it happened as described or not, a little over four decades later.

Similar memories of the same Dominican metaphysician are found in the works of others involved in the Florentine Academy. Beato made a brief appearance in Cosimo Bartoli’s (1503-1572) erudite lectures elucidating the *The Divine Comedy*. In *Ragionamento V*, given in spring 1548, the interlocutors in the dialogue took up the passage from *Il Paradiso*, canto 19, “Colui che volse il sesto / Allo estremo del mondo?”

They discussed the ultimate sphere in the cosmos and the implications of that notion philosophically for the issue of whether there are many worlds. Aristotle’s arguments that were supposed to demonstrate the necessity of there being only one world faced an objection rooted in the infinite power of God. But one of the participants, Francesco, recommended that Aristotle’s opinion on the unicity of the world be set aside for now. Aristotle, it was said, attempted with his “most exact genius” to prove everything that existed from the data of the senses, and, when he could not do so, he simply did not admit that those things existed. At this point, Francesco invoked the words of the then deceased professor of metaphysics, Gianfrancesco Beato, who used to say that Aristotle was like a blind man who has a stick for his guide, tapping it on the street as he goes on his way. When the blind man comes to a point where the stick does not touch anything, he simply does not go further. Similarly, when Aristotle came to a point in his

---

philosophy where natural reason based on the senses could not go further, he stopped.

Thus, Aristotle might not have considered other opinions about multiple worlds, such as the Platonist notion of an intellectual world that went beyond the senses and natural reason. It is remarkable that this Florentine commentator on Dante and humanist polymath employed Beato the Thomist metaphysician, soon after his death, to show the limits of Aristotle’s intellectual authority. ¹² Giambattista Gelli, another leading member of the Florentine Academy and commentator on Dante, mentioned Beato in his 1563 lecture that began with *Inferno*, Canto XXIV. Gelli was discussing the different approaches of Plato and Aristotle. Plato addressed many things, he said, “with a pure and sincere intellective cognition, while Aristotle did not trust the intellect unless what he discovered had a foundation in the senses.” ¹³ Gelli then recalled the very same illustration of Beato—calling him “a most excellent philosopher in our times”—which had been invoked by Bartoli about fifteen years before. ¹⁴ Beato had clearly made an impression on

---

¹² Cosimo Bartoli, *Raggionamenti accademici...sopra alcuni luoghi difficili di Dante* (Venice, 1567), 67v. The most relevant passage is the following: “Lasciamo per hora da parte questa oppenione di Aristotile, perche io so che egli come quello che era di essatissimo ingegno, andava investigando di provare per ragioni naturali tutte le cose che sono; e quelle che egli conosceva di non poter provare per tal via, non le ammetteva, e le rifiutava facendo come usava dire il Beato [margin: Il Beato Metafisico de tempi nostri], come quell cieco che ha per guida un bastone, che tastando con esso il cammino, quando non truova dove poter posare il bastone, non va piu inanzi, ilche faceva Aristotile servendosi de il senso, in voler provare tutte le cose; io hò pur sentito se ben mi sovviene alter oppinioni del Mondo; e che è ci sono stati di quegli, che hanno posto che sieno piu mondi.” See also Bryce, *Cosimo Bartoli*, 258.


¹⁴ Ibid.: “Per ciò che Platone camminava in molte cose con la cognizione intellettiva pura e sincera; e Aristotile non si fidava punto dello intelletto, se non quanto ei lo trovava fondato in su ’l senso. Per ciò che, sapete voi come faceva Aristotile (diceva il Beato, filosofo ne’ tempi nostri eccellentissimo) nel suo filosofare? come fa un cieco con un bastone nel suo camminare, che ogni volta ch’ ei lo appoggia, e non truova ch’ ei lo regga, non va più innanzi, e così Arisotitile, come la cognizione sensitiva gli mancava, si fermava e non passava più oltre.”
the intellectual community in Tuscany, particularly the Accademia Fiorentina, in the four years between his arrival there and his death.\textsuperscript{15}

During Beato’s time as metaphysician in Padua, his relationship with notable humanist students led to some of his published works. The encouragement of three students inspired him to weigh in on the controversy over whether Aristotle’s \textit{Categories} should be considered part of logic or metaphysics. All three of them were laymen and took part in humanistic enterprises. Ottaviano Ferrari (1518-86), who eventually taught in Milan, wrote \textit{De origine Romanorum}, a work that provided commentary on the contradictory views of the foundation of Rome and that was important for exposing the forgeries of Annius of Viterbo.\textsuperscript{16} The second of these students was Ugolino Martelli (1518-1592), a learned Florentine and friend of Benedetto Varchi, who was apparently a student of civil law at Padua. He was a learned Graecist and Latinist, and, having been significantly influenced by Pietro Bembo’s linguistic theory, he presented lectures on his \textit{Rime} in the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua that was established in June 1540.\textsuperscript{17} The last was Antonio Fiordibello of Modena (c. 1510-1574), a member of Jacopo Sadoleto’s household—eventually editing his correspondence and writing his

---

\textsuperscript{15} He arrived for the 1543-44 academic year and died on 16 August 1547.


biography—and an associate of Pietro Bembo and Reginald Pole. Students with such humanistic credentials insisted that their esteemed Dominican professor share his thought on this controversy over the connection between logic and metaphysics and then publish what he told them.

The last of these students, Antonio Fiordibello, might have also contributed to one of Beato’s other printed works and, more importantly, his connection to Jacopo Sadoleto. Since his time in Padua was an interruption in his long service to Sadoleto, it seems likely that he at least played a part in connecting this major humanist with Beato. In Beato’s 19 May 1543 dedication of his work on the second book of the *Metaphysics*, Beato reported that Sadoleto’s nephew, Paulo, approached him about whether Book α belonged in the *Metaphysics* or the *Physics*. Beato described this query as having awakened him from a sound sleep, forcing him to compose this controversial work. Sadoleto’s response from Modena on 24 May expressed agreement with Beato’s argument and much affection. The churchmen and leading humanist also said of the Dominican metaphysician’s work that “the reading of this book delighted me exceedingly. For the issues in it were explicated so

---


beautifully, not with wordy nor contorted speech but in an apt and elegant manner.”

Indeed, Sadoleto said that Beato composed this work “in the manner in which philosophy enjoys to be treated,” so that “not only his genius and doctrine but also his elegant style should rightly be praised.”Sadoleto thought that Beato’s discussion of Aristotelian metaphysics was appropriately clothed in humanist garb.

The lectures of Girolamo Vielmi, who taught metaphysics and then theology in the 1550s and Sacred Scripture in the late-1560s, were fondly remembered by important players in Italian culture. Gabriele Fiamma, the Augustinian Canon and famous preacher, attended his lectures during the period of his theological formation in the mid-1550s. In his Vita de’ Santi, he described Vielmi’s lectures in the section on St. Thomas Aquinas. He said that he attended them for five years and that they were the reflection of a man of “profound judgment, incomparable memory, and solid eloquence.” He hoped that Vielmi would be “delighted by his labors” as a worthy testimony of his teaching.

A number of other major figures in Italian literary circles attended the lectures of these Dominicans. Agostino Valiero (1531-1606), future bishop of Verona, cardinal, biographer of Carlo Borromeo, and author of a work on rhetoric, De rhetorica ecclesiastica, recalled hearing the lectures of professor of metaphysics and the first professor of Sacred Scripture at the University of Padua, Adriano Valentico.22

---

20 Beato, Librum secundum, sig.a2v.
21 Gabriele Fiamma, Vite de’ santi, vol. 2 (Genoa, 1630), 26rv. Note that Fiamma called him Girolamo Guiglielmi, but he said that was Bishop of Città Nova. No other Girolamo was bishop of that diocese. See Eubel, Hierarchia, 96. Indeed, Eubel refers to him as Hieronymus Guilelmus (Vielmi). Fiamma studied at Padua in the 1550s.
22 Agostino Valiero, De cautione adhibenda in edendis libris (Padua, 1719), 21: “admirabar etiam sanctum Thomam, in quo, cum theologiae operam darem Patavii, docente theologiam magistro Hadriano, qui deinde
Gianambrogio Barbavara likely had the great Italian poet, Torquato Tasso, in his theology lectures.\textsuperscript{23} The Milanese Dominican appears in at least one of Tasso’s works as a theological authority—in his dialogue on nobility, Tasso called Barbavara that “most learned and most pious father.”\textsuperscript{24} Tasso did study at Padua while Barbavara was professor of theology in via S. Thomae. When many leading Italian intellectuals contributed to a 1562 publication containing poems that celebrated Barbavara’s and Vielmi’s teacher, Sisto Medici, \textit{In funum reverendi p. f. Sixti Medices Veneti Ordinis praedicatorum omnium liberalium artium alumni, et sacrae paginae professoris epigrammata}, one was written by the eighteen-year-old Torquato Tasso. Giulio Pace, the Greek scholar, translator of Aristotle, jurist, and Protestant convert, celebrated the teaching of Tommaso Pellegrini.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} Scholars have referred to some of his works as anti-humanistic, but Tasso was obviously still a major figure in Italian literary circles.


\textsuperscript{25} Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 546. See Brian P. Copenhaver, “Aristotelianisms,” in \textit{The Columbia History of Western Philosophy} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 288: “In an age of literary refinement, his sensibilities were altogether philosophical, distancing him somewhat from the new Greek discoveries.
The relationship between the humanist professors of Greek and Latin literature at Padua and their Dominican colleagues went beyond civility. In a couple of instances, it appears that the experience of some humanists being part of the university community reshaped stereotypical attitudes towards scholasticism into something more complex and positive. In a 2006 essay, Paul Grendler explain the lack of conflict between humanists and scholastics in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by stating that humanists and theologians in Italy “seldom addressed each other…largely because they inhabited different institutions.”

Of course, these Dominican professors did not inhabit a different institution. Mendicant friars who taught in Padua’s arts course made up over one quarter of that group: five out of fewer than twenty instructors in arts (excluding medicine). Perhaps scholars have fallen into this problematic view because they have assumed a natural conflict between humanism and scholasticism. Hence, if we do not observe conflict in the evidence, it must be because there was little to no contact. A better way of thinking about the problem is to consider the reasons why Italian thinkers more drawn towards scholastic methods and those with more humanistic tendencies were actually able to get along with one another. As this chapter shows, they were able to teach each other, to learn from each other, and to collaborate in different scholarly activities.

and leaving him satisfied with a homely Latin. Hence, the project of putting Aristotle into elegant classical dress passed him by, though it lived on after him through the editions of Giulio Pace (1550-1635), having culminated in the Ciceronian Aristotle of Péron.” See also CHRP, see index but esp. 828-29.


27 Grendler, Universies, 33. Here Grendler shows that, between 1525 or so to 1560, the average number of professors in medicine and arts was thirty to thirty-one. And there were about thirteen professors of medicine during the period.
Giovanni Faseolo was the professor *ad humanitatem graecam et latinam* for a good part of our period, from 1545 to 1571, and illustrates this pattern quite clearly. Faseolo began his scholarly career with a rather hostile attitude towards scholasticism. But after a long period of teaching in Padua, he not only expressed his affection for his longtime Dominican colleague, Girolamo Vielmi, but brought one of his most important works to press, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*[^28]. Faseolo, who had already taught humanistic subjects at Padua for almost twenty years, was not just helping out his colleague publish one of his major works. Interestingly enough, this 1564 text included one of the rare criticisms written by an Italian theologian of certain elements in the humanist movement[^29]. The connection between Faseolo and Vielmi shows quite vividly how the collegial environment of Padua produced intellectual activities that do not conform neatly to our standard mapping of Renaissance intellectual currents.

As a younger man, about twenty years before helping to publish this work, Faseolo had some of the anti-scholastic attitudes that scholars often associate with humanism. Faseolo’s greatest scholarly achievement was the first Latin translation of Simplicius’ commentary on *De anima* (1543).[^30] In his dedicatory epistles, written just before he became a professor at Padua, he articulated his perspective on the history of Aristotelian commentary. He deeply admired his teacher, the Aristotelian natural philosopher Marcantonio Genua (de’ Passeri) (d. 1563), who taught at Padua in some

[^29]: Grendler, “Humanism,” 93, n. 47.
[^30]: Peter Lautner, “Status and Method of Psychology according to the Late Neoplatonists and their Influence during the Sixteenth Century,” in *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 102.
capacity from 1517 until his death, but he was unhappy with many of the philosophers of his day. Some preferred the Arabs, particularly “the one whom they call Averroes,” to a Greek commentator like Simplicius who “truly exposted the writings of Aristotle” and did so “with elegance and polish (nitör) in his language.” In contrast, Faseolo believed that Averroes could not bring about a true understanding of the sense of Aristotle’s words, setting aside the fact that his writing is “obscure, jejuné, uncultivated, horrid, and entirely barbarous.”

In his letter to Giambattista Campeggio, Bishop of Majorca, Faseolo showed that this was not merely a distaste for the Islamic philosophers. He said that philosophy nearly perished after the era of Greeks like Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and Simplicius and Romans like Varro and Cicero. Nothing, he said, is more opposed to the bonarum artium studia than warfare; therefore, the barbarian invasions were, to his mind, the major reason for the decline of philosophy. But philosophy did not truly recover until “our age,” long after the Gothic invasions had ceased. All efforts to improve philosophy before that time simply made things worse, defiling the pursuit of wisdom with barbarisms and ignorance. Faseolo wanted to be honest that he “more follows those devoted to good letters than to Averroes, Albert [the Great], Giles [of Rome], [Walter] Burley, or Agostino Nifo,” the last having taught natural philosophy at Padua from 1492-1499. Those philosophers were thus in error who followed the “Latins” or the “Arabs.”

---

31 Simplicius, Commentarii in libros de anima Aristotelis, trans. Giovanni Faseolo (Venice, 1543), 35v.
32 Ibid., 78r. For Nifo’s tenure at Padua, see Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 532.
rather than the “Greeks.” Lest one think that Thomas Aquinas was an exception, given his absence from this list, Faseolo’s first letter to Cristoforo Madruzzo, Prince-Bishop of Trent should be given some consideration. The translator of Simplicius was quite clear that philosophers of his day infuriated him. He was especially frustrated by the fact that some of the best philosophers chose John Duns Scotus and St. Thomas (Divus Thomas) as their leaders and guides. One wonders if Faseolo was pointing directly to the chairs in the arts course at Padua.

But, after just over two decades of teaching at the University of Padua, having had Dominican colleagues like Vielmi as well as Medici, Valentico, Valdina, and Barbavara, Faseolo was eager to print Vielmi’s writings in defense of scholastic theology. Faseolo began his letter to the readers of Vielmi’s works by saying something that nearly

---

33 Simplicius, Commentarii, 78r. See also his letter to the reader on ibid., sig.a3r: “Duo namque cum sint: quibus homines caeteris animante antecellunt: intelligendi, atque eorum quae animo significari solet: hoc neglecto in priori illo vim omnem maiores nostri collocasse videntur….Apte vero, ornate, ac copiose loquendi facultatem aspermantur. Quod si et rerum cognitionem, quam vel solam plurimi aestimandam esse concedo: apud hos mullam fere ereperiri ostendero: et dicendi laudem minime spernendam probavero: nonne et hos turpissime lapsos, et eorum ineptias et fugiendas esse, luce clarius patere poterit? Antea vero quam ulterius progrediviamur: siquid vel ex scriptorum multitudine, vel ex hominum imperitia, vel ex annis quos vixerunt, vel temporum beneficio, vel ex insigni alio dignitatis, nacti sunt authoritatis, ea, quo absque ullo impedimento veritas appareat, removeatur. Interpretati igitur Aristotelis libros sunt Albertus, Egidius, Burleus, Suessanus, horumque consimiles non pauci. In quorum interpretationibus, ut cuilibet notum esse potest, illud eorum videtur propositum, ut omnem orationis ornatum atque puram ac integram latinitatem despiciant, et se rerum solum explanatores profiteantur. In quibus tamen ii plerumque sunt: qui adeo ab illius philosophi mente et intelligentia aberrent, ut alia omnia noverint, praeter ea, quae is declarare voluerit. Quod ibi locorum praeeritium is accidit, ubi maiora, praestantium ac diviniorem traduntur. De mentis nostrae immortalitate quotusquis ex his existit qui nostrum Aristotelium non longe secus ac senserit, sensisse dicat? Consulamus Simplicium, consulamus Themistium: quam apud eos omnia certa ac perspicua sunt, intelligens….Quare, si quae omnibus in promptu sunt, tantum i assequi videntur, quae vero obscuritatis aliqut habent lumeneque desiderant, hos omnino fugiunt. Graecique contra nihil non rectissime atque verissime explicant? Cur hos neglectos, in illisque operam nostram consumptam malumus? Caeterum hic illud tenendum aiunt: quod in exponendis Aristotelis sententiis, Graecis sane palma eripit non potest: at dubitandi ratione sunt: quae Latinos magnopere commendent….Genus autem illud earum dubitationem, quae a Latinis inductae sunt, prorsus devito” (emphasis added).

34 Ibid., sig.a2v.
contradicted what he wrote in his edition of Simplicius: “Truly, I have always followed St. Thomas Aquinas with supreme admiration.” “His writings,” he continued, “were the only or chief ones from among the Latins” that were studied “when I was once dedicated to philosophy.” Faseolo informed the readers of Girolamo Vielmi’s works, whom the humanist called “the best and most erudite of men,” that the Venetian Dominican had shown Faseolo his work. Faseolo described it as “partly a work of praise and partly a defense” of Thomas Aquinas’ works, and he first read it “with the greatest pleasure.” At that point, Faseolo asked Vielmi, “a man very dear to me as a friend (mihi amicissimus),” to allow a copy to be made. Vielmi did so quickly—in keeping with his “courteous character (humanitas).” Once Faseolo had the opportunity to inspect the work more carefully, he realized that Vielmi had not merely praised the writings of St. Thomas but that this “most learned man…had divided and ordered [Aquinas’] books.” After observing this “very useful” aspect of Vielmi’s work, Faseolo began to insist that they be published (suos hos labores in publicum exire), which Vielmi initially refused, being a man without any ambition. But the fact that this work was of such benefit to scholars—bringing some order to the “various and copious…writings of St. Thomas which in great part lie hidden”—Vielmi finally permitted Faseolo to publish the work.

35 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, sig.a2r. Later in the letter (ibid., sig.a3v), he said of Thomas: “Qui expositoris nomen iure adeptus est. cuiusque libros tot vel priscorum Graecorum, vel Recentiorum quorundam ab Italia, et mente, et locis penitus seiunctorum voluminibus solos habemus, quos, paria paribus reddentes, obiciamus. fateor igitur factum esse meis vel precibus, vel cohortationibus, ut duo hi libri foras dati sint. qui optima quidem mente vestrae utilitatis ergo, id fieri volui.”
36 Ibid., sig.a2r.
37 Ibid., sig.a2v.
38 Ibid., sig.a3v.
In this printed volume, Faseolo included Vielmi’s *Oratio apologetica* in defense of scholastic theology, which was, according to Grendler, one of the rare polemics against humanism produced by an Italian theologian. The humanist professor at Padua, though, gave no indication that he found the work offensive or threatening. In fact, he recalled being in the audience for the oration back in 1554.\(^39\) He concluded his letter by asking all of the work’s readers to pray that “life and leisure be given to this most erudite man so that he might prepare very many works, finish them in a timely fashion (*commode*), and bring them forth (*ad exitum perducere*).” For, Faseolo said, Christians would not find anything equal in fruitfulness or joy than what “will flow from this font.”\(^40\) He obviously had high regard for his Dominican colleague, but, more substantively, all the evidence points to the fact that Faseolo actually changed his mind about Thomas Aquinas over the course of his career at Padua. And his position in the scholarly community at Padua and his relationship with figures like Vielmi provide as good an explanation as any for such a development. The humanist-scholastic debate in Italy was not different in Italy because theologians and humanists inhabited different institutions; at least in Padua, humanists and the scholastics like Faseolo and Vielmi genuinely admired each other and supported each other’s scholarly efforts.\(^41\)

Faseolo was not the only professor *ad humanitatem* at Padua to have a high regard for the Dominican professors and Vielmi in particular. Antonio Riccoboni (1541-1599), a more prominent humanist than Faseolo, taught humanistic subjects at the University of

---

39 Ibid., sig.a3v-sig.a4r.
40 Ibid., sig.a4r. The letter was written 13 September 1564.
41 See also Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 146, for his reference to Francesco Robortello who taught humanistic subjects at Padua from 1561 until his death in 1567: “Franciscus Robortellus vir clarissimus.”
Padua from 1571 until his death. Riccoboni was asked to give the oration in praise of Thomas Aquinas for the feast day of the artists. In this speech, he referred explicitly to Vielmi’s work on Aquinas and mined his writings for much of what he had to say.

One of Riccoboni’s most important scholarly achievements was writing the first history of the university, *De gymnasio patavino*, which also gives indications of his view of his Dominican colleagues. Like Faseolo, Riccoboni seems to have admired his Dominican colleagues, especially those whom he knew like Tommaso Pellegrini. For the period between the Venetian conquest in 1405 and the War of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516), though Riccoboni did make a note of the Franciscan metaphysician, Antonio Trombetta, he did not mention any Dominican professors. He provided a complete list of theologians and metaphysicians from the re-opening of the university after the war until 1571. He gave a slightly longer profile for some of the Dominicans,

---


43 Antonio Riccoboni, “De laudibus Divi Thomae oratio,” in idem, *Orationum volumen secundum* (Padua, 1591), 65r-70v, esp. 65v-66r: “quod multi quidem de viro sanctissimo scripserint, unde multa colligi ad dicendum possint, atque inter caeteros, posterioribus temporibus Hieronymus Vielmius, primum Argolicensis, deinde Aemoniae Episcopus religiosissimus, qui pro doctrina, et scriptis Divi Thomae duos libro sin lucem, atque aspectum hominum produxit.” He seems to have made a broad (and somewhat ambiguous) reference to the chairs of theology and metaphysics when, early in the oration, Riccoboni said, “[S]ic notissimum, atque exploratissimum est, sonitu illustris, ac pervagatae famae multorum, et magnorum, quae beatissimus Pater, Divus Thomas Aquinas, in Rempublicam Christianam contulit, beneficiorum ita aures omnium compleri, ut obsurdescere quodammodo videantur; quo etiam de harmonia coelesti doctissimi homines censunt; eiusque splendorem, et claritatem omnium oculos perstringere; ac tam multas eiusdem, et tantas laudes existere, ut omnem superare dnumerationem, atque amplitudinem existimentur. Quo factum est, ut ad magnum sonitum in omnes terras longe, lateque resonantem vel gymnasio Patavinin Doctores quodammodo surdastri facti sint; iisdemque in tanto lumine oculos defigere hoc anno adhuc reformidaverint; ac res enumerari innumerabiles, quae ad exornandum tantum virum conferri possunt, quasi supervacaneum duxerint” (ibid., 65rv). Note the reference to Pius V’s making Thomas Aquinas a Doctor of the Church as a kind of culmination of earlier papal approbation: “PIUS V. vi sua, et veritate doctrinae ex eo tempore, quo coelestibus ascriptus est, multas, quae deinceps exortae sunt, haereses confusas, et convictas dissipasses affirmavit; idcircoque quinctum Ecclesiae doctorem declaravit” (ibid., 70r). For some description of the feast day, see Antonio Riccoboni, *De gymnasio patavino commentariorum libri sex* (Padua, 1598), 145r.

44 Riccoboni, *De gymnasio patavino*, 18v.
noting their ecclesiastical offices and several of their works (Spina’s work on the power of the pope over marriage and incest and witches, Medici’s work on usury, and Barbavara’s oration in praise of St. Thomas). In the more elaborate biographical accounts in Book 2, Adriano Valentico and Girolamo Vielmi received passing and generic mentions as the predecessors to Girolamo Quaino the Servite, being called “most grave and most wise interpreters of Sacred Scripture.” But Tommaso Pellegrini was the only Dominican covered in this study given a biographical sketch. Riccoboni, who would have been Pellegrini’s colleague from 1571 until Pellegrini’s death (after the 1582-83 academic year), said that the Dominican had “obtained great authority for himself by his supreme wisdom so that he was heeded as another Pythagoras,” a reference to the deference given to the ancient philosopher’s ipse dixit. “It was nearly forbidden,” Riccoboni continued, “to withdraw from anything that he had established concerning the doctrine of Aristotle, and the most distinguished (primarius) philosophers”—perhaps a reference to the ordinary professors of natural philosophy—“were not ashamed to consult him as a kind of oracle of philosophy.” This remark might appear somewhat sarcastic, but Riccoboni said something quite similar in an oration after the death of Jacopo Zabarella, almost certainly the most famous Paduan philosopher after Pietro Pomponazzi: “he had so much authority among his auditors…that, just as among the Pythagoreans,

45 Ibid., 20v, all under the heading (ibid., 20r), “Catalogus Doctorum, qui Artes in Gymnasio professi sunt ab an.1520 usque ad annum circiter 1570. Cap. XV.” The Franciscans were just listed, though some of them received rather long profiles in a later section of the book.
46 Ibid., 46v.
47 See ibid., 65rv, “De successoribus Ioannis Ambrosii Barbavarae. Cap.XXV.” It is interesting that Barbavara was not treated at greater length. A substantial discussion of Angelo Andronico did take place on ibid., 65v. See also ibid., 33v.
48 Ibid., 46v.
[their master’s] *ipse dixit* was strong against the firmest of reasons, so did all of them cherish Jacopo Zabarella as Pythagoras.”⁴⁹ Riccoboni, the longstanding professor of humanistic subjects, thus acknowledged the philosophical acumen of Tommaso Pellegrini and the profound respect the university community had for him.

All evidence points to the fact that the humanist professors at the university had a good deal of respect for their Thomist colleagues. The humanist-scholastic debate in Italy was certainly less rancorous than its Northern counterpart. This has been explained as the result of a lack of contact between humanists and theologians in Italy.⁵⁰ But in the environment of Padua, where Italian theologians and humanists did interact, there was not substantial conflict. Indeed, an anti-scholastic humanist like Faseolo changed his mind about Thomas Aquinas after many years of teaching at the university.

**Secular and Protestant Aristotelians**

The most important legacy of the professors of arts at Padua was secular or lay Aristotelianism. The professors of natural philosophy at the university are famous for lecturing on the works of Aristotle without much concern for reconciling them to Christian theology. They did not have the concordist impulses of many medieval commentators. Padua represents a Silver Age of the secular Aristotelianism that points back to the efforts of Siger of Brabant and other philosophers in thirteenth-century Paris who defended Aristotle’s teaching against the attacks of theologians. While Albertus

---

⁴⁹ Riccoboni, *Orationum volumen secundum*, 63r.
Magnus and Thomas Aquinas were admired by the students and teachers of philosophy in the thirteenth century, one of Thomas’ most aggressive works was *On the Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*. Scholars incorrectly assume that the same struggle between Dominican theologians and radical Aristotelian philosophers played out again in Padua. On the contrary, from the first Dominican professor at Padua in the fifteenth century, Francesco Securo, to the last figure taken up in this study, Tommaso Pellegrini, the Dominicans and their Aristotelian teachers, colleagues, and students had warm relationships with one another. The intellectual milieu at Padua would encourage rather profound reflection in the teaching and works of the Dominicans on the relationship of faith and reason and on the proper role for a teacher of philosophy. By means of these connections, particularly with some Protestant Aristotelians who came from Germany to study philosophy and medicine, the Dominicans made important contributions to the Aristotelian tradition as it developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The dominance of neighborliness, collegiality, and friendship in this context should not obscure the fact that scholastic theology and metaphysics at Padua did have critics. As a young man, Giovanni Faseolo criticized philosophers in this era of renewal who followed Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus. Paolo Beni, an ex-Jesuit humanist, who would have been a student at the University of Padua during Tommaso Pellegrini’s tenure, called for a major restructuring of the metaphysics teaching at Padua. Beni thought that the professors of metaphysics should make more use of Plato. He was frustrated by connections between scholastic metaphysics and theology. His greatest aggravation was with the friars, who, he claimed, lacked sufficient knowledge of Greek,
had no respect for Latin eloquence, and invented terms that obscured Aristotle’s meaning. Beni asserted that only friars of the particular professor’s order showed up to his lectures. His proposal was that metaphysics be reduced to a holiday lectureship and that Sacred Scripture be given metaphysics’ prime position in the daily offerings of lectures.\footnote{Grendler, Universities, 388. On the basis of this discussion, Grendler concludes that “metaphysics and Scholastic theology did not measure up to other university disciplines.” For a useful point of comparison, see Lines’ discussion of the University of Bologna and the teaching of metaphysics in Lines, “Reorganizing,” 13, 49, n. 71.}

Another critic of Thomist metaphysics at Padua, Luigi Lollino, did not make merely general criticisms but attacked the prominent Tommaso Pellegrini for his deficiencies. Lollino was born on Crete in 1552 and served as bishop of Belluno from 1596 to 1625. He studied at the University of Padua from 1577 to 1583, receiving his doctorate \textit{in utroque iure} in that year.\footnote{Stefano Benedetti, “Lollino, Luigi (Alvise),” in DBI 62 (2005).} He was also a friend of Agostino Valiero, bishop of Verona and admirer of Girolamo Vielmi. Lollino wrote a prosopographical work, still in manuscript, on ten professors at Padua. One of the figures discussed was Tommaso Pellegrini, who was at the end of his academic career during Lollino’s student days. Lollino began his description by recalling his acumen and his distinguished talents. If circumstances were somewhat different, Lollino believed that Pellegrini would have rivaled all the philosophers of his age and even the ancients. “No one,” he said, “was more experienced than he in the intimate senses of the author, whom he had purposed to explain.” A book like the \textit{Metaphysics}, held to be “the most difficult in every age,” was explained quite fruitfully. Pellegrini, as a “veteran professor,” had a profound command of this text, even its most obscure passages, and his depth of understanding earned him
his high salary. But the problem was that he received no help in his interpretations from an understanding of Greek—with which he was merely acquainted—but “only from his ingenious conjecture.” Interestingly enough, Lollino criticized Pellegrini for being insufficiently theological. He regretted that the founders of Italian universities did not have a better acquaintance with Plato, whose teachings were nearer to the Christian faith. He was also disappointed by the fact that the Dominican metaphysician often mixed his teachings with discussions proper to natural philosophy.

Some of Lollino’s criticisms of Pellegrini embody the standard humanist criticisms of scholastic theology and metaphysics. But it is particularly noteworthy that he criticized Pellegrini for not giving enough attention to theology and for spending too much of his teaching on metaphysics with natural philosophy. Lollino’s censure runs in the opposite direction from that of Beni, who attacked the friars for mixing theology with metaphysics. The attack on scholastic metaphysics at Padua was thus not a unified one. These sorts of contemporary assessments, which have hitherto provided the basis for our appraisal of the mendicant professors at Padua, have their limits.

The attacks of Beni and Lollino must be placed in a much larger framework of contemporary opinion about the friars. Their criticisms are certainly rooted in rich humanistic perspectives on ancient languages, philosophy, and Aristotelianism, but the cases of Faseolo, Riccoboni, and other humanists in the Paduan milieu suggest at least a

---

53 Belluno, BC MS. 505, 50rv.
54 Ibid., 52r.
55 Ibid., 51r. There should be an edition of this text, with its biographies of major figures at the University of Padua like Zabarella that are drawn from Lollino’s own experience as a student. It would be useful to compare his comments on Pellegrini with what he said about his other professors.
56 Grendler, Universities, 389.
range of humanist opinions regarding the Dominican professors. Most importantly, there has never been a sustained effort to examine the attitudes of the famous natural philosophers at Padua towards the friar-professors. They were the ones teaching the Aristotelian corpus alongside the Dominican metaphysicians.\textsuperscript{57} The hypothesis that there was substantial conflict between Thomists and secular Aristotelians at Padua is a sensible one, but it turns out to be false. The university community at Padua cultivated a rich exchange between the Dominicans and their lay colleagues, teachers, and students.

A number of future professors of philosophy and medicine attended the lectures on metaphysics from the beginning of their existence during the tenure of Francesco Securo. Pietro Trapolino (1451-1506), once known as part of the Averroistic school at the University of Padua,\textsuperscript{58} is now frequently viewed as either a very moderate Averroist or even a Thomist.\textsuperscript{59} He studied at Padua before 1483 when he received his doctorate in

\textsuperscript{57} Of course, I have not done an exhaustive study of the writings of the Paduan natural philosophers. Any conclusions can only be tentative until a more thorough investigation is undertaken. But what is presented in this study significantly expands the range of opinions on metaphysics in this major Italian universities available in the literature. And, as we will see, the balance of the opinions that I have found has a quite different tendency than what is found in Grendler.

\textsuperscript{58} Francesco Fiorentino, \textit{Pietro Pomponazzi: studi storici su la scuola bolognese e padovana del secolo XVI} (Florence, 1868), 249. Garin reflects on his changed position in \textit{History of Italian Philosophy}, 1188: “Regarding the Averroism of Trapolino, which has been exaggerated by Fiorentino (and, on his footsteps, by myself), it is probably that the accentuation was tied to a cultural climate that gave way to an opposite accentuation, perhaps also tied to another cultural climate….If Nardi spoke of a ‘moderate Averroism,’ as it had been attributed to Trapolino by M. Antonio Genoa, Di Napoli underlined instead an approach to Thomism in the manner of Gaspare Contarini.” See also Nardi, \textit{Saggi}, 178.

\textsuperscript{59} Nardi, \textit{Saggi}, 156. Kessler, “The Intellecute Soul,” in CHRP, 500, says, “Pietro Pomponazzi…became well acquainted with Thomism through his teachers Francesco da Nardó [sic] and Pietro Trapolino.” See also Stone, “Aristotelianism and Scholasticism,” 13-14, who simply observes that he, along with other philosophers in the university, “expended much time and effort in expounding the Averroist interpretation of Aristotelian psychology and [was] prepared to confront the serious problems that lurked in this theory of the soul.”
artibus after turning thirty. Though his promoters to the degree were Pietro Roccabonella, Alessandro Sermoneta, Giovanni Aquilano, and the famous Averroist natural philosopher, Nicoletto Vernia, Trapolino acknowledged in his unpublished quaestiones on Aristotle’s De anima, that the “Lord Francesco da Nardò (Neritonius) of the Order of Preachers was my very excellent teacher (excellentissimus praeceptor).” In 1486 he received the doctorate in medicine. Trapolino was thus precisely the kind of Italian student whose studies of philosophy were directed towards the goal of a doctorate in medicine and thus supposedly had no need for metaphysics. Despite his orientation towards medicine and Aristotelian natural philosophy, however, he studied with Securo and remembered his teachings on metaphysics years later. In the academic year 1483-84 he was the extraordinary professor of philosophy and in 1486 became Vernia’s concurrent as professor of natural philosophy and had the young Pietro Pomponazzi attending his courses. But in 1494 Trapolino took the step of moving from philosophy to the teaching of medicine, which he taught until his death in 1509. Although Trapolino exemplifies the patterns often discussed by historians of Italian universities, moving from

---

61 This record of Trapolino’s lectures on the soul was taken down by a certain Benedetto del Tiriaca, who eventually taught mathematics and apparently became friends with Cajetan. For the quotation, see Bruno Nardi, “Pietro Trapolinoo, maestro del Pomponazzi,” in Studi su Pietro Pomponazzi (Florence, 1965), 113, n. 4. For more information on Tiriaca, see Nardi, Saggi, 170. Trapolino was his promoter to the degree in artibus on 20 December 1494, and he taught mathematics and astronomy at Padua to the great satisfaction of students. Nicholas Copernicus’ presence in the university during the period of Tiriaca’s teaching adds to the significance.
62 Though Trapolino took advantage of the lectures on Thomist metaphysics during his student days, he apparently remarked on the differences between metaphysics and medicine in his lectures. Ludovico Panizza, a student at Padua around the turn of the sixteenth century, remembered his teacher, Trapolino, “glory of the philosophers and physicians of his age.” While commenting on a “very subtle and entirely metaphysical” point, he recalled the opinion of the “perspicuous observer, Pietro Trapolino,” that such issues must be “expelled from their minds” since “medicine is concerned with things immersed in matter and occasionally filthy and disgusting.” Nardi, Saggi, 177-78.
philosophy to medicine, this trajectory did not preclude his frequenting and admiring Securo’s lectures on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.

Pietro Pomponazzi, the most famous of these Italian secular Aristotelians, also recognized the first Dominican professor of metaphysics, Securo, as one of his most influential teachers. More broadly, the relationship between Pomponazzi and a number of the friars in Padua during his long tenure there were so positive that a fresh assessment of his theological and philosophical views is necessary. Pomponazzi’s career at first glance bears out the conventional view regarding conflict between Italian natural philosophers and the friars. Many of those who attacked his views, especially his writings on the immortality of the soul, were theologians in the mendicant orders. But the Dominicans who studied and taught at Padua, with the exception of Bartolomeo Spina, actually had good relations with him. Securo was addressed with some frequency in Pomponazzi’s lectures as his “most excellent praeceptor”—sometimes bringing up his positions to be refuted but at other times acknowledging that he was using his master’s arguments against other positions. At times, Pomponazzi even attempted to show that a view of Securo, while almost always a challenging one, was not in keeping with the “intentio divi

---


Thomae." He did once observe that Securo was “very verbose,” but, as Antonino Poppi says, Pomponazzi “generally spoke [of him] with great respect.” Pomponazzi also described exchanges that took place between his predecessor and the important Averroist, Niccoleto Vernia, and Securo, the Dominican metaphysician. At one point, while lecturing on the relationship of the intellect and the senses in human knowledge, Pomponazzi provided a narrative of events that offers more detail about the character of this intellectual community. Pomponazzi said to his auditors, “Be aware of the fact that, before my praeceptor entered the schools for lecturing, I spoke to him about this. I said to him that what was being presupposed is not found in Book 7 of the Physics.” Securo apparently acknowledged this to be the case but clarified his own argument and also stated Aristotle’s general view of the dependence of the intellect on sense could be made to support his position. It is striking to consider the young Pomponazzi stopping the

---

65 Ibid., II: 86.
67 Ibid., I: 226. See also ibid., 29. See ibid., II: 164. Another event worth noting, though it is worthy of more careful attention, was the fact that Vincenzo Merlino, professor of metaphysics in via S. Thomae, along with Trombetta and O’Fihely, was asked by Niccoleto to evaluate his Contra perversam Averroys opinionem de unitate intellectua et de animae felicitate quaestiones divine nuper castigatissime in lucem prodeuntes (Venice, 1505). Vernia had apparently made a kind of about-face concerning his Averroist position on the unity of the intellect. On 13 July 1499, he wrote, “Ego magister Vicentius Merlinus Venetus ad lecturam metaphysice in almo studio Patavino deputatus rogatus ab exclentissimo artium et medicine doctore Domino magistro Niccoleto Theatino ut videam et diligenter hunc suum tractatum de unitate intellectus et bene examinarem si aliquid esset ibi scriptum contra sacrosanctam romanam ecclesiam. Examinato igitur tractatu cum omni diligentia dico nihil ibi esse contra sacrosanctam Romanam ecclesiam: immo ipsum apervisse multa que alii non fecerunt: et in confusionem Averroys et pro sacrosancta nostra romana ecclesiam.” See ibid., 11v. All of this took place during the tension at the university after Bishop Pietro Barozzi’s ban on discussing some of these matters. For the debate about what the significance of this event, Vernia’s sincerity, and so on. See Monfasani, “Missing Ockhamists,” 250-51, 264-65, as well as the bibliography on these pages, esp. ibid., 250, n. 21. Why might these mendicants have been willing to praise Vernia and this treatise, while the bishop (and some modern scholars) remained skeptical?
68 Ibid., II: 170.
69 See also Poppi, Saggi, 126-27.
elderly friar just before his lecture, respectfully challenging the basis of his teacher’s position in the Aristotelian corpus.

Pomponazzi’s Dominican colleagues were treated quite well in his lectures. In a discussion of individuation, Pomponazzi noted that “our reverend [Vincenzo] Merlino” supported his position, remembering him fondly just after his death.\(^{70}\) Merlino’s successor, Girolamo d’Ippolito, was a participant in a disputation that Pomponazzi mentioned when he dealt with demonstrative regress. He disagreed with his Dominican colleague’s position but showed no hostility.\(^{71}\) When discussing the much more challenging position regarding the nature of the soul, Pomponazzi said that there is “the argument of the Thomists,” which he described as the most powerful argument drawn from authority that they have at their disposal. The position was ascribed to d’Ippolito, and Pomponazzi thought that “it is surely difficult.” D’Ippolito’s argument, drawn from Book 12 of the *Metaphysics* was that an “efficient and moving cause temporally precedes its effect, but a formal cause is simultaneous with its effect.” The Dominican also said that, according to Aristotle, something of the formal cause remains after death, and Thomists believed that the intellect was a formal cause. Pomponazzi thought that this was a difficult textual point and observed that it was quite consonant with the Christian position. His response was to bring up a passage from *De generatione animalium* which moves in a different direction. Pomponazzi did not dismiss d’Ippolito’s argument; indeed, he said to his auditors, “But you say that the Philosopher contradicts himself in

\(^{70}\) Pomponazzi, *Corsi inediti*, II: 89.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 159.
these passages.” D’Ippolito’s textual authority put some serious pressure on Pomponazzi’s interpretation of Aristotle, but he thought that there was a way of reconciling all of the texts in a more satisfactory way.

The relationship between Pomponazzi and his teacher, Securo, as well as his Dominican colleagues was thus one of respectful academic debate. The work of one of Pomponazzi’s Dominican students displays nothing short of veneration. Over a decade before Alberto Pasquali became professor of metaphysics in via S. Thomae, he gave two orations on Thomas Aquinas’ feast day. After talking about the Dominican teachers at the university, Securo, d’Ippolito, and others, Pasquali turned to some non-Dominican professors who, he said, “followed the banner of Thomas.” He mentioned Pietro Trapolino, discussed above, and Francesco Cavalli, who was among the first to lecture on Aristotle from the Greek text at Padua. Pasquali referred to one of the ordinary professors of philosophy at Padua, Antonio Fracanzano, saying that he was “a man of the most perspicacious genius, abounding in indefatigable study, singular memory, and all the gifts of the soul.” Pasquali continued, “He has not only learned Latin and Greek philosophy but has drunk them up with such facility and celerity that he seems to be unaware of nothing in Greek literature.”

72 Pasquali, Orationes, sig.d3v-sig.d4r.
73 Niccolò Leonico Tomeo was the first. Francesco Patrizi, the Italian Platonist, was one of the earliest witnesses to a different view that Cavalli was actually the first. One way of resolving this problem is to say that Leonico was the first to be officially appointed to do so. See Charles B. Schmitt, The Aristotelian Tradition and Renaissance Universities XII, 61. See also Deno J. Geanakoplos, Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 128-29. More bibliography in Perfetti, Aristotle’s Zoology, 65, n. 1.
74 Pasquali, Orationes, sig.d4r.
75 Ibid.
student and future metaphysician on Greek learning is certainly noteworthy, but the point here is how Pasquali left the greatest praise for Pomponazzi, whom he called “my _praecceptor._” Indeed, the important Mantuan philosopher might have been in the audience when Pasquali said,

> He is someone so bound to this doctrine by the same oath (_consecraneus_), to use the term of Tertullian, ⁷⁶ that I would almost believe in Pythagorean palingenesis and metempsychosis, that is, the transanimation of the soul of Thomas into his body. For not only with a tow-rope but also with a more ample sail has he followed [Thomas’] tracks in such a way that he is beyond any risk in regard to his genius as well as beyond every injury from an envious age. ⁷⁷

Given modern assumptions about the profound rift between “Christian” and “secular” Aristotelianism, it seems utterly bizarre that a Dominican would—even in such a heightened rhetorical context—describe the soul of Aquinas as transmigrating into the body of Pomponazzi. ⁷⁸ And even without such assumptions in play about the rivalry of schools in Padua, it would be absolutely incorrect—certainly by 1508—to describe Pomponazzi as a Thomist. But this opinion was expressed in an extremely public setting by Pasquali, a young Dominican who was a student of Pomponazzi and who would go on to teach metaphysics _in via S. Thomae._

---

⁷⁶ The entry for “consecraneus” in Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, _A Latin Dictionary_ Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), gives Tertullian’s _Apology,_ chap. 16, as one of only two sources for the term.

⁷⁷ “extra omnem ingenii aleam” was taken from Pliny the Elder’s preface to his _Natural History._ He was referring to Cicero. See Pliny, _Natural History,_ vol. 1, trans. and ed. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 6-7. I want to acknowledge Michael Heyd, “Be Sober and Reasonable”: _The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries_ (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 133, n. 73, for helping me track down this allusion.

⁷⁸ Decades later, Giulio Cesare Vanini said that Averroes’ soul had transmigrated into the body of Pietro Pomponazzi, which perhaps might have been as far-fetched as Pasquali’s statement about the soul of Thomas Aquinas. See Martin, “Rethinking Renaissance Averroism,” 16.
These sorts of relationships between the “secular” Aristotelian natural philosophers and their Dominican colleagues and students, ranging from collegiality almost to veneration, continued until the end of our period. Cajetan was friends with Benedetto Tiriaca, who received his doctorate in arts during the single year in which Cajetan taught metaphysics at Padua (20 December 1494) and then taught mathematics from at least 1496 to 1508. Tiriaca was a Mantuan student of Trapolino and Pomponazzi at Padua. Cajetan dedicated his youthful commentary on Thomas Aquinas’ De ente et essentia to Tiriaca in the the first edition (1496). He described the future professor of arts as the “best of friends.” This friendship almost certainly developed while Cajetan was an official in the studium generale and Tiriaca was undertaking his course of studies in the arts curriculum.

Marcantonio Zimara was one of the leading Averroists of the sixteenth century, and it perhaps should cease to surprise us that he had a number of deep connections with the mendicants at Padua. Zimara’s connection with Dominican students like Sisto Medici also produced scholarly results. Zimara’s Averroism stands in marked contrast to other secular Aristotelians such as Pomponazzi. Although Pomponazzi was famous for asserting the contradictions between Aristotelian philosophy and the Christian teaching

79 Nardi, Saggi, 170. Nardi states that his professorship in mathematics and astronomy began in 1498. It is not clear where this dates comes from, but it seems that Nardi was not aware of the 1496 dedication of Cajetan that states, “ad clarissimum artium doctorem dominum Benedictum tyriacum Mantuanum logican Mathematicamque publice in Patavino studio profitentem Amicorum optimum” (emphasis added). Some of the information about who was teaching at the university at that moment is quite fragmentary. Cajetan’s commentary was printed on 14 October 1496. Incidentally, there was at least one interruption in his teaching that began in 1506.
80 See Aureum opus de ente et essentia divi Thome aquinatis cum commentariis fratris Thome Caietani sacre theologie doctoris et fratris Armandi eiusdem ordinis doctoris clarissimi ([Venice], 1496), sig.a1 v.
on the immortality of the soul, he agreed with Thomas Aquinas and his followers that the Averroist view of the separate intellect was, in Pomponazzi’s words, “nonsense”—“unintelligible and monstrous and quite foreign to Aristotle.” Yet Zimara was one of the representatives of Averroism among natural philosophers at Padua, at least in the sense of defending the Muslim philosopher as an interpreter of Aristotle. Thomists and Averroists are frequently portrayed as archrivals, but Zimara and the Dominicans in Padua maintained very good relations. Zimara studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Padua from about 1497 to 1505 and held minor chairs at the university from 1501 to 1509. When he returned to southern Italy, he began to teach natural philosophy and medicine at the University of Salerno and did so from about 1518 to 1522. Interestingly enough, in 1522-23 he taught metaphysics in the Franciscan church in Naples, S. Lorenzo Maggiore, before coming back to Padua and serving as professor of ordinary philosophy in primo loco from 1525-28. It is worth noting that, in his first Paduan phase, Zimara was associated with the Scotist professors. Even in his printed works, he referred to Antonio Trombetta as “my praeceptor,” calling him “excellent in the divine science,” “venerable (venerandus),” and “the most worthy man of our age in the speculations of metaphysics.” In the controversy over intelligible species, which motivated a Franciscan theologian in via Scoti, Girolamo Girelli, to publish one of Zimara’s quaestiones, Girelli argued that Zimara might have made a particular error

---


83 Nardi, Saggi, 324.
“because of the love of his master, who was Maurice O’Fihely (*Mauritius Hibernicus*).”

Evidence of associations with the Dominican Thomists comes from his period as ordinary professor of philosophy. Sisto Medici, the professor of theology in *via S. Thomae*, referred to Zimara as “my *praeeptor*.” In a 4 February 1558 letter to a younger confrere, Medici also talked about his high regard for the “hearth gods of Padua” (*Patavini lares*) and mentioned his philosophy studies with Zimara. Most importantly, Medici very convincingly claimed to have brought one of Zimara’s most important works (and one of the major achievements of sixteenth-century Averroism), the *Tabula dilucidationum in dictis Aristotelis et Averrois*, to press in 1537. The Dominican theologian said that he brought the work, published about five years after Zimara’s death, “from Chaos into light and order.” These collegial relationships between teachers and students thus produced substantial scholarly results.

Zimara’s successor, Marcantonio Genua (Passeri), one of the most longstanding professors of natural philosophy at Padua, also made a significant impression on his Dominican students. Once again, there is very little evidence at all of rivalry or tension, let alone hostility. Genua studied philosophy and medicine at Padua and then taught in

84 Ibid., 324-25.
86 Medici’s account referred to other philosophers such as Juan Montes de Oca (Johannes Montesdoca), a Spaniard and another “Averroist,” who taught at a number of Italian universities but at Padua from 1520 to 1525 as ordinary professor of philosophy in primo loco. Charles H. Lohr, “Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries: Authors L-M,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 31 (1978): 596-97. As we saw with Pomponazzi above, it was possible for these natural philosophers to have a sort of anticlerical, even anti-mendicant, perspective, while still having good relationships with certain friars, perhaps the best and brightest. Indeed, Montes de Oca had a stint teaching the Franciscan Observants in Carpi. But see Nardi, *Saggi*, 339, quoting his lectures on *De anima*, Book 3, from 1525 (during Medici’s student days): “Cum isti fratres vident philosophum, dicunt: haereticus est: ut mihi olim accidit, dum disputarem in capitolo generali fratrum S. Dominci…: et quia eos male tractabam, dixerunt 3° die, me esse haereticum.”
some capacity from 1517 until his death in 1563. In the same year that Sisto Medici received his doctorate (1530), the Dominican dedicated to Genua his edition of Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on *De generatione et corruptione*. Medici called him “my most excellent and most distinguished doctor,” acknowledging the “very many years in which you most ingeniously (scitissime) have publicly professed ordinary philosophy.” Medici was not entirely happy with what had been produced in this edition, but he knew that he had the support of Genua: “when you, my singular protector and my sweet honor came into my mind, both serenity of soul and tranquility of mind followed immediately.” This book, Medici said, would now be “wrapped within the guardianship of your name.” The conclusion of the dedication was full of praise and affection for his former teacher. Medici also associated Genua with the medieval author of the newly edited commentary:

For although you are the most experienced in both languages and each one of the liberal arts as anyone among morals, you most learnedly profess philosophy above all. And while you publicly lecture upon it in the ordinary chair in the University of Padua (*gymnasium patavinum*) with the largest assemblies (*conventus*) and the greatest admiration of all, you take up, defend, celebrate, and venerate the Angelic Doctor, whose exposition has been presented in your name by me, your most obsequious auditor. If at any place, I have spoken unreasonably, may you receive it with a cheerful face for reforming and defending, and may you furnish it with your authority to be read by the learned crowd of scholars that press upon you….I also pray you, my best and most cherished doctor, that you be well and that you bestow familiar love, as was customarily the case, upon your Sisto Medici.

89 *Sancti Thomae...de generatione et corruptione*, sig.aa2r.
90 He seems to have been especially unhappy with the text of the medieval translation. See ibid., “Non potui (fatebor enim) haud satis dolore, Librum meo sub nomine, minus eliamum, minusque quam par est emunctum, in antiqua praeertem textum translatione, prodiisse in publicum.”
91 Ibid.
Medici dedicated another work later in his career to his beloved teacher: his inaugural lecture as professor of theology in via S. Thomae in 1545. He described himself as another Pythius of Lydia or Virgil himself, ille vates, both of whom generously gave from their own bounty to those who were wealthier than they were. Pythius offered his wealth for the campaign of the Persian Emperor, Xerxes, while Virgil gave “not from the treasury of fortune but from the most fecund vault of his genius” to Caesar Augustus and to Maecenas, the great patron of the arts. Medici said that he saw Genua as no less than a king and as another Augustus. This oration was a small present to Genua, whom Medici called “the best of teachers.” The Thomist professor said, “I owe all things to your magnificence.” In a letter towards the end of Medici’s life, in which he discussed the superiority of the University of Padua to the gymnasia in ancient Greece, he listed quite a number of professors teaching in the middle of the sixteenth century but lingered only upon Genua, whom he described as follows:

The Muses created him consummately in every respect so that they bestow the special gifts (munus) of the liberal arts most abundantly upon this one man—a man who in his own age neither had an equal in the whole world nor perhaps will ever have one. For this reason, it is reasonable that I conclude the discussion of the rest [of the professors of the University of Padua] with this most illustrious man.

Medici had the highest regard for his teacher, Marcantonio Genua, the very well-respected professor of natural philosophy at Padua.

---

93 Ibid., 422. Note that the printed version of this oration was dedicated to Bernardo Navagero. See Sisto Medici, Oratio de ingenio theologicus facultatibus excolendo (Venice, 1555), sig.a2r.
Genua’s Dominican students were not unaware of his most important intellectual achievements; their remarks were not merely vague praise. Genua was famous for his attempt to reconcile Simplicius’ (c. 490-c.560) Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle with the influential Averroist views of the human soul.\footnote{Spruit, \textit{Species intelligibilis}, 164-65. Paul J. J. M. Bakker, “Natural Philosophy, Metaphysics, or Something in Between?: Agostino Nifo, Pietro Pomponazzi, and Marcantonio Genua on the Nature and Place of the Science of the Soul,” in \textit{Mind, Cognition, and Representation}, 169-75.} It was in reference to a related doctrine that Girolamo Vielmi, a student of both Genua and Medici, addressed his teacher. In his lectures on Hebrews while professor of Sacred Scripture (or at least in his later revisions), Vielmi mentioned Genua, “my \textit{praeceptor} and an otherwise distinguished philosopher.” Vielmi did not have quite the same level of deference for his teacher, now dead, as seen in Medici’s writings.\footnote{Of course, dedications and letters were different in form than lectures.} The younger Venetian Dominican criticized his teacher for his view that the intellect already contained forms or intelligible species that were simply “excited” by sensitive perception. This view seemed far too much like a Platonic view of innate ideas; moreover, it entailed a more or less occasionalist account of cognition rather than one in which the intellect genuinely acquires information anew from the experience of extramental reality.\footnote{BNM cod. lat. cl. I MS. 45, 53rv.} Vielmi’s critique of his professor points to the exact issues focused upon by modern scholars.\footnote{Tuomo Aho, “Suárez on Cognitive Intentions,” in \textit{Mind, Cognition, and Representation}, 196; Kessler, “The Intellective Soul,” 515-16.} But again this criticism indicates nothing more than academic debate, not hostility.

It is often supposed that the orientation of natural philosophy to medicine in Italian universities was a reason for students not to take metaphysics very seriously.
However true this might have been—and we have seen a number of major philosophers who studied with the Paduan metaphysicians and then received degrees in medicine—it is noteworthy that the mendicant professors also had a high regard for the physicians teaching at the university. Medici said that professors of medicine like Giambattista Montano, Oddo degli Oddi, Antonio Fracanzano, Andreas Vesalius, and Gabriele Fallopio surpassed Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, in the science of healing.99

A more specific reference to the achievements of Vesalius occurred in an actual work of metaphysics. Gianfrancesco Beato was commenting on the passage in Book 2 of the *Metaphysics*, in Argyropoulos’ translation, “*At totum ac partem habere non posse, id difficultatem ipsius ostendit.*”100 He began with the difficulties of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Michael of Ephesus, and Asclepius in dealing with this passage. The key issue appears to be that individual things would be intelligible. Averroes did not have to face any of the difficulties because, according to Beato, he used a corrupt text. Beato arrived at his *magister*, Thomas Aquinas, who “declares this small passage (*particula*) most subtly.” Thomas argued that the whole was known first but that resolving a whole into its parts poses a grave difficulty. For instance, it is easy to know the definition of *animal*. But to resolve *animal* into all the parts potentially contained in *animal* is extremely difficult. “Who can say,” Beato asked, “that he can enumerate all the species of *animal*, let alone understand the quiddities of aquatic, land, and flying animals?”101 But *animal* as a genus is merely a potential whole unlike an individual being which is an

100 Beato, *Librum secundum*, sig.b2v. In Ross’ translation, this passage is rendered as follows: “but the fact that we can havae a whole truth and nothe particular part we aim at shows the difficulty of it.”
101 Beato, *Librum secundum*, sig.b3r.
actual whole. Beato then distinguished between actual parts and integral parts. For example, it is rather easy to separate the human being into its actual parts, rational and animal. But it is very difficult to separate the human being into the integral parts according to which man is made up of a head, hands, bones, nerves, marrow, flesh, and the rest of the parts. Beato said, “surely few can explain the duties of all the individual parts.” His illustration of this claim was a reference to the dissections (sectio) “in this our day” of the anatomist, Vesalius, whom he believed worthy of admiration for “so openly showing the many errors of Aristotle, Galen, and others.” This statement is remarkable because of Beato’s remarkably casual remark on the mistakes of these ancient authorities. Furthermore, the Dominican metaphysician showed a great deal of respect for Vesalius’s achievements. Indeed, cutting-edge material had worked its way into the mendicant lectures. Vesalius received his doctorate in 1537 and lectured and performed dissections at the university, as Beato’s colleague, from December of that year until 1543, the year in which this commentary on part of the *Metaphysics* was published.\footnote{Grendler, *Universities*, 331.} Vesalius’ great work, *De humani corporis fabrica* was published in Basel in this very year.

There is more direct evidence of interaction with developments in medicine in the case of Girolamo Vielmi and Melchior Guilandinus. Guilandinus (Wieland) of Königsberg, one of the greatest botanists of his day, traveled around the Mediterranean world, was shipwrecked and then captured by pirates who made him a slave on their galley. His connection to Padua arose from the fact that some of the Venetians who had
been his patrons during his journeys ransomed him.\textsuperscript{103} He was a close friend of Gabriele Fallopio and correspondent with Ulisse Aldrovandi. Guilandinus took over Padua’s botanical garden, arguably the first university garden (1544), which was connected with what some scholars have called a “medical revolution of anatomy, clinical medicine, and medical botany.”\textsuperscript{104} He was involved with the garden as well as lecturing on botany at Padua from 1561 until his death in 1589.\textsuperscript{105} During the same time, Girolamo Vielmi was lecturing on Genesis as professor of Sacred Scripture, a post that he held from 1565 to 1570. In his twenty-ninth lecture, he was commenting upon Genesis 1:29, which describes the divine gift of “every herb bearing seed…and all trees that have in themselves seed of their own kind” as food.\textsuperscript{106} Vielmi wanted to argue that God did not speak in vain when he spoke of eating herbs that bear seeds. He opposed the view of Theophrastus in his \textit{De causis plantarum} that no sterile and infertile species of plants exist. He pointed to Jerome, Philo, and “the whole multitude of countrymen (\textit{turba}


\textsuperscript{104} Grendler, Universities, 372. See ibid., 74: “Pisa shared with Padua the honor of founding the first university botanical garden.”


\textsuperscript{106} Vielmi, \textit{De sex diebus}, 334. Immediately before the discussion that prompted his mentioning Guilandinus, Vielmi addressed the question of when human beings were given permission to eat meat. Here the Dominican theologian mentioned a number of recent figures like Girolamo Cardano as well as Simone Porzio, a quite radical Aristotelian, who strongly supported the mortality of the soul as the conclusion of human reason. For more on Porzio, see the recent study, Eva Del Soldato, \textit{Simone Porzio: un aristotelico tra natura e grazia} (Rome, 2010).
“agrestium)” as witnesses for his view. According to Vielmi, Theophrastus even refuted himself in his *De historiis plantarum*, which describes many plants as infertile. It is at this point that Vielmi brought up Guilandinus, “a most learned man and easily the prince of our time concerning herbs,” who was “the splendor (deus) of this Academy.”

Perhaps in preparation for this lecture, Vielmi asked the botanist “most recently” about infertile plants “in familiar conversation.” Padua’s botanist informed Vielmi that the scientific authorities now numbered among sterile plants *polypodium* and *epimedium*, both ferns, as well as fungi and several others. It is noteworthy that Vielmi was using texts unavailable to his medieval predecessors like Theophrastus; the expansion of sources available to Renaissance authors had made its impact on these lectures on Scripture. But the most interesting part of this story is how this Dominican theologian not only respected but actually consulted his colleagues in various disciplines—and not

---

107 Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 335.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid. The botanical details here must be left for another time.
110 Charles B. Schmitt, “Theophrastus,” in *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, vol. 2, eds. Paul Oskar Kristeller and F. Edward Cranz (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1971), 245: “Theophrastus was practically unknown to western medieval thinkers.” See also idem, “Theophrastus in the Middle Ages,” *Viator* 2 (1971): 257-70. For some qualifications of this statement, see Pamela M. Huby, “Medieval Evidence for Theophrastus’ Discussion of the Intellect,” in *Theophrastus of Eresus: On His Life and Work*, ed. William W. Fortenbaugh (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1985), 165-81. Stephen A. Walton, “Theophrastus on *Lyngurium*: Medieval and Early Modern Lore from the Classical Lapidary Tradition,” *Annals of Science* 58 (2001): 358. See also R. W. Sharples, “Some Medieval and Renaissance Citations of Theophrastus,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984): 186-90. For the works in question, see Schmitt, “Theophrastus,” 246: “The *De historia plantarum* and *De causis plantarum*, which reestablished Theophrastus as a scientific author of major importance and which represent the major botanical works extant from antiquity, were recopied many times during the years between the time of Aurispa’s bringing the first manuscript to Italy and the *editio princeps* of 1497. These works were first translated into Latin for Pope Nicolas V by Theodorus Gaza about 1450 and the first of the many printed editions of this version appeared in 1483.” “The botanical works were reprinted often during the sixteenth century, both in Greek and in Gaza’s translation, and several commentaries were written on them….Michelangelo Biondo translated Books I-III of the *De historia plantarum* into Italian (Venice, 1549)” (ibid., 247). See also ibid., 252, 265-75.
just the disciplines most typically perceived as related to theology—in preparation for his lectures.

Another issue that arose was the use of the term *herba*. Vielmi clarified that “herbs” here were not meant to be taken as distinguished from plants but from trees. He then proceeded to observe that, “if we follow Aristotle and Theophrastus,” there are four species of plants: herbs, shrubs, trees, and under-shrubs (*phriganum*). There was some difficulty with the rendering of the last term; Vielmi noted that Guilandinus named this type of plant *cremium*. The professor of botany also wanted to add a fifth type, which he called *cyema*, which has only a single part, like the *tubera*, *mysis*, *cerausim*, and the *cerviboletus*. Vielmi did not weigh in on this rather daring proposal—at this point, the Venetian Dominican broke off from this matter and began to discuss the intentions of Moses in communicating God’s word regarding the fertility of trees. The academic community at Padua made it possible for a theologian to consult a leading botanist for his lectures on the third day of Creation. Because of their collaboration, the students in Vielmi’s lectures, moreover, learned about some of the most recent developments in an important scientific field.

Two of the natural philosophers towards the end of our period, Federico Pendasio and Francesco Piccolomini, also had strong connections to the Dominicans and offer

---


112 More research is necessary about precisely those plants to which Guilandinus was referring.

113 Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 336.
more explicit indications of what the natural philosophers thought about the Thomists. Most of the evidence heretofore has suggested positive relationships, but it has come primarily from the Dominicans themselves. Although both Pendasio and Piccolomini are now less famous than another philosopher of the period, Giacomo Zabararella, they were both prominent professors in the universities of northern Italy. Pendasio succeeded Genua in 1564 and taught in concurrence with Piccolomini until 1571. He briefly returned to his native city of Mantua before becoming professor of ordinary philosophy in Bologna from 1571 until his death in 1603.114 Piccolomini received his degree in 1546 from the University of Siena and taught philosophy at a number of universities before arriving in Padua in 1560, where he became extraordinary professor of natural philosophy. He became second chair and then, together with Pendasio, succeeded Genua as first ordinary chair of philosophy in 1565. Piccolomini taught natural philosophy at the University of Padua until his retirement in 1598 and, by the end, commanded the extremely high salary of 1400 florins.115

Medici indicated that he taught Pendasio, a man whom the Dominican believed to have been a very eloquent philosopher. Writing in 1558, the Dominican thought that Pendasio, along with others who had attended his lectures, would eventually “spring forth from our gymnasium as from the Trojan horse” in defense of Thomism.116 It was still quite early in Pendasio’s career. Medici also wrote to one of his bachelors, Angelo, from his year as Santa Maria Novella’s regent, who was then closely associated with Ercole

114 Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 556-62.
115 AAUP MS. 651, 352r.
Gonzaga. At the end of the letter, Medici asked Angelo to greet Pendasio on his behalf. Pendasio was then teaching in the cardinal’s court.

But more evidence exists for the academic interactions of Piccolomini with their colleague and the last Dominican professor studied here, Tommaso Pellegrini.

Piccolomini was the most highly paid natural philosopher at Padua in the sixteenth century, but he was not hesitant to recognize Pellegrini in one of his major works. Although Lollino and perhaps Beni had reservations about this Dominican metaphysician’s lectures, Piccolomini, one of the leading Italian natural philosophers of the century, had high regard for his mendicant colleague. He praised Pellegrini in his discussion of the Plato-Aristotle controversy. Rejecting some of the syncretistic tendencies characteristic of Renaissance philosophy, Piccolomini praised a number of leading philosophers for their willingness to acknowledge contradictions between Plato and Aristotle, such as Genua, Pendasio, Vincenzo Maggi, and Francesco Vicomercato. He included the “Reverend Tommaso Pellegrini” among those who “explain human

\[117\] Ibid., 454.
\[118\] Ibid., 465; Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 556.
\[120\] Before his retirement in 1598, he received a salary of 1,400 florins. See AAUP MS. 651, 328r.
wisdom.” Piccolomini believed that the Dominican’s teaching shone brightly and that “he surpassed all envy by his wisdom, his keen judgment, and his sublime genius.”

Piccolomini and Pellegrini were apparently associated with one another by a number of prominent students. Piccolomini’s modern biographer, A. Enzo Baldini, remarks on the good rapport between the two professors, supposedly based on a mutual affection for Plato, that is “confirmed by the fact that the students of Piccolomini customarily do not neglect to give thanks to Pellegrini as well in their works.” One example is Stefano Tiepolo’s *Academicarum contemplationum libri decem*, a work perhaps written by Piccolomini himself, whose dedicatory epistle mentioned that he had “made use of Tommaso Pellegrini and Francesco Piccolomini…not only in public lectures but even, most intimately (familiarissime), in domestic conversations.” The Dominican metaphysicians were apparently a part of the private teaching in Padua that was becoming a major challenge for university authorities of the time.

The links between Piccolomini and Pellegrini in the minds of students might have been a factor in attracting some important Protestant philosophers into Pellegrini’s orbit.

---

121 Francesco Piccolomini, *Universa philosophia de moribus* (Venice, 1583), 274. I want to acknowledge Lines, *Aristotle’s Ethics*, 282, which guided me to this passage. It is noteworthy that, after mentioning Pellegrini, Piccolomini identified some Italian thinkers who purified human wisdom with the help of divine wisdom. Pellegrini, the Dominican metaphysician, was not in their company.


123 Stefano Tiepolo, *Academicarum contemplationum libri decem* in quibus, et divini Platonis praecepiaue sententiae ordinatim explicantur, et Peripateticorum adversus illum calumniarum quamplurimae refelluntur (Venice, 1576), sig.[*]3r. For discussion of the authorship of this work, see Baldini, “Per la biografia,” 399-402. For another important student of Pellegrini, Antonio Querenghi, see Uberto Motta, *Antonio Querenghi (1546-1633): un letterato padovano nella Roma del tardo Rinascimento* (Milan, 1997), 7.

124 Grendler, *Universities*, 486-91. For a fascinating reference to private teaching in the course of Pellegrini’s 1568-69 lectures, see Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., 1v-2r: “Interim non negamus studiosis operam nostram, si qui privatim exegerint superiorum textuum explanationem.” It appears that Pellegrini was, in certain respects, allowing his discussion of Book 12 of the *Metaphysics* to depend upon what he said about Book 7 in the previous year. If a student would want to discuss that material, he was expressing his willingness to do so in private.
Before fleeing to Geneva in the middle of the 1570s, Giulio Pace, an important editor of Aristotle and Zabarella, studied philosophy at Padua between 1565 and 1570 and then law from 1570 to 1574. Although scholars have generally associated him with Zabarella, Pace, long after his exile from Italy (1587), boasted that he studied with particular professors, who could “never be praised enough”: Tommaso Pellegrini, Federico Pendasio, and Zabarella.\(^{125}\)

Even more detailed evidence exists for Philip Scherbius (Scherbe), a student of Thomas Erastus and Jakob Schegk and the founder of the school of Altdorf.\(^{126}\) Scherbius had studied philosophy and medicine at Basel and Heidelberg before coming to Padua in 1578.\(^{127}\) Michael Piccartus (Piccart), who studied and then taught at the Lutheran Academy of Altdorf, where Scherbius also taught logic, metaphysics, and medicine after 1586 until his death in 1605, wrote a letter that referred to Scherbius’ experience at the University of Padua.\(^{128}\) The letter was written in 1603 to Caspar Hofmann, who was also

---

\(^{125}\) Quoted in Antonio Franceschini, *Giulio Pace da Beriga e la giurisprudenza dei suoi tempi* (Venice, 1903), 21. For what it might be worth, Pace’s professors were listed in that order. See Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 546. Franceschini thought it necessary to correct a major biographer, F. Lambertico, who indicates that Pace only explicitly acknowledged Zabarella. See F. Lampertico, “Materiali per servire alla vita di Giulio Pace, giuresconsulto e filosofo,” *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti*, ser. 6, vol. 6 (1885-86): 751.

\(^{126}\) Schegk was a leading Aristotelian in Germany, a major Lutheran opponent of Ramism, and professor at the University of Tübingen from 1532 until his death in 1587. Lohr, “Authors Pi-Sm,” 718; Howard Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and Its German Ramifications, 1543-1630* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 102.

\(^{127}\) There was apparently some hesitation about Scherbius’ Italian studies among his earliest biographers. See Johann Jakob Baier, *Biographiae professorum medicinae qui in Academia Altorfina unquam vixerunt* (Nürnberg and Altdorf, 1728), 15: “Academiam Basileensem informasse ipsius studia, coniicere licet propter vicinam patriae, quamvis et in Italia versatum aliquandiu, haud incertis indicis credam.”

\(^{128}\) Lohr, “Authors Pi-Sm,” 721. He was also considered a founder of the School of Altdorf (even though the Academy was in existence since the early 1570s). See Charles H. Lohr, “Metaphysics,” in CHRP, 621. J. P. Felwinger, *Philosophia Altdorphina, hoc est, celeberrimorum quorumdam in in clita universitate Altdorphina professorum, nominatim Philippi Scherbi, Ernesti Soneri, Michaelis Piccar, dispositiones
a correspondent of William Harvey. The letter suggested that Scherbius did not want certain students to go to Italy for their studies. Piccartus asked whether he was hiding Italian treasures:

Do you hear nothing of Pellegrini on the *Metaphysics*? Would no one bring him forth? Or has Scherbius alone heard him? It is hard not to think that this is the case so that he might surpass some of you who would have heard and possessed him. O would that I could have held him! Believe me—griffins do not guard their gold as he guards his Pellegrini. ¹²⁹

Here the Dominican metaphysician was singled out in quite striking fashion from among the prominent philosophers teaching at Padua during Scherbius’ Italian sojourn, such as Zabarella and Piccolomini. Moreover, Pellegrini was still considered an important philosophical resource in the Lutheran Altdorf School about twenty years after his death. Though the nature of his sources remains unclear, Piccartus made use of Pellegrini in his own *Isagoge in lectionem Aristotelis*. As was true for Gianfrancesco Beato, Pellegrini’s teaching was also recalled for its vivid illustrations. In his chapter on the subject of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Piccartus was attempting to resolve the controversial issue regarding the place of God in this science. ¹³⁰ The Lutheran philosopher argued that metaphysics deals with being *qua* being, but God is still studied in this discipline insofar

---

¹²⁹ Georg Richter, *Epistolae selectiores* (Nürnberg, 1662), 579: “De Accorombonio plane dissuadet Scherbius, quaeo, quid Tibi videatur, mi Hofmanne, edoce. Scis illum, qualis fuerit saepe, itaque plene ei fidem non accommodo. De Pellegrino in Metaphys. nihil audis? nemo edet? an solus Scherbius eum audivit, vix est, ut credam, non superare aliquos apud Vos, qui eundem et audiverint et habeant. O utinam habere possim! Gryphes, credere mihi, non ita aurum suum custodiunt, ut ille suum Pellegrinum. Si tibi cum Cremonino, ut vix amibo, aliquid usus aut familiaritas, arripere occasionem, quamque ille Metaphysicorum Commentatorum aliiis antecerat exquire, et ad me refer.” It is also quite interesting that Piccartus appears to have Hoffmann to exploit any relationship that he might develop with Cesare Cremonini, the last of the famous “secular Aristotelians,” to acquire Pellegrini’s commentaries.

as God is the first substance and first being. Piccartus invoked Pellegrini’s story of inviting a king or prince to a banquet. When such a man is invited somewhere, one has also invited his retinue, even the most unimportant figures among his attendants. The first philosopher—the metaphysician—thus deals with God as the king of beings and, consequently, all the remaining beings by degrees.\footnote{Michael Piccartus, \textit{Isagoge in lectionem Aristotelis, hoc est, Hypotyposis totius philosophiae Aristotelis} (Altdorf, 1660), 269-70. This work was completed by Johannes Conradus Durrius after Piccartus’ death. See also ibid., 271, where Pellegrini is found in a list of recent philosophers holding a particular opinion, a list that included Mattia Gibboni da Aquario, Pedro Fonseca, Agostino Nifo, and Felice Accoramboni. The breaking point for being a “recent philosopher” seems to be around 1500 since Paolo Barbo along with Thomas Aquinas, Scotus, and Averroes were otherwise identified. See also ibid., 280: “Deinde responderi potest, ut Peregrinus olim Philosophiam primam omnia quidem cognoscere, sed non omnia considerare, id quod Doctor meus, a quo hanc Metaphysicorum delineationem didici, eique libens merito rescribo, ita declaravit: primus Philosophus omnia quidem cognoscit, qua sunt Entia, non tamen omnia cognoscit sub propria cuiusque ratione: considerat enim Equm, quatenus sub Ente consideratur, sed non considerat Equm qua Equm.”}

Pellegrini’s importance to the School of Altdorf has broader historiographical significance. The vestiges of an old claim that goes back at least as far as Jakob Brucker (1696-1770) still has some influence on historians of philosophy. The claim is that a purer, “non-scholastic” form of Aristotelianism was transmitted from the universities of northern Italy to Germany. The Lutheran Aristotelians of the Altdorf Academy like Scherbius play an important role in Brucker’s monumental history of philosophy as the links between Italy and Germany. Brucker believed that, after the Renaissance and the Reformation, philosophy began to be purified. Before the original, “eclectic” philosophers arose like Cardano, Bruno, Bacon, Descartes, Leibniz, the philosophy devoted to the ancient schools was cleansed from Arabic and Roman Catholic influence by the use of better methods, texts, and so on. The scholastic Aristotelians writing after the renewal of letters—almost all members of religious orders in Brucker’s account—
might have been a bit less barbaric, but they merely perpetuated the corrupt philosophy of the Arabs and the medieval scholastics. Those who first followed the “genuine philosophy of Aristotle” were Italians. Brucker pointed to Leonico, Pomponazzi, Zabarella, Piccolomini, Pace, and Cremonini, among others. The majority of his examples were associated with Padua in some way. The German Aristotelians came next. Melanchthon was the *praepostor Germaniae*, carrying on the pursuit of this “genuine Aristotelianism” that eventually came to dominate German universities. One of the main connections between the pure Aristotelianism of Italy and Germany was Scherbius. Brucker reported that Scherbius had “learned the original philosophy of Aristotle from the Italian Peripatetics”—indeed, he pointed to Pellegrini in particular and mentioned no one else by name. The disciples of Melanchthon had taught Aristotelian philosophy but, Brucker said, they did not “crawl into its innermost chamber.” “But Scherbius,” he continued, “having been transferred to the Altdorfian Muses, did not pursue the rivulets [proceeding from Melanchthon’s disciples] but led the youth to the fonts and the very writings of Aristotle.” In conclusion, it was especially Scherbius who “restored the sincere philosophy of Aristotle among the Germans; what he believed to reign…among the Italians, he also bestowed upon his own people.” Given Brucker’s profound antipathy for the scholasticism nourished by the religious orders, it is ironic that Pellegrini, the Dominican metaphysician, was the point of connection for the genuine Aristotelians of Italy and Germany. Brucker did not know that Pellegrini was a

---

133 Ibid., 297.
134 Ibid., 297-98.
Dominican. If Brucker would have been informed of this fact, Pellegrini almost certainly would not have represented the pure Aristotelianism of Italy and Germany because of his membership in one of the religious orders and the influence of medieval scholastic Aristotelianism upon him—by way of Thomas Aquinas. But it is true that Pellegrini the Dominican made a major impact on Scherbius. Renaissance Thomism in Padua did have a role in the flourishing Germany Aristotelianism at the turn of the seventeenth century.\footnote{Perhaps the realities of Altdorf Aristotelianism might make Scherbius’ and Piccartus’ use of Pellegrini less surprising—indeed, the key issues involved pertain directly to the use made of Pellegrini by Piccartus. See Giuseppe Micheli, “The History of Philosophy in Germany in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century,” in \textit{Models}, 429.} The Protestants who came to study at the university (and even some who did not) recognized the high reputation of mendicant professors like Pellegrini.

Other Protestants had attended the lectures of Dominicans before Scherbius. Interestingly enough, they did not limit themselves to the lectures on Aristotelian metaphysics but also went to the Thomist lectures on theology. Joachim Cureus of Freistadt was a disciple of the elderly Melanchthon. He arrived in Wittenberg around 1550, received the degree of master of philosophy in 1554, and then left for Italy to study medicine in September 1557. Cureus was not in Padua for long because he received his degree in medicine from Bologna on 10 September 1558.\footnote{Lynn Thorndike, \textit{A History of Magic and Experimental Science}, vol. 5 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 403-04; idem, \textit{University Records and Life in the Middle Ages} (New York: W. W. Norton \& Company, Inc., 1975), 373-76. Cureus had an important role in the Lutheran controversies over crypto-Calvinism. Incidentally, some scholars have suggested that theology was not taken seriously in Italy because of the speed with which a student could acquire a degree. Cureus’ reception of a degree after studying there for less than half of an academic year provides helpful context.} His biographer, Johannes Wildpräter (Ferinarius), began his account of Cureus’ time in Padua by saying that “the
best doctrine is that which is drunk in *viva voce*; the living voice has a latent energy.137

The description first addressed Cureus’ studies with the professors of medicine. There were certain professors, such as Hieronymus Cappivaccius, who was a youth that “Germans heard eagerly.” Gabriele Fallopio was a professor most helpful to students who were very fond of him. But, during his stay at Padua, the Lutheran student went to the mendicant lectures on theology and metaphysics. Cureus was described as homesick, not enjoying Italian food and desiring the stove-heated rooms of Germany, but Italian elegance (*mundities*) and the lectures at Padua restored him to health. Those healing lectures were not only delivered by the physicians. Wildpräter’s account started the discussion of some professors of arts with “a certain Dominican” who taught theology, “a man of great dignity, skillful, eloquent, and, as it appeared, not ignorant of truth.” He was speaking of Vielmi.138 The account also remarked upon the fact that the Dominican theologian was not slavish to the scholastic doctors: “now and then he limited a conclusion (conclusio) of the scholastics such that he in fact denied and overthrew it (*eas*).” Vielmi’s concurrent, also said to be lecturing on the Sentences, was simply described as a Franciscan of the collegium of St. Anthony and “very witty (*argutus*).”

Valdina, also unnamed, one of “two monks who interpreted the books of the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle,” was “a young man of great genius” and “a follower of St. Thomas, as all of his order.” But the only one of the mendicant theologians to be named was Malafossa da Barge.

---

137 I consulted the translation in *University Records* carefully, but I made substantial changes in my translation of Melchior Adam, *Vitae eruditorum cum Germanorum tum exterorum* (Frankfurt, 1705), 91. Discontinuous pagination—see *Vitae Germanorum medicorum*.

138 AAUP MS. 651, 226r, records the *principia* for 1557. The five mendicant professors for that year were Girolamo Vielmi, Girolamo Girelli, Adriano Valentico, Gianmatteo Valdina, and Giacominco Malafossa da Barge.
Barge, also from the collegium of St. Anthony, described as a “curved, shrunken, humble, and witty old man,” who was “supremely well-versed in Aristotle and in the books of the scholastics, with a sure memory that was nothing short of miraculous.” The elderly Franciscan was “dexterous in teaching, clear, and extraordinarily funny” and was “a follower of Scotus, as all in his sect (secta).” Wildpräter was quite clear that his diligent effort in attending these lectures was not in vain; Cureus became “very knowledgable in the teachings of the scholastics.” It is worth noting that he heard the lectures of all four professors of theology and metaphysics in a single year. Even though the two professors in each discipline taught at the same hour, Cureus did not commit to the lecture cycle of only one of the two. Furthermore, it is remarkable that, besides the mendicants, Wildpräter only mentioned two other professors teaching in the arts curriculum (excluding medicine): Marcantonio Genua and Ambraccio dell’Ale. As was the case with Medici, Genua was described in glowing terms by Cureus’ biographer:

He was venerated as a divinity (numen) throughout Italy, and there was no auditorium more august than his. The most noble and powerful men attended his lectures—bishops and counts in great number and among the first of the Venetian nobility….Our [Cureus] said that he was especially indebted to him because he was imbued by him with a knowledge of the true Aristotelian philosophy.  

139 Lest one think that the Protestant physician’s interest in the professors of theology and metaphysics suggested a tepid commitment to the Lutheran cause, it is instructive to hear Wildpräter’s accounts of Cureus’ attendance at the Good Friday sermons at Il Santo. He despised the theatricality of a Franciscan preacher, who was reading out Pilate’s

---

139 Adam, Vitae, 91. Note that he would have studied Aristotelian philosophy at Wittenberg.
condemnation of Jesus, running around the pulpit and shaking chains. In the evening, the bishop with the canons led a huge crowd of people to Christ’s funeral. Women followed with wailing and weeping. Other aspects of Roman Catholic piety like the golden crosses and processions seem to have astonished Cureus during his stay in the Veneto.\footnote{Ibid., [92] (p. 84 in text).}

From the late-fifteenth century until the second half of the sixteenth century, the Dominicans and laymen at Padua studying natural philosophy had friendly associations with one another. The friar-professors generally had a good reputation among those studying or teaching natural philosophy. Philosophers like Pomponazzi admired his Dominican professor, while the Dominicans, Pasquali and Medici, praised their lay teachers of natural philosophy, Pomponazzi and Genua, in quite vivid terms. Medici supported the Averroistic efforts of his teacher, Zimara, after his death. Pellegrini encouraged private teaching and discussion of philosophy with Piccolomini. Even Protestants fondly remembered the teaching of the Dominican professors of Padua, with a major Lutheran philosopher like Piccartus describing one of the friars as a hidden treasure of which he was deprived.\footnote{Although it does not affect my argument, I should note that there are a number of cases where a student’s time at Padua was described without mentioning the mendicant professors. See Thorndike, \textit{University Records}, 385, describing Wolfgang Meurer’s time at the University of Padua.} The dismissive attitude of modern scholars about the mendicant role at the University of Padua does not reflect the perspective of the most important contemporaries of the Dominicans who taught there. There were strong connections between Renaissance scholasticism and secular Aristotelianism in this academic community. Any effort to juxtapose these two currents of thought must take that context into account.
Conclusion

There is an abundance of evidence that humanists and Aristotelian natural philosophers, both often assumed to be opponents of Thomism, had a great deal of respect for their Dominican colleagues and teachers—a sentiment which was undoubtedly mutual. Collegiality between these lay academics and the friar-professors was a characteristic, if not universal, feature of Padua’s intellectual community. These relationships contributed to some substantial scholarly achievements, with humanists like Faseolo helping to publish Vielmi’s major work on Thomas Aquinas and Dominicans like Medici editing Zimara’s monumental Averroistic achievement. The education that many of these Dominican professors received at the university prepared Paduan Thomism for its own intellectual contributions in lectures and printed works. Any Thomistic criticisms of other currents of thought discussed in this study were enriched by this formation, and these criticisms must be understood in the context of the general irenicism of this milieu. The friar-professors were not on the fringes at Padua but active participants in the greatest university of the Italian Renaissance.
Chapter 4  
Renaissance Thomism in the Lecture Hall

The Dominican professors lectured on theology and metaphysics in *via S. Thomae* throughout the academic year. The theologians had a four-year cycle that covered all four books of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. The metaphysicians had a three-year cycle that took books 1, 7, and 12 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as points of departure. The curriculum and the Thomistic orientation of the professorships might make them appear almost as anachronisms in this period. But these positions were not vestiges of the Middle Ages; rather, they were created by the Venetian Senate in the second half of the fifteenth century. Humanists and major Aristotelian natural philosophers respected these professors and attended their courses. The Dominican professors who taught these courses had a rigorous formation and originally came from the same elite families as many of their students as well as the professors in other disciplines. Scholars have nonetheless dismissed the chairs of theology and metaphysics throughout Italy as the least original elements in the universities.¹ But the lectures and other academic activities of the Dominican professors at Padua have never been examined before. It turns out that their teaching was innovative in a number of ways. Their lectures certainly drew from new texts made available by humanists and substantially engaged with contemporary debates and trends. Even their debates with the Franciscan colleagues who taught theology and metaphysics *in via Scoti*—and it is difficult to think of something more “medieval” or “scholastic” than debates about metaphysics between Dominican Thomists

¹ Grendler, *Universities*, 392.
and Franciscan Scotists—show the influence of major intellectual currents of the day. The syncretism characteristic of Florentine intellectuals like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola was explicitly invoked to ground the fundamental harmony between the scholastic schools. This concordism as well as the humanist critiques of sectarian infighting between Scotists and Thomists forced the Dominicans to articulate what it meant for a Christian theologian to take a master like Thomas Aquinas. Renaissance humanism thus made a decisive impact on the teaching of the Dominican professors at the University of Padua.

The Lectures

Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* and Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* were certainly traditional fare. But knowing the base text for lectures only provides a part of the story. The language of academic statutes can be misleading. In the sixteenth century, professors took these major academic texts as a springboard for complex inquiries into the proper interpretation of the text as well as for examination of the theoretical concerns involved in a particular passage. Just because professors were lecturing on old texts written by Roman lawyers, Hippocrates, Galen, Aristotle, or Peter Lombard should not obscure the possibilities for innovation in their teaching.²

Almost no direct evidence of the Dominican professors’ academic activities survives for the period from 1465 to the 1540s, though we do have some indications

---

² See the Appendix for a brief description of Vielmi’s lectures on Genesis. It may provide further insight into the pace of lectures and perhaps into what it meant to cover a particular passage from a traditional text.
about the theology teaching of Gaspare da Perugia in the 1520s. One of the few hints about the nature of the lectures from this long period is found in Sisto Medici’s own ten-volume *Stromata*, the extensive collection of lectures, notes, letters, and other personal writings of the friar who taught theology at Padua from 1545 to 1553. As a student, Sisto Medici recorded one of Gaspare da Perugia’s lectures on theology delivered in 1527. In his lecture, Gaspare addressed Book 1 of the *Sentences*, distinction 8, on whether the soul is whole in the whole body and is whole in each part. It is hazardous to generalize on the basis of a single lecture, but in the late 1520s, the theologian *in via S. Thomae* was structuring his lectures, by all appearances, according to the order of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. Nevertheless, much of the content came from Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae*.\(^5\) Gaspare’s subject for the day was the “location” of the soul in the body.

Peter Lombard had taken up chapter four of this *distinctio* to address the simplicity (and non-simplicity) of the corporeal and spiritual creature, which is where the issue of the soul’s wholeness in every part of the body arises in the classic textbook of theology. Thomas Aquinas took up this issue as a distinct *quaestio* in his commentary on the *Sentences*, Book 1, d. 8, art. 3. And Thomas dealt with it again in the *Prima pars* of his *Summa theologiae*, q. 76, art. 8. The fact that Gaspare was using the *Sentences* to serve as the fundamental principle of organization and textual basis for Gaspare’s lectures is

---

\(^3\) Besides the hints about the positions of Securo, Merlino, and d’Ippolito in the lectures of Pietro Pomponazzi and the disputations of Antonio Trombetta, very little, if anything, exists for the period before the War of the League of Cambrai.

\(^4\) BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MSS. 58-66 and Archivio del Sacro Eremo MS. 1202.

\(^5\) See Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 165-67, for a discussion of how Thomas Aquinas’ teaching in his *Scriptum* (on the *Sentences*) and the *Summa theologiae* shaped Dominican education in the fourteenth century. This is true despite the fact that the *Summa* did not replace the *Sentences* as the basic textbook for instruction.
indicated by the title of the lecture in Medici’s notes, which made explicit reference to the *Sentences*. But Gaspare’s Dominican formation and, perhaps most importantly, the fact that he was teaching theology *in via S. Thomae* might have pushed him to state rather quickly that St. Thomas treated this issue not only in his commentary on the *Sentences* but also in the article of the *Summa* just mentioned. He even remarked upon Aquinas’ treatment of the topic in his *Quaestiones de anima*, q. 10.6

The lecture, however, did not merely give an exposition of the Lombard’s or Aquinas’ view of the subject. These lectures certainly did not remain in the context of twelfth- and thirteenth-century debate on these topics. Gaspare addressed fourteenth-century opponents and defenders of Thomas Aquinas’ teaching. The major objections handled in the lecture were those of the controversial Dominican, Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, and Scotus. Durandus’ Thomistic opponent, Durandellus, and some unnamed Averroists also seem to have made appearances.7 It is especially worth noting that relatively recent figures, such as Paolo Barbo (d. 1495), who was Gaspare’s teacher, and even his living contemporary, Cardinal Cajetan (d. 1534), were named in the lecture.8

The significant amount of manuscript and printed evidence from the academic activity of Sisto Medici and Gianfrancesco Beato in the 1540s and their students, Girolamo Vielmi, Gianambrogio Barbavara, and Tommaso Pellegrini, offer much more

---

6 BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV M/S. 66, 229r. Note that the *Quaestiones de anima* are divided into articles now. Article 10 states, “utrum anima sit in toto corpore et qualibet parte eius.”

7 BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 66, 112v: 229v, 232r (Scotus); 231rv (Durandus); 230r (Averroists – of course, these might be from any point between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries); Durandellus (232r).

8 Ibid., 232v, and Medici put in the margin, “eius praceptor.” See Tavuzzi, “Gaspare,” 600-02, though scholars do not appear to have known about this lecture. For Cajetan, see ibid., 235v.
detail about the shape of the teaching in via S. Thomae at Padua. In the case of theology, the most important discovery is that many of these lectures from the 1540s to the 1570s were not based on the statutory text at all. Instead of Peter Lombard’s Sentences, many year-long lecture cycles were based on Thomas Aquinas’ Summa theologiae. And the lectures went through the Summa at a quite deliberate pace. In Sisto Medici’s first year of teaching at Padua (1545-46), the Dominican professor of theology spent the first nine lectures on Q. 22 of the Prima pars on divine providence,9 and he addressed Q. 23 on predestination from his tenth until his twenty-sixth lecture, basically moving article by article.10

For the 1550-51 academic year, the details about a full academic year of scholastic theology in via S. Thomae survive. Medici’s lectures began on 4 November 1550 with Q. 44 of the Prima pars, the beginning of Thomas Aquinas’ treatise on Creation. He completed this quaestio in his twelfth lecture on 24 November 1550.11 Medici moved a bit more briskly through Q. 45, completing eight articles in only eleven lectures on 10 December 1550.12 Gianambrogio Barbavara, who was then bachelor of the Sentences in S. Agostino’s studium, substituted for about seven of his lectures shortly after he began QQ. 46-47, which he only completed in his thirty-seventh lecture. QQ. 48-49 on evil and its cause took up all the lectures of the Lenten season. The biblicus in S.

---

9 Ibid., 89v: “Q. 23 de predestinatione: Articulus primus.”
10 See also ibid., 91v, where, it seems, he began Q. 23, art. 8, in his twenty-sixth lecture.
11 Ibid., 147r. He began art. 2 in lecture 5, art. 3 in either lecture 9 or lecture 10, art. 4 in lecture 11.
12 Ibid., 147rv. He completed each article in no more than a single lecture (finishing arts. 7-8 in lecture 23 on 10 December) except for article 1, which probably involved an introduction to the question as a whole, and article 5 (lectures 18-21), which argues that only God can truly create anything. It has a rather long corpus; indeed, noted that he addressed the third and fourth parts of the corpus in lectures 20 and 21, respectively.
Agostino, who was almost certainly Giambattista Pipi da Sicilia, took over for four lectures before Medici skipped to Q. 103 on 6 April 1551, where Medici would have begun to deal with Aquinas’ treatise on the government of creatures. He thus decided not to deal with angels (QQ. 50-64), things inferior to man or “the six days” (QQ. 65-74), and human beings (QQ. 75-102). Medici was occupied with Q. 103 from lecture 58 to lecture 71, and he examined the following question until 9 June (lecture 84). He concluded this lecture cycle with fifteen lectures on Q. 105 (lectures 84-98), which addresses how God moves creatures, concluding on 11 July 1551 with four final lectures (lectures 99-102) on Q. 106. In a whole year of lectures—and 102 lectures in an academic year was relatively high—Medici covered just ten questions of one part of the Summa theologiae.

Medici’s use of the Summa put Padua’s chair of theology in via S. Thomae in the middle of important developments in sixteenth-century theology. Thomas Aquinas intended the Summa theologiae as a text for intermediate instruction in theology in his order. While the views of Thomas expressed in the Summa certainly informed Dominican teaching throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the traditional Sentences of Peter Lombard continued to dominate education even in the order’s

---

13 ASPd MS. 262, 87v, 90r, 91v.
14 BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 149r.
15 Ibid., 149r-150r.
schools. From the decades before the turn of the sixteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century, the *Summa* actually began to be used in (at least some) public university lectures at Freiburg, Paris, Pavia, and Salamanca. By the end of the sixteenth century, this list would also include the University of Louvain, the *Sapienza*, and the Collegio Romano. The Dominican professor of theology at the University of Padua was taking part in these trends. And the *Summa* continued to give structure to theology lectures in the work of Medici’s two successors and students, Vielmi and Barbavara.

Medici’s successor, Girolamo Vielmi, actually showed a willingness to break with both the *Sentences* and the *Summa* at times. His 1558 lectures on penance have survived, though in an incomplete form. He said that instruction on this particular sacrament had

---

17 Mulchahey, *Dominican Education*, 141. Some lectors were actually reprimanded for the use of the *Summa* alone. See ibid., 155-56, 165-66, 553. See also ibid., 160-67, 214-16. Incidentally, the *Summa theologiae* was the basis for organizing Medici’s lectures as regent of the *studium generale* of S. Agostino in 1545. See BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 60r-71r.

18 See Simona Langella, “Le innovazioni di Francisco de Vitoria all’università di Salamanca e la loro istituzionalizzazione,” in *Innovazione filosofica e università tra Cinquecento e primo Novecento* (Padua, 2011), 51-70. Note that the famous introduction of the *Summa* in the place of the *Sentences* by Francisco de Vitoria were not in keeping with Salamanca’s statutes; he introduced many of his lectures with a reference to where Thomas Aquinas’ discussion could be found in the Lombard. See Andrew Hegarty, “Carranza and the English Universities,” in *Reforming Catholicism in the England of Mary Tudor: The Achievement of Friar Bartolomé Carranza*, eds. John Edwards and Ronald W. Truman (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 166, for the introduction of the *Summa* at the University of Oxford during Mary Tudor’s reign.


20 Vielmi mentioned in *De scriptis* (1748), 113, that he had notes on the *Summa* that he hoped to publish, though this seems never to have occurred: “Itaque, ut ad Sumnam D. Thomae revertar, rapit me amor, quo in divinum opus a primis meorum studiorum annis feror, ut de eo latius, et particulatim scribam viamque ad eas, quas in eo illustrando adnotationes parturio, et quorum etiam causa de hoc praestantissimo Auctore nune scribere agressum sum, excursionie hac simul muniam, atque complanem.” See also Maccarinelli, “Commentarius,” 32. Admittedly, he did not explicitly say that these notes came from his period of teaching at Padua. Barbavara is addressed specifically below.
become very difficult.\textsuperscript{21} He observed that the theologians traditionally found nine distinctions in Book 4 of the \textit{Sentences} that involved penance, and the canonists dealt with penances in seven distinctions of Gratian’s \textit{Decretum}. Vielmi said that there was a great diversity of opinions: beyond the theologians and canonists, differences existed between the opinions of the ancient and modern heretics. Indeed, according to Vielmi, “almost all Catholics spoke most confusedly on this matter.” The exception, Vielmi believed, would have been the treatment of Thomas Aquinas in the \textit{Tertia pars}, where Aquinas “had wanted to bring much light and order (\textit{digestio}) to this matter and subject.”\textsuperscript{22} “But envious death,” he continued, “lest we have such a great good, bore him away before he entirely finished it.”\textsuperscript{23} Vielmi was referring to the fact that Thomas Aquinas stopped writing the \textit{Summa theologiae} in the middle of his treatise on penance.\textsuperscript{24} Aquinas did write seven questions on penance in the \textit{Tertia pars} (QQ. 84-90), while the \textit{Supplement} provides a further twenty-eight questions on \textit{Penance}, gathered by his students from his youthful commentary on the \textit{Sentences}.\textsuperscript{25} The combination of the concluding questions of the \textit{Summa} and the opening of the \textit{Supplement} has a reasonable structure for dealing with the subject of penance, but Vielmi believed that Thomas Aquinas’ untimely death was grounds for structuring his lectures according to his own design. He said, “We will now maintain the method and order of discussing [this

\textsuperscript{21} BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 1r-2r.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 2rv.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 2v.  
\textsuperscript{24} Torrell, \textit{Thomas Aquinas}, 289, quotes Bartholomew of Capua who said, “After that Mass [in autumn of 1273], he never wrote further or even dictated anything, and he even got rid of his writing material; he was working on the third part of the \textit{Summa}, on the treatise concerning penance.”  
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 147.
material] whereby we might keep this extremely vast issue within certain limits.” In the first lecture, he laid out his plan to cover this material in three stages that are rather different and much simpler in structure than what one finds in the Summa or the Sentences: (1) penance in itself, (2) the parts of penance, (3) what precedes and follows penance.

The surviving lectures of Vielmi’s successor, Gianambrogio Barbavara, also took the Summa as their general principle of organization. The mandate to teach theology in via S. Thomae had a substantial impact not only on their positions but also on the basic textbook for their courses. For Barbavara’s lecture on the Prima pars of the Summa theologiae, we have 201 folio pages that provide a substantial record of the lectures from a single academic year—far more detailed than the brief notes from Sisto Medici’s lectures. In this entire year, it seems that Barbavara actually addressed only the first question of the Prima pars on the nature of sacred doctrine.

None of the theologians whose lectures survive made any attempt to cover a substantial amount of material. Depth was being privileged over breadth in their university courses. Medici covered about ten questions of the Summa theologiae in a

---

26 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 2v.
27 Ibid. Combining the Summa and the Supplement, Thomas Aquinas’ organization is as follows: penance itself, its effects, its parts in general, its parts in particular, its recipients, the keys, and the rite of penance.
28 Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf. Note that the manuscript does not indicate the number of lectures, as seen in other lectures cycles from this period. See Tommaso Pellegrini’s teaching on Book 12 of the Metaphysics in Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., which contains eighty-four lectures and concludes on 249r. See also Charles Lohr, “Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries: Authors So-Z,” Renaissance Quarterly 35 (1982): 239, which indicates that Jacopo Zabarella gave sixty-seven lectures on Physics I, and the manuscript has 252 folio pages. Now, it should be acknowledged that his teaching on Physics VIII (see ibid.) amounted to sixty-seven lectures in 298 folio pages.
29 The last topic in the manuscript corresponds to the final article of Aquinas’ question: whether Sacred Scripture has multiple senses. This discussion begins on Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 184r, and Barbavara was discussing matters related to this question on the final page of the manuscript.
A robust academic year of 102 lectures. Vielmi’s lectures on penance were dedicated to one treatise of one part of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa*. Barbavara’s series of lectures took up only one question of the *Summa*. He clearly did not see his charge as coverage of the *Summa*, let alone the statutory text, Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. Barbavara wanted to give a detailed examination of the many themes raised by the first question on the *Summa* on the nature of theology, whether theology was a science, whether it was practical or speculative, and so on.

It is particularly noteworthy that the Milanese Dominican added matters for examination that had emerged more recently in works of theology. In the middle of these lectures on this particular question, Barbavara addressed an objection in his broader discussion of whether theology is a matter of argumentation. At this point, he invoked the distinction between arguments from authorities like Sacred Scripture and arguments that use natural reason for declaring (not for proving) the faith (*Summa* I, q. 1, art. 8, ad. 2). But the brevity of Thomas Aquinas’ discussion of how such arguments from authority function pushed Barbavara to provide a much more extensive discussion of authoritative sources in Christian theology. One of the most important works on this subject, *De locis theologicis*, by Barbavara’s Spanish confrere, Melchior Cano (d. 1560), had been published in 1563. It took the very same passage in the *Summa* as its point of departure.

---

30 Ibid., 105r.
31 See I, q. 1, art. 8, ad. 2: “Ad secundum dicendum quod argumentari ex auctoritate est maxime proprium huius doctrinae, eo quod principia huius doctrinae per revelationem habentur, et sic oportet quod credatur auctoritati eorum quibus revelatio facta est. Nec hoc derogat dignitati huius doctrinae, nam licet *locus* ab auctoritate quae fundatur super ratione humana, sit infirmissimus; locus tamen ab auctoritate quae fundatur super revelatione divina, est efficacissimus. Utitur tamen sacra doctrina etiam ratione humana, non quidem ad probandum fidem, quia per hoc tolleretur meritum fidei; sed ad manifestandum aliqua alia quae
Making use of Cano’s work, Barbavara’s discussion of authoritative sources in theology—Scripture, the pope, councils, and so on—takes up about one third of the manuscript (105r-172v). Barbavara thus lectured for a substantial number of days on just a few lines from one article of Aquinas’ *Summa*. Only then did he pick up discussion of Q. 1 of the *Summa* at its ninth article.

The use of cutting-edge material from a major theologian like Cano provoked Barbavara to address matters beyond the actual discussions contained in the *Sentences* or the *Summa*. Barbavara asked whether Sacred Scripture should be subjected to any human judgment, who should make a judgment regarding the canonical books, whether the

---

32 Cano’s work had thus made a substantial impact in Italy within a decade of its publication. Note that, according to his famous student, Domingo Bañez, Cano used an especially high style in order to make it attractive to a non-Spanish audience. See Domingo Bañez, *Scholastica commentaria in primam partem angelici doctoris S. Thomae usque ad LXIIII quaestionem* (Douai, 1614): “Nota quarto, quam sit necessarium praeceptori Theologo praesertim in schola dictanti, ab eloquenti, ornataque oratione abstinere, quoniam id sine dispendio multi temporis fieri nequit, et scholasticorum argumentorum vim, dictionis mollicies eneruat. Curet igitur praeceptor industrius, verborum proprietate res gravissemas breviter dilucidare, et quod uno verbo dici potest, duobus uti superfluum est. Frater Melchior Cano nostri ordinis magister sapientissimus praecptórque meus, dum in Sacrae Theologiae primaria cathedra Salmanticae dictabat, mirum erat, quanto verborum compendio, et orationis brevitate multa distincte complectebatur. Verum cum postea librum de locis Theologicis compositit, et antequam praelo mandaret, mihi legendum tradidisset, ut magister (quae sua erat modestia) discipuli iudicum quaereret, memini, me, postquam librum legi, praecceptor responsisse, doctrinae quidem gravitatem, profunditatemque plurimum mihi placuisse: tamen orationis continuum, affectatamque suavitatem displicuisse. Ille vero libenter meam obiectionem audiens ita rem se habere confessus est. *Sed eam excusationem adiecit, quod librum potius exteris nationibus scripsit, quae plurimum eloquentia delectantur, ut dictionis dulcedine allecti catholicam doctrinam imibherent.* Id quod ei provavit eventus. Nam apud Hispanos liber ille non tanti aestimatur, quantum doctrinae dignitas meretur. At vero reliqua nationes illum, et propter doctrinae utilitatem, et orationis suavitatem maximoque venerantur*” (emphasis added).

33 Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 105r.

34 Ibid., 112v. In these lectures, Barbavara discussed the primacy of the Roman Church (ibid., 118r, 129r), different synods (ibid., 124r-127r), the deuterocanonical books (129v), and so on.
authority of the Church or Scripture is greater, whether a theologian should draw arguments from tradition, what is the role of the teachings of the Church Fathers in theology, what is the role of natural reason, and whether it is licit to argue negatively from the authority of Scripture. A good number of these questions were not discussed in a sustained way by theologians in the Middle Ages. For instance, ecclesiological issues were treated by canon lawyers; theologians generally dealt with them in a more or less scattered fashion until the sixteenth century. At that time, extensive treatments of the canon of Scripture, the relative authority of Scripture and the Church, the authority of the Church Fathers, and the primacy of the pope were integrated into the structure of medieval texts which had discussed these issues rather briefly, if at all. The theologians at Padua were thus perfectly willing to make significant adjustments, even when they took the Summa as their fundamental guide. Like the other fundamental academic texts employed in Italian universities, the Summa could provide a framework for innovation on the part of the professors.

---

35 Ibid., 133r.
36 Ibid., 139r.
37 Ibid., 148v.
38 Ibid., 159r.
39 Ibid., 170r. In other words, is it licit for someone to conclude that there are not seven sacraments on the basis of the fact that Scripture never affirms that notion?
40 Wolfhart Pannenberg, Systematic Theology, vol. 3, trans. G. W. Bromiley (New York: Continuum International, 2004), 21-22. See Domingo Bañez, Scholastica commentaria in secundam secundae: de fide, spe, et charitate (Salamanca, 1584), where he wrote from col. 104 to col. 385 on Thomas Aquinas’ II-II, q. 1, art. 10: “Whether it belongs to the Sovereign Pontiff to draw up a symbol of faith.” To put this in perspective, Bañez’s commentary on II-II, q. 2, art. 1, goes from col. 387 to col. 388.
41 For the discussions of Thomas’ actual articles see Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 31r (art. 2), 51r (art. 3), 57v (art. 4), 69v (art. 5), 82r (art. 6), 88v (art. 7), 99v (art. 8), 173r (art. 9) [after the long discussion of loci theologici], 184r (art. 10).
42 Nancy G. Siraisi, Medicine and the Italian Universities, 1250-1600 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 344; idem, History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press,
But Barbavara did not always lecture on the *Summa*. In 1568-69, he based his teaching of theology *in via S. Thomae* on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. Very early in his lectures for the year, he said, “By a new decree of the most illustrious moderators [of the university],” they “summon me to the interpretation of the Master of the *Sentences*”; “nevertheless,” he continues, “they command that I produce…the *quaestiones* that the scholastic doctors construct, according to the *via* of St. Thomas.” Barbavara made a specific reference to his teaching *in via S. Thomae*. It is not entirely clear that there was a “new decree” ordering him to lecture on the *Sentences* rather than the *Summa*, but this is at least a possibility.

Unlike all the theologians examined above, Tommaso Pellegrini, the only professor of metaphysics *in via S. Thomae* whose lectures survive, did not structure his teaching in any discernibly Thomistic way. His lectures simply took up the major issues from the three most important books for each triennium of teaching (Bks. 1, 7, and 12 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*). Although there are some indications that Cajetan might have used Thomas Aquinas’ *De ente et essentia* as a way of organizing his metaphysics lectures in 1494, nothing of the sort can be seen in Pellegrini. As a professor of

---


43 It is likely, though not demonstrable at this time, that the lectures on the *Summa* preceded these lectures on the *Sentences*. No dates are given in Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf. I am not certain, but it is possible that he referred back to these lectures as his 1566 lectures in Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf. (1568-69), 9r, 27r.

44 Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 3r.

45 Barbavara had received a more general decree of re-appointment in September 1566, which was about two years before this statement. See Contarini, *Notizie*, 59.

46 The only basis for this suggestion about Cajetan, as far as I know, is the close proximity of the date of the commentary’s publication (1494) and his year of lecturing on metaphysics *in via S. Thomae* at the university (1493-94). The commentary itself does have some characteristics of a course of lectures.
metaphysics rather than theology, he believed that his role was to be an interpreter of Aristotle’s first philosophy.

The non-Thomistic structure of Pellegrini’s lectures was congruous with the non-Thomistic character of his exposition. While Thomas Aquinas and his followers were quoted very often in the lectures of Medici, Vielmi, and Barbavara, Pellegrini quoted Aquinas and the medieval schoolmen rather infrequently. Most lectures made no reference at all to Aquinas or to any medieval thinker. Moreover, Pellegrini displayed the intense interest in the Greek commentary tradition that often marks out Renaissance Aristotelianism. The Greek Peripatetic, Alexander of Aphrodisias, as well Averroes, the Islamic commentator and still major voice among philosophers at Padua, were quoted with the greatest frequency. Greek commentators such as John Philoponus, Simplicius, Themistius, and Michael of Ephesus received at least as much attention as any medieval thinker, including Thomas Aquinas. Whenever “the Latins” in contrast to the Greeks and the Arabs received general comment, the result was often negative. Indeed, Pellegrini was quite frank in his criticisms of Aquinas, even in regard to some of his fundamental metaphysical positions. He also seems to have been rather dismissive of some school debates. After presenting Thomas’ exposition of a particular issue, he made a very rare reference to Scotus, who, in Pellegrini’s words, “carps at the explanation of St. Thomas.” “The followers of St. Thomas,” Pellegrini continued, “say many things for his defense.”
But Pellegrini did not take this argument seriously. The Dominican metaphysician called the whole debate “a quarrel over goat wool”—a contention about trifles.⁴⁷

Although very little remains, the academic activity of Pellegrini’s teacher and predecessor as professor of metaphysics in via S. Thomae, Gianfrancesco Beato, had a similar character. He also quoted Latins, even Aquinas, quite rarely, though one does not find such frank challenges to Thomas. Beato’s work, Dubii nuper renati an Liber Praedicamentorum Aristotelis metaphysicus sit, an logicus...resolutio,⁴⁸ reflected the Dominican professor’s attempt to confirm his students in the position that the Categories is a work of logic, not one of metaphysics, in opposition to the work of Antonio Bernardi della Mirandola that had been circulating in Italian intellectual circles.⁴⁹ It is not a formal academic lecture, but it does reflect his academic activity at the University of Padua. Beato’s students—all laymen—insisted that Beato put his opinion in writing. Beato hesitated because of the burden of writing while also giving daily lectures. But his students offered to take down Beato’s dictations, which took place over the course of a few days, making it possible for Beato to publish the work in September of 1543. The work made no explicit references to Thomas Aquinas. This was also true of his Quaesita in quo Averois ostendit quomodo verificatur corpora Coelestia cum finita sint, et

⁴⁷ Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., 81r.
⁴⁸ The work might be listed as Ioannis Francisci Beati Praedicamenta in veterem auxiliatricis disciplinae locum servata (Venice, 1543).
possibilia ex se acquirant aeternitatem ab alio, which did not mention Aquinas even though it dealt with the eternity of the world, an issue that obviously has some prominence in Thomas Aquinas’ opera.\textsuperscript{50} Besides Averroes and Avicenna, Greek commentators such as Themistius, John of Philoponus, Simplicius, and others received sustained attention, often mediated by the works of the Commentator.\textsuperscript{51}

In Beato’s 1542 lectures on Book 2 of the \textit{Metaphysics},\textsuperscript{52} published with a dedication to Jacopo Sadoleto, he did mention Thomas Aquinas on a number of occasions.\textsuperscript{53} But Thomas was not central to Beato’s exposition of the text. Greeks like Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius were often mentioned,\textsuperscript{54} yet Asclepius of Tralles and Michael of Ephesus received the most attention of any Greek commentators.\textsuperscript{55} Averroes was probably referred to more than any other author and was occasionally praised, such as when Beato said that he explained one passage “more correctly than the Latins and Greeks,” though this was in spite of being “an Arab.”\textsuperscript{56}

Specific Latin authors made rare appearances—for instance, Cajetan was mentioned as was John of Jandun, a fourteenth-century Latin Averroist, who was very popular among

\textsuperscript{50} There is no publication information for this item. It is a very rare item in the Biblioteca Marciana, whose shelf-mark is Misc. 2455.002. It appears that the question was addressed in Padua on 4 September 1542 by way of an explanation of Averroes’ \textit{De substantia orbis}, chap. 7. This is before the academic year had begun; I am not certain about the exact provenance of this activity.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., sig.a2r, sig.c2r, sig.d1v-sig.d2r.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ioanni Francisci Beati in librum secundum Metaphysicae interpretatio: in qua, certis rationibus ostenditur, eum librum ad Metaphysicam omnino non pertinere, sed esse proemium secundi libri de auscultatione Physica} (Venice, 1543).

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., sig.d3r, sig.f1v, sig.g3v-g4r, sig.h1rv, sig.h2v, sig.k3r.

\textsuperscript{54} Alexander: ibid., sig.b2r., sig.d4r, sig.k3r, sig.l1r; Themistius: ibid., sig.c2r, sig.c3r, sig.h1rv, sig.h4rv.

\textsuperscript{55} Michael: ibid., sig.a4v, sig.e3v, sig.f1r, sig.f2v, sig.g2v-sig.g3r, sig.g4r, sig.h4v, sig.k1r, sig.k3r; Asclepius: ibid., sig.b1r, sig.b3r, sig.d1v, sig.d3v, sig.e3v, sig.g4r, sig.h4v, sig.l1rv.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., sig.g4v. Other references are found on ibid., sig.b2r, sig.c1r, sig.c1v (as Commentator), sig.c2r-sig.c3r. Indeed, there are few pages in which Averroes’ commentary was not mentioned. Beato linked the Commentator and the Latins on ibid., sig.e3v.
Paduan natural philosophers. A more or less contemporary professor of natural philosophy at Padua, Marcantonio Zimara, was brought up; he was criticized for his interpretations of Themistius, Averroes, and Thomas Aquinas. It is especially noteworthy, given the widespread notion that the Thomists and Scotists were locked in perpetual struggle, that John Duns Scotus was not mentioned a single time. The teaching on Aristotelian metaphysics of Beato and Pellegrini look quite similar to that of their lay Aristotelian colleagues who taught natural philosophy. These Dominican metaphysicians frequently engaged with the major commentaries of Alexander and Averroes, they criticized some of their contemporaries (often those who had taught or were teaching at the University of Padua), they drew substantially on the Greek commentary tradition, and they made rather infrequent references to the Latins. One would expect that metaphysics in via S. Thomae would be much more Thomistic. TheseDominicans were giving the students what they wanted: a deep engagement with Aristotle’s metaphysical teaching according to the conventions of university teaching at Padua.

In contrast to the metaphysicians, the Latins—the intellectual tradition of medieval Christendom—had a much more central position in the lectures of the theologians in via S. Thomae at Padua from Medici to Barbavara. Almost every brief summary of Sisto Medici’s lectures from 1545 to 1553 stated that the lecture was presenting the position of Thomas Aquinas against the objections of later—usually

57 Cajetan, the “most reverend cardinal,” on ibid., d2v; John on sig.g2rv, sig.g4v. See Casini, “Renaissance Debate,” 133. General references to the Latins occur throughout, e.g., on Beato, Librum secundum, sig.a2r, sig.a3r-sig.b1r, sig.d2r. More research must be done to determine whether Beato was referring to consensus positions, the interpretations of Aquinas, or some other figure.
58 Ibid., sig.h1r.
fourteenth-century—authors. Cajetan’s commentaries on the *Summa* were clearly one of Medici’s key texts, being mentioned in the short account of almost every lecture.\(^{59}\) Medici drew from Thomas Aquinas’ other works such as the *Summa contra gentiles*. When he referred to this work, he generally mentioned the other important sixteenth-century Thomistic commentator, Francesco Silvestri da Ferrara.\(^{60}\) Medici most frequently dealt with Scotus’ objections,\(^{61}\) though Peter Auriol (d. 1322) occasionally appeared in Medici’s lecture notes.\(^{62}\)

The Thomistic character of the lectures of Vielmi and Barabavara were clear from the structure and many of the positions defended by them. They also drew quite extensively from the Latin tradition of theology, Thomistic and non-Thomistic. The evidence from the complete lectures of Vielmi and Barbavara provides more information than Medici’s notes. Medici was moving a bit more briskly through the *Summa*. Cajetan’s commentaries provided most of the major points for interrogation in his lectures. The slower pace might have allowed Vielmi and Barbavara to cite a greater range of Latin authors in their lectures. They referred to fourteenth-century authors like Scotus,

---

\(^{59}\) This may provide some evidence for the idea that Cajetan’s commentaries on the *Summa* were in some way a precondition for that text becoming truly available as a university textbook. Perhaps the same thing might also be true of the Dominican *studia*. Medici also mentioned Cajetan’s commentary on *De ente et essentia* (BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 150v).

\(^{60}\) BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 150r. See also ibid., 127r, 141v. Medici referred to other works of Thomas such as *Quaestiones disputae de potentia* (ibid., 150r). It is possible that Medici was using Prierias’ *Conflatum*, though more investigation is needed (ibid., 137r). I also think that he was using another important Italian Dominican thinker of the era, Chrysostom Javelli (ibid., 132v, 137r).

\(^{61}\) Ibid., 102v, 105r, 106r, 137r, 141rv, 142v, 154rv, 160r, 161r. Scotus’ arguments may have been drawn by Medici from Cajetan in some cases (ibid., 142v).

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 141v, 161r,
Durandus, Gregory of Rimini, and Peter Auriol. The leading Carmelite theologian, John Baconthorpe (d. 1345/8), also made a few appearances, perhaps because of the important Carmelite studium generale in Padua as well as his importance to the natural philosophers at Padua. Contemporaries of Aquinas like Bonaventure and Albert the Great were given some attention as well. But they also addressed earlier medieval figures like Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Hugh of St. Victor as well as the substantive positions—not merely the arrangement of topics—of Peter Lombard. Vielmi and Barbavara made use of medieval canon lawyers such as Gratian and Panormitanus. Vielmi engaged Thomists besides the major commentators, Cajetan and Silvestri, such as John Capreolus and Peter Palude, and he did not ignore scholastic theologians after the fourteenth century like Thomas Netter (Waldensis), Gabriel Biel, Adrian Boeyens (Adrian VI), and Andreas de Vega.

---

63 Scotus: BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 43v, 77r, 87v, 89r, 92r, 94v, 104r, 105v; Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 26v; Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 35v, 100r; Durandus: BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 24v, 41v, 47v, 57v; Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 32v, 64v, 93r (“Haec Durandi positio multifariam reprehensibilis est”); Gregory of Rimini: BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 31r; Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 64v; Peter Auriol: Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 56v, 100v.
64 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 43v, 94v; Ambrosiana MS. D 372 inf., 81v; Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 99r. See Simon Nolan, “John Baconthorpe,” in Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 594-97, esp. 595. One might compare the use of Baconthorpe in Padua and Salamanca or Paris to determine if the Paduan Dominicans were really taking part in these local prioritizations of medieval thinkers.
65 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 91v, 94r, 109r; Ambrosiana MS. D 372 inf., 81v; Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 56v.
66 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 9r, 12v, 86v, 109v, 131r; Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 94v; Ambrosiana MS. D 372 inf., 56v.
67 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 51r, 85v, 87v, 124r. Note also the frequent references to John the Glossator by Vielmi (ibid., 85v, 89r, 91r, etc.) See Ambrosiana MS. D 380 inf., 119r.
68 Though one might point out Vielmi’s use of Cajetan’s commentary on Scripture (BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 96v). See also ibid., 41r, 48r, 58r, 102v, 104r, 106r-107r.
69 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 43v, 81v, 94v.
70 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 8r, 9r, 31r, 78r, 93r, 104r. Thomas Netter (Waldensis) (d. 1430) was an English Carmelite theologian and opponent of John Wycliffe. Vega was a major Franciscan theologian at the Council of Trent.
Most importantly, Vielmi and Barbavara made substantial use of non-scholastic sources. They drew extensively on the Church Fathers. They also drew upon recent writers among the humanists and took some opportunities to criticize the Protestant Reformers. Yet the medieval theologians obviously drew upon the Church Fathers. The difference that marks them out as Renaissance Thomists was that Vielmi and Barbavara drew upon the humanistic scholarship on the Church Fathers. For instance, Vielmi’s lectures on penance attempted to establish that certain aspects of confession existed in the ancient church by drawing on the testimony of the Fathers. When he referred to Tertullian’s view of priestly absolution, he counseled his audience to consult the scholarly annotations of Beatus Rhenanus.\(^{71}\) In his later lectures on Genesis, Vielmi discussed the creation of human beings and employed Juan Luis Vives’ annotations on Augustine’s *City of God* to show that Jerome and the Bishop of Hippo were in agreement on the particular point.\(^{72}\) Vielmi was critical of some of the more radical conclusions of Erasmus and Cajetan in their rendering of Scriptural passages as well as their views about the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but his lectures frequently show that he consulted many of the Latin translations of Scripture that had been done in recent decades.\(^{73}\) He also considered rabbinic treatments of Genesis.\(^{74}\) Many such moments in the lectures could be adduced. There is little doubt that the increased access to the


\(^{72}\) Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 311.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., 18-19.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 28, 30, 37, etc.
writings of the Church Fathers and recent humanist scholarship had made a difference in Padua’s theology lectures.

Sensitivity to historical context in the lectures of these theologians might be seen in small but still interesting ways. In his lectures, Vielmi generally made it a point to note the years when any theologian “flourished”—from the Fathers of the second century to theologians like Cajetan who had died relatively recently. He even made observations about the contemporaneity of Christian writers such as the relationship between Polycarp and Irenaeus. 75 When he was addressing the opinions of Hugh and Richard of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux, Vielmi noted the fact that they were all “contemporaneous” and that they all flourished around the year 1140. 76 Many of these dates appear to have been drawn from the scholarship of Abbot Trithemius’ De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis. 77 This sort of historical consideration is not something one sees so clearly in medieval lectures on theology.

The lectures of the Dominican theologians at Padua were not simply readings of Peter Lombard’s Sentences supported by Thomas Aquinas’ commentary. In many cases, as was the case in a number of other university centers in the period, they based their teaching on the Summa and were even willing to make adjustments to the structure of that base text. The Dominican teaching certainly had a Thomistic character, but it drew upon the historical and textual scholarship of humanists and engaged substantially with theologians from long before Aquinas—the Church Fathers in particular—and with

75 BAV Vat. lat. MS. 4633, 119rv.
76 Ibid., 131r.
77 Ibid., 116r.
theologians up to their own day. Neither could the academic activity of the Dominican
metaphysicians have been predicted from the language of the statutes, though for
different reasons. The instruction to teach metaphysics in via S. Thomae had no impact on
the structure of the lectures at all. The Dominicans simply lectured on the major themes
in Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Even the content had almost no discernibly Thomistic
character. Rather than collapsing the distinction between theology and Aristotelian
philosophy—or being parts of a “religious studies offering” of the university\textsuperscript{78}—the only
real connection between the lectures on theology and metaphysics at Padua was that they
were given by friars.

\textit{The Chair of Sacred Scripture}

The use of the \textit{Summa theologiae} in university lectures on scholastic theology was an
important innovation that participated in broader European developments. The use of the
\textit{Summa} instead of Peter Lombard’s \textit{Sentences} may have begun before the tenure of Sisto
Medici (1545-1553), though the only lecture that survives from the period between the
chair’s foundation in 1490 and 1545 was Gaspare da Perugia’s lecture on the \textit{Sentences}.
Medici’s lecture notes led to another important discovery: he offered series of lectures on
Scripture that were interspersed within his lectures on scholastic theology. These lectures
on Scripture may have been inspired by the Council of Trent’s instruction for universities
to incorporate teaching on the Bible, though no direct evidence exists for this claim.
Furthermore, it is very likely that Medici’s teaching on Scripture led to the creation of a

\textsuperscript{78} Grendler, \textit{Universities}, 372.
permanent holiday lectureship on Scripture in 1551 at the University of Padua. This foundation is remarkable since Padua was the first Italian university—by 15 years—to create a Scripture professorship.\textsuperscript{79}

One of the humanist criticisms of scholastic theology was its lack of attention to the Bible. Scholasticism was accused of being caught up in abstruse questions about the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and so on rather than the words of Scripture. This sort of humanistic critique is actually reflected in the only real explanation ever offered for the creation of this chair in 1551. Jacopo Facciolati, an eighteenth-century historian of the university, was incorrect when he said that the professorship of Sacred Scripture was created because of the deficiencies in the theological curriculum for the decades after the foundation of the Scotist and Thomist theology chairs in the second half of the fifteenth century. The Franciscans and Dominicans, he suggested, did little more than lecture on their obscure theological inventions, focusing most of their attention on the debates between scholastic schools. This approach, he said, did not fulfill the goals of the Venetian Senate to expose the students at the University of Padua to Christian theology.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 371.
\textsuperscript{80} Facciolati, Fasti, pt. 3: 267: “Sacrae Paginae Professor primis Gymnasi temporibus idem erat, qui nunc Theologus dicitur. Omnia enim Theologia studia duobus veluti cardinibus vertebantur, quorum princeps Sacra Pagina erat, idest sacrarum litterarum liber; secundarius Ecclesiae placita, quae Petrus Lombardus collegit, et quatuor sententiarum libris complexus est. Postea duo quaedam Theologiae systemata certo ordine digesta cum exissent, Thomisticum, et Scotisticum, paulatim disciplina tota in duas has facitiones abit. Hinc aemulatio et contentio, quae scholas disputationibus occupavit usque adeo, ut Sacrae Paginae studium, titulique ex eo orti paene obsolescerent; Lombardi autem sententiae dumtaxat ad Laureae consequendae examina retinerentur. Id non satis libenter tulere, qui Gymnasium Patavinum moderabantur vini sapientes: sed temporum ratio habenda fuit. Attamen ut animi saltem et eruditionis gratia ad pristina studia homines allicerent, peculiarem S. Scripturae scholam aperiri voluerunt, et diebus vacantibus assignarunt.” See also Contarini, Notizie, 109. Even though he was a Dominican, Giambattista Contarini basically repeats Facciolati’s argument. See Grendler, Universities, 371, n. 70, for his dismissal of this
The creation of the chair of Sacred Scripture was certainly not a subtle criticism of the theology teaching of the mendicants over the previous few decades, even if it may have had something to do with humanistic attitudes towards theology. Even before learning about Sisto Medici’s lectures on Scripture in the 1540s, this old explanation was implausible because the Venetian Senate hired Dominicans to serve as the first two professors of Sacred Scripture. And they were Dominican theologians who had first taught public courses in metaphysics and theology: Adriano Valentico and Girolamo Vielmi. But before 1551, Medici was publicly lecturing on texts of Sacred Scripture—many of the same texts that became fixtures in the later courses on the Bible, such as Genesis and Romans—in his capacity as professor of theology in via S. Thomae. For instance, during the Lenten seasons of 1548, 1549, and 1550, Medici gave lectures on Scriptural texts such as Genesis, Galatians, and Ephesians. Each lecture cycle began on the second day of Lent and ended the Wednesday of Holy Week. But there is no evidence at all that he was being paid to do two jobs. It is certainly possible that his predecessors also gave lectures on Scripture, though this point cannot be determined given the nearly complete lack of evidence about their academic activities. It is noteworthy, however, that the lectureship was created while Medici was still teaching theology. Adriano Valentico, who was then professor of Thomist metaphysics, lectured instead of Medici on Scripture during Lent of 1551. During this time, Medici simply

---

81 For 1548, see BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 112v; for 1549, see ibid., 129r; for 1550, see ibid., 139r.
82 ASV, Senato, Terra, Registro 38, f. 26r, Sept. 10, 1551, quoted in Grendler, Universities, 371; “Quanto convegna alli presenti tempi, che nel studio nostro di Padoa si lega la lettione della scrittura sacra a cadauno
continued his lecture series on the Treatise on Creation in the *Prima pars* of the *Summa theologiae*.

He lectured on the *Prima pars* after the Easter vacation. He did not devote Lent to the exegesis of Scripture for the rest of his tenure as professor of theology. The new professor of Sacred Scripture, the Dominican Adriano Valentico, was chosen by the Venetian Senate to serve that role.

The creation of the chair of Scripture in 1551 thus appears to be a division of labor and a way, perhaps, of allowing the professor of theology to devote all of his lectures to scholastic theological inquiry. In other words, though one can only speculate at this point, the circumstances of the chair’s creation seem to suggest that the rulers of the university wanted the professors of theology to give more lectures on the *Sentences* or the *Summa theologiae* and to leave the direct teaching of Scripture to someone else. That claim is plausible because the number of lectures on the Bible did not increase substantially once a special professor of Sacred Scripture entered the university. Medici’s lecture cycles on the Bible in the 1540s included about twenty-five lectures. In two printed lecture cycles from Padua’s chair of Sacred Scripture, from 1570-71 and 1616-1617, there were thirty and thirty-three lectures, respectively. The creation of a chair of Sacred Scripture, therefore, did not establish that between seventy-five and ninety lectures were given on the sacred text, as was the case with the ordinary professorships in

---

83 BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 112v, 148r.
84 See Girolamo Vielmi, *De sex diebus conditi orbis liber* (Venice, 1575), and Luigi Alberti, *De operibus sex dierum et de terrestri paradiso lectiones* (Venice, 1618).
the university. Indeed, the difference between the number of lectures given by Medici and what was likely taught by the official professor of Sacred Scripture was quite small.85

In creating the chair of Sacred Scripture, the Venetian Senate was giving official standing to something that already existed. The students appreciated Medici’s and Valentico’s lectures on Scripture. The rulers of the university wanted these lectures to be a regular part of the university offering in the arts course without making the Dominican professors of theology or metaphysics devote their attention to it. The Senate believed in 1551 that it could afford five friars teaching in the arts course—two Dominicans and two Franciscans teaching theology and metaphysics and a professor of Sacred Scripture. Venice would continue paying these five salaries into the eighteenth century.

In creating this chair, the Venetian Senate may have been responding to major developments in the Catholic world in the midst of the Reformation and the Council of Trent. Debates raged during the fourth session of the Council of Trent regarding teaching on the Bible and scholastic theology, discussions that were substantially influenced by humanistic concerns over the past several decades. The Council decreed that, “in public universities (gymnasia), wherever…this profoundly necessary lecture has not yet been instituted, out of the piety of our most religious princes and republics and with charity for

---

85 Medici gave seventy-two lectures in the 1552-1553 academic year, but he did lecture on the *Summa theologiae* during Lent. See BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 163r. He only gave sixty-seven lectures for the 1551-1552 academic year and also lectured on the *Summa* during Lent. See Edward Muir, *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 31, where he says that “the professors in the Faculty of Arts at the university [of Padua] delivered between sixty and seventy lectures per year.” But to take a figure from the middle of our period, Marcantonio de’ Passeri (“il Genova”), ordinary professor of natural philosophy, there is evidence that he gave eighty-nine lectures on Aristotle’s *Physics* in one year, eighty-five lectures on the *Physics* in another year, ninety-five lectures on *De caelo*, and so on. At the end of our period, the Thomist metaphysician, Tommaso Pellegrini, gave eighty-four lectures on the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics*. See Lohr, “Authors G-K,” 726-28; Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 564.
the defense of the Catholic faith…let it be instituted.”  Though there is no direct evidence of Tridentine influence on Medici’s or the Venetian Senate’s decisions regarding lectures on Sacred Scripture, a future occupant of the chair, Girolamo Quaini, writing about twenty years later, indicated that there was a connection. Quaini, the first Servite to be a public professor in the university and Paolo Sarpi’s promoter for the doctorate, became professor of Sacred Scripture in 1571 and gave his inaugural lecture on sacred history on 11 November. Quaini remarked that this chair was entering its twentieth year of support from the Venetian Senate. He reflected upon its history. Padua, he said, may have been the noblest academy in the whole world, adorned with all the best arts and sciences. But it was necessary to remember, Quaini argued, that every human discipline refers to God as its source and the first principle of its wisdom. The theological science claims the supreme place among all disciplines, and theology’s true principles flow from nowhere else than from Sacred Letters. He addressed the Paduan students, telling them about the possibility of ascending quickly and happily through all the degrees to the flame of the divine eloquies. Two of the most grave and learned theologians of the age, Quaini observed, had come before him. He named both of them: the first was Adriano

---


88 Girolamo Quaini, *De sacra historia oratio* (Padua, 1572): “Qui praeclarum hoc divini verbi interpretandi munus Illustissimi Veneti Senatus decreto nobis hoc tempore demandatum, annis ab hinc ferme viginti in hanc florentissimam Academiam invexerunt.” For his discussion of the chair of Sacred Scripture, see ibid., sig.a2rv.
Valentico and the other was Girolamo Vielmi. The decision to give such theologians a platform to teach the “supreme” textbook, Quaini said, was one made in order to follow the “counsel of the Tridentine Synod.”

The University of Padua instituted the first chair of Sacred Scripture in Italy. This appears to have been proximately influenced by the Council of Trent and remotely by the humanist movement’s encouragement of a return ad fontes. But a Dominican theologian, Sisto Medici, anticipated the creation of this chair by several years with his own Lenten lectures on the Scripture. He yielded between twenty and thirty lectures on scholastic theology to offer this instruction to the students at the university. He stopped doing so once the chair was created in 1551. The university authorities apparently thought it was better to pay a fifth friar teaching in the arts course than to lose that many lectures on the Summa theologiae.

**Scotism and Renaissance Thomism**

An important part of the academic activity of the Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae was the dialogue with their concurrents who taught the same subjects in via Scoti. Dominicans taught at the same hour as their Franciscan counterparts. Students could follow the lectures of one or the other—or perhaps both by

---

89 Ibid.
alternating classes—over the course of an academic year.\textsuperscript{91} Medici’s \textit{Stromata} records frequent debates with his Franciscan colleague in university “circles,” though not much information about the character of these discussions can be discerned from his notes.\textsuperscript{92} The exchange between these schools was part of shaping Paduan Thomism.

The language of the \textit{viae} immediately evokes old humanist accusations about the sectarianism and litigiousness of scholasticism,\textsuperscript{93} a perspective that still shapes the

\textsuperscript{91} See the discussion below of Joachim Cureus who attended the Thomist and Scotist lectures in his year at Padua.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 94r, 110v, 127r, 140v, 154v, 160r. See ibid., 126r, for a description with a bit more detail. Other references to evening circles occur with some regularity (ibid., 101r, 147r).

\textsuperscript{93} See, e.g., Desiderius Erasmus, \textit{The Praise of Folly}, 2nd ed., trans. Clarence H. Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 93: “So far as I can judge, Christians would be wise if, instead of sending out those regiments of thick-skulled soldiers who have been fighting for so long now without winning a decisive victory, they should send against the Turks and Saracens these most clamorous Scotists and most stubborn Albertists, together with the whole band of dialecticians.” See Francis Bacon, \textit{Of the Advancement and Proficience of Learning or the Partitions of Sciences} (Oxford, 1640), 29 (Book 2, chap. 4): “Now follows the distemper \textit{settled in Matter}, which we set down as a second \textit{disease of Learning}, and have design’d it by the name of \textit{Contentious subletie}; and this is in natur esomewhat worse than that whereof we spake even now…. [S. Paul] assigns two Markes and Badges of suspected and falsified science; The first is the \textit{Novelty} and \textit{Strangenesse of Termes}; The other, the \textit{strictnesse of Positions}; which of necessity induce opposition and so Alterations and Questions.” See also John Locke, \textit{An Essay concerning Human Understanding}, ed., Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 600 (Book 4, chap. 7): “The Schools having made Disputation the Touchstone of Mens Abilities, and the \textit{Criterion of Knowledge}, adjudg’d Victory to him that kept the Field: and he that had the last Word was concluded to have the better of the Argument, if not of the Cause. But because by this means there was like to be no Decision between skillful Combatants…” The first great general history of philosophy made this same critique with some frequency. See Jakob Brucker, \textit{Historia criticae philosophiae a Christo nato ad repurgatas usque literas} (Leipzig, 1743), 871-72, 902-12. But note that this was not just latter-day caricature. Although it should be noted that Ortensio Lando was a humanist of noted Protestant sympathies, he reported the following of Pietro Bembo’s stay in Padua: “Fu dimandato una volta essendo io in Padova, a Monsignor Bembo, perche non andasse la quaresima alle prediche? rispose egli incontanente, che vi debbo io fare? poscia che mai altrò non vi si ode che garrire il dottore sottile contra il dottore Angelico, e poi venisene Aristotele per terzo, a terminare la quistione proposta.” Indeed, on this very page, Lando continued, “Pensarono già alcuni fratocchi brodaiuoli, non poter far meglio che invesciare in tal lettione affirmando senza Aristotele non potersi intendere la scrittura santa…sopragiunse poi M. Lutero senza favore di Aristotele, senza soccorso delle formalità di Scoto, solo armato delle scritture sante a suo modo intese, e volse in fuga tutti quelli Reverendi Theologi Aristotelici, di Lipsia, di Lovania, e di Colonia.” See Ortensio Lando, \textit{Paradossi cioè, sententie fuori del comun parere, novellamente venute in luce} (Venice, 1543), 79v. See the discussion of this claim in Paolo Simoncelli, “Pietro Bembo e l’evangelismo italiano,” \textit{Critica storica} 15 (1978): 4.
historiography of late scholasticism.\textsuperscript{94} The establishments of viae in northern universities were indeed part of an effort to define boundaries and calm tensions between schools of Scotists and Ockhamists, Albertists and Thomists, and so on. Scholars have assumed that the viae in Padua were part of the same late-medieval patterns; contentious rivalry is taken as a given.\textsuperscript{95} But our inquiry into the origins of these chairs yielded no evidence that the Venetian Senate was attempting to quell mendicant rivalries. The language of the viae came quite a bit after the lectureships were already established. It is essential to examine the debate between Thomists and Scotists historically—not as a static reality that survived without substantial change since the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{96} The relationship

\textsuperscript{94} For an effective discussion of this narrative’s origins and development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see John Inglis, \textit{Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy} (Boston: Brill, 1998), 41-234. A discussion of the traditional scholarship on the two viae, the via antiqua and the via moderna, can be found in Hoenen, \textit{“Via Antiqua and Via Moderna,”} 11-13. A more extensive discussion of the rivalry between scholastic schools as a cause of scholasticism’s decline, still within the “Gilsonian paradigm,” is Juan Belda Plans, \textit{La Escuela de Salamanca y la renovación de la teología en el siglo XVI} (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2000), 13-17. See also Etienne Gilson, \textit{History of Christian Medieval Philosophy in the Middle Ages} (New York: Random House, 1955), 528. See also Copenhagen and Schmitt, \textit{Renaissance Philosophy}, 71.


\textsuperscript{96} Part of the difficulty is that old narratives still make historians assume at times that nominalism and then humanism had dealt major blows to the realism of the via antiqua over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Any survival of scholastic realism after this period—particularly in the sixteenth century at Padua, where there are significant scientific activities taking place—would be deemed an anachronism. Renaissance intellectual historians have rarely studied Thomism in this period, let alone Scotism or the other scholastic schools. Renan, \textit{Averroes}, 257, makes the point quite clearly: “A côté de la vraie science représentée par les Fallope, les Fabrice d’Acquapendente, on trouve la théologie enseignée par un dominicain secundum viam S. Thomae, et par un franciscain, secundum viam Scoti. Cremonini annonce à ses auditeurs qu’il exposera le traité de la Génération et de la Corruption, le traité du Ciel et du Monde, avec un traitement de deux mille florins, tandis que Galilée, avec un traitement pour inférieur, expliquera les éléments d’Euclide.” See also Grendler, \textit{Universities}, 392: “Most important, all the signs suggest that the vast majority of the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Servites in Italian universities continued to teach medieval Scholasticism of their predecessors with little originality.”
of Thomists and Scotists at Padua was not consistently acrimonious, litigious, or petty.\(^97\) Indeed, the Thomist professors at Padua adopted the concordism most famously espoused by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Renaissance intellectual currents provided resources to these professors as they attempted to give pride of place to their order’s own doctor while recognizing the unity of truth among the great theologians of the past.\(^98\)

It is difficult to provide much detail about the relationship between the first Dominican Thomist and the first Franciscan Scotist teaching metaphysics in the arts course because Francesco Securo da Nardò left no writings on metaphysics.\(^99\) But Antonio Trombetta’s Scotistic work provides a kind of window into the debates taking place at Padua at this time. Trombetta’s metaphysical questions opened with a reference to the fact that they were read and disputed *ad concurrentiam M. Francisci Neritonensis ordinis Praedicatorum*. Trombetta addressed Securo directly a number of times as his “concurrent,” often at the very beginning of the *quaestio*. One *quaestio* pertained to the

---


\(^98\) Although William Craven seeks to detach Pico from those who associate him with some sort of syncretic, universal religion, he says the following: “The most moderate form of this view is to be found in Kristeller’s brief statements on this aspect of Pico’s thought. For him, the theme of the second part of the *Oratio* was the unity of truth: the idea that, despite their differences, the various philosophical schools shared in a common truth.” See *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola: Symbol of His Age* (Geneva, 1981), 89-90.

\(^99\) He was involved in printing the work of a major Scotist metaphysician, Antonio Andreae, entitled *Quaestiones super XII libros Metaphysicae Aristotelis* (Venice, 1473-77). There were widespread and sometimes detailed reports about *Quaestiones* on the *Metaphysics*. Modern scholars believe that this notion arose erroneously from his edition of Andreae, but it should be noted that Altamura, *Bibliothecae*, 205, said that “these *Quaestiones* were elaborated with much genius and study as well as being replete with erudition, which even in these times are held to be of great worth (*pretium*).” In SOP II: 123, one of Securo’s successors, Gianfrancesco Beato, was ascribed a *Recollecta F. Francisci Nardi alias Neritonensis*. Other reports of this sort exist in the period.
plurality of substantial forms in man and the divine creation of the soul. The other involved the relationship of being (esse) and essence. Trombetta wrote, “Since my concurrent thoroughly treats the matter of being and essence in the context of *Metaphysics*, Book 7, by determining against the Subtle Doctor, this question is thus moved against him: Whether being and essence are distinguished in reality.” Later in the work, he addressed him in relation to the issue of whether things have a unity less than numerical. In other words, is there something real in things, such as our common human nature, that is distinct in some way from the unity that things have as individuals. Of course, this disputation touched upon the debate over universals. Trombetta stated that Securo’s denial of any less-than-numerical unity was erroneous and gave his arguments for his position: “It is certain that man in common has a proper unity distinct from the unity of Socrates.” Besides the words *in Thomistas* in the title of Trombetta’s work, these disputations reflected substantive metaphysical debates between divergent

---


101 Trombetta, *Opus in Metaphysicam*, 44v.

102 Ibid., 63r. Indeed, there are more examples than I was led to believe from the scholarship. See ibid., 8v, 15v, 47v, on the medium of demonstration, 54r, on sensation,
approaches to metaphysics. I certainly have not found the sorts of hostile remarks in the record of the Thomist-Scotist debates like those made by the natural philosophers about each other. For instance, Pietro Pomponazzi called the position of “modern pedagogues” on intelligible species “abominable, fatuous, and bestial.” The most important scholar of the Scotists at Padua, Antonino Poppi, states that the debate between Securo and Trombetta, while “constant,” was actually rather “polite.”

The only Thomist at Padua that might bear out the humanist concern about heated debates between rival schools was Cajetan. Perhaps the greatest Dominican thinker of the sixteenth century, Cajetan did much of his advanced training at S. Agostino and taught metaphysics for one year. Despite being the most famous professor of theology or metaphysics in via S. Thomae at Padua, Cajetan taught for an extremely short time and was not officially appointed to the position by the Venetian Senate. He was basically serving as a substitute after his teacher and Securo’s successor, Valentino Camerino, gone on business for the order. Besides, he was a very young man at this time, around twenty-five years old. We should thus be careful about making generalizations. Nevertheless, Cajetan’s teaching at Padua seems to have been the foundation for his commentary on Thomas Aquinas’ De ente et essentia, which became a fundamental work.

---

103 Note the evidence which compels restraint in this conclusion, e.g., on ibid., 48r: “Dimissa impugnatione Concurrentis: quantum ad secundum articulum arguo contra Egidium.” But see ibid., 42r: “impugnata opinione S. Thomae et aliorum.” But the general conclusion of this paragraph has the opposite tendency of Edward P. Mahoney, “Antonio Trombetta and Agostino Nifo on Averroes and Intelligible Species: A Philosophical Dispute at the University of Padua,” in Storia e cultura, 300: “it might well be that [Agostino Nifo] intended an oblique reference to Trombetta, who was openly critical not only of Saint Thomas but also of his own Dominican concurrent at Padua, Francesco Securo di Nardò.” But Trombetta’s Opus is cited in general without a particular passage supporting this view. Mahoney also cites Antonino Poppi’s work on Trombetta which is discussed in the next paragraph.

104 See Bruno Nardi, 232.

105 Poppi, “Scotista patavino,” 68.
of Thomistic metaphysics, addressed at length by major scholastics of the future like Pedro Fonseca, Francisco Suárez, and Raffaelo Ripa. Cajetan named Trombetta with some frequency in this commentary and did so harshly at times. For instance, when Cajetan thought that he caught Trombetta contradicting himself from one work to another, he said that “liars must have good memories,” employing the famous aphorism from antiquity. At one point, Cajetan charged Scotus and Trombetta with erroneously attributing an opinion to St. Thomas, and he went on to say that “they spoke without having the whole law before them, and they make facile pronouncements according to

---


108 Tommaso de Vio, Aureum opus de ente et essentia divi Thome aquinatis cum commentaruis fratris Thome Caietani sacre theologie doctoris et fratris Armandi eiusdem ordinis doctoris clarissimi (Venice, 1496), 18r. Though this amounts to something of an anachronism, see Desiderius Erasmus, Adages II.i.1 to II.vi.100, trans. and annotated by R. A. B. Mynors (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 175. It was often associated with Quintilian.
Aristotle after considering a few points.”

A bit earlier in the commentary, Cajetan said that Trombetta “does not seem to understand his own words.” But, with regard to such hostility, Cajetan appears to be the exception that proves the rule.

Some members in the university community, while appreciating the thorough discussion of issues arising from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and the relevant medieval debates, did think that the friars were still a bit too partisan. This did not necessarily amount to a charge of contentiousness; rather, there was a sense that the mendicant professors were unwilling at times to draw freely from authors outside of their school. At one point, Pietro Pomponazzi was discussing the formal distinction, a notion associated with Scotism regarding a type of distinction intermediate between a real distinction and a merely rational one. He said that his praecceptor, Securo, had offered what he believed to be a difficult challenge to the view of the Scotists and simply moved on as if he had shown his position to be true. “This does not seem surprising,” Pomponazzi said, “because he is a Thomist.” In Pomponazzi’s view, Securo was too quick to dismiss a Scotist position because of his school affiliation. Pomponazzi’s identification of his teacher’s loyalty to a particular school meant that Securo’s positions were almost entirely predictable.

Very little evidence of hostility or even rivalry with Scotists exits for the period after Cajetan. And, from the 1540s to the 1570s, there is far more information about the

---

109 Cajetan, *Commentary*, 231. See also ibid., 222, where he said that “Trombeta did not consult the sources in St. Thomas” and that “he errs in imputing this one argument to us as the complete basis of our position.” Note that Trombeta is an alternative spelling of the Scotist’s name.

110 Ibid., 223.

111 Pomponazzi, *Corsi inediti*, II: 125.
academic activities of the friar-professors. In fact, Pomponazzi’s charge with regard to the predictability of the positions of the Thomists school falls somewhat flat. The Dominicans after Securo occasionally took quite surprising positions on certain philosophical questions. For instance, in Pomponazzi’s lectures on De anima in 1503-04, one learns that Vincenzo Merlino, Cajetan’s successor, probably accepted the Scotistic view of individuation. Pomponazzi was discussing the question of “whether the soul is one (unica).” This raised the longstanding debate that often raged in Italy about the Averroist position on the unity of the possible intellect. The quaestio addressed the “opinio Christianorum” that there are many intellectual souls numerically distinguished according to the number of individual human beings. One issue was how souls might be distinguished from one another without bodies since many Aristotelians considered designated matter to be the principle of individuation. Pomponazzi eventually stated that he would give a response which he believed to be “that of St. Thomas and the opinion of Hervaeus Natalis as well as other Thomists who are most excellent men.”¹¹² This response is that intellectual souls could be distinguished from each other through their intrinsic haecceitates (“thisness”).¹¹³ The conviction that haecceitas was the principle of

¹¹² Pomponazzi, Corsi inediti, II: 89.
¹¹³ See Cross, “Medieval Theories”: “First proposed by John Duns Scotus (1266-1308), a haecceity is a non-qualitative property responsible for individuation. As understood by Scotus, a haecceity is not a bare particular in the sense of something underlying qualities. It is, rather, a non-qualitative property of a substance of thing: it is a ‘thisness’...as opposed to a ‘whatness’...Furthermore, substance, on the sort of metaphysics defended by Scotus, are basically collections of really identical properties (‘really identical’ in a specialized sense explained below), all but one qualitative; the one non-qualitative property is the haecceity. In contrast to more modern accounts of the problem of individuation, Scotus holds that the haecceity explains more than just the distinction of one substance from another. According to Scotus, the fact that individual substances cannot be instantiated also requires explaining. At issue is something like this: what explains the fact that (e.g) a clone of me is not an instance of me, but an instance of human nature? Haecceities, in addition to explaining distinction, also explain non-instantiability.”
individuation, however, was strongly associated with John Duns Scotus, and Pomponazzi knew this quite well. Indeed, the first objection to his reply was that to speak in this way was to scoticize (scotizare). Pomponazzi replied, “When it is said that this would be to scoticize, I say that you speak the truth, and I say that not only do I scoticize but I speak the truth, nor can anything else be said.” If Thomas did in fact reject haecceitas as the principle of individuation, Pomponazzi said, so much the worse for him. But then one of the professors in via S. Thomae, Vincenzo Merlino, entered the discussion. Pomponazzi has already invoked Hervaeus (d. 1323), arguably the first major Thomist, but he also called upon a contemporary, “our reverend Merlino,” who had only died the previous summer.114 Pomponazzi remembered him fondly. But he recalled hearing that Merlino held this opinion on haecceitas as the principle of individuation. This is certainly not the standard Thomist view of the time; there is no doubt, for instance, that Cajetan rejected haecceitas as a principle of individuation.115 Pomponazzi’s reference to Merlino, therefore, suggests that the Dominican professors at Padua were not in perfect doctrinal harmony. It also suggests that the fear of “scoticizing” among the Dominicans might not have been extremely strong in the Paduan intellectual milieu, despite Cajetan’s rather fierce anti-Scotism.

In one of the few direct comments of a Dominican about a Franciscan colleague, one finds confirmation of the fact that there was a good deal of respect. Medici was

writing a letter which compared the University of Padua and its brilliant professors to the gymnasium of ancient Greece. Medici referred to his concurrent, Girolamo Girelli da Brescia, as his “colleague from the Franciscan family.” But then he stated that the Franciscan metaphysician, Giacomino Malafossa da Barge, was “most celebrated for [his] vigorous genius and excellence in the sciences.”

Padua once again proves itself to be a rather collegial intellectual milieu, at least as far as the friar-professors were concerned.

Such fragmentary evidence is given greater articulation in the works of some of these Dominican professors, especially Girolamo Vielmi, who explicitly addressed the issue of partisanship and scholastic rivalry in their works. An irenic attitude with regard to the scholastic schools can be found in the very first professor of theology in via S. Thomae, Ludovico Valenza. In a sermon delivered in the papal court a few years after leaving the university, he addressed the “conformity of the Church militant to the Church triumphant.” He praised some theologians as generals of the army of the faithful: among the Latins, he identified Gregory the Great, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, while, among the Greeks, Diosysius the Areopagite, Basil, Chrysostom, and Damascene also were “great and vigorous emperors in Christendom.” Orders of men dedicated to preaching followed them, whose most illustrious representatives were Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Giles of Rome, and “many other distinguished doctors.” Of course, Scotus’ absence is conspicuous, but Valenza’s sermon united illustrious theologians from the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians. The

Fathers and the medieval doctors came together, he suggested, to defeat errors, to overcome enemies of the faith.\textsuperscript{117} They gave Christianity such doctrinal strength that “no philosophers, no poets, no orators, no mathematicians, no prophets, no magicians, no heretics would dare to assail Christians with reasons.” They can only do so by arms and by force—an allusion to the Turks. “We now enjoy the immense labors of the ancient theologians,” Ludovico continued, “Christian letters now have peace.”\textsuperscript{118} The concordism and irenicism of the Roman Renaissance informed Valenza’s take on the history as well as the current state of Christian theology.

Girolamo Vielmi’s discussion of scholastic rivalry was in direct response to humanist accusations, while at the same time drawing upon major Renaissance intellectual currents in his reply to them. In Vielmi’s \textit{Oratio apologetica adversus obtrectatores theologiae, praeæertim scholasticae}, delivered at the beginning of his first year as theologian in \textit{via S. Thomae} (1554-55), he took up the charge that scholastic theology was divided into sects.\textsuperscript{119} In the common allusion to Horace’s expression, \textit{nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri} (“I am bound to swear to the words of no

\textsuperscript{117} John W. O’Malley, \textit{Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 163, puts the point very well: “When Ludovico da Ferrara reviewed the long theological history of the Church, he saw no ugly discontinuities. He saw, rather, an orderly procession, with each great tradition—the Greek Fathers, the Latin Fathers, and the scholastics—contributing to an harmonious culmination.”

\textsuperscript{118} Ludovico Valenza (Ludovicus Ferrariensis), \textit{Sermones quinque coram Pontifice Maximo habiti} (Rome, between 1494 and 21 Sept. 1496), sig.d2v-sig.d3r. From our perspective, his words might seem somewhat ironic only two decades or so before Luther came on the scene, as suggested in Denys Janz, “Late Medieval Theology,” in \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology}, eds. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5. But, according to O’Malley, this notion of a \textit{pax theologica} reflected a general feeling of doctrinal security. See O’Malley, \textit{Praise and Blame}, 160.

\textsuperscript{119} Vielmi, \textit{De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis}, 83r.
scholasticism’s opponents indicted its adherents of swearing by the words of their masters: Albert, Thomas, Scotus, and others. The scholastics had zeal for their own factions and created dissension in the study of the Scriptures. Vielmi thought the accusation of sectarianism was more than saying that the schools were divided into groups (classis), especially because genuine sectarian divisions were against the commandment of Paul in I Corinthians 1:10-13. If the critics of scholastic theology were referring to divisions regarding the “holy dogmas of Christian piety,” Vielmi replied, “this is pure calumny and mere imposture.” The scholastics were all united in affirming the articles of faith. If his opponents were referring to disagreements about “the contemplations of nature, dialectics, of metaphysics,” the theologians were certainly not alone; the humanists must similarly accuse the “professors of all disciplines,” especially the natural philosophers.

Vielmi also handled the dismissal of scholastic theology for its “litigiousness.” His response was that training in disputation had a purpose. Vielmi said that the scholastics were taught “to hunt not only for the affections and properties but also to

---

120 Horace, Epistles, Book 1, ep. 1, line 14.
121 For discussion of this point in the more famous Spanish context, see Annabel S. Brett, “Authority, Reason, and the Self-definition of Theologians in the Spanish ‘Second Scholastic,’” in Forms of the “Medieval” in the “Renaissance”: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of a Cultural Continuum, ed. George Hugo Tucker (Charlottesville: Rookwood Press, 2000), 77-78.
122 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 83r.
123 “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been signified unto me, my brethren, of you, by them that are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you says: I indeed am of Paul; and I am of Apollo; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul then crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”
124 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 90v.
125 Ibid., 90v-91r.
126 See also ibid., 82v-83r.
inquire into the causes and natures” of the “most ample secrets of the divine and of nature.” The scholastics trained for this challenge in the “circles (corona) of the theologians and assemblies of the wise,” not among the “common people (vulgus) or children.” These scholastic exercises often helped “to root up the truth” from the “well of Democritus and the cave of Heraclitus.”

As gymnastics makes bodies stronger,” Vielmi continued, “so in literary palestrae do the powers of genius come forth more vigorous”; “our young men learn to swim,” he said, “together with literature,” and they learn to consider matters with exactitude in these exercises. These scholastic exercises fundamentally served as training for debates with opponents of Christianity and heretics, rendering the theologians’ approach, in Vielmi’s view, “acute, brief, and keen.” Vielmi rejected, finally, the idea that the pursuit of truth was lost in altercations between the schools. He said that “we are accustomed to carry out our disputes in an orderly and methodological fashion (ordine et modo).” Vielmi believed that rancor was not characteristic of scholastic disputations. Disagreements occurred in theology as in all other disciplines, as scholars struggled to find hidden truths. But academic exercises had rules and a proper form that the theologians upheld. Even if debate sometimes took place merely as an exercise, this was the necessary training for facing any challenges to the Christian faith.

127 Ibid., 89v-90r.
128 It appears that this image drawn from Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, Examen vanitatis doctrinae gentium, et veritatis Christianae disciplinae (Mirandola, 1520), 45v: “Illud certe omnibus fere notum eruditis, et multis proditum locis de Heraclito et Democrito, quod alter in profundo antro, alter in puteo iacere veritatem affirmavit, quasi aenigmate insinuatum vellent, habere quidem veritatem posse, sed magno cum labore.”
129 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 90r.
130 Ibid.
In Vielmi’s later work published after his time at the Council of Trent (1564), *De scriptis D. Thomae Aquinatis*, he showed his respect for the other scholastic doctors more directly. He stated that the theologians who came after the Church Fathers were worthy of their high titles: Angelic (Thomas Aquinas), Seraphic (Bonaventure), Solemn (Henry of Ghent), Irrefragable (Alexander of Hales), Subtle (Duns Scotus), Illuminated (Francis of Meyronnes and/or Ramon Llull), Resolute (John Baconthope), Profound (Thomas Bradwardine), and Great (Albert).\(^{131}\) He complimented a few of them by name: Peter Lombard was the “chief of all the scholastics,”\(^{132}\) Alexander of Hales was “most grave,”\(^{133}\) Robert Holcot was a “distinguished doctor,”\(^{134}\) Albert the Great was “never sufficiently praised for his dignity,” earning his moniker by the consent of the universities of Europe even while he lived.\(^{135}\) Many of these statements occur in the context of Vielmi’s acknowledgment that a significant number of the scholastics “erred in the dogmas of our religion.”\(^{136}\) He enumerated some of the errors of these theologians but wanted to assure his reader that these scholastics were otherwise worthy thinkers. John Duns Scotus erred, in Vielmi’s view, in rejecting the *lumen gloriae* that elevates the mind for the Beatific Vision and in his teaching on satisfaction.\(^{137}\) But Vielmi observed that no

---

\(^{131}\) Ibid., 13r.  
\(^{132}\) Ibid., 23v.  
\(^{133}\) Ibid., 22v.  
\(^{134}\) Ibid., 23r.  
\(^{135}\) Ibid., 13r.  
\(^{136}\) Ibid., 22r. Here is one of the few references to William of Ockham in the work of the Dominican professors at Padua. See ibid., 23v: “Porro Gulielmi Ocham errores insigniores plures sunt, quam ut eos recensere hoc loco possimus.”  
\(^{137}\) For some helpful comments on these “errors,” see Antonino Poppi, “Una difesa della teologia scolastica contro gli erasmiani: la prolusione di Girolamo Vielmi al corso di teologia ‘in via Thomae’ (1554),” in *Ricerche sulla teologia e la scienza nella Scuola padovana del Cinque e Seicento* (Soveria Mannelli, 2001), 82.
theologian was infallible, despite the fact that commentaries published in Padua by a professor of metaphysics in via Scoti said as much. Indeed, Vielmi said that Scotus would never have thought of himself that way. Vielmi nonetheless wanted to make it clear that he thought Scotus was truly “a subtle and distinguished doctor” and “had rightly obtained a splendid place among those of the highest rank (classicus) long ago.” Vielmi’s devotion to Aquinas did not preclude great respect for John Duns Scotus.

Vielmi was obviously not ignorant of the fact that important debates between Thomists and Scotists had arisen many times in the past. Part of the Dominican’s response was to highlight the fact that Scotus, Henry of Ghent, Durandus, Gregory of Rimini, and Peter Auriol disagreed with each other as well and sometimes even defended Thomas Aquinas as they opposed each other. Vielmi somewhat sarcastically made reference to Hilary of Poitier’s statement that “the war of heretics is the peace of the Church.” And he proceeded to use martial imagery to describe their struggles with Thomist positions and one other.

---

138 Giacomino Malafossa da Barge, Super primum Sententiarum Doctoris Subtilis exactissima narratio absolutissimaeque expositio (Padua, 1560), 1r: “Et quoniam Deo duce pro utilitate eorum qui sequi volunt sanctam, profundam, et infallibilem doctrinam Doctoris Subtilis Ioannis Scoti sum declaratus et expositurus eiusdem irreprehensibilis Doctoris primum librum super sententias.” See also Poppi, “Difesa,” 82. Another idea that might reflect Vielmi’s experience with Padua’s viae can be seen on ibid., 31r: “Sed et Ioannis Scoti interpretes nulla in re magis laborant, quam ut eum sibimet ipsi concilient.”

139 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 23v.

140 Ibid., 26v-27r.

141 Ibid.: “Cum namque Ioannes Scotus Aquanatis placitum aliquod multis armatus Argumentis invadit, tunc Ariminesis, Durandus, Henricus, Aureolus pro Thoma illi obviam eunt; et ubi Durandus, vel Henricus, vel alius quispiam insurgit, ibi Ioannem Scotum, et reliquos confertim ferme, et agminatim partes Thomae tueri, et in illius castris sua sponte militare conspicimus; solentque Doctrina illius, tamquam umbone ferreo tecti, sophismatum acutissimas sagittas frangere, adversariorumque phalanges profligare, et sternere. Ipse vero Sanctus Doctor interea, tamquam bos lassus, ubique fortius pedem figit.”
It is at this point that Vielmi invoked Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, whom he referred to as the Phoenix. Pico had famously attempted to find concord between Plato and Aristotle, and he did the same for Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus. And, interestingly enough, the attempt was well-received by this Dominican professor. Vielmi described himself as finding confirmation in many passages for one of Pico’s claims: that much of the disagreement between these leading Dominican and Franciscan doctors was “only about words and not things.” Vielmi knew that Pico had promised to bring about the “union (conciliatio) and concord of the world,” if only “life would have been his companion.” Pico’s promise was unrealized because of his early death at thirty years old. Regardless, Vielmi thought that he should still go ahead and affirm that these famous opponents of Aquinas were “among those men of the highest rank (classicus) in piety.” Vielmi said that he held them in such reverence that they would have said to Thomas Aquinas what Jerome once said to Augustine:

For we converse among ourselves for the sake of gaining knowledge. But if enemies, and especially heretics, see differences of opinion between us, they will slander us by saying that they stem from rancor of the heart. Yet I have decided to love you, to cherish you, to honor you, to admire you, and to defend your statements like my own.  

\[142\] Ibid., 27rv. See Oratio d hominis dignitate, sec. 34: “Proposuimus primo Platonis Aristotelisque concordiam a multis ante hac creditam, a nemine satis probatam. Boetius, apud Latinos id se facturum pollicitus, non inventur fecisse unquam quod semper facere voluit. Simplicius, apud Graecos idem professus, utinam id tam praeestaret quam pollicetur.Scribit et Augustinus in Achademicis non defuisse plures qui subtilissimis suis disputationibus idem probare conati sint, Platonis scilicet et Aristotelis eandem esse philosophiam. Ioannes item Grammaticus cum dicat apud eos tantum dissidere Platonem ab Aristotele, qui Platonis dicta non intelligent probandum tamen posteris hoc reliquit. Addidimus autem et plures locos in quibus Scoti et Thomae, plures in quibus Averrois et Avicennae sententias, quae discordes existimantur, concordes esse nos asseveramus” (emphasis added).

Pico’s concordism and the piety of the ancient Church Fathers provided Vielmi with a vocabulary of appreciation for Thomas Aquinas’ scholastic rivals.

**Thomism as a School**

Though Girolamo Vielmi demonstrated his affection for Scotus and for other scholastic theologians, arguing for the fundamental unity between them and Thomas Aquinas, it remains the case that his work on Thomas’ life was partisan in some ways. And Vielmi confronted that point directly. Other Dominicans who taught at Padua also defended a kind of Thomistic dogmatism. In doing so, they made certain distinctions between different kinds of authority and explained how a human master like Thomas functioned in the pursuit of theological and philosophical truth. They understood themselves to be part of a school of Aquinas’ followers and also began to recognize that an offshoot of that school had emerged in Padua over the previous century.

Vielmi thought that Thomas Aquinas was the greatest of the scholastic doctors. First of all, he thought that Thomas was exceptionally blessed by God in his theological pursuits. After discussing the errors of the other scholastics, while noting that humans were able to err and acknowledging their other achievements, he said, “the Holy Spirit granted Thomas Aquinas such a grace that nowhere does he seem to have erred against the faith or against good morals.”

It may be worth noting that this sentence does not appear in the 1564 edition. And between 1564 and the next edition in 1575, Aquinas was

---

144 Girolamo Vielmi, *De sex diebus conditi orbis liber...adieicti sunt praeterea eiusmodem auctoris libri duo de D. Thomae doctrina et scriptis et orationes duae; altera Apologetica et reliqua De optimo episcopi munere* (Venice, 1575), 397.
made a Doctor of the Church by the Dominican Pope Pius V (1567). Vielmi also thought that Thomas Aquinas was clearer and more orderly in his teaching than the other scholastics. Vielmi admitted, at least for the sake of discussion, that some scholastics were occupied with useless questions and lost the truth in the way of Carneades by straining to defend both sides of an argument. “What is this to Thomas?” Vielmi asked, “for there is nothing unnecessary, nothing useless, nothing unworthy for the theologian or the philosopher” in his disputes that were all executed with “the most beautiful order, great seriousness, and incredible judgment.” Vielmi said that it was nothing short of calumny to associate the vices of some schoolmen with all of them, particularly with Thomas Aquinas. The seriousness with which the recent Council of Trent took the teachings of Aquinas, Vielmi argued, should make any opponent hesitant to dismiss the “prince” of the scholastics.

145 Compare ibid.: “Et denique Theologiae tirunculi probe norunt etiam ipsum Magistrum, Scholasticorum omnium Coriphaeum, in pluribus locis a posterioribus communiter repudiari: non negamus ergo Scholasticos tamquam homines aliqui esse lapsos et saepe meliora posse ab eis desiderari, sed nunc Aquinati tantam gratiam Spiritum sanctum impartiisse contendimus, ut nullibi, aut contra fidem, aut contra bonos mores errasse videatur. Quamobrem, et hoc quoque praeter caeteros consequutus est, ut nullus insignis auctor hucusque extiterit, aut celebrorius in Ecclesia nominis” to Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis (1564), 23v: “Et denique Magistrum, Scholasticorum omnium Coriphaeum, pluribus in locis communiter reici, Theologiae nostrae tirunculi etiam norunt. Sed tamen luminis sanctissimus Aquinas habuit, ut nullus insignis auctor extiterit.” The following passage was part of the first eighteenth-century edition, but it is not found in the 1575 edition (De sex diebus, 433). Girolamo Vielmi, De Divi Thomae Aquinatis doctrina et scriptis...libri duo, nunc primum attionibus illustrati, accedunt orationes duae, habitae in Gymnasio Patavino, altera Apologetica, altera De optimo episcopi munere (Brescia, 1748), 123-24: “Porro autem et Pius V nuperrime in Bulla super celebratione festivitatis S. Thomae, ita scribit, ‘Sed quoniam omnipotentis Dei providentia factum est, ut Angelici Doctoris vi et veritate doctrinae ex eo tempore, quo coelestibus civibus ascriptus fuit, multae, quae deinceps exorta sunt haereses, confusae et convictae dissiparentur, etc.’”

146 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 21r.
147 Ibid., 21v.
148 Ibid.
149 Vielmi, De sex diebus, 395.
But the Thomists at Padua were aware of the criticisms of this sort of devotion and denied that they elevated the authority of Aquinas beyond proper limits. They were sensitive to the charge that Thomists “swore by the words of a master,” that they were slavish to Thomas Aquinas’ authority whose ipse dixit ended all argument. A couple of decades earlier, Gianfrancesco Beato had come to the conclusion that Book 2 of the *Metaphysics* was erroneously placed in that work; rather, it belonged to the *Physics*. But Beato was hesitant about pushing these reflections further: “I was restrained by the authority of the Greeks, Latins, and Arabs.” How could Beato argue for correcting such a fundamental text against its acceptance by all the Peripatetics for well over a millennium? But, in the end, Beato was unwilling to act like the Pythagoreans who stopped any argument once the Master had spoken—ipse dixit. “Nothing,” Beato said, “can be more shameful than ipse dixit to the one professing philosophy.” The follower of any teacher must demand the reasons for his position.150 Despite Vielmi’s claim that Thomas Aquinas had special divine guidance, he would not have disagreed with Beato. Only the Word of God, Vielmi said, was irreprehensible and infallible.151

Vielmi did not limit himself to the more or less obvious claim that Aquinas’ authority was less than that of Scripture and the Church. He attempted to explain how his

---

150 Beato, *Librum secundum*, sig.a2r: “Ita Graecorum tamen Latinorum atque Arabum authoritate detinebar, ut vel videns quidem in eo naturalia proponi tot clarissimis viris, quasi quod apertissimum esset non advertissent, adversari non auderem, tantae profecto...virorum, quos summos a vetustioribus seu a nobis ipsis accepimus, authoritas est. Si quid enim dixerint ad habendam eius rei rationem inertiorem reddimur, at si quid, quod deterius est, falso pronunciaverint, nos ambigentes veritatem non inquirimus. Et propterea philosophiam proficiendi eo verbo, IPSE DIXIT, nihil turpius esse potest. Nam si ille ratione dixit, eamque sector rationem praeterierit, stertentem atque oscitantem cognoscemus, si vero nulla ratione, quod ille dixerit, illum sequutus affirmaverit, hunc aeque atque agnum matris baltum sine ratione ortione emittere didicisse intelligemus.” This statement was made in his dedicatory epistle to Jacopo Sadoleto.

151 Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 23v.
high praise for his *magister* was compatible with his denial of the *ipse dixit*, which Vielmi, rather unsurprisingly, provided in Greek in his *Oratio apologetica*.

152 It is useful, Vielmi argued, to have a single guide to follow. Of course, he said, it is important to read many authors just as it is beautiful to have wandered through many cities. But most would agree that it is best to have—in addition to the experience of travel—one city that is cherished as the best. Similarly, it profits the student to hold one teacher as familiar, one who excels the rest. Otherwise, Vielmi said, one is like the foreigner, who has many hosts and few friends.

153 For Vielmi and the Paduan Thomists, Thomas Aquinas was this cherished city and true friend. Vielmi wanted to be clear that this familiarity did not imply that “we swear by the words of a *praecceptor*.” Besides the canonical books, authors of important books should be consulted for their reasons not for their *auctoritas*, not respected for their names but for having explained the truth. Someone like Thomas Aquinas, Vielmi argued, had been embraced by the Catholic Church for so many centuries because of the effectiveness of his teaching and his arguments, not merely because of his name. “It is no wonder,” he continued, “that we cherish, admire, elevate, and venerate” such men, esteemed for so long by the Church and the approved by the testimonies of the most distinguished men”; they were venerated “as our patrons” for penetrating divine secrets through faithful interpretation and deep understanding of Scripture.

154 The Thomists at Padua took this name and were part of a school because the reasoning of Thomas Aquinas gave order to their own reflections and studies. Their reasoning was compatible with his denial of the *ipse dixit*, which Vielmi, rather unsurprisingly, provided in Greek in his *Oratio apologetica*.

152 Ibid., 91r.
153 Ibid.
154 Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 450 (1575). This was changed from the 1564 version which said that they were venerated “as our tutelary deities and propitious spirits.” See Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 91v.
devotion to Aquinas saved them from a kind of intellectual vagabondage—a confused, fragmentary education that might arise from considering all books as equals and from taking no guide at all. Thomas Aquinas only had authority because of his reasons in stark contrast to Scripture which, for a sixteenth-century theologian, had authority because of its author.

Vielmi ended his 1554 oration by encouraging the students, “most excellent young men” (juvenes praestantissimi) not to allow pleasures to distract them from the great labor ahead of them. It would be shameful, Vielmi said, for a man of good birth (vir ingenuus) who was baptized as a Christian not to be able to think rightly about God, the Trinity, Christ, the sacraments, the angels, man, and other sublime matters. As a professor, Vielmi presented himself as a companion, a partner, to the students, but he set forth Thomas Aquinas as their guide (dux). The words of Cardinal Bessarion, the Greek convert, defender of Plato, translator of Aristotle, and Renaissance patron, legitimated the choice: Thomas Aquinas was “most learned among the saints and most holy among the learned.”155

While Vielmi explained what it meant to be a Thomist in general, there was also a notion emerging of Paduan Thomism, a Thomistic school at the University of Padua that began with Francesco Securo da Nardò. Two orations in praise of Thomas Aquinas, given by Alberto Pasquali during his student days reveal this developing idea. Pasquali, who would be Thomist metaphysician in 1518-31 and 1531-33, spoke at the annual feast

155 Ibid., 95r.
of the arts students. According to the major scholarly treatment of this genre of panegyric, Pasquali’s orations distinguished themselves for their specificity in treating Thomas Aquinas’ life and works. At one point in the second oration of 1508, Pasquali referred to Thomas as a “Socratic swan,” alluding to the passage in Plato’s *Phaedo*, in which Socrates dismissed the traditional notion that swans sang before their deaths for fear of death; rather, resting in their divine master, they were singing because of the joy of what was to come. Similarly, Pasquali believed that Aquinas was aware that he would be “established beyond the clouds,” and that from his teaching, “as from the Trojan horse,” remarkable men would come forth. These were the “Thomists” of the Dominican school such as Hervaeus Natalis, Thomas of Sutton, Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (!), Durandellus, Peter of Spain, and John Capreolus. Pasquali transitioned from this

---

156 He was master of students in 1509-10, but he gave these orations in the spring of 1504 and 1506, when he was around the ages of seventeen and nineteen (born c. 1487).


158 Albertus Hunacius, *Orationes duae in laudem divi Thomae Aquinatis habite* (Venice, 1507), sig.d2v. This is actually a rather odd but not unprecedented list. Durandus was a significant opponent of Thomas Aquinas’ teaching. In fact, Durandellus, another figure on this list, was best known for defending Thomas against Durandus’ attacks (Durandus of Aurillac). But putting him in the list of Thomists, because of his Dominican habit, had happened before. See Petrus Niger’s (d. 1483) statement in the *Clypeus thomistarum* (1481): “De hoc est opinio omnium thomistarum, scilicet herphei, durandi, petri de palude, Thome anglici holkot, bernardi Lombardi, guillelmi de maricalmo. Et capreoli,” quoted in Serge-Thomas Bonino, “L’école thomiste au XVe siècle,” *Rivista teologica di Lugano* 5 (2000): 229. See also *Clypeus Thomistarum* (Venice, 1481), prologue: “Sectatus sum quidem ex ordine predicatorum celebratissimos viros Albertum colonensem quem vulgo magnum appellant, herveum britonom acutissimum, petrum de palude, guililmum de maricalmo, ioannem capreoli tholosanum, ac ioannem neapolitanum, ceterosque professionis eiusdem doctores illustres,” which does not list non-Thomists (in our sense) like Durandus and Holcot. Incidentally, Bonino is aware of this passage (“L’école thomiste, 229), though it should be observed that Niger also arranged his opponents according to their religious profession. As far as Pasquali’s list, the major logician, Peter of Spain, was widely believed to be a Dominican at that time, and it has actually been recently argued by Angel d’Ors in three articles published in *Vivarium*. See Angel d’Ors, “Petrus Hispanus O.P., Auctor Summularum,” *Vivarium* 35 (1997): 21-71; idem, “Petrus Hispanus O.P., Auctor Summularum (II): Further Documents and Problems,” *Vivarium* 39 (2001): 209-254; idem, “Petrus
statement to the story of Paduan Thomism. “Why do I commemorate foreign examples?” he asked. “For,” he continued, “we are rich in domestic ones.” He began with Francesco Securo: “The citizens of Padua know Francesco da Nardò (\textit{Neritonensis}), who publicly lectured on metaphysics with so much honor…that he restored metaphysics—for a long time in exile—as if he led back into the stagnant city of Antenor the flowing River Medoacus.”\footnote{\textit{Medoacus} is the Roman name of the Brenta. Antenor is a counselor of Priam during the Trojan War, who according to certain legends founded Patavium. See \textit{Virgil}, \textit{Aeneid} I.242-49: “Antenor potuit, mediis elapsus Achivis, / Illyricos penetrare sinus, atque intima tutus / regna Liburnorum, et fontem superare Timavi, / unde per ora novem vasto cum murmure montis / it mare proruptum et pelago premit arva sonanti. / Hic tamen ille urbem Patavi sedesque locavit / Teucrorum, et genti nomen dedit, arma fixit / Troia; nunc placida compustus pace quiescit.”}

“I am in wonder,” he said, “that the walls and towers of this ample city do not burst forth in exultation…when they hear the name of this lively man.” Pasquali also mentioned Merlino, Securo’s disciple, who also “elucidated metaphysics with great splendor in this most flourishing Academy.” But Pasquali did not plan to speak merely of the dead. He mentioned Cajetan, who was then serving as procurator of the Dominican order in Rome.\footnote{Pasquali also mentioned Vincenzo Bandello here. This perplexed me because, it seems, he had no association with the \textit{studium} of S. Agostino or the University of Padua. See Michael Tavuzzi, “Savonarola and Vincenzo Bandello,” \textit{AFP} 69 (1999): 199-224. In May 1484 he defended the maculist thesis (that Mary was conceived with original sin) with such brilliance that Pope Innocent VIII created him a master of theology. He became regent master of Bologna’s prestigious \textit{studium generale} of S. Domenico and was incorporated into the theological faculty of the University of Bologna, serving as its dean in 1493. Nevertheless, on 27 June 1502, he was received by the whole College of Theologians of Padua, while he was master-general. Bandello’s motivations are unclear to me, though one can understand why having a master-general of a major religious order would increase the prestige of Padua’s faculty. See Gargan, \textit{Studio}, 171-72. Perhaps, it was just a way of honoring a major theologian as he passed through the Veneto on his visitations. His \textit{registrum litterarum} indicates that he was in Venice from 9 May until 20 June 1502, and he was in Padua from 25 June at least until 29 June. See AGOP IV, reg. 15, 44r-45v.} His adulation of Cajetan might be one of the earliest to celebrate this major Thomist in such glowing terms: “He is the most perfect work of nature itself, who


\textit{159} Pasquali also mentioned Vincenzo Bandello here. This perplexed me because, it seems, he had no association with the \textit{studium} of S. Agostino or the University of Padua. See Michael Tavuzzi, “Savonarola and Vincenzo Bandello,” \textit{AFP} 69 (1999): 199-224. In May 1484 he defended the maculist thesis (that Mary was conceived with original sin) with such brilliance that Pope Innocent VIII created him a master of theology. He became regent master of Bologna’s prestigious \textit{studium generale} of S. Domenico and was incorporated into the theological faculty of the University of Bologna, serving as its dean in 1493. Nevertheless, on 27 June 1502, he was received by the whole College of Theologians of Padua, while he was master-general. Bandello’s motivations are unclear to me, though one can understand why having a master-general of a major religious order would increase the prestige of Padua’s faculty. See Gargan, \textit{Studio}, 171-72. Perhaps, it was just a way of honoring a major theologian as he passed through the Veneto on his visitations. His \textit{registrum litterarum} indicates that he was in Venice from 9 May until 20 June 1502, and he was in Padua from 25 June at least until 29 June. See AGOP IV, reg. 15, 44r-45v.}
not only explained the most obscure sense of Aristotle and the mind of St. Thomas, but also persisted in his investigation of the knot in the bulrush, such that I see him lifting himself beyond humanity and flying beyond human philosophy.” This degree of praise took place—it should be pointed out—before Cajetan’s rise in the order’s hierarchy and, most importantly, before his commentaries on the *Summa theologiae* were published.\textsuperscript{161} Pasquali noted that his commentaries on Aquinas’ *De ente et essentia* and some of Aristotle’s logical works were completed while he was still a youth, which prompted him to remark that, “if he lives for a long time, theology will become clearer and more muscular, and philosophy will alter its filthy clothes and bristling hair.”\textsuperscript{162} If this were to happen, he said, “because of his genius and industry and by the splendor of his speech and the abundance of things, we would live on equal footing with the Greeks.”\textsuperscript{163} Pasquali finally referred to Girolamo d’Ippolito, his own *praeeceptor* in metaphysics, who “bestowed much splendor upon this Academy,”\textsuperscript{164} “a man, as Epicurus says, of the first line,”\textsuperscript{165} having “a keen and vigorous genius (*ingenium*).”\textsuperscript{166} In about a decade, Pasquali himself would take his place in these ranks.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{161} His commentary on the *Prima pars* was published in 1507.

\textsuperscript{162} Pasquali’s expression, “horriditatas comarum,” is almost certainly a classical allusion. See the major Latin authors using a similar expression on A. J. Kleywegt, *Valerius Flaccus, Argonautica, Book I: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 142.

\textsuperscript{163} Note the sense of inferiority of the Latins to the Greeks in this statement.

\textsuperscript{164} Pasquali mentioned a couple of Dominicans from his native Udine, Pietro Cavalcanti and Benedetto dal Colle. The latter was described as “a unique gift to the world and the most gleaming star.” Alberto reported that the Venetian authorities had attempted to bring him into the “city of Antenor” in order to lecture on metaphysics and then theology. One would not be surprised if he was summoned during the periods of vacancy for theology (1491-95) and the periods of transition between professors of metaphysics (1489, 1494, 1495, 1502). For Pietro, see Gargan, *Studio*, 28, 110, 134-35, 169. For Benedetto, see ibid., 111, 129-31, 135, 144, 169.

\textsuperscript{165} I am not certain about this reference or the exact meaning of *vir praeiae lineae*. 
A few decades later, Sisto Medici similarly portayed the Dominican professors at the University of Padua as forming their own school. He did so in the context of a discussion of his conviction that, from the beginning of human wisdom, philosophers were generally priests as well. Medici began with the Persian *Magi*, the Indian Brahmins, the Egyptian metaphysicians, the Ethiopian Gymnosophists, and the Gallic Druids.\(^{168}\) Among the Greeks and Romans, he identified Orpheus, Pythagoras, Numa Pompilius, and even Julius Caesar as uniting the two tasks—priest and wise man. Medici simply continued his story with the Hebrew prophets and the Church Fathers. “But,” he then said, “in later centuries Albert the Great and Thomas came forth from us, columns of the sciences and religion, who not only explained all the secrets (*arcana*) of theology but also were the first to grant to the universities (*gymnasia*) all the volumes of Aristotle, illuminated with the clearest commentaries.” Like Pasquali, he presented a list of followers of Thomas Aquinas that was more Dominican than Thomistic, strictly speaking (given its inclusion of Durandus). In the age nearest to Medici and his audience, he observed that a number of great Dominican theologians taught at the University of Padua. He went on to list all the professors up to that time, beginning with the metaphysicians and concluding with the theologians, also distinguishing those who came from his native convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. This oration pointed out the fact that he was about to be

---


\(^{167}\) Hunacius, *Orationes*, sig.d2v-d3v.

succeeded as theologian in via S. Thomae by Girolamo Vielmi, “my disciple, who is so strong in genius, in the knowledge of the good arts, and in eloquence that the whole world will soon hear the sound of his doctrine with admiration.” Vielmi was next in the line of Paduan Thomists who would unite the priestly office and the responsibility of communicating wisdom to students at the university.

**Conclusion**

The Dominicans at Padua structured their lectures and offered content somewhat differently than the statutes might have indicated. The theologians in via S. Thomae often employed the *Summa theologiae* as their textbook and privileged deep engagement with particular themes over the coverage of all the topics in Christian theology. They drew upon the Church Fathers, humanist scholarship, and innovative approaches in Spanish scholasticism, such as the positive theology—the examination of the authoritative sources in theology—developed by Melchior Cano. On the other hand, the metaphysicians in via S. Thomae did very little to make their lectures Thomistic. They analyzed the major metaphysical teachings of Aristotle and drew mainly on the sources that were dominant at the University of Padua, particularly Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes.

A major element of the Dominican role at Padua was their association with the via Scoti of the Franciscans who taught the same subjects. The Franciscans at Padua were some of the leading Scotists in Europe. Except for the young Cajetan, in the one year that he taught metaphysics at the university without an official appointment, the relationship

169 Sisto Medici, *Oratio de humanae industriae praestantia*, sig.a2r-a3v.
between the *viae* shows little evidence of hostility or contentiousness or petty rivalry. Dominicans like Vielmi, however, were aware of the criticisms of the humanists that scholastic theologians were litigious, attacking anyone who disagreed with their chosen master and assenting to the teaching of the head of a school almost with the certitude of faith. Paduan Thomism confronted this criticism by emphasizing the unity of truth and the underlying harmony between the scholastics, drawing on Pico della Mirandola. He also defended the use of a central guide, especially one as gifted and as favored by the Church as Thomas Aquinas, for giving order to the pursuit of theological and philosophical truth—just like a world-traveler still having a home. The humanist criticism and, one might assume, their many discussions with humanist students and colleagues had brought forth an articulate defense of being part of a school. And this Thomistic school, the Dominicans began to think, had taken up residence at the University of Padua, beginning with Francesco Securo in the second half of the fifteenth century.
Chapter 5
Faith and Reason at the University of Padua

At Padua, Renaissance Thomism came into contact with the greatest Italian interpreters of Aristotle in the period. And the Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics thrived in this environment. But philosophers like Pietro Pomponazzi challenged the use of Aristotle by Christian theologians, many of whom, they thought, had corrupted the meaning of the Stagirite. According to Pomponazzi and other secular Aristotelians at Padua, Aristotle taught that the individual human soul was mortal, that the world was eternal, that there was no divine providence, and so on. Despite the fact that natural philosophers at Padua sometimes seriously challenged Aquinas’ interpretations of Aristotle, the Dominican professors had very collegial relations with them. What is more remarkable is that this collegiality was supported by a common approach to teaching Aristotle. All evidence from the academic activity of the professors of metaphysics in via S. Thomae—the Dominicans who were responsible for teaching the Aristotelian corpus—shows that their efforts were aimed at properly metaphysical considerations and at accurate interpretations of the text. No references to the Bible or to the teachings of the Catholic Church appear. Indeed, Tommaso Pellegrini, the only metaphysician in via S. Thomae in this period whose lectures survive, was remarkably un-Thomistic and perhaps even anti-Thomistic in his teaching. He embraced the Paduan approach to the teaching of Aristotle, that it should strive for the best interpretation of the text without any regard for Christian theological considerations. Even the theologians were not entirely opposed to the Aristotelianism of Pomponazzi and his successors. Dominican professors like Vielmi
and Barbavara did offer some criticisms of Italian natural philosophers. But they were still respectful of their philosophical achievements. Most importantly, the debate with secular Aristotelianism encouraged some important reflections on the relationship between faith and reason in the works of the Renaissance Thomists at Padua.

The active participation of the professors of theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae in the culture of Paduan Aristotelianism shows the limits of widespread scholarly assumptions about scholasticism in the sixteenth century. Scholars have quite sensibly referred to philosophers like Pietro Pomponazzi, Marcantonio Zimara, Francesco Piccolomini, and Giacomo Zabarella as secular or lay Aristotelians. More problematically—since many Paduan natural philosophers challenged key interpretations of Aristotle—historians of philosophy still think of Padua as the home for a Silver Age of Latin Averroism that employed Greek and Muslim commentators on Aristotle to challenge Christian beliefs in the immortality of the soul and creation ex nihilo. Scholars thus assume that there was a basic conflict between this radical, secular Italian Aristotelianism and the Christian Aristotelianism of thinkers from Albert the Great to Francisco Suárez. However sensible these assumptions might be, they do not line up with what happened at Padua. The Thomists were not ignored, left on the fringes of the university. Nor did they remain a foreign element as they defended a so-called “religiously oriented metaphysics” within the secular environment of Padua that brought

---

1 Lohr, “Sixteenth-Century Transformation,” 57-58. See also the more reserved statement of Monfasani in “Missing Ockhamists,” 258-59.
forth periodic conflict between Aristotelian natural philosophers and the friars.\(^2\)

Tommaso Pellegrini’s metaphysics was not oriented to theology at all; on the contrary, he refused to consider theological matters in his lectures on Aristotle and criticized even Thomas Aquinas for stretching Aristotle’s meaning to fit Christian theological assumptions. Pellegrini’s teaching and the respect that his students and colleagues had for him show that the Dominican presence was an integral part of the arts course at the University of Padua.

The connection between Paduan Aristotelianism and Renaissance Thomism was thus a rich and complex one. And the fact that this study talks about the relationship between these two currents shows that the argument here is not these terms should be abandoned. It is sensible to expect that a layman teaching Aristotelian natural philosophy at the University of Padua in the sixteenth century would have generally drawn upon Greek commentaries and the works of Averroes. One should expect that Christian theological considerations would not have been important for his interpretations of Aristotle’s writings. He might even have occasional eruptions of anti-clericalism. Similarly, it is appropriate to suppose that a Dominican professor would have deep familiarity with Latin sources and a profound respect for the theology and philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. What is incorrect is to assume that these two groups were in perpetual

\(^2\) Grendler, *Universities*, 287: “Thus, four mendicant order clergymen taught theology and religiously oriented metaphysics at Padua in the 1490s. They were there to point out the contradictions between Averroist views and Christian theology found in the teaching and writing of their colleagues in natural philosophy.” See also Copenhaver and Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy*, 110: “Pomponazzi spent much of his career at Padua, whose faculty included not only its long-standing complement of natural philosophers and logicians, who shared his wish to explicate Aristotle without accommodating theological interests, but also theologians and metaphysicians whose orientation was conspicuously religious.”
conflict and that the sixteenth-century Dominican Thomists would not be engaged with humanistic scholarship and contemporary intellectual trends. Moreover, the notion of Renaissance Thomism must be flexible enough to deal with the challenges to particular arguments of Aquinas that one finds in the lectures of Tommaso Pellegrini.

Metaphysics in via S. Thomae and Christian Theology

The work of Tommaso Pellegrini receives the most detailed treatment because of the availability of his lectures. But the fragmentary indications from the work of his predecessors suggest that Pellegrini was not an outlier. None of the Dominican metaphysicians brought theology into their philosophical inquiries. The academic activity of the Dominican professors of metaphysics was focused on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.

As the first Dominican professor at the University of Padua, Francesco Securo set the tone for teaching metaphysics at the University of Padua. His debates with his Franciscan concurrent, Antonio Trombetta, were focused upon fundamental issues in Aristotelian philosophy. Representative topics were as follows: whether what is more universal is better known to us than what is less universal, whether it is more difficult to corrupt than to generate, whether individuation of a nature happens through *haecceitas*, whether being (*esse*) and essence are really distinguished, whether the singular is understood by the intellect *per se* and indirectly, and whether the middle sciences such as perspective, music, and astronomy are more physical than mathematical. ³ Even when subjects touching on what might be called natural theology, such as whether “being” can

---

³ Trombetta, *Opus in Metaphysicam*, 111v, has the tabula of all of his quaestiones.
be univocally predicated of God and creatures or whether the metaphysician can prove that separate substances exist, the conversation maintained its ground in the texts of Aristotle and his major commentators.\(^4\)

In fact, the lay natural philosophers were at times more explicitly concerned than the Dominicans about the implications of their philosophical discussions to Christian theology. The problem of universals has long been considered as having significant bearing on the doctrine of the Trinity.\(^5\) The way in which Peter and Paul could perhaps have unity as human beings while being distinct individuals was sometimes thought to be at least analogous to the unity of the divine being and the trinity of persons. Within a decade or so of one another, Pomponazzi and Cajetan addressed this difficulty. At one point in his *quaestio* on universals, Pomponazzi said, “And you make a note of the fact that I am unwilling to introduce anything concerning a universal which is applicable to three divine persons, that is, whether there is a divine essence which is communicated to three persons, etc. But my intellect has never understood this.”\(^6\) Pomponazzi knew that the debate over universals had implications for the doctrine of the Trinity, but this issue was not his concern at the moment. Indeed, the Italian philosopher avoided any question from the students by pleading ignorance. In his commentary on Aquinas’ *De ente et essentia*, Cajetan also handled this concern without offering an extended discussion of the connection between universals and Trinitarian dogma. Instead, he suggested that the Trinity was *sui generis*, and then he addressed the philosophical issues at hand. The

\(^4\) Ibid., 82v.
\(^6\) Pomponazzi, *Corsi inediti*, II: 126, n. 1.
question was how two distinct beings might be formally one. Cajetan presented two possibilities. One possibility is the “mutual negation of formal division,” such as is the case for all individuals in the same species which are not formally divided from one another. The other possibility is that two beings outside of the human mind “are united in something common to and undivided in both of them.” Cajetan said, “I do not find [this second kind of unity] in reality except…in the Trinity which is known by the Christian faith.” And then he moved on to the case of individuals in a species. Later in his commentary, he was actually discussing divine unity, and he said, “there is no question here of the Trinity of Persons.” Both Pomponazzi and Cajetan believed that extended discussions of theological issues were inappropriate when doing philosophy. The only real difference was that Pomponazzi said that he would avoid further discussion of the Trinity because of his own ignorance. Cajetan did so exclusively because of the distinction between the two sciences.

Even more direct evidence for Cajetan’s desire to keep metaphysics and theology distinct appears in his discussion of being and essence. Cajetan observed that Scotus had rejected the real distinction of being and essence. But, in this context, Cajetan preferred not to give Scotus’ theological arguments for his position that were related to the doctrine of the incarnation: “We could give Scotus’ arguments in proof of this, but since they are concerned with the union of human nature with the divine supposit, I thought it best to give here in this first section the ten arguments used by Anthony Trombeta in his

---

7 Cajetan, *Commentary*, 149. See also Thomas de Vio, Cajetan, *In De ente et essentia commentaria*, ed. M.H. Laurent (Turin, 1934), 95.
8 Cajetan, *Commentary*, 249.
Cajetan entirely set aside Scotus’ theological arguments and, interestingly enough, made use of the more properly rational arguments of his Paduan concurrent.

Securo and Cajetan did not mix theology and philosophy, but they did have a Thomistic orientation. Both of them were defending longstanding positions of the Thomist school in dialogue with Antonio Trombetta. Gianfrancesco Beato’s lectures were also non-theological, but they did not even have a strongly Thomistic orientation. Beato, the teacher of Tommaso Pellegrini, even chose not to take some obvious opportunities to acknowledge Thomas Aquinas’ achievements. The work of Beato most closely associated with his academic activity at Padua, *In librum secundum Metaphysicae interpretatio*, makes the argument that the second book of the *Metaphysics* was actually the preface to *Physics* II. Beato said that, with this claim, he was contradicting the Greek, Arabic, and Latin commentary tradition. But in Thomas Aquinas’ own commentary, which Beato obviously knew well, Aquinas had in fact associated the arguments of this book of the *Metaphysics* with Book 2 of the *Physics*. Beato, however, never acknowledged this fact and actually claimed that the connection was entirely unnoticed since antiquity.

---

9 Ibid., 217-18. I follow the translators here, including their use of an alternative spelling of Trombetta’s name.
10 Beato, *Librum secundum*, sig.l3r.
The most noteworthy feature of Tommaso Pellegrini’s lectures is their un-Thomistic character.\textsuperscript{12} The extensive remains of his academic activity also illuminate the reason for the three-year cycle of the metaphysicians in which they focused especially upon Bks. 1, 7, and 12.\textsuperscript{13} In a discussion of Averroes’ commentary on the work, Pellegrini went through each of the books of the \textit{Metaphysics} in the beginning of one of his lecture cycles and explained the significance of all the parts of this work.\textsuperscript{14} Most importantly, he indicated that the significance of Book 7 as a breaking point was Averroes’ view that all the books that precede Book 7 are merely preparatory for this book. The rest of the work then follows the threefold division of being into substance and

\textsuperscript{12} The lecture cycles that survive from Pellegrini’s teaching career are apparently complete. They contain the appropriate number of lectures for a year of teaching, and each individual lecture is quite long. The vast majority of these cycles are found in the Ambrosiana along with the lectures of other Paduan professors from this period. There are indications that the basis of these manuscripts are student notes. For instance, see Ambrosiana MS. D 400 inf., 1r, where one reads, “a fratre Alb.” See also Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 563-64.

\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, based upon the limited information available in the \textit{rotuli}, this is precisely which book one would have predicted Pellegrini to cover over the course of these years. He dealt with Book 7 in 1579-80. See AAUP MS. 651, 283r. Moving backward from 1580-81 and based on the assumption of regularity, one would surmise that he would have lectured on Book 12 in the following years of his career, noting the year of the fall semester (1562, 1565, 1568, 1571, 1574, 1577, 1580). Though, see ibid., 219v, where Valdina lectured on Book 1 in 1555-56. Projecting backward, one would have expected that the metaphysician would have taken up Book 7 in 1555-56. But the dating of Pellegrini’s other lectures fit the pattern established here. For Book 12 in 1562-63, see Ambrosiana MS. D 400 inf., 272v. Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 564, says 1563, but the last lecture was dated on 3 July 1563. See ibid., 563, for lectures on Book 1 being given in 1566. See also Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., 1v: “ego in superiori anno dum 7m. interpretater.” See also Grendler, \textit{Universities}, 385, which states that metaphysicians at Rome also taught on Bks. 1, 7, and 12. It is noteworthy that Beato and Pellegrini did offer extensive expositions of Bks. 2 and 4. See Beato, \textit{Librum secundum}; Ambrosiana MS. D 398 inf., 227r; Ambrosiana D 399 inf. See also Lohr, “Authors N-Ph,” 563-64.

\textsuperscript{14} For Grendler’s discussion of the reasons for choosing these books, see \textit{Universities}, 385-86: “The reasons for concentrating on these three chapters (of fourteen) in the \textit{Metaphysics} are easy to understand. Book 1 outlines the characteristics of metaphysics, which Aristotle also called ‘first philosophy,’ ‘wisdom,’ and even ‘theology’ at times. It then offers a good survey of earlier Greek philosophy on metaphysics, finding it inadequate. Book 7 discusses in detail his conception of substance, with forays into essence, form, and matter. Building on substance, book 12 develops Aristotle’s famous argument for the Unmoved Mover or God. The three books are the heart of Aristotle’s work and were an appropriate metaphysical foundation for Scholastic theology.” The fact that Averroes’ commentary seems to be the basis for the triennial cycle shows how important it is to examine the actual lectures when making these sorts of judgments. Preparation for scholastic theology does not seem to have any relevance at all.
accident, potency and act, and one and many. Book 7 is the first to deal with substance along with accidental being. Book 9 deals with potency and act, followed by Book 10 which treats the one and the many. Book 12 then deals with immaterial substance. Pellegrini did not entirely embrace Averroes’ way of describing the organization of the work, but when he dealt with Book 12 in 1568, he said that a significant portion of it dealt with “immobile substances”—God and separate substances.

To examine the un-Thomistic character of Pellegrini’s lectures, Pellegrini’s 1568-69 lectures on Book 12 provide a useful framework for analysis. Aristotle covers separate substances and God in this book. If any of Pellegrini’s lecture cycles would be concerned with revealed theology, it would be his lectures on Book 12 of the *Metaphysics*. But even in lectures on Aristotelian views of “God and the other divine minds,” issues pertaining to scholastic theology almost never arose. When they did, Pellegrini set them aside. Indeed, the Latin doctors were quoted much less frequently than Averroes and Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Pellegrini was quite willing to criticize them. In lecture 2, Pellegrini for the first time brought up a Latin commentator, his confrere, Albert the Great. In discussing the divisions of substance, Pellegrini chided Albert for his interpretation. He said, “His reason…is not consonant with the words of Aristotle.” “Albert,” Pellegrini stated, “does not uphold Aristotle, which is what he should have done since it is the task of the interpreter; instead, he corrects Aristotle.”

---

15 Ambrosiana MS. D 233 inf., 1r. Though the numbering of Aristotle’s books is slightly different, see *Aristotelis Stagiritae Metaphysicorum libri XIII, cum scholis Averrois Cordubensis digressiones omnes in eosdem* (Lyons, 1547), 128, for Averroes’ preface.
16 Pellegrini employed the Renaissance translation of Cardinal Bessarion throughout this series of lectures.
17 Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., 4r.
According to Pellegrini, in his desire to perfect Aristotle’s treatment, Albert added a treatise on the nature of celestial bodies and their principles. In the end, Pellegrini embraced the interpretation of Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes on this point.

In the third lecture, Pellegrini turned to God and the rest of the “divine minds.” It seems that the first two parts of the work on sensible substance were addressed sufficiently in the first two lectures since much of this material would have been covered in his lectures on Book 7. It is not until lecture 4 that he finally referred to Thomas Aquinas, who had attempted to distinguish “human theology” (or metaphysics) from “divine theology.” Thomas argued that the metaphysician does not consider substances abstracted from matter as the subject of his science but merely as the principles of that subject. Pellegrini also pointed to Thomas’ prooemium to his commentary on the *Metaphysics* in which, in Pellegrini’s words, “he openly says that, although the first philosopher considers both abstract substances and common being and its properties; nevertheless, he does not consider all these things in the same way.” Pellegrini continued his description of Aquinas’ position: “This is because common being is considered as the

---

18 I am only looking for explicit references to the Latin doctors or issues in scholastic theology. But it is remarkable that Pellegrini said in the beginning of his fourth lecture that his third lecture had demonstrated that separated substances were part of the subject of metaphysics rather than merely the principle of the *ens commune* that is the subject of metaphysics. This is a claim that contradicts the view expressed in Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on Boethius’ *De trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4: “divine things are not treated by philosophers except insofar as they are principles of all things and, therefore, they are treated in that doctrine which those things are posited that are common to all beings, which has as its subject being insofar as it is being. And this science is called *divine science* by them.” See also John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 18. See also Marco Forlivesi, “Approaching the Debate on the Subject of Metaphysics from the Later Middle Ages to the Early Modern Age: The Ancient and Medieval Antecedents,” *Medioevo* 34 (2009): 15-19.

19 Ibid., 7r: “Lectio 3: Etsi interpretes omnes Aristotelis uno ore fatentur disputationem de Deo et caeternis intell.iiis et formis separatis pertinere ad Metaphysicam et hanc disputationem velunt absolvvi in hac 3.a parte libri 12.”
subject of this science, and separate substances are the principles of this common being." Aquinas’ teaching that God and spiritual substances are not part of the subject of metaphysics is arguably one of the fundamental features of his metaphysics. The substances separate from matter are the principles of metaphysics’ subject, which is *ens commune*, being in common. This perspective is part of Aquinas’ strategy for solving the problem of the relationship of philosophy and theology. Metaphysics posed a problem for Thomas because many thinkers had said that its subject is God; Aristotle even called this science *theology*. Thomas argued that the subject of metaphysics was *ens commune* and that God was not a part of that subject, only its principle, which left revealed theology as the only science which had God as its subject. For this reason, it is particularly startling that Pellegrini concluded the description of Thomas’ position by saying, “we have already refuted this position.” A view fundamental to Aquinas’ metaphysics and his account of the difference between revealed theology and metaphysics was openly rejected by the Dominican professor.

In his sixth lecture, Pellegrini took up the relevant passages on this topic—separate substances and the subject of metaphysics—from Alexander, Averroes, and Thomas Aquinas and criticized Aquinas once again. After giving a generous interpretation of the Greek and Islamic commentators, Pellegrini turned to Aquinas and began by saying, “I confess that his words cannot be glossed so commodiously.” The Dominican professor followed this statement by saying, “I will nonetheless say what is

---

20 Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., 12rv.
21 Ibid., 12v.
22 I basically transliterated Pellegrini’s term, *commode*, because, as I will note below, reading “commodiously” had a somewhat technical meaning for these Paduan professors.
said by those who profess his teaching.” One would have thought that Pellegrini, as a professor of metaphysics in via S. Thomae, would be one of those who professed Thomas’ teaching. His discussion here is important because it directly confronts revealed theology. Pellegrini remarked again on the fact that Thomas’ commentary on Boethius’ De trinitate makes a distinction between “a theology discovered in a human manner (humanitus)” and “a theology that is held by revelation.” Both are ways of speaking (sermo) about God, but in “human theology” God is considered as a principle or cause, not as a subject of the science, but in “revealed theology” God is considered “under the aspect (ratio) of a subject.” The best that Pellegrini could do with this position was to say, “These words might be thusly interpreted for someone who wants to uphold [Thomas] in this part and to remain in his via.” In Pellegrini’s construal, they say—those who want to defend Thomas Aquinas on this point and be part of his via—that Thomas was really dealing with the mode according to which abstract beings are considered by the metaphysician. God and separate substances were known a posteriori, that is, from their effects. They were known as principles of being. On this interpretation, Thomas was not necessarily attempting to exclude these beings from the subject of metaphysics but simply describing the limits in how the metaphysician comes to know these beings. But, however charitable an interpretation this might have been, Pellegrini made it quite clear that he did not find this to be an accurate gloss of Aquinas’ teaching in his commentary on Boethius. Pellegrini proceeded to address Aquinas’ prooemium to his commentary on the Metaphysics. Again, Pellegrini pointed to the fact that they interpreted Aquinas to be

23 Ibid., 17v.
saying something other than what the prooemium says on the basis of a straightforward reading, that is, that separate substances are not part of the subject of metaphysics but merely the principle of its subject: being in common. Instead, they argued that Thomas Aquinas simply wanted to say that the First Cause is not by itself the adequate subject of metaphysics. Pellegrini was certainly putting Thomas Aquinas’ followers on the defensive, forcing them to engage in rather strained glosses of some of his most important statements on the subject. The Dominican professor concluded his discussion by saying that “the genus of abstract substances is considered by the first philosopher as part of his subject and the most principal part.”

In contrast to the explicit teaching of Aquinas, Pellegrini argued that God and the intelligences were a part of the subject of metaphysics.

In his lectures, Pellegrini was not only willing to criticize Aquinas but also to propose innovative interpretations. He wanted to explain briefly why abstract substances are not merely the principle or cause of the subject of metaphysics or, on the other hand, just one part of metaphysics, but the “especial part of this subject.” We might get some perspective on why the Dominican was such a popular teacher when he followed this statement with the bold claim that “perhaps this matter has been rightly explained by no one.” Pellegrini was quite frank about the radical character of his interpretation of Aristotle, not only in contrast to Thomism but to the entire Peripatetic tradition.

---

24 Ibid., 18rv.
25 Ibid., 18v.
Pellegrini’s discussion of whether metaphysics or natural philosophy is the science that proved the existence of God also showed his boldness in dismissing traditional solutions to difficulties in the Aristotelian corpus. The famous debate between Avicenna and Averroes illuminates the discussion. Avicenna believed that God’s existence is proved in metaphysics. But since no science can demonstrate its own subject, God cannot be considered its subject, though Avicenna held a less radical position on this point than Aquinas. Averroes rejected this position. Though he agreed that no science can demonstrate the existence of its own subject, he thought that the existence of the Primary Substance is proved by the natural philosopher, not the metaphysician. Since Pellegrini, like Averroes, believed that God was the principal part of metaphysics, one might expect that Pellegrini would have taken the Averroistic option of having natural philosophy demonstrate the existence of separate substances. But he rejected Averroes’ view that the natural philosopher proves their existence.

Despite affirming that God was part of the subject of metaphysics, Pellegrini believed that the metaphysician proved the existence of God. He pulled this off by simply rejecting the principle that was a key motivation for a great part of this debate. He said in his eighth lecture that “they are greatly deceived who believe that no science can prove its own subject.” This claim is so remarkable because almost every major figure in the

---

26 Ibid., 24r. See also Piccartus, Isagoge, 281: “[C]ontra subjectum nostrum quidam ita disputant. Subjectum scientiae non demonstratur, sed praecognitum esse debet. Metaphysicus autem probat esse Deum, qui primarium tamen ejus subjectum constituitur, aut ergo principium illud erit falsum, assumptum a nobis in majore, aut alid constituenendum erit Metaphysices subjectum....Omnino axioma illud esse falsum.” Aristotle seems never to have applied this principle to the science of metaphysics. More work needs to be done on this rupture in the history of Aristotelian metaphysics. I would like to acknowledge the scholarship of John Doyle for helping me think through this difficulty.
Aristotelian tradition—Greek, Arabic, and Latin—accepted this fundamental principle.

The view of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Avicenna, Averroes, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Giles of Rome, and many others was set aside with stunning frankness.

For centuries, Latin Aristotelianism wrestled with the contradiction between Aristotle’s position that the world was eternal with the Christian teaching that the world was created ex nihilo. Thomas Aquinas rejected the position that implied the double truth: both the Aristotelian and Christian teachings are true. But he also rejected the position of many contemporary theologians that reason could demonstrate the non-eternity of the world. He thought of this as a “neutral problem.” The world could be eternal or non-eternal. Aristotle did not demonstrate the eternity of the world, nor has any Christian

---

27 Forlivesi, “Approaching the Debate,” 19, 41, 44-45; Leo Elders, The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 83, n. 4; Amos Bertolacci, “The Structure of Metaphysical Science in the Ilâhiyyât (Divine Science) of Avicenna’s Kitâb al-Šifāʾ (Book of the Cure),” Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale 13 (2002): 45, n. 158; Stephen P. Menn, “Metaphysics: God and Being,” in The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy, ed. A. S. McGrade (New York: Cambridge, 2003), 149; John F. Wippel, “Essence and Existence,” in CHLMP, 386-92. See Anna Akasoy, “Arabic Texts: Philosophy, Latin Translations of,” in Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy, 93-94: “The ‘School of Toledo’ produced translations of works of Aristotle and his Greek commentators from their Arabic versions as well as of later commentaries and more independent works originally written in Arabic. Its two protagonists were Dominicus Gundissalinus (or Gundisalvi) (c. 1110-1190), Archdeacon of Cuéllar (in the Diocese of Segovia), and Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187)….The term ‘metaphysics,’ which had already appeared in manuscripts of Boethius’ works, was established as a term for a philosophical discipline in the Latin West only through Gundissalinus’ On the Division of Philosophy which was informed by various Latin and Arabic texts translated in Toledo. The impact of this text was even greater—Gundissalinus introduced here basic principles such as the division of disciplines according to their subject matter or that a science cannot demonstrate the existence of its own subject matter.” See also Duns Scotus, Philosophical Writings, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 10: “Avicenna has spoken well, however, and Averroes very badly and against him I use the basic proposition they both hold, namely: ‘No science proves the existence of its subject.’ This is true, because of the priority a subject has with respect to the science. For if it were posterior, its subject could be proved in a lower science, where it would be conceived under some inferior aspect inadequate for its role as the object [of the higher science]. But a subject enjoys a greater priority over a lower science than over its own science. If the highest science, therefore, cannot establish the existence of its subject, since this is first or highest, still less can an inferior science do so.”
demonstrated the non-eternity of the world. Christians ultimately believe that the world is not eternal because the Bible says so. In lecture 11, Pellegrini took up Thomas Aquinas’ exchange with John Philoponus on the eternity of the world. The Dominican professor summarized Thomas’ view that Aristotle gave merely probable, not demonstrative reasons for the eternity of the world.²⁸ Pellegrini did not think much of Philoponus’ arguments, but he believed that Thomas’ reason for his position “has the greatest force,” though he immediately invoked the fourteenth-century Averroist, John of Jandun, to defend the reasoning of Aristotle.²⁹ But Pellegrini did seem to have some difficulty with Aristotle’s arguments for the eternity of the world, though no theological concerns—creatio ex nihilo in particular—were at issue.³⁰ After working through the opinions of Plato, Alexander, Theophrastus, Eudemus, Simplicius, and John Philoponus, he addressed “the opinion of the theologians” briefly, but only to use the nature of angelic cognition to illustrate a certain point about the relationship of time and motion.³¹

Towards the end of lecture 16, Pellegrini gave indications that he might finally be ready to defend the teaching of Aquinas regarding the eternity of the world. But in the

²⁸ Ambrosiana MS. D 401 inf., 34r. See ibid., 35v, where Pellegrini said that some of John’s arguments were “of no significance.”
²⁹ Ibid., 36r.
³⁰ Ibid., 34r. But note ibid., 37v: “Et sic nihil habet Simplicius adversus Ioannem Grammaticum ex illo dicto philosophi. Nihil etiam adversum eum habet si velimus stare in doctrina philosophi.” See also ibid., 42r, where Pellegrini suggested that the philosopher truly demonstrates eternity or, “if we do not believe Aristotle, he judges himself to have demonstrated it”: “aut non si Aristoteli credimus, ipse putat se eam demonstrasse.” See also Ambrosiana MS. D 399 inf., 121r: “et occasione huius digreditur parum Averroes: contra nonnullos philosophos maxime contra Avicennam prava natura, et consuetudo, et dispositio, inquit, causa est, ut aliqui non admittant p.as propositiones…quia ea in legibus scripta inveniunt, verbi gratia, est propositio, ex nihilo nihil sit, sunt aliqui videntes in lege divina scriptum esse: Deum caelum, et terram, creasse ex nihilo; crediderunt non esse impossibile hanc propositionem ex nihilo aliquid fieri, unde coguntur fateri, magnitudinem fieri ex non magnitudine.”
³¹ Ibid., 38r. Note that he attacked Plato’s position in the Timaeus on ibid., 46rv.
end his auditors were treated to another challenge to Thomas’ reading of Aristotle. Thomas was worried, Pellegrini showed, that Aristotle’s proofs for the genus of immaterial beings were based upon his conviction regarding the eternity of the world. How could the Philosopher have founded his “whole philosophy upon a probable reason” and one that, in Aquinas’ view, turns out to be false? Pellegrini was perplexed by Thomas’ suggestion that we do not have the means for demonstrating the existence of this genus; the medieval theologian stated that the conclusion was true, even though the reasons given by Aristotle for believing that God and other separate substances exist were false. According to Pellegrini, Agostino Nifo challenged Thomas Aquinas’ perspective, arguing that there was no other way for proving the existence of beings abstracted from matter except with the eternity of motion. This argument was based on Averroes’ interpretation. Pellegrini disagreed with Nifo’s argument, thus defending Thomas. But soon after this—at the very end of the lecture—Pellegrini directly confronted Aquinas: “Speaking as a Peripatetic (peripatetice loquendo), I believe that the reason of St. Thomas about the philosophy of Aristotle does not efficaciously argue for the immateriality of the First Principle.” “If the world was made,” Pellegrini stated, “it was made by something—if I may omit the possibility of the world being made by chance.” But it is possible that this “something” was material, even if it was not generated, as in the case of the heavenly bodies. Pellegrini was basically arguing here that Aquinas was trying to have his cake and eat it too. Aquinas wanted to argue that Aristotle’s arguments for the eternity of the world were not demonstrative while still making use of his

32 Ibid., 53v.
arguments for the existence of God. The difficulty, in Pellegrini’s perspective, was that, for Aristotle, the argument for God’s existence depended upon the world being eternal. Pellegrini thus thought that Aquinas failed to make a coherent, authentically Aristotelian argument for the existence of God.

Pellegrini concluded the discussion with an explicit statement about the place of theology in the context of his lectures on the Metaphysics: “Nevertheless, I am not saying that reasons are not given by the theologians, besides the eternity of the world, for concluding necessarily that the First Principle is immaterial.” Theologians could prove the existence of an immaterial principle for the universe, but Pellegrini did not see this as his task in lectures on the Metaphysics. His reservations about the use of theology in his Paduan lectures were no less potent than those of his lay colleagues.

Theology had no place in these lectures. The metaphysical teaching of the scholastic theologians was subject to critique. While Pellegrini did occasionally approve the teaching of Thomas Aquinas or was at least willing to say that his interpretations were more probable than those of others, his references to the medieval theologian often ended up as criticisms. If a scholar were unaware of the fact that Pellegrini was a Dominican and a professor of Thomistic metaphysics, she would probably not infer that these lectures were delivered by a Thomist.

More work must be done before a general characterization of Pellegrini’s metaphysical teaching can be given. In his examination, he did bring up “recent

---

33 Ibid., 54r.
34 Ibid., 54v.
philosophers,” without naming them and often to criticize them.\textsuperscript{35} He explicitly named a few major Italian natural philosophers such as Nifo,\textsuperscript{36} Zimara,\textsuperscript{37} and Francesco Vicomercato.\textsuperscript{38} There were very rare references to other medieval theologians like Scotus.\textsuperscript{39} Pellegrini was not interested in pushing the boundaries of metaphysical inquiry. He thought his job was to interpret the texts of Aristotle as accurately as possible—to speak as a Peripatetic. This might mean that he would give innovative readings, never given before. It might mean that he criticized very authoritative interpreters of the past, even the medieval doctor whose name was associated with Pellegrini’s chair.

By way of conclusion, it is worth considering Pellegrini’s general characterization of his professorial role, which was made in the context of very clear remarks about Thomas Aquinas and Christian theology. In lecture 61, Pellegrini presented Aquinas’ views of angels that differed from those of Aristotle. One of the issues, for instance, was Aristotle’s view that the number of separate substances corresponded to the movements of the heavenly orbs. Aquinas, however, believed that angels exceeded all material multitude. After presenting Aquinas’ position, Pellegrini said that one of his reasons was “very obscure” and the most powerful reason of Aquinas, which “should suffice for the Christian man,” is found in his citation of the book of Daniel (7:10), which Aquinas often used in this context and which says, “thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 15v, 21v, 36r.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 54v.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 48v.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 53r, 118v.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 81r, 192rv.
thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him.”40 Pellegrini then stated that these things about the Bible were said learnedly and subtly by Aquinas, but his role as a professor of Padua actually made him an opponent of his great confrere: “Since we are in the present circumstances (hic) an interpreter of Aristotle and we ought to uphold him, we will strive to solve the reasons of St. Thomas.”41 Pellegrini proceeded to defend Aristotle’s view of separate substances against the criticisms of Aquinas.

Far from mixing theology and philosophy or merely presenting the three-hundred-year-old expositions of Thomas Aquinas on the *Metaphysics*, Pellegrini could barely be considered a disciple of Thomas Aquinas. The Dominican metaphysician was a rather frequent critic of the doctor of his order. There is no evidence whatsoever that his goal was to prepare students for the study of scholastic theology or to protect the students at the university from unchallenged Averroistic readings of Aristotle. Pellegrini sought to give accurate interpretations of the Stagirite’s teaching and to provide students with a thoroughgoing treatment of the main philosophical issues arising from the *Metaphysics*. His criteria for evaluating the major commentators, especially Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes as well as Albert, Aquinas, and others was their ability to offer a coherent, rational interpretation of the text. Divine revelation had nothing to do with it.42

40 *Summa theologiae* I, q. 50, art. 3; *Scriptum super Sententiis* 2, d. 3, q. 1, arg. 5.
41 Ibid., 189r.
42 Of course, the effect of this argument depends in some respects on misunderstandings about what Thomas Aquinas himself was up to in his commentaries on Aristotle. See Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas*, 238-39, for a summary of the complex debate and the biographer’s own take. I am quite hesitant about Torrell’s cautious affirmation of the notion that Aquinas was *baptizing* Aristotle in the literal commentaries.
Faith and Reason in the Works of the Dominican Professors

Like Pomponazzi, Zimara, Genua, and Zabarella, Pellegrini interpreted Aristotle without much concern at all for Christian revelation. Though he made a few remarks about the theologians, Pellegrini did not engage in extensive discussions of faith. As he said himself, as a professor of metaphysics at Padua, his job was to interpret the works of Aristotle. Christian theology was not relevant to what he was doing. This was obviously not true for those teaching theology in via S. Thomae. They offered some interesting reflections on the appropriate way for a theologian to make use of a pagan philosopher like Aristotle and the conclusions of human reason. The theologians, particularly Medici, Barbavara, and Vielmi, also had conflicting statements about Islamic Aristotelianism and the Italian natural philosophers, the most important of whom had taught at the University of Padua.

Some Dominican theologians associated with Padua actually held the conventionally Thomistic positions on the major issues of conflict in Italian thought. Others responded to these controversies by adopting a skeptical stance towards philosophy and retreating to faith for all truth. These alternatives show the range of perspectives on faith and reason among the Dominican professors and also set in relief the balanced approach of Vielmi and Barbavara.

The most famous debate in Italian academic culture was over the immortality of the soul. It began at the end of the fifteenth century and culminated with Pomponazzi’s 1516 *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* and the condemnation of the double truth and the definition of the soul’s immortality at the Fifth Lateran Council. Before the
“Pomponazzi affair,” Valentino da Camerino, Securo’s successor, criticized the view of his student, Cajetan, on the immortality of the soul, which the latter expressed in his commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima*. Valentino pointed to the “illustrious doctors” of the Dominican order, Albert and Thomas. In his *quaestio*, which was not produced during his time at Padua, he also observed that Cajetan’s denial of the rational demonstrability of the soul’s immortality might give relief to heretics. But these things were stated in Valentino’s conclusion. The *quaestio* itself relies on conventionally Thomistic readings of Aristotle’s texts. His stated goal was to understand the “mind of the Philosopher.”

About twenty years before he became a professor of theology at Padua in 1536, Bartolomeo Spina fiercely defended Thomas Aquinas’ view of the immortality of the soul against Pomponazzi. He was one of the key players in the “Pomponazzi Affair.” His opposition to Pomponazzi’s view of the soul was strongly associated with his strident rejection of Cajetan’s denial of the possibility of demonstrating the soul’s immortality from Aristotle’s texts. Indeed, he suggested that Pomponazzi’s view was in some way indebted to Cajetan. The key for Spina was that Pomponazzi (and possibly Cajetan) went beyond what was acceptable for a philosopher who was also a Christian. Spina’s take was a bit more subtle than is sometimes suggested. He knew that major Christian theologians such as Duns Scotus had said that the immortality of the soul could not be established on the basis of Aristotelian principles. He even claimed that he initially defended Pomponazzi’s book from being destroyed by the Venetian Senate because he

---

44 Ibid., 312. Tavuzzi provides an edition of this *quaestio*.
45 Note also that Pomponazzi claimed that *De immortalitate animae* was in some way prompted by a question from a Dominican student.
thought Pomponazzi was simply espousing the Scotistic position. Upon reading the work, however, Spina realized that the reality was much worse. He came to the conclusion that there was a major difference between Scotus and Pomponazzi. Pomponazzi’s work was not simply a cautious, sensitive reading of Aristotle which concluded that the immortality of the soul could not be established on the basis of his corpus. On the contrary, Pomponazzi was a scoffer, who mocked the Christian position as absurd, falling into what Spina referred to as a heretical position. This heresy was the position that the immortality of the soul is repugnant to natural knowledge (*scientia*). As he summed it up at one point in the polemic,

> Though no one prohibits that one can hold and opine that the immortality of the soul is not naturally demonstrable but held by faith alone, nevertheless, no Christian should oppose natural reasons to the truth of faith and infer that the conclusion [of the faith] is not only false but even a delusion, repugnant to the principles of philosophy.  

Spina did not accept Pomponazzi’s declarations of personal faithfulness to Christian doctrine on the soul’s immortality, even if he challenged it as an interpreter of Aristotle.  

> Spina and some of his Observant confreres have been described as being unable to grasp the distinction between Aristotle and philosophical truth or that between philosophy and Christian dogma. But it is remarkable that even one of the most pugnacious Dominicans of the era—and certainly the most severe of those who taught at the University of Padua—was able to make some critical distinctions in this debate. Spina

---

46 Bartolomeo Spina, *Opuscula* [*sic*], 47v-48r.

47 Note that some modern historians often agree with the fiercest “inquisitorial” sorts in their view of Pomponazzi and with the most hostile statements of the natural philosophers in their perspective on the mendicants. I hope that this study has shown the vast range of opinions between these extremes.

certainly thought that this debate went beyond the classroom. His students—presumably those studying in his convent’s studium—were concerned. He believed that some Christians who were weak because of stupidity or age or lack of faith might be shipwrecked through learning that a brilliant philosopher like Aristotle opposed their faith on such a fundamental issue. No longer could one find support in the idea that the great minds before the birth of Christ had somehow prepared the way for the acceptance of Christ’s teaching. Towards the end of the short treatise, Spina quite strikingly compared the use of philosophy in theology to how Jesus and the prophets used parables and other stories drawn from nature and experience. It gave consolation to the wise—and preachers were supposed to care for them as much as they did for the ignorant and “rude”—to know that the philosophers agreed with the teachings of the Church.

“Theological matters,” Spina said, “cannot be declared to the wise and how much less to the unlearned people unless they are known with many premises from natural reason and familiar experience.” Spina believed that philosophy was a handmaiden to theology.

But Spina repeated with some frequency that the Thomist position was supported “by the most natural arguments.” Indeed, Spina said quite clearly that “it is not a concern of the Christian faith whether [the immortality of the soul] can be demonstrated by natural reason or not.” Pomponazzi brought out this aspect of the debate quite

---

49 Spina, Opuscula [!], 58r.
50 Ibid., 44v.
51 Ibid., 57v. See also 47v-48r: “Licet enim nullus prohibeat posse teneri ac opinari non esse naturaliter demonstrabile animam esse immortalem, sed sola fide teneri, et possit nihilominus quisque conari solutoaines adhibere ad rationes naturales pro tali conclusione indutias, nullus tamen christicola debet contra veritatem fidei rationes naturales opponere et inferres quod talis conclusio falsa sit, et non solum falsa, sed etiam deliramentum, repugnans principiis philosophie quod necessario vera sunt.”
explicitly when he stated that “Thomas tried to make Aristotle a Christian.”\(^{52}\) The problem of Christian versus secular Aristotelianism cannot be more clearly stated. When faced with the charge of Christianizing Aristotle, how did Spina actually respond? Did he think that this was precisely what a theologian ought to be doing? Spina was actually outraged at the suggestion, believing that the charge of Christianizing Aristotle was a charge of corrupting the Greek philosopher’s meaning and, indeed, of outright lying. On the contrary, Spina defined Thomas’ relationship to Aristotle in the following way:

> St. Thomas saw Aristotle as one who, in comparison to the rest of the philosophers, was more acute and more methodical in handing down knowledge about corporeal and spiritual things and, nevertheless, thought that many of his followers and adversaries did not prevail in attaining to his wisdom….Theology does suppose natural science as faith supposes nature, but Thomas did not, as a consequence, attempt to make Aristotle a Christian. Rather, he attempted to create a situation in which his wisdom, which stands forth so eminently and clearly, would not be disfigured by the ignorance of all those who had and still do attempt to make Christians into infidels and heretics. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Aristotle could not genuinely be shown to support theology if his meaning was distorted.

Spina even was willing to acknowledge points where Thomas Aquinas and other Thomists such as Capreolus were “speaking as theologians” rather than as “pure philosophers.”\(^{53}\) The distinction between Aristotelian philosophy and Christian faith were quite clearly defined in Spina’s polemical challenge of Pomponazzi.

---

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 53v.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 57r. See also Spina’s *Defensiones*, 168, regarding an opinion of Antonio Andrea pertaining to angelology: “Sed a proposito longe vagatur, cum Aristoteles utpote Philosophus purus, & itidem puram tradens Philippian, de motu illo angeliun nullibi faciat mentionem, nec consequenter de potentia ad talem motum activa sive passiva. Neque enim novit angelos illo modo moveri quo theologii tradunt. Neque si novisset de hoc in physicis memor esset, sed neque in metaphysica, in qua Physics et non ut theologus loquitur. Unde nec alicuius alius theologus debuit hic inserere ea, quae propria theologorum sunt, et fidei sola revelacione noscuntur. Hoc enim proprium illorum est, quibus ad suum propositum insereendum desunt
As we have seen, the relationships between the lay Aristotelians and the Dominican professors were generally quite good. Spina’s harsh attacks on Pomponazzi, while still a friar quite early in his academic career, were the exception rather than the rule. A final point about the debate over immortality as it concerns Pomponazzi involves Girolamo d’Ippolito, who taught theology and then metaphysics from 1495 to 1510. Very little is known about d’Ippolito’s career at Padua, but one of the times when he appears in Pomponazzi’s lectures pertains to the debate over immortality. There is no evidence of rancor here, though d’Ippolito, professor of metaphysics at that time, was defending the Thomistic position. He was arguing against the position that the intellectual soul was one for all human beings. While Pomponazzi referred to d’Ippolito’s view as a “Thomistic” argument, he did say that it was the best textual support for that position available. Pomponazzi’s only response was to say that this text contradicted other Aristotelian writings and thus must be re-interpreted to maintain its coherence with the rest of the corpus. Pomponazzi acknowledged that his Dominican colleagues could offer real challenges to his views from Aristotle’s writings.

Pomponazzi, Corsi inediti, II: 65. It might be worth noting some relevant points from the career of Ludovico Valenza, the first professor of Thomist theology at Padua, who nonetheless only taught for a single academic year. In a compendium on Aristotelian ethics written for Olivierio Carafa, Valenza told a story about how, when first reading Aristotle’s *Ethics*, he assumed that the author must have been a Christian because of how he disputed about happiness (*beatitudo*! Valenza described himself as being brought to uncontrollable tears when thinking upon Aristotle’s fate. He continued, “If what almost everyone affirms, that this man, one from the human race so well-deserving of God, has been given up to eternal damnation by God,” then this great sadness overtakes me. “Nevertheless,” Valenza struck back, “I am certain that if he led the kind of life that he taught and believed in the one God who governs all things and has a concern for human affairs, then he will obtain the enjoyment of the highest good.” See Lines, “Pagan and Christian Ethics,” 442-443, nn. 38-39. Despite having this attitude towards Aristotle, Lines argues that Ludovico’s *Compendium* “does not betray any of this interest in comparing Aristotelian
Alberto Pasquali’s *De optimo philosophorum genere* responded to the controversies in Italian philosophy by taking a skeptical stance and adopting a fideistic position. This dialogue rejects the idea that any certainty comes from philosophy. The work provides some insight into the range of views of faith and philosophy held by the Dominicans who taught at the University of Padua. The dialogue probably does not reflect Pasquali’s teaching as much as why he temporarily abandoned the chair of Thomistic metaphysics in 1531. In the opening of the work, he said that he was writing about his conversations in the summer of 1531 with Gentile Contarini, Giovanni Brevio, and Marino and Giovanni Grimani. The young man who described the soul of Aquinas being transferred into the body of Pomponazzi had become professor of metaphysics in 1518, about ten years after that oration. One of the characters in the dialogue, Giovanni Grimani, remarked upon the years that he heard Pasquali’s lectures in Padua. But Pasquali left Padua after these summer conversations. All the reasons for the interruption in Pasquali’s teaching in the early 1530s are not known. But the attitudes that he expressed in this work, dedicated to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, suggest that the popular professor had lost confidence in Greek philosophy and even in human reason.

---

56 Alberto Pasquali, *De optimo philosophorum genere libri duo* (Venice, 1532), 54.
In his dedicatory epistle, Fra Alberto presented the conclusion of their discussion as being that “no part of happiness for us should be asked from philosophy.” As a man teaching metaphysics for well over a decade, it is remarkable that Brevio persuaded him that knowledge about how to live well and honorably could only be derived by the most learned men in Scripture. Consequently, Pasquali said, “I have decided to abandon the entire glorious doctrine of the philosophers.” He wanted to provide a record of those reasons that “abstracted me from philosophy.” Pasquali did so by using a dialogue. Far from a series of scholastic _quaestiones_, this dialogue paints a picture of learned discussion in the Late Renaissance. Before the dialogue opened, Pasquali even set the scene with the Torre River running next to the high mountains, creating a pleasant solitude appropriate for contemplation. Pasquali’s delight in the beauties of nature was marveled at by one of his interlocutors.

As Charles Schmitt has suggested, this work contains an important discussion of Academic skepticism.57 But _De optimo_ contains not only references to the Academics but also an endorsement of their views. Indeed, Pasquali explicitly noted the conflict between his skeptical attitude about philosophy and his long experience of lecturing on the ancient philosophers:

> Nothing more vexing or bitter can happen to me, nothing more against my mind than commending the philosophy of these philosophers since I judge nothing to be feebler than this philosophy, in which there are innumerable errors. Because their families are so diverse, because their opinions so various, because their judgments are so obscure and contrary to each

57 Charles Schmitt, *Cicero Scepticus: A Study of the Influence of the Academica in the Renaissance* (The Hague, 1972), 213: “To the materials cited in the text we might also add the following which devote some attention to the Academic school of philosophy: Albertus Paschaleus, *De optimo philosophorum genere libri duo*.”
other, and because of obscurity and ignorance, they seem to have left for us nothing besides opinions and ignorance.\textsuperscript{58}

In the opening section of the dialogue, Alberto took the position of \textit{idiot} to the \textit{magister} of Giovanni. Giovanni’s fundamental argument was that philosophy has never made anyone happy. How could demonstrations about the heavens or about mathematics and other things so distant from experience be useful to humankind? If even the greatest and most learned philosophers from all the sects, whether Stoics, Academics, or Peripatetics, have never found the blessed life, what hope would there be for the rest of us, let alone the common people? Upon hearing this point, Pasquali proclaimed,

There is nothing that I desire more from you than that you finish what you have begun. Show all the folly of these philosophers. If you will do this, since I have renounced the metaphysics that I have professed at Padua, I will also abandon the entire philosophy of Aristotle and Plato and transfer all my studies, all my effort, all my concern, industry, reflection, and finally my whole mind to Christian authors.\textsuperscript{59}

This dialogue had high stakes. After years of studying and teaching philosophy, Pasquali said that he would abandon philosophy and devote himself entirely to Christian writers if his conversation partners showed the foolishness of the pagan philosophers.

The dialogue’s participants turned to a number of issues in natural philosophy and metaphysics but offered striking reflections on the matter of the immortality of the soul.

The conviction that Aristotelianism failed to prove the immortality of the soul created some distance between them and many Latin commentators on Aristotle, even a great

\textsuperscript{58} Pasquali, \textit{De optimo}, 5rv.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 7rv. Another comment on teaching is worthy of note, even if it was not made by Pasquali’s character in the dialogue: “Ut enim si Geometram se professus quipsiam, punctos individuos esse nesciat, aut si calamos absurd inflet is, qui se haberi Musicum velit: turpius in ea ipsa re peccat: cuius cognitionem se habere gloriabatur: Sic philosophi e opus sunt contemnendi, quod in ea arte, quam maxime profitentur: foedius illos labi, turpiusque oberrare conspiciamus.” See also ibid., 18v.
theologian like Aquinas. Rather than offering a Christian defense of Aristotelianism by showing that his principles could support the soul’s immortality, as we saw in the case of Camerino and Spina, they took this “failure” of Aristotelianism to imply the radical insufficiency of philosophy itself.

The dialogue suggested that Aristotle’s discussions of God in the *Metaphysics* were profoundly insufficient. Aristotle might have surpassed Plato because of the strength of his arguments and his greater lucidity, though they also believed that his discussion of the divine fell short of Plato’s. While the Stagirite might have acknowledged rightly that God is pure act and that God is the first mover of the heavens, Aristotle also called God a great animal with sensitive powers. This would be repugnant to anyone with a pure mind, as Marino Grimani declared in the dialogue. The estival interlocutors discussed other errors of Aristotle and how this “very grave and eloquent man was blind in finding the truth.” They also discussed Aristotle’s problematic view of the eternity of the world.

The most interesting discussion, especially given the northern Italian context, pertained to the immortality of the soul. Thomas Aquinas’ interpretation of Aristotle on the immortality of the soul came close to satisfying them that Aristotelianism could still contribute to human understanding. Giovanni stated that he was accustomed “from the

---

60 Ibid., 10r.
61 Ibid., 11r.
62 Ibid., 11v. Also note the view that some of these matter had not been recognized by men of former age: “Quoniam nullo alio in congress hominum memini me tam aperte declaratumuisse, et qui sint errors Aristotelis, et quantum vir gravissimus et eloquentissimus in veritate invenienda caecutierit cuius inquisitionis causa nati, & in lucem editi sumus. Quare perge obsasco mi frater: et aggreedere ream rem, quae a nostris hominibus, usque ad hanc aetatem vel ignorata, vel relicta iudicatur.”
first time of my age” to approve the opinions of others “in such a way that I was carried to the authority of the singular Thomas Aquinas as if by a storm, to whom I adhered as if to a rock.” Whatever this man asserted, who was “never sufficiently praised,” was “more certain than those things which were said by others.” Even Thomas’ weaker reasons were convincing to Giovanni, and any perspective that was repugnant to him he always judged to be false and inane. His love for Aquinas made Giovanni nervous about their conversation regarding Aristotle’s errors. His brother, Marino, did not allow this concern to impede his demonstration of the hopelessness of Aristotelian interpretation on the matter of the immortality of the soul. When it came to the immortality of the soul, Marino said, “we see that the dissensions of the gravest philosophers are so great” and, since only one of the opinions could be true, “so many of the supreme and most illustrious philosophers have by necessity been in error.” “Averroes said one thing,” he continued, “Alexander said another, and Thomas said still something else.”63 Not only did Aristotle commentators, including Christian philosophers like Thomas, Albert the Great, and Giles of Rome, wrestle with the issue of the soul’s immortality; even Aristotle struggled within himself. Eventually, the interlocutors agreed that Aristotle contradicted himself directly on this point. In Book 3 of *De anima*, Aristotle called the possible intellect unmixed and eternal on the testimony of Anaxagoras. In their commentaries—“rightly referred to as fables”—Aristotelians were not willing to face up to these contradictions: “They contrive, with ingenious subtlety, to defend their praeceptor from so clear and manifest a

---

63 Ibid., 14v.
contradiction.“ Strategies had consisted in saying that there were two possible intellects in human beings. These desperate commentators posited that there was, in addition to the possible intellect, a mortal *vis cogitativa*, a sensitive power which had powers resembling the intellect, which, as the *personae* in the dialogue revealed in pointing out, was never listed by Aristotle among the sensitive powers. Indeed, positing a *vis cogitativa* was one of Thomas Aquinas’ strategies. Despite all Aristotle’s obscurities, contradictions, and errors, which have given rise to struggles and conflicting interpretations for centuries, “all philosophers want to be called and judged as Aristotelians (*Aristotelici*).”

But this was not a polemic against Aristotle. He was just the chief of the philosophers. As such, showing his deficiencies was an indictment against philosophy as a whole. If it were not for Christian faith, the solution for the interlocutors at Udine would be skepticism:

Socrates confesses that he knows nothing; Anaxagoras judges all things to be covered and surrounded by darkness; Empedocles lamented the narrow and small seats of the senses; Democritus says that the truth is buried in a well; Cratylus, Heraclitus, Arkesilas, Zeno, Cleanthes, and Carneades judged that nothing is certain, nothing ascertained, and that all things are doubtful and uncertain and are probable on both sides. Who or what then do we follow? These men? These men who say that there is no truth or that they can find no truth? These men who, as we have said abundantly, have given rise to so many dissensions…such that in this extremely wide and entirely overwhelming sea of opinions, even Ulysses himself could lose himself. 

---

64 Ibid., 15v.  
65 Ibid., 16r.  
66 The dialogue, however, called Socrates the parent of the philosophers. See, e.g., ibid., 21r.  
67 Ibid., 16rv. See also ibid., 23r and 31r, for more discussion of the the philosophers’ ability to argue on both sides of any issue.
The teaching of the greatest philosophers about how difficulty it was to acquire truth through philosophy did not inspire confidence.

A stronger argument against philosophy was drawn from ethics. The central issue was that the philosophers could not lead human beings to a good life. Despite being acknowledged as the most learned of men, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Avempace, and Averroes were all worthy of ridicule because, while they confessed that all happiness is found in knowing the divine being, God as an infinite being cannot be perceived by human reasoning nor be explained by any human speech; God cannot be comprehended by the native powers or intellect of human beings. Besides re-emphasizing the limits of human reason and their assertion of the wide disagreement among the philosophers about the good life and the ordering of the commonwealth, the interlocutors dismissed the philosophers for their vicious conclusions. Aristotle was criticized for saying that those useless to the republic, such as the blind or the deformed, should be killed. Gentile Contarini observed that the historians reported that Aristotle himself had a weak and feminine voice as well as extremely slender legs.\textsuperscript{68} Plato’s works were generally worse. The dialogue brings up the standard issues: communal wives and pedophilia. This was very strong evidence, Contarini noted, against Plato’s notion of a philosopher king. Even Socrates detracted from natural piety with his skepticism about the gods.

The conclusion stated that Christian theology could give certainty. But it actually focused much more on the lives of Christians who displayed “supernatural virtue,” particularly the martyrs. It is much easier to teach, the dialogue observed, than to do what

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 26r.
one has taught. Christian heroes like Lawrence and Agnes and even those like Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and other Christians who died in their beds were worthy of imitation.\(^{69}\)

Was philosophy then utterly useless? The dialogue concluded on a somewhat more positive note, offered by Gentile Contarini, who had been the harshest interlocutor as far as the ethical teachings of the philosophers:

Surely, I judge that Plato, Aristotle, Democritus, Anaxagoras, and other philosophers were very learned but with many errors. Nevertheless, I think that all of them left us no little ardor for discovering the truth and uncovered the most hidden circuits for us. Neither do I entirely condemn them for not entirely discovering the truth. Their books should still be read so that what we write might be embellished with ornaments and decorations from them. For gold is often sought in the earth and in the mud of the Pactolus, and it shines on the turbid seashore. Let us imitate David who wrenched out the sword from the hands of his enemy and cut off the head of Goliath with his sword.\(^{70}\)

Pagan philosophy could serve as ornamentation, or it could be used as a weapon by Christians to defeat the philosophers. This was the best thing that the dialogue could say about philosophy. Given Pasquali’s sharp turn away from Aristotelian philosophy, it is no wonder that he did not show up to teach metaphysics next fall. Indeed, one wonders what his teaching was like when he did return in 1533. Pasquali’s skeptical attitude towards Greek philosophy and human reason was very unusual for these Paduan theologians. His fideism was unique as far as Dominican professors at Padua were concerned. But it shows the range of possibilities. More importantly, Pasquali’s work shows that the metaphysicians were certainly capable of seeing the limitations of Aristotle and the

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 32rv.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 35r.
contradictions between his work and Christian faith. Pasquali believed that he had to face them directly and to make his choice for the teachings of Jesus.

In contrast to Pasquali, the theologians Medici, Barbavara, and Vielmi had a much more positive perspective. They show the way in which the Paduan intellectual milieu and the famous lay natural philosophers at the university affected Renaissance Thomism. Sisto Medici’s inaugural oration at the University of Padua, *De ingenio theologicis facultatibus excolendo*, described the way in which Scripture reveals the highest splendor of all the sciences. But he acknowledged that philosophy was one of the most subtle tasks of human genius.\(^\text{71}\) He pointed to the part of philosophy discovered by Aristotle called rational philosophy—that is, logic—which gave rules for intellectual inquiry. Socrates and Plato did teach natural philosophy but Socrates in particular, as Cicero said, also brought moral philosophy down from the heavens.\(^\text{72}\) Nevertheless, Medici believed that philosophy was seen in its full glory in the sacred text:

> Natural philosophy and metaphysics consist especially in the cognition of principles and causes; our philosophy is sufficiently obtained if we hear John thundering from on high, “In the beginning was the Word”...or Moses prophesying marvelously about the hidden past, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

There may be some hyperbolic language here, but whatever Medici thought of the role of the liberal arts and philosophy in the Bible, he did not think of this as theology, the subject that he was to teach in the coming academic year. Theology was, Medici stated, an encounter with God. He said, “every individual...should cherish this supreme skill

\(^{71}\) Medici, *De ingenio*, 8v.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 9r.
(facultas), which...is the divine queen of the sciences, by which our salvation and every
good is contemplated with the eyes of the mind by that revealed light of faith, until God
grants that he be seen face-to-face with eyes that have been purged.” What is noteworthy
is that Medici did not separate this kind of religious ascent from the theology of the
schools. Immediately after this almost mystical flourish, he said, “Thomas Aquinas
exceeds all authors in this study because of the order of his speech as well as the clarity and
abundance of his opinions, so that, as Aristotle is first among philosophers, so this holy
doctor is second to none in every kind of science but especially in sacred theology.”

The way in which Thomas Aquinas and the other schoolmen brought order to Christian
theology, particularly the teachings of the Church Fathers, was fundamental to the
Dominican defense of their thirteenth-century teacher. Medici observed by way of
conclusion that many Christians ignored and even spurned the study of theology despite
the fact that it was, in his words, “the law of life.” Linking this argument to the theme
of his upcoming lectures on predestination, he said, “Our Philosophy, which was sent
down from heaven for the salvation of all, excludes men of no age or profession.”

Medici saw theology as bringing to perfection the inquiries available to human reason.
And he was not teaching clerics but lay students. He thus explained how this study was
appropriate for all Christians.

In his oration in praise of St. Thomas at the annual festival of the artists at Padua,
Gianambrogio Barbavara addressed Aquinas’ contributions to philosophy and theology.

73 Ibid., 12r.
74 Ibid., 13v.
75 Ibid., 12v. The basis for the openness of theology to classical wisdom was, according to Medici, the
universality of Christian vocation.
In his speech, he made the argument that Thomas Aquinas was not only the greatest theologian but also the greatest commentator on Aristotle. He praised his teaching on God, angels, human action, and the soul. He celebrated Aquinas’ commentaries on Scripture, particularly Paul’s epistles. Even if someone would not want to give Thomas the first place in the “academy of the theologians,” the Dominican could not be far behind whoever was made first. Indeed, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and even Erasmus were said to have acknowledged his achievements.

But while many in his audience might grant that Aquinas was prince of the theologians, Barbavara acknowledged that putting him at the head of the philosophers might be a challenge. Barbavara pointed to other contenders: the Greek expositors and the “most divine Averroes,” who had been reasonably called the Commentator. Barbavara’s Dominican education clearly did not give him a fierce hostility to the Islamic Aristotelians. Barbavara knew the Paduan tradition of natural philosophy and used it to sustain his argument for the greatness of Aquinas as a philosopher. When Barbavara began to point out philosophers who acknowledged the importance of Thomas Aquinas as an interpreter of Aristotle, he pointed first to Pietro Pomponazzi. Since this oration was given in the late-1540s, his recognition of Pomponazzi was obviously not due to a personal relationship, and it came long after the controversy over the immortality of the soul. Barbavara knew of Pomponazzi’s prestige and was willing to employ it to magnify the achievements of his doctor on Thomas’ feast day. He was not ignorant of key disputes.

---

76 Barbavara, Oratio, sig.b1v.
77 Ibid., sig.b4v.
between Thomists and Averroists. He acknowledged some of the controversies between
Thomas and Averroes and their respective followers, but he affirmed the statement that,
"where there is discord in philosophy between Averroes and St. Thomas, it is difficult to
see the truth." Barbavara frankly said, “I certainly admire and, for a second time, I
admire Averroes.” Interestingly enough, one of the reasons that Barbavara offered for
privileging Aquinas over Averroes was that “better literature…abounded more and
more.” Because of progress in scholarship, the fact that Thomas Aquinas wrote several
decades after Averroes thus gave him an advantage. Thomas’ orderliness and
perceptiveness in interpreting made it possible, Barbavara said, to read only Aquinas to
gain an understanding of the Stagirite. Incidentally, Barbavara’s praise of Thomas—
rooted in the availability of better texts—seems rather understated when compared to the
oration of Pasquali at the same event, delivered decades before. Pasquali also spoke of
Aquinas as an interpreter of Aristotle. He invoked the famous story of Christ saying to
Aquinas, “You have written well of me,” but the young Dominican changed the cast of
characters. Pasquali said, “O great Aristotle, I truly believe that if you were to come back
to life for a short time and were to enjoy heavenly breath once again, you would surely
exclaim, ‘Thomas, you have written well of me.’”

Barbavara’s expression of admiration for Averroes and Pietro Pomponazzi did not
prevent him from facing a key criticism of Aquinas from the northern Italian academic
context. Barbavara took up the objection that Thomas “mixed or confused the profane

78 Ibid., sig.c1v.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Pasquali, Orationes, sig.c4v-sig.d1r.
with the sacred.” Aquinas’ critics said that he employed “physical reasons” while doing theology, and he sometimes attempted to draw the explanation of the philosopher to “Christian truth.” In a certain sense, this charge of “mixing” was a criticism of what Barbavara believed to be worthy of praise. A certain sort of mixing was commendable, Barbavara said, because it was simply showing that one truth does not disagree with another. In other words, Thomas should be praised for rejecting the so-called “double truth.” Some philosophers might ridicule Aquinas for supposedly making Aristotle a Christian, but Thomas was merely showing Aristotle’s genius for uncovering some of the most hidden truths. Again, Barbavara’s statement here echoed Pasquali’s oration from decades before, in which the young friar proclaimed, “Thomas demolished the mortality of the soul,” and he pitted him against Averroes, Avicenna, Simplicius, Themistius, John the Grammarian, and Alexander of Aphrodisias. While Pasquali, like Barbavara, believed Thomas to be the greatest of the Aristotelian commentators, neither dismissed the other commentators, particularly the new texts that had been playing an increasing role in the Paduan community:

Whatever is florid and intricate (vermiculatum) in Themistius, whatever is time-honored (antiquus) and charming in al-Farabi, whatever is winding and melodious in Alexander, whatever is deep (perssum), agreeable, and venerable in Simplicius, whatever is upright and elegant in Theophrastus, whatever is stable, grave, and rhythmic in Averroes the Arab, whatever is happiest and brilliant in Ammonius, whatever is firm, muscular, and polished in [Thomas’] own great Albert, no one hesitates to say that all these aspects shine most abundantly in him.

---

82 Barbavara, Oratio, sig.c2r.
83 Ibid., sig.c2r.
84 Pasquali, Orationes, sig.d1r.
There was no great animosity towards Alexander of Aphrodisias or Averroes in these orations. Barbavara was quite clear about his admiration for the Commentator. In fact, it appears that the Dominican speakers sought to elevate the other commentators in such a way that arguing for Aquinas’ primacy among them became even more laudable.

Girolamo Vielmi’s works provide the most articulate treatment of the relationship of Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle and, by extension, that of faith and reason. Vielmi discussed the use of philosophy in theological works in the context of making positive comparisons of the scholastics with the Church Fathers. Vielmi argued that the ancients wrote with less circumspection and took greater license in the use of pagan terminology because they did not fear being perceived as believing anything opposed to the Catholic Church. The Dominican professor claimed that this was a consequence of fewer heretics vexing the Christian commonwealth at that time.85 By way of example, Vielmi noted Augustine’s frequent use of the term “Fortune” in his writings, something of which he had to repent in the Retractions.86 On the other hand, scholastic theologians “speak so chastely, appropriately, and accurately that they produce no offense and no impious or false opinion in the souls of their auditors.”87 For this reason, scholastic theology was “the most secure and the most chaste” kind of Christian theology.88 This comparison of the scholastics with the Church Fathers was Vielmi’s central strategy for articulating the merits of scholasticism. He attempted to show the “antiquarians”—or humanists—the

85 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis,15r.
86 Ibid., 15v.
87 But note that Medici, Barbavara, and Pellegrini all invoke the “gods” (“O dii”, etc.) at certain points in their writings.
88 Ibid., 15v.
error of their ways by highlighting the benefits that students of Christian doctrine now derived from the development of a well-formed, organized, and systematic theology.\textsuperscript{89}

His emphasis on the “chastity” of the scholastic approach to paganism did not preclude a clear defense of the use of Greek philosophy by theologians. His key authority for this position was Paul’s epistle to the Philippians, where the apostle said, “Whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is holy, think on these things.”\textsuperscript{90} Vielmi continued, “If philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom...or of goodness, a monument of divine love towards us, it is necessarily in harmony with Christian piety.” Those who oppose Christians who study philosophy were mistaken because “both studies follow the truth.”\textsuperscript{91} Nevertheless, theology and philosophy did not “mix” \textit{per se} because theology’s foundation is divine revelation, while philosophy is based upon the senses and rational reflection. Moreover, the former is concerned with the divine and natural things only as they “participate” in God; the latter is concerned with natural causes for their own sake. Even when metaphysicians speak about God and separated substances, they do so according to the capacities of human reason alone. Vielmi had no difficulty acknowledging that “the best of the philosophers, Aristotle and Plato” held to views that were “clearly opposed to our holy religion,” but the theologian must recognize when “the philosophers wisely make definitions about nature, prudently discuss morals, or subtly dispute about metaphysics.” When this is the case, he said, “theologians not only should not reject philosophy but

\textsuperscript{89} See also ibid., 18v, 32rv, 57r, and 76v, where he is even more explicit about his preference for the scholastics over the Patristic authors.

\textsuperscript{90} See Philippians 4:8.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 92v
should elucidate and confirm it.” He concluded with an illustrative passage regarding Aristotle:

But it seems to me that there can only be doubt about why the schools of the theologians received Aristotle more than the other philosophers if one has not observed his industry in overthrowing the hidden things of nature, his strength in establishing the truth, his copiousness and vigor in refuting his adversaries, his order and diligence in dividing and elucidating the kinds of knowledge (scientia), his facility and perspicuity in treating those sciences, and, finally, his steadfastness in observing propriety of speech.92

These qualities make Aristotle useful for the Christian theologian. The Greek philosopher distinguished and organized the various disciplines and sciences, illuminated nature, and gave an orderly treatment of human knowledge. To spurn the greatest of the philosophers, in Vielmi’s judgment, would betray the principle that Christian faith not only accepts but also perfects nature.93

Vielmi was well-aware of the fact that he would have to provide more support for the use of philosophy by theologians. Individuals that Vielmi deemed to be learned and holy men like Jean Gerson had criticized scholasticism harshly for its devotion to Aristotle. Vielmi’s fundamental argument, when it came to Thomas Aquinas, was that Aquinas was simply following the counsel and often the precise actions of the ancient saints, both biblical and post-apostolic. Indeed, Vielmi began with Abraham, Joseph, and Moses who were thought to be learned in the sciences and liberal arts of the Phoenicians

92 Ibid., 93rv.
93 Ibid., 93r. This potential danger of philosophy, Vielmi believed, is far less grave than that of rhetoric. In the closing pages of his apologetic oration, he turns around the argument of his opponents that the schools of the philosophers were the nurseries of heretics by asserting that far more heretics “disembarked from the instruction of the grammarians, the forum of the orator, and the theatres of the poets than the convent of the philosophers,” listing, among others, Donatus, Faustus, Apollinarus, and even Muhammad. See ibid., 93v-94r.
and the Egyptians. Numerous examples were drawn from Origen and the Cappadocian Fathers as well. He quoted Augustine: “Not only should the philosophers not be feared but must even be reclaimed for our use, as though from unjust possessors,” just as the Israelites made better use of the gold, silver, and garments of the Egyptians. 94 In Vielmi’s account, these ancient believers provided the key examples to Thomas Aquinas and the other scholastics for how secular learning could be the handmaiden of theology.

The basis for this relationship, according to Vielmi, is the relationship of Christian revelation to human understanding. In the Oration, Vielmi observed, in classic Thomistic fashion, that “our faith does not destroy nature but perfects and exalts it.” 95 In On the Writings of St. Thomas, he said, “even God speaks in sacred letters with tropes and similitudes in a human way and uses things which are...familiar to us.” 96 But did this mean, Vielmi asked, that the scholastics “mixed philosophy with theology, human arts with divine contemplation”? If this were the case, he averred, scholasticism would be something that he would utterly reject. 97 Pagan philosophy and the liberal arts were not mixed with theology by the scholastics; rather, Vielmi said, Aquinas “converts the water of philosophy and the good arts into good wine, that is, into the glory of God, the benefit

94 Ibid., 35v. See Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana II, chap. 40.
95 Ibid., 93r.
96 Ibid., 36v.
97 Nevertheless, this notion that scholasticism mixed theology and philosophy would become central to the historiography of philosophy and remained so for centuries. See, e.g., Lambert Daneau, Opuscula Omnia Theologica (Geneva, 1583), 2005, which is the origin of a longstanding narrative of medieval thought that can even be found in Diderot’s famous Encyclopédie. This Calvinist theologian developed it in the prolegomena to his commentary on Peter Lombard’s Sentences. He argued that the evils of scholasticism were rooted in “ushering Aristotle into the inner sanctum of theology’s sacred temple” and “comparing the divine word to all the writings of Aristotle the Philosopher.” See the oft-quoted line of Johannes Trithemius in De scriptoribis ecclesiasticis (Cologne, 1546), 161. He was discussing Peter Abelard and said, “Ab hoc tempore philosophia secularis sacram theologiam sua curiositate inutili foedare coepit.”
of souls, and salvation, according to the example of the Lord at the wedding feast” at Cana. But how was this different than what the Fathers did? Vielmi said that the Church Fathers had actually mixed theology with “profane letters” at times. Furthermore, many of the Fathers zealously followed the Platonists and, consequently, “erred in many places.” Vielmi listed a number of theological errors in the works of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great, and even Augustine, which were caused by the Platonic view of the relationship of matter and spirit. He noted that Aquinas approached the interpretation of the Platonizing faults of the ancient theologians “lovingly” and “with reverence and piety,” but, to Vielmi’s mind, they were serious errors that were the consequence of mixing theology and philosophy, of following a pagan philosopher with too much zeal. On the other hand, Aquinas had developed his knowledge of philosophy, particularly Aristotle, with such accuracy that he was not his “follower” but a “watchman,” who could “avoid the views of this philosopher which now and then were opposed to our piety” and “interpret ambiguous passages commodiously (commode) and piously (pie).” According to Vielmi, Thomas Aquinas and the best of the scholastics kept the counsel of the Church Fathers on the proper use of philosophy better than the Fathers themselves. Their thorough knowledge of philosophy allowed them to handle Greek learning with greater care.

98 Vielmi, De scriptis, 37v.
99 Ibid., 35r.
100 Ibid., 37r.
101 Ibid., 37v.
102 Ibid., 37r.
The way that Thomas read the ancient philosophers, particularly Aristotle, was not only put in contrast with the Church Fathers but also with the Aristotelian philosophers of Vielmi’s own day, the lay natural philosophers who taught at Padua. Here we have a rare example of someone who was a Dominican professor at the University of Padua criticizing his colleagues among the natural philosophers. When discussing these figures, Vielmi’s emphasis on a “pious” reading of Aristotle, though still present, seems to be toned down and the focus was put on the accuracy and clarity of Thomas’ literal commentaries on the Aristotelian corpus, where his goal was “to express the sense of [Aristotle’s] words faithfully.”103 As he put it, eruditely invoking a number of ancient literary and scholarly images, “Thomas Aquinas is Lynceus himself, who, like a Delian swimmer, pursues, apprehends, and holds prisoner that cuttlefish, which frequently discharges its black ink and cautiously flees.”104 Aquinas was like the famous hunter, one of the Argonauts, who was seeking to pin down Aristotle’s often slippery and elusive meaning.105 It was this that merited Thomas Aquinas being widely known, even by the Paduan natural philosophers, as “The Expositor.”106

103 Ibid., 47r.
104 Ibid.
105 The image of a Delian swimmer is taken from Socrates’ comments about Heraclitus, i.e., that he must be a skilled swimmer, staying at the surface if he is not to drown in his dark depths. See Erasmus, Adagiorum epitome (Lyons, 1553), 383. It is also worth noting that Lynceus was a great hunter because of his supernatural powers of sight. See Charles B. Schmitt, “Aristotle as a Cuttlefish: The Origin and Development of a Renaissance Image,” Studies in the Renaissance 12 (1965): 60-72, where he argues that this image of Aristotle as cuttlefish re-emerged in the Renaissance as part of anti-Aristotelian polemic. Its use here by a scholastic theologian is noteworthy because Schmitt makes no observations about its use by Aristotelians or, at least, those who were not opposed to Aristotelian philosophy such as Vielmi.
On the other hand, Vielmi said that some recent professors of philosophy did not always follow Aquinas’ example and consequently marred the Church’s perception of Aristotle’s achievements. According to Vielmi, the destructive potential of these “false and pernicious opinions,” particularly about the immortality of the soul, disturbed young students, as the Fifth Lateran Council recognized.\footnote{Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 47v. See also *De sex diebus*, 321, for a statement of Vielmi on the immortality of the soul in the Aristotelian tradition.} His primary example of these “recent Aristotelians” was Pietro Pomponazzi, who was “second to none of the philosophers in his time.” Nevertheless, in his little book on the mortality of the soul, Vielmi said, Pomponazzi used the most “unfavorable” and “least pious” interpretations of Aristotle possible to “dissolve the discipline of the Christian life” and “corrupt the youth.”\footnote{Ibid., 57v. See Vielmi’s harsh critique of Pomponazzi in *De sex diebus*, 246-47, though it should be noted that it takes place in the context of a defense of Giovanni Pico’s view of astrology: “D. Augustinus permultis capitibus loco citato, et cumprimis cap.4, ubi Esau, et Iacob qui uno parentem congressu fuerunt procreati, vitam et mores accurate hunc in modum persequitur: *Tanta (inquit) in eorum vita, moribusque diversitas, tanta in actibus disparitas, tanta in parentum amore dissimilitudo fuit, ut etiam inimicos eos faceret ipsa distantia.* et paulo postea, unus duxit mercenariam servitutem, alius non servivit, unus a Matre dilegebatur, alius non dilegebatur; unus honorem qui apud eos habebatur amisset, alter adeptus est, quid de uxoribus, quid de filiis, quid de rebus, quanta diversitas? Sed de his scripsere cum laude iamdudum Ioannes Picus latissime, licet Pomponatius de incanationibus cap.12.eum arrogantiae, et petulantiae (bili percitus, opinor, nam iudicium iniquissimum est) redarguat, ac ferme eius operis faciat compilatorem et furem, et Hier. Savonarola pressius atque simpliciori stilo.”} This notion of a pious reading of Aristotle, which glossed ambiguous meanings in the sense more favorable to Christianity, sits somewhat uneasily with his praise of Thomas Aquinas for “diligently considering the words and expressing their sense.”\footnote{Ibid., 47r.} But Vielmi did not linger much on this point.\footnote{Consider the work of older Thomist contemporary and interlocutor with Pomponazzi: Chrysostom Javelli, a professor at the Dominican studium in Bologna. When Javelli confronted difficulties in Aristotle’s reasoning or his conclusions, he highlighted the distinction between “philosophy as philosophy” and “philosophy according to Aristotle.” Javelli explicitly criticizes Agostino Nifo, one of Pomponazzi’s colleagues and eventual opponents, for forcing the texts of Aristotle to say more than they do in his defense.}
Despite these criticisms of Pomponazzi and some of the recent natural philosophers, Vielmi certainly did not absolutely reject these figures. We have already seen him refer to Pomponazzi as “second to none.” The professors at the University of Padua, moreover, were his fundamental sources for showing Aquinas’ status as “The Expositor.” He listed some of the most famous members of the “school of Padua” as his key witnesses. He quoted Agostino Nifo at great length. He pointed to Pietro Pomponazzi’s statement that Aquinas was “greatest of all the Latins and perhaps is…to be preferred to all the interpreters, whether Greek or Arab, when he is in accord with reason and the authorities.”

Like Barbavara, Vielmi appreciated Marcantonio Zimara’s statement: “Where there is discord in philosophy between Averroes and Thomas, it is difficult to see the truth.” The devotion of Vielmi and his Dominican predecessors and colleagues to the teaching of Thomas Aquinas did not imply hostility to the sometimes divergent approaches to philosophy of contemporary Paduan academics and even Averroes and Alexander of Aphrodisias. They answered some of the criticisms that the medieval schoolmen had “baptized” Aristotle by re-articulating the relationship between faith and reason and explaining (in a number of different ways) the appropriate use of Aristotle by a Christian theologian.

of the immortality of the soul. See Tractatus de animae humanae indeficentia (Venice, 1536), 41rv. The fact that there appear to be different approaches to this issue by Thomists of the same period is in need of careful study. But De scriptis as well as his lectures on Genesis in De sex diebus, esp. 200, suggest that Vielmi himself had little difficulty clearly pointing out the errors of Aristotle.

111 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 50r.
112 Ibid. He also pointed to Marcantonio Flaminio and Sebastián Fox Morcillo. It should be pointed out that Vielmi used some of the exact quotations as Barbavara did in his oration. See Oratio, sig.b4v-sig.c1v.
Conclusion

Padua was an intellectual milieu characterized by mutual respect between the mendicant professors and their lay colleagues. Indeed, the university’s intellectual culture had a substantial influence on the friars. The Dominicans expressed profound admiration, at times, for Averroes and, when they criticized him, they did so as a fallible interpreter of ancient texts rather than as a threat to orthodox Christianity. They also made substantial use of the Greek commentary tradition, represented especially by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Most importantly, they knew that their defense of Thomas Aquinas’ commentaries on Aristotle had to engage the recent interpretations of the Paduan natural philosophers.

The case of Tommaso Pellegrini in particular demonstrates the effect of the Paduan intellectual community on these Dominican professors. The students demanded that lectures on the texts of Aristotle offer the best interpretation possible. Pellegrini’s role as a professor of metaphysics at Padua meant that theological considerations and even the longstanding deference of his order to the commentaries of Aquinas were set aside. And Pellegrini did so with sometimes startling frankness, abandoning some of Thomism’s most fundamental metaphysical teachings. This attitude towards Aristotelian exegesis was admired by colleagues and students at Padua. Some of Pellegrini’s students, Giulio Pace and Philip Scherbius, became major players in Protestant Aristotelianism at the end of the sixteenth century.

But Pellegrini was not the only one to suggest some distance from Thomas Aquinas’ philosophical perspectives. Pasquali came to the conclusion that the
philosophies of Plato or Aristotle could not give any certainty, and he basically turned to Academic skepticism as far as natural reason was concerned. In contrast, Medici, Vielmi, and Barbavara as well as Bartolomeo Spina all clearly defended the way in which Thomas Aquinas and Christian theologians in general made use of philosophy. But in more subtle ways, Medici, Vielmi, and Barbavara also suggested the limitations of even the best medieval theologians and the need for a renewal in philosophy and theology. The Paduan milieu forced them to offer a very careful examination of the relationship of faith and reason and the use of Aristotle by theologians. And one might even discern some implicit criticisms of the medieval approach. Vielmi pointed out Thomas Aquinas’ charitable interpretations of the Church Fathers and his pious readings of Aristotle, glossing their errors in a way that maintained a respect for these figures and supported Christian belief. But, of course, Vielmi’s perspective on Aquinas’ mode of reading actually drew attention to the errors of Aristotle and the Fathers and thus in some ways undermined what Thomas Aquinas was doing. Vielmi certainly thought Thomas’ approach to interpretation worthy of praise, but humanist attitudes towards scholarship and towards history perhaps made it difficult for the sixteenth-century Venetian Dominican to engage in the same enterprise as his thirteenth-century master. The incorporation of humanism into Thomism, which was implicit in the handling of Aristotle and of faith and reason by the Paduan Dominicans, serves as the subject of the final chapter of this study.

Despite their varying responses, their careful treatment of the contradictions between Aristotelian philosophy and Christian faith in substantial dialogue with
Pomponazzi and his successors marks out these Dominican professors as part of a school of Paduan Thomism. Thomists in Spain, France, and the Empire all responded to and incorporated humanism in various ways. Securo, Pasquali, Medici, Barbavara, Vielmi, and Pellegrini were different than Thomists elsewhere because of their participation in the flourishing of a distinctive sort of Aristotelianism at the University of Padua.
Chapter 6
Humanism and Thomism at the University of Padua

All of the disciplines at the University of Padua were affected by Quattrocento humanism. Theology and metaphysics were no exception. The connection of the Dominican professors with Renaissance humanism went beyond collegial relationships and the mutual influences of teachers and students. The professors of theology in via S. Thomae participated in the literary culture of their day by advising printers and by taking part in the early Italian academies. The Dominicans who taught at Padua accepted distinctively humanistic attitudes towards eloquence, poetry, and history into their lectures and published works. Even Girolamo Vielmi, who gave an influential oration that defended scholastic theology and criticized elements of humanism—one of the few such challenges to humanism by an Italian theologian in this period—spoke with all the eloquence and erudition that would be expected of a public oration in 1554. Paduan Thomism was a genuine part of this Renaissance academic culture.

This claim stands in contrast to current scholarly judgments on theology and metaphysics at Padua. Though he acknowledges that Italian theology is the least studied university subject, Grendler has concluded in a number of publications that theology was the least “original” of all the university disciplines because humanism did not make any impact.\(^1\) Even Antonino Poppi, who has studied the Franciscan Scotists of this period in

---

\(^1\) Grendler, *Universities*, 392, 511; idem, “Continuity and Change in Italian Universities between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,” in *Renaissance Medievalisms*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: CRRS, 2009), 50-51. See also, who argues that theology at Padua failed to adapt to the times and to incorporate the useful insights from humanism.
great detail, argues that Italian university theology was not innovative because of its
deference to thirteenth-century scholastics and its weak engagement with the Church
Fathers and the humanist movement. 3 These views, though, are not made on the basis of a
careful examination of the academic activity of the Dominican professors. 4 These
judgments are based mostly on assumptions rooted in old narratives about the inherent
conflict between humanism and scholasticism. The evidence adduced in this chapter
shows a substantial engagement with the Church Fathers and humanism and even an
acceptance of some key elements of the humanist programme. What is clear is that these
professors did not ignore humanism; they knew that something of great intellectual
significance had happened in the centuries between them and the masterworks of
thirteenth-century scholastic theology.

Expert Participants in Italian Literary Culture

The Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics at the University contributed to
the “printing revolution” in Venice. 5 The friars had expertise in the texts of thirteenth-

---

2 Grendler, Universities, 392, 511; idem, “Continuity and Change in Italian Universities between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,” in Renaissance Medievalisms, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: CRRS, 2009), 50-51.
4 I must acknowledge Poppi’s essay on Girolamo Vielmi’s critique of humanism. It does not take Vielmi’s more pro-humanistic statements in his other works into account as fully as this study. See “Una difesa della teologia scolastica contro gli erasmiani: la proeluzione di Girolamo Vielmi al corso di teologia ‘in via Thomae’ (1554),” in Ricerche sulla teologia e la scienza nella Scuola padovana del Cinque e Seicento (Catanzaro, 2001).
and fourteenth-century scholastic theologians that was valuable to printers. These works were in demand at major university centers like Padua, and the scholastic training of the Dominicans was useful.⁶

The first Dominican professor at Padua, Francesco Securo, assisted in some major printed editions before 1500. He helped German émigré, Albert Stendhal, print what was, it seems, only the second edition of Thomas Aquinas’ Prima pars.⁷ The first part of Aquinas’ masterwork would certainly have been the most relevant section for the

---

⁶ For some reason, some historians of early print at Venice have dismissed the theological and philosophical output. Leonardas V. Gerulaitis, Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth-Century Venice (London, 1976), 98-105. For a useful counterpoint, consider the fact that Greeks were interested in Western academic culture because of the works of Thomas Aquinas and others. See John Monfasani, “Greek Renaissance Migrations,” Italian History and Culture 9 (2002); rpt. in idem, Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy: Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), Article I. More study of Thomism, the Greeks, and Renaissance humanism should prove useful. For some material, see Angold, Eastern Christianity, 65-73; George Arabatzis, “Manuel Chrysoloras,” in Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy, 710-11; Ivan Christov, “Demetrios Kydones,” in Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy, 256-57. Marcus Plested’s groundbreaking forthcoming work, Oxford Readings of Aquinas (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) should provide a fruitful framework for such an inquiry.

⁷ See Ludwig Hain, Repertorium bibliographicum, in quo libri omnem ab arte typographica inventa usque ad annum MD., vol. 1, part 1 (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1826), 173 (n. 1440): “Explicit opus prime partis sancti Thome de auino. diligenter emendatum ab excellentissimo sacri theologie doctore magistro Francisco de Neritono ordinis predicatorum. per magistrum Albertum de Stendael. Anno domini. M. CCC. LXXIII. die V. mensis octobris.” See also ibid. (n. 1442): “Explicit prima pars summe sancti thome de aquino diligentissimissime castigata super emendatione magistri francisci de neritono per theologos viros religiosos petrum cantianum et iannem franciscum venetos. Venetiis. M. CCCC. LXXVII.” See Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita, vol. 4. Pars prima summae theologiae a questione I ad quaestionem XLIV ad codices manuscriptos vaticanos exacta cum commentariis Thomae de Vio Caietani ordinis praedicatorum, S. R. E. Cardinalis (Rome, 1888), xiv. Pietro da S. Canziano di Venezia and Gianfrancesco da Venezia were Dominicans who studied at S. Agostino. See Gargan, Studio, 109-110, 117-18, 168, 183. The Prima pars was probably first printed by Ulrich Zell in Cologne around 1469, though some scholars say 1468 (Bibliothèque Nationale’s Catalogue des incunables) and other say 1473 (Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke). Albert Stendahl also printed Penketh’s 1474 editions of Scotus. Stendahl’s print shop had a noteworthy range: Decimus Juvenal, Petrarck, and a more or less contemporary author like Antonio Guainerio (d. 1440). He also printed Paul of Venice’s Expositio of Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics, though this work is said to have been printed in Perugia. This information is based on the British Library’s Incunabula Short Title Catalogue.
students of arts and medicine at Padua. This edition was printed in October of 1473.

Securo’s other editorial work was an edition of Antonio Andrea’s *Quaestiones super XII libros Metaphysicae Aristotelis*, which is interesting because Andrea was a Franciscan student of Duns Scotus. This edition was printed between 1473 and 1477 in Venice. What is also noteworthy and perhaps somewhat perplexing about this edition is that his concurrent in metaphysics in the mid-1470s, Thomas Penketh, the Augustinian friar, also undertook an edition of the same work.

The special expertise of these friar-professors continued to be employed in subsequent decades. In 1490 Girolamo d’Ippolito, edited Albertus Magnus’ commentary on *De caelo et mundo*. This edition was the first work in the de Gregoriis brothers’ ultimately failed effort to print all the works of Albert the Great. D’Ippolito also edited the *Summa totius logicae*, a work that turns out to have been falsely ascribed to Thomas Aquinas. It was printed on 20 May 1496 by Simone Gabi (Bevilacqua) da Pavia. The work included a dedicatory epistle to Antonio Pizzamano, Francesco Securo’s former student and editor of Thomas’ *opuscula* in 1490, a collection which had not included the *Summa totius logicae*. Pizzamano had identified it as *Opusculum* 48, but he wrote in

---

8 The first part is often divided into a treatise on God’s nature and attributes, God as Trinity, the angels, and a treatise on the human being, whose focus is the intellect.
9 This may thus have been a first edition, though there were other printings See also Hain, *Repertorium*, 107 (n. 973): “Questiones acutissime Excellentissimi Antonii Andreae O. M. super duodecim libros metaphysice emendatae per Fr. Franciscum de Neritono.” There was an edition in Naples in November 1475 and in Vicenza (Penketh) in May 1477.
10 In their 1494 edition of his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, the publishers observed that a promise was made to print Albert’s works to support all students of philosophy, and the edition of the commentary on the *Physics* (also 1494) noted that Albert’s most learned followers (*doctissimi sequaces*) were involved in emending these texts. See also Mahoney, “Albert and the *Studio Patavino*,” 561.
1490 that he was not able to find it despite expending significant labor in the search.¹² D’Ippolito recognized that Pizzamano, the “magnificent and excellent doctor of arts,” knew the opuscula of Thomas Aquinas best. Nevertheless, through a great deal of effort, this missing work came into d’Ippolito’s possession. He emended it and had it printed for the sake of helping students in logic as well as veterans in the discipline. The doubts about authorship, it should be noted, are not simply a product of modern times.¹³ D’Ippolito published the work with Thomas Aquinas’ name on it, but he recognized that some learned men thought it was written by a major fourteenth-century Thomist such as Hervaeus Natalis or Thomas of Sutton. The Dominican editor did not think the question to be of much significance; all of the possible authors were “very skilled in the liberal arts and were of the Order of the Preachers.”¹⁴ In the end, he relied on Pizzamano’s “Apollonian judgment” and his deep familiarity with Greek and Hebrew, to determine any ways of improving the work. He had no doubt of Pizzamano’s sollicitude: “you have

¹² He observed that the Summa totius logicae was in Pietro da Bergamo’s important Tabula aurea, but Pizzamano also noted that Pietro did not offer an incipit, suggesting that he had not been able to find it either. See Thomas Aquinas, Opuscula, ed. Antonio Pizzamano (Venice: Hermannus Liechtenstein, 7 September 1490), [285r]: “Opusculum quadragesimum octavum secundum magistrum petrum de bergamo in tabula sua est summa totius logyce. Quem tractatum multibus laboribus quesitum nullibi potuimus invenire.” He inferred from the character of the reference in the Tabula that Pietro did not have the text in hand either. The fact that Pizzamano could not find this item in 1490 might provide more information about an edition of this work printed by Martin Landsberg in Leipzig, probably at the Dominican studium in that city. Scholars have argued that the printing must have been before 1491 on the basis of a Sammelband of that date that binds the Uppsala copy. What might experts infer from Pizzamano’s account?

¹³ Carl Prantl, Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1876), 250, esp. n. 300, quoting the work: “Verba infinitivi modi aliquando ponuntur ex parte subiecti, ut cum dicimus ‘currere est moveri,’” et hoc est, quia habent vim nominis; unde Graeci addunt eis articulos sicut nominibus; hoc idem facimus nos in logica vulgaris, nam dicimus ‘el corere mio,’ ubi littera ‘el’ est articulus.”

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, Logica, sig.a1v: “Mihi tamen compertum est plerosque nec sane in eruditos de auctoris nomine ambigere. Dum aliis illuminati doctoris Divi Thome aquinatis esse omnino asserunt: Alii autem hervey britonis censent: nonnulli anglici Thome peribent: quod apud me magni momenti haud quamque est. Quum opusculum illud quantum animadvertere potui omnino divinum sit nec multum refert cuius illorum potissimum fuerit: Quum omnes viri liberalium arcium solertissimi et ordinis predicatorm in extenterint.”
always been the fiercest patron of Peripatetics and Thomists.” D’Ippolito’s expertise in Thomas Aquinas’s works almost certainly helped him make this contribution to the efforts of Pizzamano, but the Dominican recognized the importance of the humanist’s skill in languages for improving upon what he had done.

The family connections of Gaspare da Perugia to printers in Perugia provided opportunities for him to publish major Thomistic works. All of these activities took place while the university was closed during the War of the League of Cambrai. These professors did sometimes remark upon the fact that daily lectures interfered with their ability to publish. None of his efforts have any genuinely humanistic character, though it might be noted that he was involved in a relatively rare effort to make Thomas Aquinas’ writings available in the vernacular. He translated De puritate conscientiae et modo confitendi and De divinis moribus, both erroneously ascribed to Aquinas, and dedicated the works to his niece, who was a third-order Dominican nun.

---

15 Ibid.: “Sed hec sicut et alia maiora tuo non secus quam apollineo integerrimo iudicio committo opere igitur tibi dedicato superest ut prestantiam tuam rogem: ut siquid ex litteris tam grecis quam hebreis quibus die noctuque insudas ocii nactus fueris id totum in dilucidando opusculo impendas. Quod te facturum liquido constat. Quum te peripateticis ac thomistis acerrimum semper patronum exitisse sciam.” Incidentally, the work was then printed a couple of years later as Opusculum 48 in Thomas Aquinas, Opuscula, ed. Antonio Pizzamano (Venice, 1498), 203r-224v.

16 Torrell, Thomas Aquinas, 360-61. In “Gaspare,” 606, Tavuzzi calls this work an “exposition” of the two opuscula, but the sections that I examined were just translations. For instance, in the first part of the treatise, De modo confitendi (“del modo de la confessione”), the Latin reads, “Confessio debet esse vera, ita quod nulla falsitas dicatur sciente, nec aliquod dubium affirmetur; sede certa ut certa, et dubia ut dubia sunt dicenda.” Gaspare’s text says, “La tua confessione debbe essere vera che niuna falsita avertentemente date sia dicta nella cosa dubia per vera da te sia affirmata: ma le cose certe di como certe et le cose dubie come dubie.” The addition of the more conversational tone by using words like tua and da te is noteworthy. Nevertheless, this is a translation, however loose it may be at certain points. See Doi aurei opuscoli o vero tractati de lo angelico doctore sancto Thomaso de aquino…dechiarati e vulgarizati dal Reverendo Professore de sacra Theologia Maiestro Guasparre da Perosia del sacro ordine de li predicatori (Perugia, 1510). Note the reference to the the printer as the “nepote del sopradicto maiestro Guasparre.”

17 There are some aspects of his letter of dedication worth noting: “Most beloved Sister Teodora,” he began, “by natural consanguinity a niece, but through our spiritual regeneration in the same habit of our
Before returning to Padua in 1517, Gaspare began a collaborative project with Sylvester Prierias. Prierias had been a fellow-student of Savonarola and Paolo Barbo under Pietro da Bergamo. Since Paolo Barbo had a major influence on Gaspare during his student days, the connection between Prierias and Barbaro is not difficult to explain. They also appear to have shared some antipathy to the commentaries on the Summa theologiae of Cajetan. The activity of Gaspare revolved around Prierias’ Conflatum ex S. Thoma, a work that would have in certain respects outstripped the scope of the great Italian Thomist commentaries of that era, those of Cajetan and Francesco Silvestri. The latter two commented exhaustively on the Summa theologiae and the Summa contra gentiles, respectively, while the Conflatum set out to be a commentary on an anthology and digest of Aquinas’ entire corpus. The work was never completed, although the first volume, devoted to the first forty-five questions of the Prima pars, was printed in 1519 in Perugia. A brief of Leo X, which made up a part of the prefatory materials of the Conflatum, was directed to Gaspare and his nephew, Girolamo, the printer. Gaspare was to find help for checking Prierias’ quotations of Aquinas, making corrections, and overseeing in a general way the printing of the Conflatum. The task was not completed.

Patriarch, St. Dominic, a sister.” In the letter he invoked a key principle of Thomist theology, that grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, as an analogy to the fact that “spiritual love does not remove natural love but makes it more perfect” in reference to their current niece-sister relationship. A general statement of current Catholic piety, accompanied by a rather loose soteriological reflection, motivated the translation. He wanted to begin to impart to her the results of his understanding of the way of the spiritual life. “According to the testimony of our Savior,” Gaspare wrote, “few persons are taking the narrow way to eternal life, the way of the commandments that are necessary for salvation.” “Even fewer persons,” he continued, “are going on the way of the counsels which are more strict and more difficult and the proper state for religious persons.” Gaspare considered these works of Thomas Aquinas, “our angelic doctor,” a useful guide. He concluded by asking for her prayers.

18 See Tavuzzi, Prierias, 93, for discussion of Gaspare’s no longer extant Apologia Pauli Soncinatis olim magistri sui that was written against Cajetan’s views of Barbo’s commentary on the Metaphysics.
19 Ibid., 92-96.
until after his return to Padua, but this did not discourage Gaspare. Prierias’ *Epithoma responsionis ad Lutherum* was also published in Perugia in 1519 by Girolamo with Gaspare’s supervision.\(^\text{20}\)

Gaspare’s comments on the *Conflatum* provided some explanation for why he wanted to participate in the project. In an epistle to a Venetian nobleman, Domenico Loredan, Gaspare expressed approbation for the project which would take the theological teaching of the Angelic Doctor that was now scattered among codices and make it so that his teaching could be found systematically arranged in the *Conflatum*—in his words, “gathered, united, and perfected.” Students who once found Thomas’ works too daunting, however interested they might have been, would now be irrevocably drawn to the Thomistic school, he thought. Prierias had not only brought order to the doctrine of St. Thomas; like Capreolus, Prierias had also defended it. He defended Aquinas’ teaching from the attacks of explicit opponents as well as against those claiming to be Thomists (*profitentes se thomistas*).\(^\text{21}\) It is quite likely that Cajetan, who had left Padua just a few years before Gaspare arrived, was the target of the last comment.\(^\text{22}\)

This confrontation with the work of Cajetan in Gaspare provides a useful transition to the editorial efforts of Bartolomeo Spina, though they took place long before he began to teach theology at the University of Padua. His expertise was exploited in the important publication of Cardinal Cajetan’s commentary on the *Secunda secundae*. Cajetan did not think that the correctors provided by the Scotto press in Venice were

---

\(^{20}\) Tavuzzi, “Gaspare,” 612.

\(^{21}\) Silvestro Mazzoloni da Prierio, *Conflatum ex S. Thoma Aquinate* (Perugia, 1519), sig.+3r.

\(^{22}\) Tavuzzi, “Gaspare,” 611.
sufficient and thus asked for Spina’s help. This is clear evidence that the friars were valued for their expertise with these texts.²³ Spina thanked the cardinal for the opportunity and wrote a brief panegyrical biography that would create some awkwardness when Spina criticized Cajetan over the immortality of the soul a few years later.²⁴ He had already published the second edition of Capreolus’ massive commentary on the Sentences written in defense of Aquinas.²⁵ He was part of a flurry of activity pertaining to Capreolus that was, it seems, taking place especially in Observant Dominican circles.²⁶

Bartolomeo Spina also edited a number of the Aristotelian commentaries of Thomas Aquinas with new humanist translations. This is significant because Spina is probably most famous for his confrontation of Pietro Pomponazzi’s teaching on the immortality of the soul; despite his reactionary position in that Aristotelian dispute, Spina was very receptive to the new translations of Aristotle. In the same year that he began work on Cajetan’s commentary on the Summa, Spina printed Aquinas’ commentaries on

²³ See Thomas Aquinas, Secunda secunde Sancitssimi Doctoris Thome de Aquino ordinis predicatorum, adornata preclarissimis Commentariis Reverendissimi in Christo patris ac Domini.D.Thome de Vio Caietani, S.R.E.tituli.S.Sixi Presbyteri Cardinalis, artium et Sacre Theologie Doctoris Eximii, ac totius ordinis Generalis Magistri (Venice, 1518), sig.a2r: “Thomas de Vio Caietanus…charissimo fratri Bartholomeo Pisano eiusdem ordinis Lectori conventus sancti Dominici de Castello de Venetiis…Commentaria nostra in secundam secudnae Divi Thome Aquinatis imprimenda tradidimus Domino Octaviano Scoto. Et quia necesse est ut aliquis doctus sit qui ex animo intendent correctioni impressionis et non permittatur ipsa formarum correctio compositorum discretionum ideo desiderii nostri est ut tu curam habeas totius negotii et die noctuque superintendas ut forme sint bene correcte” (25 August 1517). He accepted the task in a letter written on 13 September 1517. See ibid., sig.a1v, for Leo X’s letter to the printers, similar to the one that he wrote to the printers of the Conflatum.
²⁴ Ibid., sig.a2r-sig.a3v.
²⁵ Jean Capreolus, Defensiones theologie in quattuor libris sententiarem Thome de Aquino (Venice, 1514-1515).
²⁶ Priéras published one of the most important compendia of Capreolus’ daunting commentary. Paolo Barbo also began a compendium that was posthumously completed by the Milanese Observant Dominican, Isidoro Isolani. Spina himself contributed an important Tabula, an index to the commentary.
the *Physics* (1517) and the *Metaphysics* (1517) with the translations of John Argyropoulos. In the mid-1520s, he continued such efforts with an edition of Thomas’ commentaries on the *Peri hermeneias* and the *Posterior Analytics*, again printed with Argyropoulos and the “ancient” translation.

But probably the most interesting episodes concerning emending or editing printed books involved Sisto Medici. Medici also displayed an openness to humanist translations of Aristotle and even a willingness to make some subtle criticisms of Aquinas in light of humanist scholarship on those texts. Medici’s efforts were also remarkable because they were not acknowledged by the printers. His editorial contributions have not been recognized; the only evidence of his connection to certain efforts can be found in his letters. Just after receiving his master’s degree in theology, Medici edited Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on *De generatione et corruptione* in 1530—reprinted in 1539 and then 1549. As noted above in the case of Bartolomeo
Spina, these Dominican professors expressed a good deal of enthusiasm for the new humanist translations of Aristotle. Thomas Aquinas’ commentary was printed with the “most elegant translation” of Pietro Alcionio, first published in 1521. The later troubles of Medici with printers were foreshadowed in the fact that his edition of Aquinas’ commentary was printed at first without his knowledge.\[^{30}\]

\[^{30}\] Medici reflected back on this event in a 1559 letter to Pietro and Bernardino Lauredano, who received dedications from Carlo SIGNORE and Marc-Antoine Muret. The letter was thus written about two years before Medici’s death about one of his earliest scholarly productions: “Agebatur Salutis nostrae Anno 1528, Mensisque Aprilis quarta dies, dum, absoluta a me huius operis recognitione, in Magisterio Studii Patavini, consolarer plurimum a tot erroribus, ac mendis ipsam hanc D. Thomae expositionem in Libros de Generatione, et Corruptione Aristotelis, vindicasse. Nec displicuit eadem typis pulcherrimis excussam ab Amadeo Scoto, mei amantissimo 1530, quemadmodum per epistolam in fronte illius editionis videri, potuisset. Etenim in hac eadem Epistola, quam modo inspicitis Operi praefixam, quod annorum numerus fuerit mutatus, in causa est, quoniam distributis inter studiosos primae illius impressionis Voluminibus, atque Amadeo ex humanis sublato, Brandinus Scoto, post annum nonum, characteribus iis minus bonis, clam me, denuo impressit, et propteram Amadei nomen in suum, et annorum notas, quod millesimum dicunt, modeste satis, atque urbane mutavit. Locus hic, me etiam nollentem, impellit, ut memoria repetam, minus modesto factum Romuli cuiusdam Apostatæ Florentini. Is enim dum proximis annis in officina Thomæ Juncta Correctorem ageter, ibique nostri laebres imprimerentur, sibi eos Romulus per Epistolam attribuit, et meum, et excellentissimi Marci Antonii Genuae, nomen supprimere non erubuit.” See Contarini, “Epistolæ,” 326-27. Among other things, note his friendship with the important printer,
His student and successor in the chair of theology, Girolamo Vielmi, later pointed to Medici’s remarks in this edition of *De generatione et corruptione* as a model for criticizing venerable theological authorities. Vielmi used it as a point of contrast with the “censor of the world,” Desiderius Erasmus. While Vielmi said that Erasmus and some of his humanist colleagues had no respect for the great doctors of the past, Medici showed a great deal of “piety” towards Thomas Aquinas, even when critiquing some of his glosses on Greek words in the Aristotelian text. Medici’s generally humanistic outlook showed as he expressed his concern about the lack of eloquence and cultivation in previous editions of Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on *De generatione et corruptione*. Medici wrote the dedication to Marcantonio Genua, one of the most prominent Paduan natural philosophers of the sixteenth century. In light of Genua’s upcoming series of lectures on *De generatione*, Medici wanted to examine the work with some of his fellow students by studying the exposition of Thomas Aquinas. “But,” he said, “the book offended me.”

“Good gods (*Dii boni*)! It was so squalid, mangled, unformed, and uncultivated,” he continued, “that I despaired of reading it....Every part of it was bursting with innumerable errors, and defects constantly sprang forth before my eyes.” Part of this despair is induced by the condition of previously published editions of the text, but he was also concerned

---


about the text itself. Medici himself invoked the concept of “piety” in the relationship to his “holy teacher” but did not elaborate, though he did make it clear that he might be accused of “audacity” for how he edited Thomas’ commentary in conformity with the new humanistic translation.\textsuperscript{32} Finally, though he was editing one of Aquinas’ commentaries, he sounded very much like a humanist scholar when he described the challenges of finding and comparing old manuscripts.\textsuperscript{33}

But what is remarkable about Medici’s career as an editor is rooted in the fact that this arduous work was often entirely unrecognized. According to Medici’s own report, there were a number of times in which his name did not appear on his editorial productions, and these included some important works. He had some difficulties with later editions of \textit{De generatione et corruptione}, but he was even less willing to tolerate what Ottaviano Scotto, Jr., did with his edition of the widely read \textit{Tabula dilucidationum in dictis Aristotelis et Averrois} of his praeceptor, Marcantonio Zimara (1475-1532), which was printed after Zimara’s death.\textsuperscript{34} In his 1559 letter to Bernardino and Pietro Loredan, Medici reported that the “great part of it was my labor” and that he had brought

\textsuperscript{32} Medici provided copious annotations in the margins of the work. More careful study of them, including a comparison of the three editions, should yield more precise information about his attitude towards language—was his main concern Thomas Aquinas’ eloquence or his actual understanding of the text?

\textsuperscript{33} Cranz, “Publishing History,” 158, 186, esp. 168: “The commentary on the \textit{De generatione} was published again in 1530…with a new translation. Even at this late date we again find the story of the rescue.” Note how a poem in the edition played on this theme of rescue and the title of the work: “Nam livore olim poteras me dicere, Lector / Corruptum; dicas nunc genitum, Medice.”

the work “from Chaos into light and order.” Nevertheless, Scotto “cut out that by which this whole labor might be judged.” “However small my praise might be,” Medici went on to say, “they could tear it away by their choice; nevertheless, the profit of time well-spent and the pleasure in my soul from doing this which was mine, they could not take away.”

Indeed, there is no indication of any editor on the first printing of the work, despite the fact that the work’s author had been dead for a few years.

The reason that Medici was writing this letter to the Loredan brothers was that they had given Medici codices—in some way associated with Carlo Sigonio, whom Medici called “the most erudite of men”—that had manuscripts of Aristotle’s Politics and Economics (in the medieval Latin translation, it seems). These documents provided the basis for a 1558 edition that included Leonardo Bruni’s humanist translation of these two works (Aristotelis Politicorum sive De Republica), Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on the Politics, Aquinas’ De regimine principum, and the “ancient” translations of the Politics and the Economics. Medici worked with the major French humanist and famous Latin stylist, Marc-Antoine Muret, and his Tuscan confrere, Remigio Nanni da Firenze, to produce this edition. But apparently Giuliano Marziano Rota, who would be known for his vita of Boethius and his translation of pseudo-Galen’s history of philosophy, took all

---

36 Marcantonio Zimara, Tabula dilucidationum in dictis Aristotelis et Averrois (Venice, apud Hieronymum Scotum, 1537).
37 BNM cod. lat. cl. VI MS. 39, 2rv. The Economics is pseudonymous.
38 Muret (1526-1585) was still a relatively young scholar; this collaboration with Medici took place shortly after an imprisonment and after leaving Paris on suspicion of sodomy in 1554. He was burned in effigy as a Hugenot. He fled to Venice, had dedicated his edition of Catullus to Bernardino Lauredano, became a companion of Paolo Manuzio, and taught the humanities in Venice until 1558. Thus, for a number of years Muret and Medici both taught Venetian youth since the Dominican had been professor at the School of the Rialto since 1554.
the credit, despite the fact that, according to Medici, “there was nothing shared with respect to friendship or familiarity” and that “he added nothing more than all those who have been named.” And it is the case that, in this edition, printed by the Giunta press in Venice, Rota wrote the letter to the reader. Moreover, the title page says, “Iul. Martiani Rotae labore ac diligentia.”

Medici’s letter combined classical and biblical references that justified a moderate insistence on the rewards that are due to one’s labor.

Medici’s editorial projects, however difficult for him, still indicate the importance of the expertise of these friar-professors to Italian printers. Moreover, the use of humanist translations in many of these efforts indicates that these leading Dominicans intellectuals, even more “conservative” ones like Bartolomeo Spina, were certainly not reactionaries against these efforts to render Aristotle’s writings in eloquent Latin. The Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics at Padua made important contributions to the transformation of European scholarship and literature provoked by the invention of the printing press.

---


40 Contarini, “Epistolae,” 328-29: “Modesti quidem pectori munus est, gloriolae stimuli non agitari, sed saxeum existimaverit quispidam, si quae tibi ex honestis laboribus praemia debentur, a quovis subripi tacite, atque oscitans patiaris. Nam Aegles ille Samius, natura ei loquelam non sine miraculo ministrante, sublatam sibi gloriem, clamorem, redemit; et Matuanus ille Vates, etism Musis impellentibus, quarter cecinit: *sic vos non vobis*; quo ab Octaviano Augusto furtum deprehenderetur. Ne tradas alteri gloriem tuam, Propheta ait, (Baruch cap. 4.) *et dignitatem tuam Genti aliena.* Atque: *gloriam meam alteri non dabo,* ait Dominus per Isiaiam (Cap. 48). Ego tamen tacitus me continui, et si me, non modo saxeum, sed et calibaeum dixeritis, quiete seram. *Unusquisque in suo sensu abundet,* Apostolus ait (Ad Rom: 14.). Mihi satis factum fuerit, haec intra domesticos parietes mansura, mihi, inquam, solum, ac vobis amicis Lectoribus cognoscenda scripsisse.”
The openness of the Dominicans connected to Padua to the eloquent and often more accurate humanist translations of Aristotle represented a shift in Paduan Thomism. Their concern for eloquence and their high view of ancient poetry also demonstrated the impact of humanism on Dominicans in the Veneto. While the friar-professors continued to recognize the achievements of Thomas Aquinas and other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century scholastics, they believed that the improved Latinity and knowledge of Greek over the previous several decades demanded certain shifts in Christian theology.

To demonstrate the fecundity of Renaissance Thomism as a category, it is important that Paduan Thomists after 1450 or so held different views than their counterparts from an earlier era. Though Andrea Chrysoberges of Pera (d. 1451) moved in humanist circles, his perspective on the earliest humanist translations sets the acceptance and even promotion of those translations on the part of sixteenth-century Paduan Dominicans into sharper relief. A Greek, Chrysoberges was known to the humanists as Andreas Constantinopolitanus.\textsuperscript{41} He converted to Roman Catholicism and the Dominican order with his two brothers, Maximus and Theodore.\textsuperscript{42} They were part of the generation immediately following Demetrius Kydones, the teacher of Manuel Chrysoloras, who undertook a major Greek translation of Thomas Aquinas and had close

relations with the Dominican order.\textsuperscript{43} Both Theodore and Andrea had significant roles in decades of negotiations between Latins and Greeks. In 1410-11, there is evidence of him serving as a teacher of philosophy in the \textit{studium} of S. Agostino.\textsuperscript{44} It is noteworthy that a native Greek was chosen to teach philosophy to the other friars, surely an anticipation of the importance of Greeks in northern Italian philosophy teaching represented by John Argyropolous and others.\textsuperscript{45} By the end of 1415, he became involved in the \textit{studium generale} of theology, serving as master of students and then bachelor in 1417 and 1418. Pope Martin V dispensed Andrea from the need to finish his lectures on the \textit{Sentences} because they had been interrupted by his participation in the Council of Constance. At the end of 1418, he became a member of the College of Theologians at Padua. At Constance he served as an interpreter for the Greeks and gave some plenary sermons.\textsuperscript{46} Between the two Councils, he was appointed Master of the Sacred Palace, serving the pope in that office from 1426 to 1432. It was in this office especially that he negotiated favorable terms for the Byzantines regarding a council in Italy. The pope would fund four heavy galleys to bring up to 700 Greek delegates to Italy, it would pay for two light galleys and three-hundred crossbowmen to stay in Constantinople while the Emperor was gone, and,

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Studia naturarum} clearly began to be hosted in the same houses as \textit{studia generalia} during the fifteenth century at the latest, so it was very possible that Chrysoberges taught philosophy in S. Agostino. Note \textit{Registrum litterarum Fr. Raymundi}, 24, where Padua was acting as a \textit{studium artium} and a \textit{studium generale} during the same year (1389). Note the change in the mandates of the Dominican general chapters: in 1315, it was said, “Studia vero arcium vel philosopnie ullo modo in eisdem conventibus [in quibus sunt generalia studia] non ponantur” (MOPH IV: 79). In 1491, it was said, “et ubi parcitas aut ineptitudo conventuum predicta studia in diversis conventibus poni non permiserit, in eodem conventu simul poni poterit studium theologie et philosophie” (MOPH VIII: 398).
\textsuperscript{46} Kaeppeli, \textit{Scriptores}, I: 65.
no matter what the result, the Pope would take care of expenses for the delegation’s return to Constantinople.\footnote{Setton, \textit{Papacy}, 46.} In May 1432 Andreas became archbishop of Colossi on Rhodes and eventually of Nicosia on Cyprus.\footnote{Kenneth M. Setton, “The Byzantine Background to the Italian Renaissance,” \textit{Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society} 100 (1956): 60.} During the Council of Basel-Florence, Andrea had an even more prominent role than at Constance, reminding the assembled delegates in a major oration about the efforts towards church union during Constance. He was a signatory to the important yet doomed act of 6 July 1439 which united the Greek and Latin Churches; he had striven for unification for quite a long time.\footnote{See Joseph Gill, \textit{The Council of Florence} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959).} He died in 1456, leaving to the fledgling papal library very significant and little-examined Greek manuscripts, many of which were given to him by his brother, Theodore.

While serving the pope in Rome, Chrysoberges apparently formed relationships with some of the leading humanists of that generation, though he was not fully accepted within their company. He offered Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481) a position in the Curia in 1428 when Filelfo was a relatively young man. Chrysoberges attended Poggio Bracciolini’s fiftieth birthday party in 1430 and was included in Poggio’s dialogue \textit{De avaritia}—indeed, Chrysoberges had an important role in resolving the debate occupying the interlocutors “\textit{cum sit religiosus}.”\footnote{Ibid., 11, n. 40.} But the Greek Dominican apparently had questioned Bruni’s reputation as a moral philosopher, a reputation rooted in his work on Aristotle’s moral writings. The Florentine humanist did not respect Chrysoberges, prominent though he was, the way that Faseolo and Riccoboni respected some of the
Paduan Dominicans over a century later. Bruni merely dismissed Chrysobriges’
criticisms because he was an “enemy of eloquence.”

The shift from the hostility between Bruni and Chrysobriges to the work of the
Dominican professors at Padua could not be starker. The first professor of theology at
Padua, Ludovico Valenza, went to Rome after his brief tenure at the university and
published Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on the Politics. As Sisto Medici did decades
later, Valenza published Thomas Aquinas’ commentary with the humanist translation of
Leonardo Bruni, though Valenza did not even bother to include William of Moerbeke’s
thirteenth-century translation of the Politics—which, of course, was the text on which
Aquinas actually commented. Valenza explained why he chose to take this course. He
offered what amounts to a very significant reflection of the attitude of a scholastic
theologian and philosopher largely sympathetic to the changes wrought in the previous
century or so by the humanists.

In an epistle to Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (1439-1503) of Siena,
later Pope Pius III, Valenza described what led him to this publication. The cardinal’s
nephew, Agostino Piccolomini, found Aquinas’ commentary on the Politics during a trip
to Tuscany in the summer of 1491, which would have been just after Valenza’s first and
only year of teaching at the University of Padua. But Agostino, a man who, according to
Valenza, was erudite, of good character, and observantly pursued the good arts, asked

---

51 See Martin C. Davies, “An Enigma and a Phantom: Giovanni Aretino and Giacomo Languschi,”
Humanistica Lovaniensia 37 (1988): 10. Davies also argues that Chrysobriges was the teacher of a certain
Demetrius to whom Bruni wrote a letter about his comments about Aristotle that served as a preface to his
translation of the Ethics. If so, Bruni referred to him as “a man, from what I have heard, with great learning
in theology but with absolutely no letters” (ibid., 11).
Ludovico to examine (*recognosco*) and correct this text because of the faults of the transcription. The Dominican was happy to do so. He believed that this text contributed to an essential discipline that “handed down precepts for governing the commonwealth,” the study of which is “agreed to be the duty of the wise man.” Agostino’s magnanimous and generous soul, however, was such that he wanted the work to be made available to a larger public. When Valenza decided to take on the project, he decided to use Bruni’s translation because it was “more open and Latin.” Linking the commentary of Thomas Aquinas, based on the medieval translation, with Bruni’s new version, demanded a difficult labor of adaptation and expurgation. Indeed, Valenza stated that some had judged that the old translation—and, by extension, Thomas’ commentary—simply did not agree with the authentic text of Aristotle. Valenza did not think the differences between the translations to be quite that significant. “St. Thomas,” Valenza said, “makes both translations plain and open to you in the same way, without any distinction at all.” He nonetheless acknowledged the greater clarity and improved Latinity of Bruni’s translation.

As the letter wore on, Valenza did have stern words for some representatives of the humanist movement. He first addressed the ignorance of certain humanists. Of those who judged the old translation of Moerbeke to be inconsistent with Aristotle, he said, “I have learned by experience that men like this rashly judge what they do not understand,” though pardon can be given to those who did not profess philosophy and were unaccustomed to probe its secrets. He also criticized these “unjust censors” for a kind of daintiness:
They are excessively delighted by the charm and ornament of words and, content simply to know what the words mean, they forget to search out more diligently the natures and properties of things that are expressed by words. They condemn works that lack polish (*fucium non praestant*), even if they contain truth.\(^{52}\)

These “rhetors of our age,” who “condemn all writers who did not write about history or oratory,” who refused to read any other kind of writer, must be spared from excessively harsh criticism. Besides, they hardly “embark upon the great sea of our philosophy” in their “trifling skiffs.” It irritated Valenza that these critics did not recognize their limitations, setting themselves up as censors of all the arts when those who studied philosophy since childhood still could be perplexed by one difficult passage in Aristotle.\(^{53}\)

But Valenza’s criticism of the superficiality of some humanists certainly did not amount to a dismissal of the contributions of humanism to philosophy.\(^{54}\) Valenza would be quite pleased if the critics were first to learn “our philosophy” and then go on to “unite the good arts and disciplines with eloquence.” He hoped that they would find and emend any errors. He said, “We venerate and extol eloquent and erudite tongues; we entirely approve expertise in the Roman tongue.” Ludovico’s devotion to ancient writers, not

---


\(^{53}\) The letter is found on Aristotle, *Politica* (Rome, per Magistrum Eucharium Silber, 19 July 1492), sig.a2rv.

\(^{54}\) My interpretation of this letter is significantly indebted to the relatively brief discussion in Cranz, “Publishing History,” 171-73. But see Kraye, “Philologists and Philosophers,” 147-48, which uses this letter as one of the key examples for a resistance of philosophers to the “invasion of their territory.” The work itself—an edition of Leonardo Bruni’s translation of Aristotle with a revision of Thomas Aquinas’ commentary so that it might conform to the humanist translation—renders the claim somewhat implausible. Furthermore, Valenza is quite explicit about his appreciation for the humanist contributions to philosophy. He was thus not criticizing humanism in general but the tendency of some humanists to superficiality.
merely Aristotle, was quite evident: “We venerate Plato, we cherish Theophrastus, we heed Alexander [of Aphrodisias], we revere Themistius, we praise Simplicius, we approve our Cicero and we bear up to the heavens with supreme praise all the rest who have brilliantly, gravely, copiously, and elegantly treated aspects of philosophy.” This major Dominican theologian thus made quite clear his respect for the Greek commentators of Aristotle, a key feature marking out a particularly humanist approach to Aristotle.\(^{55}\) Nor did this mean Valenza ignored contemporary contributions. He noted the immense thanks due to Bruni and to Theodore Gaza, both having “made Aristotle elegant (\textit{cultum}).”\(^{56}\) His most profound statement, though, is probably the following: “We vehemently desire that philosophy becomes Latin.” One could safely assume that Valenza acknowledged the role of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas in making Aristotelian philosophy

---


\(^{56}\) In his \textit{Compendium} on Aristotle’s \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, Valenza observed that Aristotle was “cultus et elegans,” while also being “nervo plenus et in ea brevitate obscurus.” See Lines, \textit{“Pagan and Christian Ethics,”} 441. For Gaza’s achievements as a translator, see the brief biographical sketch and introduction to the literature in Stefano Perfetti, \textit{Aristotle’s Zoology and Its Renaissance Commentators}, 1521-1601 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 11-14. This praise of Gaza from a Dominican and former professor of Thomist theology is noteworthy because, in Gaza’s own day, he was fiercely criticized by another Greek émigré, George of Trebizond, who asserted that Gaza and other members of Cardinal Bessarion’s circle were attempting to destroy Latin Aristotelianism and scholastic theology with their perverse translations. John Monfasani, \textit{George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic} (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 155-56.

Valenza’s respect for Bruni here is also noteworthy since the early fifteenth-century humanist sounded a great deal like the “rhetors of our age” that Valenza criticized. Now, Bruni may have been spared because Valenza might have respected his knowledge of philosophy, which Valenza thought gave scholars the right to criticize the errors of the past. Regardless, the Ferrarese friar printed Bruni saying the following in the preface to his translation: “Nam cum viderem hos Aristotelis libros (qui apud Graecos elegantissimo stilo perscripti sunt) vitio mali interpretis ad ridiculam quondam ineptitudinem esse redactos: ac praeterea in rebus ipsis errata per multa ac maximi ponderis laborem suscepi novae traductionis quo nostris hominibus in hac parte prodessem….[I]gnaris Graecarum litterarum facultatem praebere ut non per enigmata ac deliramenta interpraetationum ineptarum ac falsarum: sed de facie ad faciem possint Aristotelem intueri ….Excitavit quoque me utilitas maximaque ex interpraetatione Ethicorum pervenisse conspexeram: hominess enim ingéne erudite (quos primo veteris interpraetationis ineptitude: ac barbaries a legendo repellabat).” See \textit{Politica}, sig.a2v-sig.a3r.
intelligible to the Latins with their extensive commentaries. But it was the task of his contemporaries, with the help of the newly available texts of the Greek commentators and other ancient philosophers as well as the elegant translations of Aristotle, to make these philosophical achievements truly Latin.

Valenza was not merely a defender of this programme in theory. He put it into practice in a radical way. Manuscript versions of Thomas’ commentary on the Ethics had already combined his commentary with Bruni’s translation. The printings of Aquinas’ commentaries on the Ethics (1478, Barcelona, and 1482, Vicenza) and Politics (1478, Barcelona) before Valenza’s edition either printed Bruni and the old translation or united the commentary exclusively with the old translation. Valenza’s was the first to exclude Moerbeke’s translation altogether. And he went further. Valenza’s student in Rome, Martinus Nimara, archdeacon of Arbe (Croatia), described Valenza’s approach as changing a few words when necessary to conform to the new translation of Bruni, but this description did not do justice to Valenza’s editorial choices. He removed all explanations of transliterated grecisms from the commentary because they were absent from Bruni and surely because these discussions would seem uncouth to many contemporaries. He also replaced some “barbarisms” with authentically Latin terminology—for instance, substituting respublica for politia, paucorum status for

57 Cranz, “Publishing History,” 171, calls this edition “perhaps the most radical and most successful attempt to ‘humanize’ Thomas.”
58 Ibid., 161.
59 See Cranz, “Publishing History,” 185, 191. Both of the Barcelona editions were printed by Petrus Brunus and Nicolaus Spindeler. Incidentally, the unfinished section of Thomas’ commentary was supplied by the commentary of Albert the Great rather than that of Peter of Auvergne.
60 Politica, 254r.
oligarchia, and popularis status for democratia. As F. Edward Cranz vividly puts it, “Thomas has been indeed been ‘reborn’ in the Renaissance, but this time as an urbane humanist, and his editor has made Thomas’ philosophy into what Ludovicus de Valentia believes is ‘Latin.’” All editions of Thomas’ commentary on the Politics until the Leonine edition of 1971 basically reprinted this 1492 edition, ignoring the only previous printing of the commentary in Barcelona of 1478 that was much truer to the authentic text of Aquinas. Valenza’s desire to make philosophy Latin led him to “update” Thomas Aquinas’ Latin. This effort provides an example of unmistakably humanist impulses that sometimes cut directly against modern standards of scholarship also emerging in the Renaissance. Dominicans who taught at Padua were thus at the vanguard of synthesizing the interpretive achievements of the scholasticism of the thirteenth century with the humanistic eloquence and scholarship of the fifteenth century.

The Dominican professors at Padua had a much greater interest in poetry and eloquence than their thirteenth-century master. Even the great twentieth-century historian of scholasticism, Etienne Gilson, called the thirteenth century “l’exil des belles-lettres.” Dominicans were often found in opposition to early humanistic defenses of poetry in the fourteenth century. One of the first of these debates actually occurred at Padua between Giovannino da Mantova and Albertino Mussato, an early Italian humanist.

---

61 Ibid., 173.
62 Quoted in Robert Black, Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 193.
63 See Witt, Footsteps, 17, 81. See also Brotto and Zonta, Facoltà, 13. According to Concetta Greenfield, Karl Vossler calls this controversy the most important event in the evolution of poetics during the fourteenth century. See Concetta Carestia Greenfield, Humanist and Scholastic Poetics, 1250-1500 (East
Giovannino’s attitude towards poetry was quite different than his sixteenth-century successors in Paduan intellectual culture; it is, therefore, worth examining in some detail. Albertino Mussato referred to Giovannino as one “surpassing in theology as well as natural and moral philosophy.” The Dominican was lector of the schola in 1319, prior of S. Agostino in 1321-22, and still residing in the convent in 1323. This Dominican lector might arguably be the first representative of scholasticism in the humanist-scholastic debate; Giovannino’s exchange with an early humanist, while relatively cordial, marked the beginning of debates between those Italians devoted to literature—to walking in the footsteps of the ancients—and those who identified themselves with the scholastic theology associated with the universities of Paris and Oxford. The hostility of Fra Giovannino towards Mussato’s view of poetry also had later iterations, most famously Fra Giovanni Dominici’s Lucula Noctis, which, though of a different character, was part of a debate with Coluccio Salutati. While scholasticism and humanism are still often


Gargan, Studio, 8, n.5.

Again, the debate was cordial. Lucula noctis was dedicated to Salutati. See Greenfield, Humanist and Scholastic, 146-67, esp. 147: “The representatives of both sides at times enjoied friendly and even close relationships….Dominici dedicated the Lucula noctis to Salutati, even though the treatise attacked the humanist tradition. Salutati, despite the treatise, remained friendly with Dominici, even convincing the pope not to let the city of Bologna lure Dominici from preaching on the Bible in Florence. As a Christian humanist, Salutati openly admired the religious fervor of Dominici. This attitude is reflected in the poetics of both, which are not isolated statements but attempts to consolidate two traditions of thought currently being revived in Florence.” I must note my cautious disagreement with Greenfield on her reading of “scholastic poetics.” On Ibid., 156, Greenfield acknowledges that Dominici’s abandonment of the “middle position of Thomas based on a fusion of reason and Revelation” puts him “at the extreme of Thomism, where he refuses reason and accepts only Revelation as contained tradition.” It seems to me that this radical position on the role of reason in education in general and theology in particular puts Dominici entirely outside of the Thomist tradition. Greenfield, I believe, should have further developed her reflection on Dominici’s sources on ibid., 151, where she observes that Dominici rarely quoted Aquinas in Lucula noctis
associated with the periodization schema of Middle Ages and Renaissance, it is much more plausible, particularly in an Italian context, to see this early fourteenth-century exchange between a Dominican scholastic and an early humanist as a debate between contemporaneous, though divergent, disciplinary approaches rather than a controversy between conservative and progressive movements.  

The exchange between Mussato and Giovannino da Mantova began with a sermon that the friar preached in 1315 or 1316. According to a chronicler, the sermon pointedly accused all sciences of falsehood. In a response, Mussato observed that and was shaped, she says, by the pre-Thomistic “Augustinian” culture of the Dominican order. But note that even Giovannino’s deep concern with Mussato’s view for the divine origin of poetry and his stark juxtaposition of Christian and pagan learning provides a useful backdrop for future developments. Changing attitudes towards poetry among Dominican intellectuals in the Veneto, even those squarely aligned with Thomism, demonstrate the extent of humanism’s conquest during the Quattrocento.  

My perspective has certainly been nourished by the Kristellerian approach to humanism. See the comments of John Monfasani in “The Renaissance as the Concluding Phase of the Middle Ages,” *Bollettino dell’Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo e archivio muratoriano* 108 (2006): 173-75: “Renaissance humanism did not end the reign of medieval scholasticism. Indeed, the greatest age of Italian scholasticism, when it rose to European-wide prominence, was precisely the Renaissance….But if Italian humanism began in the thirteenth century, as it demonstrably did, how can it not be considered anything but a medieval phenomenon?…[B]y the fourteenth century Italians had clearly taken the lead and would eventually produce far more brilliant results than did the earlier medieval humanists. But what is critical to understand is that at this very same time in the thirteenth and especially fourteenth centuries Italians were also absorbing northern scholasticism and developing their own very distinctive university structure.” Ernst Robert Curtius inverts conventional categories even further. See *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 220-21: “But his theory of poetry and his controversy with Fra Giovannino have little to do with the Humanism of the trecento. As a poet and as a theorist of poetry, Mussato follows paths which the Latin poetry of the North had long since opened. In the controversy, he represents tradition—of, if anyone prefers, reaction. The Dominican, on the other hand, represents the thinking which at that time was modern: Aquinas’ theory of knowledge and of art. Behind this opposition, to be sure, there lies the eternal quarrel between the philosopher and the poet.”  

This is what is reported by a chronicler: “Un fra Giovannino da Mantova, lettore del convento padovano dell’ordine dei predicatori, il giorno di Natale tenne, da quell’uomo valente che era, un sermone elegantissimo in lode della sacra teologia. Nel quale sermone, come sogliono i predicatori, prese argomento ad accusare mordacemente di falso tutte le scienze, in modo speciale alcune, assalendole e vilipendendole, ma lasciò senza rimprovero la dottrina poetica.” Quoted in Manlio Dazzi, *Il Mussato preumanista (1261-1329): l’ambiente e l’opera* (Vicenza, 1964), 110-11. Of course, it seems quite unlikely for Giovannino to have dismissed all secular study as pointless and dangerous since, in order to be a lector in Padua, he would have had to study both logic and natural philosophy. Before being appointed to a lectorship in a relatively
Giovannino’s sermon had not mentioned poetry. He suggested, with palpable sarcasm, that Fra Giovannino did not mention poetry when he preached about falsehoods in all the human disciplines because poetry was also a sacred science standing alongside theology. Giovanni appears to have taken a somewhat ironic, even playful, stance towards the Paduan poet’s arguments. He began his letter by addressing Mussato as the one “in whom the poetic Muse is both excellently and singularly venerated in our times.” He hesitated to imitate his worthy opponent’s “elegant and profound poems” by making his arguments in a metrical form; instead, he put them in prose (prosaice)—a more appropriate form for a teacher of sacred theology. Giovannino transformed Mussato’s poetical defense of poetry into a scholastic quaestio, presenting the views of the Italian humanist as nine propositions to be refuted in order. He also seems to suggest that the form of Mussato’s epistle might have obscured the meaning, though he moved ahead on the presumption that he had understood Mussato’s arguments on behalf of poetry being rightly called a divine art. In Giovannino’s reconstruction, Mussato had argued for poetry’s status as a divine art on the basis of how human beings have talked about poetry and poets, its subject matter and source, its effect on its audience, and its harmony with biblical revelation.

---

68 For an edition of the exchange, see Eugenio Garin, Il pensiero pedagogico dello Umanesimo (Florence, 1958), 2-18.
69 Ibid., 2, 4: “Circa quam quaestionem, patavine vates, in quo poetica Musa nostris temporibus tam excellenter quam singulariter veneratur, dubia prosaice quam metrice potius movere disposui, ne doctor viderer sacrae theologiae inuiri facere, me poeticis regulis obligando….Igitur, si vestra decora et profunda carmina ad plenum intellexi, novem rationibus videmini confirmare quod poetica merito dici debeat ars divina.”
70 Ibid., 4, 6.
The Dominican friar found Mussato’s arguments based on ancient terminology for the poets unimpressive. The first poets did discuss gods in meter, but their poems treated false gods, not the true God. How could these poets be rightly called theologians? He also made a traditional, though unimpressive, etymological case to refute Mussato’s use of the application of vates (prophet) to poets as a support for poetry as a divine art. Vates, Giovannino argued, only referred to poets insofar as it was derived from the verb vieo, which means to weave. Poets bind together meters or feet as a basket-weaver spins fibers. Giovannino quickly dismissed Mussato’s argument that the ancient poets were divine because they treated heavenly things. Their celestial subject matter was false gods; they gave divine honor to created things, which was a sacrilege. Just as Giovannino thought that teaching about false gods did not make one a theologian, so was he unwilling to acknowledge the divine character of ancient poetry merely because the poets claimed to talk about divine objects.

Giovannino made a somewhat more interesting argument in relation to the question of the divine source of poetry. Again, the falsehood of the tales of the poets received great emphasis. Instead of saying that the universe came from nothing, the poets asserted that it emerged from a primordial chaos. The poets corrupted the true story of Noah with the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha. These errors should indicate that poetry was not revealed by God. Rather, Giovannino averred, poetry was invented by men just

---

71 Ibid., 6, 8.
72 Ibid., 6.
73 See ibid., 8, where Giovannino prefaced his remarks about the Deucalion myth by stating, “If I remember correctly (si bene memini).”
like other secular things (*sicut aliae saeculares ab hominibus est inventa*). Giovannino’s point in this argument provides an important reminder about the shape of this early debate between humanists and scholastics. Mussato was arguing that poetry was a divine art. He indicated to his Dominican opponent that God had inspired the ancient poets. Poetry thus had a status comparable to scriptural revelation, and the poet presenting that revelation could be rightly called a theologian. Giovannino certainly emphasized the point—again, unsurprising for a Christian theologian of almost any era—that Christian revelation was true, while non-Christian teachings about the divine were corrupted by error. But another interesting point was that Giovannino emphasized the “secular” character of poetry. Giovannino had no real objection to beautiful speech or metrical writing, but he thought that poetry was merely the invention of human beings, as many elements of human society. In Giovannino’s eyes, Mussato had a severely inflated, implausible view about the origin and character of the poetic craft.

This last point finds confirmation in Giovannino’s argument against the notion that the wonder and delight produced by poetry indicates its divine character. Poetry may elicit wonder, not because it describes excellence but because it fabricates monsters. The question regarding the delight found in poetry encouraged Giovannino to come back to his point about the limited horizons of poetry. Poetry can delight, Giovannino argued, because of its ability to fashion objects of wonder but also because of the external adornment of the words of a poem. Sacred Scripture, however, elicits admiration primarily because of its content, which Giovannino believed to be “divine truth,” though

---

74 Ibid.
he acknowledged that the sweetness of scriptural truth conforms well to the eloquence of the biblical writers. Thus, Giovannino had no difficulty praising eloquence and the adornment of the truth with richly adorned speech, but his fundamental concern was the truth contained in any work. In this regard, the Dominican lector believed that the ancient poets could not even approach the genuine divine revelation contained in Sacred Scripture. As he said in response to Mussato’s argument about the eternal glory of the poets symbolized by the laurel wreath, “poetry outwardly has a certain elegance of words but inwardly has the bitterness of vanities.” Giovannino perhaps playfully showed his own poetic gifts by metaphorically linking this contradiction of what is internal and external to poetry to the laurel which has on the outside its fresh green color and delightful odor but has only bitterness within and the most bitter of fruits.

The relationship of poetry and Scripture was elaborated in Giovannino’s final arguments. Giovannino acknowledged that Moses and Hannah sang God’s victory over the Egyptians in meter. Here the Dominican made clear that he had a narrower understanding of poetry than metrical speech or writing. “Even if it be granted,” Giovannino said, “that the whole of sacred theology would be handed down metrical…nevertheless, poetry would not be called divine.” He compared his distinction between metrical speech and poetry to that of logic and natural philosophy. Just because the natural philosopher uses the mode of arguing and demonstrating handed

---

75 Ibid., 8.
76 Ibid., 10: “Sic poetica exterius habet quendam decorem verborum; interius autem amaritudinem vanitatum.”
77 Ibid.: “Dato etiam quod tota sacra theologia esset metrice tradita, sicut quidam excellentes viri, ut Arator et Sedulius facere conati sunt, propter hoc tamen poetica non esset dicenda divina.”
down by the logician does not mean that natural philosophy can be reduced to logic.

Giovannino did not explain his view about the essence of poetry that is distinct from its metrical form.\(^7^8\) It appears, however, that this poetic essence pertains to the content of poetry. For, in his discussion of uses of metaphor by biblical authors, Giovannino asserted that Scripture uses metaphor to hide the ray of divine truth from the unworthy and to elicit ardent inquiry from those who are worthy. On the other hand, the poet uses metaphors for the sake of effective representation of his subject and for the sake of delighting his audience.\(^7^9\) Virgil and the poets did not have access to a revelation from God which they obscured in poetic forms. When Christians employed the pagan poets in defense of the faith, as in the case of Virgil’s fourth Eclogue, they did so against the original intention of the poet to signify something that the poet could never have imagined.\(^8^0\)

Giovannino certainly privileged the content of Scripture over all other disciplines, and he strongly expressed his opposition to the content of the works of the ancient poets. But he did not entirely dismiss the power of metaphor and meter to delight as a human invention and even to be used in the service of divine truth, though such use would render that metrical writing no longer poetic, strictly speaking. His fundamental objection was to Mussato’s understanding of poetry as a divine art; the poets did not receive revelation from God like Moses and the prophets. It is inconsistent for scholars to smirk when ancient and medieval Christians view the pagan poets as prophets and then to criticize

\(^7^8\) In spite of the complex reception history of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, see chapter 1 of that work (1447b16-20).

\(^7^9\) Garin, *Il pensiero pedagogico*, 10. See the discussion of related points in Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae* I, q. 1, art. 9.

\(^8^0\) Ibid., 12.
opponents of that view as insufficiently appreciative of the art of poetry. But
Dominicans connected to the University of Padua in the sixteenth century would not
stand in opposition to the poets. They actually accepted the language of prophecy for
speaking about the ancient poets that Giovannino had attacked.

The impact of Renaissance humanism can be seen in the changed usage of the
word *vates* by Dominicans between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century. Giovannino
criticized poetry for its attitude towards false, pagan gods and challenged any connection
between ancient poets and prophecy. In the sixteenth century, Sisto Medici had no
trouble using the term *vates* to refer to poets, even pagan poets, as prophets. In a letter to
his humanistic confrere, Desiderio da Legname, Medici admitted that he spent less time
“in these authors which the stars have permitted you and those similar to you always to
have in view,” those for whom “the Muses smile upon and gentle Apollo always plays
the lyre.” Despite this supposed lack of familiarity with ancient literature, Medici was

---

81 In the first volume of his *History of Italian Philosophy* (139), Eugenio Garin summarizes the exchange as a
defense of poetry “against the ‘theological’ attacks of friar Giovannino of Mantua.” Garin does not
acknowledge here the boldness of Mussato’s claims. For a useful discussion of history of interpretations of
the Fourth Eclogue, see Wendell Clausen, “Virgil’s Messianic Eclogue,” in *Poetry and Prophecy: The
Ronald Witt sets Mussato into the context of the Renaissance discussion of this point in his “Coluccio
Salutati and the Conception of the *Poeta Theologus* in the Fourteenth Century,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 30
(1977): 540-41. He writes, “The writings of Albertino Mussato, considered the first scholar of the
Renaissance to defend poetry, represent this interpretation of the poets as prophets of Christ and Christian
truth carried to excess….Mussato’s basic idea that ancient poetry in its highest forms was the product of
some sort of divine inspiration tied Mussato into the medieval tradition. What set his account apart from
earlier Christian defenses was his thorough paralleling of poetry with Scripture and the complete
confidence with which he executed his task with no indication that poetry could be dangerous to the faith.”
Witt contrasts Mussato with the later Renaissance humanists by describing their view as one that defends
“the sacral character of ancient poetry, which in their own eyes gave it nobility, without having to resort to
medieval arguments for a direct divine influence acting on the poet or for a secret tradition of divine truth
initially derived from God’s Revelation” (538).
82 Desiderio was probably most famous for supposedly finding the tomb of Cicero in 1544 on the island of
Zakynthos.
interested in Varro’s epigram that was reported in Aulus Gellius’ *Attic Nights* (3.11.7). The Venetian Dominican began with a discussion of these lines: “This snow-white kid the tomb of Homer marks; / For such the Ietae offer to the dead.”\(^{83}\) In this context, the ancient Greek poet was referred to as *Vates Homerus*.\(^ {84}\) The status of *vates* was also extended to Virgil. In the letter discussed above to the Loredan brothers, Medici used classical references to defend his frustration that his efforts at editing were not recognized. One example was the “outstanding Mantuan Prophet (*vates*),” who “did not tolerate thieves and thus sang four times with the urging of the Muses: “*sic vos non vobis,*”\(^ {85}\) a reference to the apocryphal story of Virgil’s rebuking a fellow poet, Bathyllus, who took credit for poetry that was not his.\(^ {86}\)

Medici offered some direct statements about poetry in his published works.\(^ {87}\) In his inaugural lecture as professor of theology *in via S. Thomae* at the University of Padua, he gave an oration *De ingenio theologicis facultatibus excolendo*.\(^ {88}\) The oration offered ways in which one could see the “supreme splendor of all sciences” in a deeper

---


\(^ {84}\) Contarini, “Epistolae,” 301-02. Desiderio was quite impressed with Medici’s powers of literary interpretation (ibid., 312-14).

\(^ {85}\) Ibid., 328.

\(^ {86}\) The story came from an anonymous *Vita Publil Virgilii Maronis*, often associated with Donatus. For more references to *vates*, see Medici, *Oratio in funere Aloisii Dragani*, sig.[**]*2r.

\(^ {87}\) It might also be noted that one of Medici’s very earliest recorded writings was a (rather unimpressive) sonnet written when he was sixteen which was printed in an exemplar of Francesco Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. E. Fumagalli, “Due esemplari dell’‘Hypnerotomachia Poliphili’ di Francesseco Colonna,” *Aevum* 66 (1992): 420-421. Note ibid., 421: “Il sonetto, caudato e in endecasillabi sdrucchioli…chiude, si auspica, la disputa sulla paternità dell’opera, eliminando definitivamente il Francesco Colonna romano, principe di Palestrina…o quanti altri negli ultimi tempi hanno sollecitato l’acume o la fantasia degli studiosi; ma apre una questione di genere completamente diverso: come è possibile che un novizio, e sia pure di forte personalità, giudacas se tanto positivamente un’opera che in seguito sarebbe diventata perfino imbarazzante per i domenicani?”

\(^ {88}\) 8 November 1545.
understanding of Scripture.\textsuperscript{89} In regard to the \textit{studia humanitatis}, Medici pointed to the mute being miraculously given speech and the disciples granted the gift of tongues as examples of grammar in the sacred text. Medici stressed Paul’s rhetorical powers in the courts of Agrippa and Festus and on Mars’ hill. He set before his audience the sermons of Peter on the day of Pentecost when 3,000 people were baptized. Finally, he asked, “was there ever a word more inflamed or threatening than that of Christ in saying, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ when Paul was transformed from a persecutor to the vessel of election.”\textsuperscript{90} Medici wanted to show the place—indeed, the perfection—of eloquence in Scripture.

In pointing to biblical exemplars, Medici by no means meant to dismiss the classical world or the natural capacities of the human being. He referred to Homer as the “parent of the good arts.” “Though blind,” he asked, “are there any cities, forests, regions, rivers, battles, banquets, characters (\textit{ingenium}), or habits (\textit{mos}) of men that he did not set before our eyes, as though in a painting.”\textsuperscript{91} The poets, Medici said, were deemed to be divine, never erased from human memory. Then, he quoted that “prophet,” Ovid, who sang forth,

\begin{quote}
Yea, though hard rocks and though the tooth of the enduring ploughshare perish with passing time, song is untouched by death. Before song, let monarchs and monarchs’ triumphs yield—yield, too, the blessed banks of Tagus breaking gold!\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{89} Medici, \textit{De ingenio}, 9v.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 9v-10r.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 8v.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid. \textit{Amores}, I.15, ll. 31-34. For this translation see the Loeb edition in Ovid, \textit{Heroides and Amores}, trans. Grant Showerman (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 378, with a slight modification based on a difference in Medici’s text (“blessed” instead of “bounteous”).
Rhetoric also had great power. Pisistratus and Pericles, “with sweet fluency,” did more than “stroke the ears of men.” Medici said they used it to “impose the yoke of servitude on the free necks of the Athenians.” But eloquence could also spare life, for Mark Antony used it to convince those sent to kill him to re-sheath their swords and, in the end, “rendered his enemies benign.”

A less rhetorically charged discussion of language occurred in Medici’s preface to Andrea Calmo’s popular comedy, *Il Travaglia* (1546). This play employed a number of different Italian dialects, not only high Tuscan. Calmo was interested in defending the “impurity” of his literary style against critics, arguing that the goal of a playwright, especially in comedy, was to show how people actually speak and also to make choices for the sake of comic effect. In the first year of Medici’s career teaching theology at the University of Padua, Calmo wrote a letter to Medici, asking for his assistance. Medici responded a few days later and eventually composed two prefaces, addressed to the

---

93 Medici, *De ingenio*, 8r. This is a noteworthy view of political history as well.
94 Ibid., 9v.
95 Marvin A. Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues: Languages at Play in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 33-34, 68, 72, 74-76, though he does not note that many of the interesting reflections of Calmo on language in theatrical performance were the words of Medici. See also Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 145-50: “Calmo has not yet benefited from the dedicated scholarly work which has so transformed our perception of Ruzante; and it is better to admit from the start that passages in his plays remain practically incomprehensible, from a combination of deliberate linguistic garbling and casual topical allusions—precisely the two features which no doubt helped to make his work hilarious to his contemporaries” (146). See also Anthony Ellis, *Old Age, Masculinity, and Early Modern Drama: Comic Elders on the Italian and Shakespearean Stage* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), chap. 4, esp. 94, which highlights a soliloquy in *Il Travaglia* of an old man concerning his sexual cravings that Giovannino da Mantova and Giovanni Dominici would probably not appreciate: “The moist says that only coughs, catarrhous spittle and saliva are found in me, and the air knows me to be without humor, full of smoke and fog; the dry sees me a parched root, an old terrain with little manure; but the heat, which judges according to natural valuation, leaving aside all grudges, palpating the very spot, knows by true science that my flesh is ready to receive the flame, the blaze, and the much-desired heat.”
spectators, one included in the first publication of the play in 1556. He made two fundamental arguments in defense of Calmo’s “clear, pithy, honest, and jolly comedies.”97 The first was that the use of dialects was more realistic. The “garden of many flowers and much fruit,” drawn from diverse persons and regions and lands, was reflected in a variety of dialects in Calmo’s plays.98 With the help of “Andrea Calmo’s pleasant and happy Muses,” his noble audience would encounter something that made more sense than the high literary Tuscan in many plays: “A Greek or Dalmation speaking in Italy with the Tuscan accents and idioms (modo) is no less out of the ordinary than if someone from Bergamo spoke in Florentine or someone from Naples in German.”99 The second argument of Medici is that such an approach is funnier and thus more in keeping with a comedy.100 These different characters with their different tongues and customs create situations in which one would need “the heart of a tiger or a panther not to laugh.”101 Calmo’s goal and the proper desire of the audience of his plays was not the “elegance of the Tuscan language” but “to give birth to the happiness, the savory laughter, the jolly acclaim of spectators,” concluding the shorter, printed preface with the

98 Rossi, Lettere, xlix.
100 See also Rossi, Lettere, xlix: “So che li vostri generosi spiriti […] amano le comedie di subbietti arguti et giocondi, ma però di casi facili da intender con parole cotidianamente usate, dove le persone de diverse patrie pparlino nel nostro idioma in modo che noi l’intendiamo et rallegriamo i spiriti, et faciano solletico et gatuzole alle orecchie del core.”
101 Ibid.
words, “Prepare yourself to listen and to laugh.” Other poets wrote on topics inappropriate for the comic form:

There are some gloomy talents (scuro ingegno) who, when composing comedies, treat the grandeur of the fixed stars, the various courses of the wanderers, the motion of the sun in its oblique circle, the spots of the moon, the conjunctions and opposition of the planets, the concourse of the elements in the generation of things and, finally, any subjects that strike the head by means of Aristotle and Plato. Are these the sorts of things that give pleasure to gentle spirits?....One goes to the famous universities (studio) in Padua and other cities of Italy to rack one’s brains in such sublime speculations.

Medici suggested that one should go to a university lecture, not a comic play, if one was looking for sublime speculations. He said that, if one wanted Tuscan eloquence, one should look to Pietro Bembo, Gian Giorgio Trissino, Sperone Speroni, or some other worthy poet.

This list strongly suggests the relationship of Medici’s preface to the debates about language that animated the literary academies of this period. Indeed, Medici and some of the other Dominican professors at Padua played some role in the early stages of these academies. At the very least, they were strongly associated with some of their foremost members. We have already seen Gianfrancesco Beato’s associations with Benedetto Varchi and Giambattista Gelli, both leading figures in the Accademia Fiorentina. The circle of scholars that gathered in Pietro Bembo’s household in Padua attracted many scholars and in some ways provided material for Padua’s Accademia degli

102 Calmo, Il Travaglia, 37.
103 Rossi, Lettere, xlviii.
104 Calmo, Il Travaglia, 37.
105 Varchi was also part of Padua’s Accademia degli Infiammati. See Richard S. Samuels, “Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement,” Renaissance Quarterly 29 (1976): 629. See also ibid., 600-01.
Infiammati. Sisto Medici, at least occasionally, took part in Bembo’s scholarly discussions during his own student days. Medici was thus involved in his proto-academy in Padua. In a letter written in 1530 to an unnamed correspondent, he described an event from the early 1520s, probably 1523. He set the context by describing a group of men, dedicated in their “companionship (contubernium) with the Muses,” who wasted no time in the pursuit of learning and spent even their meals in erudite discussions and disputations, as in Plato’s *Symposium* and Macrobius’ *Saturnalia*. This sort of banqueting did not end with the ancient philosophers. Andrea Navagero, a learned Venetian nobleman, and Pietro Bembo, whom Medici described as “second to no one as far as erudition in the languages and sciences,” decided to host a banquet. They invited Niccolò Leonico Tomeo, “the parent of philosophy and eloquence,” who is now famous for teaching Aristotle in Greek and undertaking important translations of the Aristotelian corpus. Medici described the hilarity that ensued due to the great wit of this “most facetious” of men. Apparently, Leonico had a reputation for being quite funny in the company of his friends, especially once the banqueting tables had been removed. But the Dominican recalled that suddenly he checked his tongue with silence, lifted his eyes, and persisted for some time in what appeared to be very grave thoughts. When Navagero observed this behavior, he asked “the good Leonico” why he was departing in his

---

106 Ibid., 605.  
thoughts from their company. After some pleasantrys, the great Graecist and Aristotelian philosopher replied that he was pondering a disputation which had made him think about the “unjust opinion of those men who assert that nature is mother for all things but a stepmother for mankind.” He went on to reflect, on the basis of Aristotle’s statement that man is “the end of all things,” that nature—whether the heavens, the earth, the sea, or the elements—conspires to bring about what is necessary, useful, and even pleasurable for human beings. The difficulty then arises, he said, if someone wanted to discuss the following question: “Is it the case that man by his nature is concerned with more in his arts and duties than a rational animal?” Navagero replied, though Medici’s letter cut off in the middle of it, that such a consideration was worthy of departing from the company of the banqueters; indeed, he declared, “let us also refresh our souls, lest the soul envy the body now gladdened with feasting.” Unfortunately, it is not possible to discover what Navagero described as his “chattering” on this important topic in the presence of Leonico Tomeo and Bembo, whom the letter also called “the prince of the

---

111 Ibid.
112 Ibid., 419. See Medici’s Oratio de ingenio theologicis facultatiubs excolendo, delivered over two decades later (November 1545), that reflected on related themes: “Diogenem Synopeum Philosophum tradunt a se in primis omnium voluptatum et cupiditatum illecebras abdicasse; vilissimo vixisse amictum palliolo, et angusto dolio veluti ampi domicilio contentum. Is itaque quam aliquandiu ex calice quodam ligneo usum potandi haberet: videns pureum manu concava bibentem, statim calicem terrae illisit, dicens. Nesciebam naturae poculum non deesse. Ex hoc procul dubio innuens, Naturam humanis usibus, consulere quasi matrem omni ex parte prudentissimam atque liberalissimam. Quod quamvis apertissime constet, non modo ex elegant eademque temperantissima Rationalis naturae architectura, verum etiam ex additis exterius adminiculis; quam astra lucere, coelem cunctis influere, nubes pluere, miseri elementa, arbores atque animalia fructus foetusque suos solum ad hominis usum producere satagant (Omnium enim quodammodo finis est homo, ut ait Aristoteles) Longe tamen copiosius hominem suprema illa Natura, quae Deus est, ditat atque extollit, dum ingenii superno lumine ipsius animum ita exornat, ita illustrat, ut in Divinam referat imaginem” (5rv).
philosophers.” Medici not only took part in Bembo’s academy but also showed great admiration for the major humanist scholar.

The clearest evidence of such participation in Italian academies emerges from Medici’s year in Florence (1544-45). He characterized the years of service to his order in the Veneto as the labors of Martha; Florence made it possible for him to “choose the better part with Mary.”113 He said, “I established to live from then on for God, for myself, and for the Muses alone (not without Apollo).”114 Medici explicitly stated that he enjoyed the meetings of the Accademia degli Umidi, founded in 1540, which met in the convent on feast days for “the most learned lectures,”115 though it should be noted that the name was already changed to the Accademia Fiorentina by that point. Their Sunday lectures in Santa Maria Novella took place in the Sala del Papa.116 He pointed especially to Giambattista Gelli, whom he called “a shoe merchant but very learned man,” who was their “chief.”117 After his return to Venice in 1553, decades later, he was associated with the learned circle of Aldo Manuzio’s son, Paolo.

And Medici was not the only one of these Dominican professors at Padua to have a place in such gatherings. While Girolamo Vielmi was professor in Rome, he taught the

114 Ibid., 458.
115 Ibid., 459. See Judith Bryce, “The Oral World of the Early Accademia Fiorentina,” Renaissance Studies 9 (1995): 77, where it is stated, “The Accademia Fiorentina came into being in the spring of 1541 as the successor to the short-lived Accademia degli Umidi (founded 1 November 1540).” But Medici was using the old title: “Insuper et cum Musarum Alumnis ex Humidorum, ut vocant, Academia, qui in Domo nostra singulis Festis diebus per lectiones doctissimas exercebantur.”
116 Sherberg, “Accademia Fiorentina,” 28: “When this space [a room at the Studio Fiorentino] proved too small, public events, including the production of at least one comedy, were moved to the Sala del Papa in the cloister of Santa Maria Novella.” Indeed, Ugolino Martelli’s Il Furto was performed there on 9 November 1544.
117 Contarini, “Epistolae,” 459. Gelli was actually a hosier.
young Carlo Borromeo and almost certainly participated in the scholarly discussions of Borromeo’s academy, the Noctes Vaticanae. Vielmi and Gianambrogio Barbavara appear to have had some connection with the early stages of Gianvincenzo Pinelli’s important intellectual circle. Dominant connections to the debates about language in Italian academies and their generally positive view of humanist scholarship, poetry, and Latin eloquence provide essential context for the rare Italian defense of scholastic theology against humanist attacks composed by Girolamo Vielmi. In the oration that initiated his career as theologian in via S. Thomae at Padua, Vielmi took up the issue of an eloquence fitting for a theologian. He began with a quite general and classical statement about the need for rhetoric to be grounded in truth, cleverly invoking Cicero’s view that only eloquence united with wisdom is worthy of praise. But there is a difference, he argued, between the eloquence that is fitting for a theologian and that which properly adorns the orator. Vielmi thought that this fact was sometimes ignored by the humanists. At this point, his argument became quite complex. He sought to defend the particular eloquence of the theologian by invoking the simplicity of the biblical writers. He paraphrased Paul’s words to the Corinthians that “we announce what was given to us by God, not with the learned words of human wisdom but in the showing of the Spirit and power.” It is simplicity of speech, Vielmi argued, that manifests the “pure sincerity...of the Holy

119 I hope to investigate this matter further. See Ambrosiana MS. A 51 inf., Ambrosiana MS. N 193 sup., Ambrosiana MS. S 106 sup.
120 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 87r.
Adorning theological writings with poetic turns of phrase and high-blown rhetoric would suggest that the arguments themselves lacked persuasive power.

It was, however, not simply the dearth of attractive speech that raised the ire of Vielmi’s opponents. The scholastics were not often accused of being too simple but instead too obscure, having filled their writings with barbarisms and solecisms, and Vielmi was well-aware of that fact. Vielmi explained that this obscurity was certainly not the goal of the scholastics, who, he said, had a “most beautiful method” and sought to “divide rightly, define aptly, and demonstrate exactly.” The difficulty, however, was that this sort of pursuit could not be accomplished perfectly because “God dwells in an inaccessible light and is incomprehensible and ineffable to us in every way.” It was thus not a problem with the method but with the “amplitude and excellence of the subject matter.” Only the twelve apostles heard the full explanation of Jesus’ parables; the crowd was not properly prepared. The difficulty of a science whose subject matter is God forced the theologians into obscure inquiries. Vielmi said, “there is a need for experience, industry, study, discipline, and, finally, the invocation of the Holy Spirit and its help,” in order that even a glimpse of these divine mysteries might be made possible.\(^\text{122}\) Although the scholastic theologians might strive to imitate the text of Scripture in its simplicity and clarity, making manifest the force of the arguments themselves, the divine mystery and

\(^{121}\) Ibid., 87v.  
\(^{122}\) Ibid., 89v.
the weakness of the human intellect make such a task almost impossible. Consequently, to the uninitiated, the writings of the theologians seem filled with obscurities.\textsuperscript{123}

This tension between simplicity and obscurity in theology was pertinent to Vielmi’s criticism of his opponents for “not allowing their erudite ears to enjoy anything except for the delights of the Latin or Greek language.”\textsuperscript{124} He emphasized the simplicity and clarity as well as the universality of Christianity, which the theologians did not limit to the classical cultures of the ancient world. They sought, Vielmi said, “to advance and establish the Scythians and the Africans as well.” Their concern was for “the wise and the foolish, the learned and the ignorant.” For this reason, he argued, the scholastics accommodated their diction to every sort of human being. “While the splendor of words,” he claimed, “is received from the poets and orators, and the understanding of nature from the philosophers, so too the whole meaning of Christian piety and the precepts of living well and happily are received almost entirely from the theologian.” He also invoked the teachings of Plato on this matter.\textsuperscript{125} As we saw in Vielmi’s arguments for the harmony of Thomas Aquinas and Scotus, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola could be a useful ally. In this case, Vielmi appreciated his arguments for the idea that, “in matters where the cognition of things is sought, one must press the uncorrupted truth, not the charm of a

\textsuperscript{123} See ibid., 89r, where the author explicitly invoked the examples of the ancient Egyptian and Greek philosophers who were intentionally obscure to repel the inexperienced and slow-witted.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 87v.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 88v. Socrates’ debates with the Sophists expressed this point on a number of occasions, though most famously in the \textit{Gorgias}. For how humanists wrestled with this dialogue, see James Hankins, \textit{Plato in the Italian Renaissance}, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 54-56, 326-27.
shining oration.” The goal of the theologian was truth, and truth could be presented in languages other than Ciceronian Latin.

Vielmi was more willing to concede some of the arguments of the humanists in his longer work on the writings of Thomas Aquinas, published ten years after the oration. But even in this more mature work he wanted to emphasize that the style of the texts of the scholastic theologians had its justification:

The more distinguished scholastics all pressed and labored to show that the truth of the matter, dyed with no colors and polished with no allurements, would be seen by honest, virile, and acute natures, who

126 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 88v. See also ibid., 27r, 28r. Gianambrogio Barbavara also made use of Pico in his 1548 oration for the feast day of Thomas Aquinas. See Gianambrogio Bar bavara, Oratio pro D. Thomae Aquinatis laudibus habita, Patavii apud D. Augustini, Dominicos (Venice, 1548), sig.84r: “Non preteribo tamen hic recensere, quid de ipso senserit quidam tempestate nostra non infimus, et cuius sententiam quisque facile sequatur, Ioannes inquam Picus Mirandulus ipse enim (ut in eius vitae Franciscus nepos refert) quum prae omnibus qui in Theologiae studiis floruerre, Thomam effeerre solitus esset; han rationem affererat, quod solidiori praes alis veritatis basii inniteretur, atque iaco in Heptaplo in altera Prohaemii expositione Theologiae nostrae florem, ac splendorem nunupavit.” Note that Pico had a relationship with the Dominicans who would eventually teach at Padua during his short life. The case of Cajetano is the most famous. At a general chapter, Pico and Cajetan, then teaching in the studium of S. Agostino, engaged in a disputation. After Cajetan responded to the one-hundred objections, Master-General Gioacchino Torriani gave Cajetan his own doctoral insignia. The friar of Gaeta, not quite twenty-five years old, was hoisted on his brothers’ shoulders and carried off as victor and magister. It was Pentecost, 18 May 1494. See Spina’s account in Laurent, “Les premières biographies,” 450-51: “Neque enim annorum defectus prohibuit, quin favum sapientiae purissimum suggereret purissimum, et cunctis effuderet abundanter. Dnum eo temporum decursu ad universalem Praedicatororum synodum, praefati summo capite Ferrariam concessit. Die igitur constituta in campum procedens, cum celebratissimo illo scientiarum omnium velut armario capacissimo, Ioanne Pico Mirandula, congressus est. Quam felici fato dies illa donata est, ut iuvenes duo robustissimis sese pro veritate impeterent, qui cum acetate tum animi elegantia, interiorisque lumen ac sapientiae plenitudine moribus etiam haud dissimiles erant sed nec professione demum. Picus enim (tametsi morti occurrerens) sacrum et ipse Praedicatorum ordinem est professus. Viriliter igitur die illo, dum utrinque decertaretur, tantum gloriae Thomas—absque tamen concertantis inuria—consecutus est, ut coram illustriissimo Ferrariae duce Hercule, ac toto sapientium senatu, ac innumera populi circumstantis ac stupendis frequentibus, ab sui ordinis Generali moderatorio, loachimo Turriano Venten, viro praestantissimo consedente, mox coram accitus, proprium quo caput tegetat biretum, magisterii infumam, capiti Thomae imposuerit, cucitsole appaudentibus, sed et eodem quoque Mirandule comite plurimum collaudante, sacrae illum theologiae magistrum creaverit.” See also Grendler, Universities, 362. There was also an important disputation with Ludovico Valenza. See Toti, Oratio, [3]: “Qui in omnibus his civitatisibus cum viris famosis etiam cum mirandulensi comite in aula pontificis disputans manifestissima sue doctrine signa reliquit. Illustriissimus quoque venetorum senatus ad tradendam in florentissimo Patavino gymnasio theologiam honestissimo salario conduxit: ac eius nomine novam lecturam instituit.”
neither dread uncultivated diction, nor remove themselves from the house of the theologians because they do not consider them orators and grammarians.

Theological truth, Vielmi thought, did not need so much assistance from the orators. And the readers of the theologians should not have such a narrow standard for “worthy” books.

At the same time, Vielmi offered more of a response to the humanists than a denial of the legitimacy of their concern for eloquence. He acknowledged with some disappointment that some of the scholastics had contempt or, at the very least neglected, the elegance and attractiveness of oratory and language. And Vielmi spent a good deal of time defending the notion that Thomas Aquinas surpassed all the schoolmen in his Latinity. Vielmi said that the “oration of Aquinas has no solecisms, no barbarisms, nothing distasteful (odiosus).” Vielmi, therefore, cannot be said to have embraced the view of some humanists concerning the eloquence of medieval theologians, but he did not dismiss their concerns altogether. He sought to defend Thomas Aquinas against the charges; he did not merely assert that the charges were faulty in themselves. Moreover, Vielmi marshalled a list of humanists who spoke positively of Aquinas’ Latin. He thus had some respect for those most knowledgable in Latin (latinissimis hominibus). Vielmi presented quotations from more or less well-known figures Marcantonio Natta

127 Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 15v.
128 Ibid., 16r.
129 Note the avoidance of “foreign terms” like *ethica* in the work of Barbavara: “Quum ergo institutum sit primam philosophiae partem tractare in his libris, quas *de moribus Aristotelis ad Nicomachum* inscripsit.” See Ambrosiana MS. D 373 inf., 142v.
130 Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 16r.
and Basilio Zanchi, but he also cited Juan Luis Vives and Desiderius Erasmus.\textsuperscript{131} As we will see, Erasmus would be especially useful for providing an historical framework for thinking through the lack of eloquence in the medieval theologians.

Vielmi’s attitude towards poetry was also complex. Even if he might have used some of these figures as allies, Vielmi frankly opposed those from Jean Gerson to Erasmus who employed allurements that might draw away young people from the sure teaching of the scholastics—and especially Thomas Aquinas—to the “trifles of the poets and the flourishes of the rhetors.”\textsuperscript{132} This sort of statement, however, must be understood to be in the context of his use of the ancient poets—Ovid, Valerius Flaccus, and particularly Virgil, “the most learned of poets”—in his university lectures on Genesis.\textsuperscript{133} Vielmi actually explained his use of verse in his lectures just before quoting Virgil’s \textit{Georgics}. He acknowledged that much of this poetry would be very well-known to his students. But he was explicit about the fact that he brought forth these poems with a clear purpose: to delight and restore the exhausted ears of those listening to him. There was a deeper reason: “I understand [poetry’s] great power for separating souls from bodies and for rousing them to the contemplation of divine things, which not only authors such as Plato in the \textit{Timaeus} and Plotinus in Book 3 of his \textit{Enneades De triplici ascensu animi ad mundum intelligibilem} have said; indeed, this is something that I have also learned from experience (\textit{experimentum}).”\textsuperscript{134} Moreover, he said that this effort to lift one’s auditors to

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 16r-17r.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 11v.
\textsuperscript{133} Vielmi, \textit{De sex diebus}, 126. 149, 170, 293, 341. See also ibid., 285-86, where Vielmi said that poetry could be misleading.
\textsuperscript{134} The work of Plotinus is Book 3 of his \textit{Enneades}. 
divine contemplation was the “duty of the theologian,” and Vielmi proceeded to quote Virgil’s *Georgics*, Book 1, to prove that this statement was based on careful consideration:

> When the fleet gulls fly back from mid-ocean, wafting their screams shoreward, and when the sea-coots sport on dry land, and the heron quits its home in the marsh and soars aloft above the clouds.\(^{135}\)

Vielmi wanted to keep his students interested, and he believed that quotations drawn from the great poets would also aid in contemplation. Indeed, even if the pagans were “superstitious” in their reading the entrails of birds and so on, Vielmi said that the poets could act, as it were, like natural diviners or augurs admonishing the farmers, sailors, and builders about the things to which they ought to give consideration. “Our religion,” Vielmi said, “does not reprove this.”\(^{136}\) Vielmi was quoting Plato and the Neo-Platonists to support his alliance with the poets in lifting his students to the contemplation of divine things. Humanism thus had its effect even on a Dominican theologian who wrote one of the few Italian attacks on humanism.

*The Theologian and History*

The Paduan Thomists generally accepted the high view of poetry and eloquence associated with humanism. They also largely embraced humanism’s view of history and scholarship. Scholars who have attempted to revise the Kristellerian view that sees very little conflict between scholasticism and humanism have looked to “historical


\(^{136}\) Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 263.
consciousness” as a “primary characteristic” that gave the movement definition and often put it in opposition to the scholastics.\textsuperscript{137} Whatever may have been the case across the Alps, these Dominican professors did not have contempt for the textual scholarship and historical sensitivity of the humanists.\textsuperscript{138} Indeed, as we will see, they engaged in the very same intellectual activities—often, though not always, with the texts of medieval authors—and arguably went further than many humanists in their awareness of the extent and complexity of change over time.\textsuperscript{139} And they used this historical consciousness as well as humanistic approaches to texts to defend the scholastics, particularly Thomas Aquinas.

A deeper attention to historicity was demonstrated in the Dominican professors’ concern about pseudonymous texts and erroneous attributions. Both Vielmi and Barbavara wrote works that sifted through claims regarding the authorship of Thomas Aquinas’ writings. Vielmi’s \textit{On the Writings and Doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas} is the most important printed work emerging from the Paduan Thomists that engaged in this sort of enterprise. These features of the text are probably what interested the humanist Giovanni Faseolo in the text and led him to publish it. Vielmi sought to prevent confusion

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{137} See Charles G. Nauert, \textit{Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20-22, esp. 20: “Humanism was not a comprehensive system of philosophy as scholastic Aristotelianism had been and continued to be, but it was a distinct method of intellectual procedure. Since scholasticism also was essentially an intellectual method rather than a single set of doctrines or conclusions, a subtle clash of intellectual methods underlies the many over and accidental causes for the conflicts between humanists and scholastics that marked the intellectual history of the Renaissance.”
\textsuperscript{138} For perhaps the most current, major treatment of this issue, showing conflict in contrast to Kristeller’s approach, see Erika Rummel, \textit{The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
\end{flushright}
by arranging Aquinas’ writings artfully and methodically. 140 He acknowledged the doubts of others—“not to be condemned”—concerning the authorship of Thomas’ commentaries on Isaiah. 141 Most striking was how he exposed the problematic editorial work of Bartolomeo Spina, professor of Thomist theology at Padua, who was described by Vielmi as “my most distinguished praacher.” 142 When Vielmi was a student at Sant’Anastasia in Verona, he found the commentaries of Pietro della Scala (Petrus Scaliger). He realized that Spina had supplied Della Scala’s commentary on the Sermon on the Mount in the place of what was missing in Thomas Aquinas’ commentary, and Vielmi reported that he had “admonished” Spina. This section, Vielmi said, “could not be compared in style or in diligence” to the commentaries of Aquinas. 143 Incidentally, this claim was dismissed as “insane” for centuries, but Vielmi’s position was vindicated by twentieth-century scholarship. 144 The Venetian Dominican offered a lengthy discussion of why so many works were falsely ascribed to Aquinas that is worth quoting:

For since many of the most erudite men had this name, it was easy for the monuments of authors to be considered among the writings of our doctor, who is held as the sun among doctors. This might have happened either by error, which does occur, or by the inept judgment and imprudent love for him among some of his followers. Or it might have also happened in the following way: many knew that the fame of Thomas Aquinas’ extraordinary sanctity and incomparable doctrine had convinced the whole

140 Vielmi, De sex diebus, 414. Recall that the 1575 printing of his lectures on Genesis included De scriptis and his Oratio. I am using this edition at this point in the chapter because I am interested in Vielmi’s most mature reflections on the authorship of these Thomistic works.
141 Ibid., 419. See Torrell, Thomas Aquinas, 27: “Weisheipl takes up this hypothesis and suggests that Thomas taught cursorie on Jeremiah, Lamentations, and a part of Isaiah at Cologne….The commentaries on Jeremiah and Lamentations exactly correspond to that definition. Ironically, Sixtus of Siena in the sixteenth century denied the authenticity of these commentaries precisely because of their doctrinal poverty (sterilitas doctrinae). It is hardly worth lingering on this.”
142 Vielmi, De sex diebus, 420.
143 Ibid.
144 Torrell, Thomas Aquinas, 57.
world, had resounded in all places, and was held as a supreme authority. Indeed, there was no one, provided with either secular or divine letters, who did not hold his writings the dearest of all and to be sought out everywhere. Anyone would desire to enrich his own museum or library with such a great author. No one would spare even an outstanding price. The avarice of notaries made it so that the offspring of many authors would be supposed as those of Aquinas, and the vigils and labors of many would be ascribed to Thomas alone. But it is more execrable by far that some depraved and wicked men acted in this way either to diminish (elevo) the authority of Thomas (viz., teaching something different in a different place and agreeing with the opposite position) or, as I judge, to prop up and sanction some of their own opinions that were customarily turned about in controversy on the basis of the testimony of this great man.  

He clearly believed it important to have accurate texts and was disturbed by those who used Thomas’ authority for their own ends. Vielmi offered a rather subtle examination of the various motivations involved in these false ascriptions.

These Dominicans gave significant attention to Aquinas’ short works, his opuscula. Vielmi stated at the beginning of his discussion of Aquinas’ writings that “very many opuscula had been falsely ascribed (inscribo) to St. Thomas.” Gianambrogio Barbavara dedicated an entire treatise to an evaluation (censura) of Thomas’ shorter writings, written at the behest of the Dominican master-general, Serafino Cavalli (1571-1578). Some of Barbavara’s principles, as stated, would not conform to modern

---

145 Vielmi, De sex diebus, 421-22. This translation is not as literal as is ordinarily the case.
146 Ibid., 415. Recall the role of Pizzamano and d’Ippolito and even Gaspare in diffusing these pseudonymous works.
147 Barbavara’s commission probably had something to do with the famous “Piana” edition of Thomas Aquinas’ Opera omnia of the early 1570s. Vielmi was also summoned to do work of this sort: “Nam eius scriptis alicubi adulterina quaedam inserverunt, cuius rei causa Stephanus Usus maris, Generalis Magister Ordinis Praedicatorum prudentissimus, et doctissimus, me auctore, publico iudicio Venetis coram Archinto Episcopo Salluciarum, et nuncio Apostolico Typographum quendam semel convenit, et alibi rem totam pando” (ibid., 422). The major eighteenth-century Dominican historian, Bernardo de Rossi (de Rubeis), substantially engaged with Barbavara’s work in Admonitiones praeviae. See De gestis, et scriptis, ac doctrina Sancti Thomae Aquinatis dissertationes (Venice, 1750), 92, 222, 244, passim.
scholarly practice. He saw Thomas Aquinas’ works as “an indissoluble nexus of things and, as it were, a solid body of truth,” which could be used to show that a particular work was not written by Thomas Aquinas. But he also sought to look for his “simple style,” which never revealed a “lascivious reed-pen” nor anything “mean or lowly (abiectus aut humilis).” Barbavara also kept an eye out for his mode of argumentation: “While he confutes alien opinions, he is certainly very keen (acerrimus) but still very modest, in such a way that he never understands himself to be at war with men but only with perverse dogmas and opinions.” Barbavara spent a good part of the treatise arguing that an opusculum was not Thomas’ because a position defended there contradicted what he said elsewhere. But he occasionally employed a more sophisticated approach. For instance, though he did not doubt Thomistic authorship of De unitate intelletua contra Averroistas, he observed that “whole pages are recited from Themistius according to the version of Ermolao Barbaro,” which was published in 1481. And he was willing to make controversial claims—for example, he denied that Thomas Aquinas wrote any of the important work, De regimine principum, an opinion later discussed by Barbavara’s famous student, Robert Bellarmine.

Their ability to see Thomas Aquinas in historical context significantly shaped the defense of their order’s major theologian. This sense for change over time in the history

---

148 Ambrosiana MS. D 373 inf., 159r.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., 159v.
151 Ibid., 159v-160v. It would be interesting to examine this work further to see what a major Thomist of the second half of the sixteenth century thought implausible as an opinion of Thomas Aquinas. One example is Barbavara’s concern that the author of De regimine appears to be more a student of Aristotle than Paul the Apostle in his condemnation of commerce with foreigners (ibid., 160r). See E. A. Ryan, The Historical Scholarship of Saint Bellarmine (New York: The Fordham University Press, 1936), 29.
of academic theology and the intellectual context of the thirteenth century may be one of
the most important achievements of Paduan Thomism. Though Vielmi obviously
recognized that Erasmus had spoken harshly about Aquinas at times, Vielmi saw
something different in his Annotations on Romans, where the famous northern humanist
said,

Thomas Aquinas was a great man and not only in his own day. For, to my
mind, there is no recent theologian that is his equal in diligence, more
sound in ability, or more solid in learning. He plainly deserved to obtain a
knowledge of languages as well as everything else belonging to the study
of good literature, inasmuch as he so skillfully used the resources available
to him in his own day.\footnote{Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 16v. See also Desiderius Erasmus, Complete Works, vol. 56, ed. and trans. Robert D. Sider, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 10.}

Erasmus’ historical view on the paucity of opportunities to learn languages or the liberal
arts in scholasticism’s days of glory might appear to be something that the Thomist
Vielmi would reject.\footnote{Barbavara also made use of Erasmus in his oration, quoting nearly the same passage sixteen years before. It is quite interesting that these Paduan Thomists appear to have been gathering positive statements praising Aquinas from humanists and other contemporary figures. See Barbavara, Oratio, sig.b4v: “Non potuit vel Erasmus ipse (etiam si in monachos nunquam non agat Momum) non potuit inquam Aquinatis Thomae ingenium sumopere non admirari; qui quum eum pluribus lois commendatur, maxime in suis ad Pauli epistolam annotationibus, hanc de ipso elegantissimam profer sententiam. Thomas (inquit) Aquinas vir non tantum suo seculo magnus. Nam meo quidem animo, nullus est recentium Theologorum cui par sit diligentia cui sanius ingenium, ui solidior eruditio; planeque, dignus erat, cui linguarum quoque peritia relicquaque bonarum, artium suppellex continget, qui iis, quae per eam tempestatem dabantur, tam dextre sit usus.” Note that some modern scholars dismiss the significance of this passage quoted by Vielmi, emphasizing Erasmus’ hostility to scholasticism. See the rather complex discussion in István P. Bejczy, Erasmus and the Middle Ages: The Historical Consciousness of a Christian Humanist (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 86-96, esp. 90-91. See also Jean-Pierre Massaut, “Erasme et Saint Thomas,” in Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), II: 581-611.}

In fact, the Dominican theologian embraced and then elaborated
upon this historical judgment, saying that the “age of Thomas did not have the luminaries
of the Latin tongue, who have felicitously helped and advanced our era in matters
pertaining to Latin.” This recognition of a break between his age and that of the thirteenth-century doctors is very striking because of how it echoes the notion of “historical consciousness” that is so central to our contemporary understandings of humanism.

Vielmi developed this historical awareness even further and with arguably greater seriousness when it came to Greek learning. After stating that Thomas was the “first of the Latins” to offer genuine commentaries on a significant portion of Aristotle’s works, he made another historical observation on Thomas Aquinas’ era: “For since that age either condemned Greek literature or neglected it, Aquinas was either entirely ignorant or had only a very slight knowledge of that language.” “It was for this reason,” Vielmi continued, “that sometimes he hesitates or errs in explaining Greek words.” He referred to his teacher, Sisto Medici, whom he called a “worthy philosopher and theologian,” pointing to the fact that Medici had cautioned the reader about this deficiency in his dedicatory epistle to his edition of Thomas Aquinas’ commentary on *De generatione et corruptione*. Vielmi also recognized that certain texts were unavailable in the thirteenth century, a state of affairs that might have put limits on the theologians of that era. After stating that Aquinas preferred Aristotle to the other philosophers, Vielmi remarked on the

---

154 Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 17r.
156 See Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 17rv, where Vielmi listed the errors of Thomas Aquinas because of deficiencies in Latin during his time. They all appear rather trivial. He also moved quickly into a critique of the humanists, referring especially to Juan Luis Vives as “the puffed-up Spanish censor,” who also criticized the Church Fathers for lacking eloquence.
fact that the thirteenth-century theologian “did not so much read as taste” the works of Plato. The reason for this was that “only one or two of his books spoke Latin in that time.” Vielmi thus accepted the characterization of Erasmus and the other humanists with regard to the significant shortcomings of the “age of Thomas”—what we would call the Later Middle Ages—in the knowledge of Greek and, to some extent, in Latin eloquence. Things had changed since then, and Vielmi believed that many of these changes have been beneficial, even for theologians. And those shifts were on display in Vielmi’s lectures. In his course on Genesis, he dealt with almost every Hebrew word in that book’s first chapter, examining the different renderings in the Christian and Jewish traditions. The interpreter who was “destitute of this holy language,” Vielmi said, is lacking “a great light.” He likely did not have full control of Hebrew himself, but, because of the debates and translation efforts of recent decades, his scholarly treatment of Genesis 1 was significantly different from what one would find in a thirteenth-century work.

Vielmi was not alone in his view of the age of Thomas Aquinas. In his youthful oration for Thomas Aquinas’ feast day in Padua (1548), Barbavara stated that “God raised [some men] from the ruins of the barbarians since he would not allow the truth to wallow in slothful calm (otio torpescere) any longer.” Interestingly enough, these men raised up by God from the barbarian invasions were those defending various erroneous

---

157 Vielmi, *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis*, 74r. See also Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 5r: “eo praesertim tempore quo librorum suppellex tenuior erat.”
158 Vielmi, *De sex diebus*, 20r. He also made reference in this section of his lecture to the Tridentine degree regarding the authenticity of the Vulgate.
159 Gianambrogio Barbavara, *Oratio pro D. Thomae Aquinatis laudibus habita, Patavii apud D. Augustini, Dominicanos* (Venice, 1548), sig.b2v.
opinions that woke up the “religion of Christ.” These dangerous men used passages that they gathered from the Church Fathers as well as philosophers like Aristotle, Averroes, and Avicenna to criticize Christian doctrines. “But God,” Barbavara said, “having pity on the great loss of mortals, sent divine Thomas from his heavenly temple, and he put together and restored the disturbed religion of Christ that had been nearly brought to ruin.”

Later in the oration, Barbavara explained how the vulnerability of the Church, caused by the barbarian invasions, had a negative impact on learning. Thomas Aquinas thus “lacked the idiom of the commentaries of the Greeks,” an impediment for an interpreter of Aristotle. Barbavara immediately observed that his auditors must consider the times in which Aquinas lived (“ea ferebant tempora”).

The recognition of a break between themselves as Thomists and the “age of Thomas,” marked by what we know as Renaissance humanism, demonstrates that the Paduan Dominicans appreciated the achievements of humanism. When these Renaissance scholastics criticized humanists, they did not merely accuse “grammarians” of trespassing on their divine territory. Vielmi was involved in a rather sophisticated defense of scholastic theology against its latter-day detractors, while still recognizing the importance of humanism to the development of Italian intellectual culture. This was not a backward-looking apology for scholasticism; it was an attempt to enunciate a “Renaissance theology,” drawing upon Latin eloquence and Greek learning, that could still draw upon

---

160 Ibid., sig.b3r.
161 Ibid., sig.c1r.
162 This is a key point of Rummel, Humanist-Scholastic Debate. See esp. ibid., 83-87, where she discusses the key trope used against humanism by northern theologians, i.e., that they were “putting their sickles into other men’s crops.”
the monumental theological works of the Later Middle Ages, especially those of Thomas Aquinas.

Vielmi thought that the deficiencies of the age of Thomas Aquinas in certain ways magnified Aquinas’ own achievements. Thomas’ ignorance of Greek might have somewhat hampered his studies, but Vielmi believed that his achievements in the face of this major limitation demonstrated his abilities all the more. He thus contrasted Medici’s critique of Aquinas “in a few words” with that of Erasmus, “the censor of the world,” who used “many words” to expose Aquinas to public ridicule, as he often did to “pious and sober authors.” Erasmus lacked “civility” in the manner and frequency with which he pointed out the errors of Aquinas and other leading theologians of the past. Vielmi believed that these problems were mere “blemishes” that should not erase the “piety” which modern authors owed to their predecessors.163 And he also noted that Erasmus’ works, particularly his Annotations on the New Testament, were not entirely free from errors either. To conclude this section, Vielmi might surprise us again by calling on one of the greatest Italian humanists, Lorenzo Valla, as well as Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, to testify against Erasmus. According to Vielmi, these humanists had frequently argued that the most learned theologians should be spared from this sort of criticism or at least treated with great mildness.164 Vielmi believed that Aquinas’ diligence shone through in his effort to overcome these challenges. According to the Venetian Dominican, Aquinas

---

163 This notion of piety is an interesting part of Vielmi’s approach to authors in the past, though he is obviously willing to criticize Thomas Aquinas and the Church Fathers, as we saw above. How this “piety” distinguished him from his humanist opponents, like Erasmus, Vives, and others, is worthy of more detailed and systematic treatment. See Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 2v, 6v-7r, for more of Vielmi’s reflections on this and related points.

164 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 49rv. I have not found the source for this claim.
recognized that, “when destitute and deficient in the area of language, one lacked a great source of light for understanding authors.” “So,” he continued, “as he grew older, Aquinas...consulted with those who were learned in Greek.” Thomas Aquinas’ era was a hindrance, but he had enough insight to realize that the knowledge of Greek was a great benefit for studying Scripture and Aristotle. He had no disagreement in principle with those defending Greek studies, and he was willing to consult others to make up for these deficiencies. Finally, despite all of these constraints, Vielmi pointed out that Aquinas continued to be employed with frequency in contemporary theological and philosophical discussions.  

The historical consciousness of the Paduan Thomists also allowed them to express their frustration with the extreme glorification of antiquity by some of their contemporaries. They thought it was necessary to recognize substantial progress since antiquity in particular fields. Sisto Medici wrote a letter to Agostino Navagero, a senator, former praetor of Padua, and eventual bishop of Verona, which reflected on these themes. “Some,” Medici said, “are accustomed to offer copious praise to the genius of ancient times, as though forgetful or even enemies of their own praise.”  

This type of man was obsessed with censuring his own time as utterly lacking in virtue, good arts, and probity. Medici had no doubt about the excellence of the ancients in certain arts, such as poetry,

---

165 Ibid., 49v. As for the Greek learning of the Paduan Dominicans, Medici, Vielmi, and Barbavara would provide Greek script in their readings with some frequency. Sisto Medici’s *Stromata* show his attempts to learn Hebrew and Greek, though more study is needed to determine how far these studies might have taken him. Vielmi’s knowledge of Greek was not entirely satisfactory to him; indeed, he sometimes regretted having to leave Crete, where his understanding of the Greek language would have attained a very high level. See Maccarinelli, “Commentarius,” 13, 26.

166 Contarini, “Epistolae,” 402.
rhetoric, music, astronomy, and expertise in painting and sculpture, and he mentioned Homer, Virgil, Demosthenes, Cicero Ptolemy, Euclid, Apelles, and Lysippos.\textsuperscript{167} He was quite impressed with the achievements of the ancients in music; he noted especially how the princes of the musical discipline developed the precepts of sound and distinguished the Lydian from the Phrygian modes, giving rise to “a grave and masculine music, not theatrical and effeminate,” as seen in the spectacles of Medici’s time. Did this confirm those who asserted the superiority of antiquity to “our age”? Medici’s principal argument for rejecting the superiority of the ancients was the following: “the divine nature that moves all things, which also is the principle of all things even according to Aristotle, was by no means a step-mother for us if it was a true mother for them; nor was she less liberal to us than them in the largesse of her gifts.”\textsuperscript{168} It was important for man to give the effort necessary to the cultivation of good arts. The support of the state was also important: “Grant an Augustus and a Maecenas, and immediately Virgils and Horaces will be born.” Indeed, this greater cultivation of the arts and support from the powerful was already bearing fruit in Medici’s day, such as the Church of San Marco (\textit{D. Marci Templum}) in Venice and St. Peter’s in Rome, along with the great cathedrals of Milan and Florence. Secular structures such as the Doge’s Palace in Venice, as well as those of the Roman Pontiffs, the Duke of Urbino, and the Prince of Trent were also worthy of admiration. “These buildings,” Medici stated, “are in no way inferior to those of the ancients.” Even more interesting was his reference to the artists of his age, Michaelangelo Buonarotti and

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 403-04.  
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 404. Recall the discussion of nature as mother or step-mother in his recollection of Leonico’s intervention at the banquet of Pietro Bembo.

The artistic productions of these men from Medici’s day were certainly comparable to those of Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Phidias, and Praxiteles—“nay rather,” he continued, “the [moderns] made such things that, if the greatest artists of that age were awakened, they would be stupefied by the great number of inventions and by the absolute nobility of the arts.” Even in music, which elicited Medici’s high praise for the ancients earlier in the letter, his contemporaries put up some impressive competition. Medici mentioned Josquin des Prez (d. 1521), Antoine Brumel (d. ca. 1512), and Adrianus Petit Coclico (d. ca. 1562). He also remarked upon the fact that new instruments had arisen in the past century.

Medici addressed fields other than the fine arts. Rulers such as Charles V, Francis I, and even the Ottoman emperors, Selim I and Suleiman the Magnificent, matched the Greeks and Romans in wealth, armies, and the extent of their domains. Modern rulers had sent ships to a New World. Of course, Medici did not have a vision of linear progress in politics. He believed that France did not flourish in the sixteenth century as it did under Charlemagne nor did Rome as under Augustus. The frequent devastations of barbarian peoples had dealt Rome many blows. “This is the vicissitude of all things,” Medici wrote, “the unstable wheel of Fortune now raises this one and then forces down that one.” As for educational institutions, there was no doubt that “the ancient gymnasia are surpassed by ours because now the most celebrated interpreters of Sacred Theology were present who

---

169 Medici’s loyalty to his native city is worthy of note.
170 Ibid., 405.
171 Ibid., 406-07.
were not present at that time before heavenly wisdom was made known to man through the Son of God. Orpheus and Linus only stuttered.” He mentioned the gymnasia of Athens among the Greeks, of Paris among the French, and of Padua among the Italians. As he later summarized, “many princes, nobles arts, and erudite men of this age, especially those mindful of sacred things, have either surpassed antiquity or at least are its equal without controversy.” Medici believed that Christianity made the institutions of higher learning superior to those of the ancients.

This defense of Medici’s own time in comparison to the ancients was matched by Vielmi’s and Barbavara’s favorable comparisons of the scholastics to the Church Fathers. Vielmi most frequently referred to those detracting from scholastic theology as “antiquarians.” They would not recognize any achievement in theology after the Patristic era. After mentioning the achievements of the Church Fathers and medieval theologians like Bede and Bernard of Clairvaux, Vielmi acknowledged the veneration owed to antiquity. Vielmi argued, however, that many who came after the Fathers should also be honored by the Christian commonwealth. As Plato praised the Greeks who increased and illuminated the arts and studies that they received from the barbarians, so must the Christian world acknowledge that the scholastics “had built a sure home” for the “theology in the writings of the Fathers,” which had been “dispersed in letters to their friends, their polemical writings against pagans, Jews, and heretics, and their

172 Ibid., 408. Figures such as these were called theologians by Aristotle in the Metaphysics.
173 Ibid., 415.
174 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 19v, 21v, 36v, 37v.
explanations of the Holy Bible.” Vielmi argued that the scholastics brought order to the ancient Christian theological tradition by treating all theological matters methodically. The Fathers had not used this sort of method, an approach that revealed the relationships among all of the parts of Christian wisdom. According to Vielmi, it was John Damascene (d. 749) who was the first theologian to collect and organize the Patristic writings, setting them into four books, because he realized that reading all the works of the Fathers was, invoking Hippocrates, a “lengthy task” and “life was short.” About four-hundred years after the composition of Damascene’s *On the Orthodox Faith*, Peter Lombard composed his *Sentences*, also in four books, which “so copiously and clearly summed up all of theology that, though he seemed to imitate Damascene, he was the one who gained the name ‘Master,’ which no one protested.” Not too long after the composition of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, William of Auxerre, Albert the Great, and Alexander of Hales published their *summae*, which were even better ordered than the work of the Lombard, though written in imitation of it. “The last of all,” Vielmi said, “was St. Thomas, who wrote his illustrious *Summa theologiae* with the most certain order, the most beautiful method, and the most subtle skill in discussing these matters.” “Without any controversy,” he asserted, Aquinas “took the palm from the ancients and from all of those who followed them in this literary genre and, as all of the most erudite confess, he summarized our sacred doctrine.” This notion of method and order in theology—that which would soon come to be referred to as “systematic”—is the key point for Vielmi in

---

175 Ibid., 13r.
176 Ibid., 14r.
177 Ibid., 14v.
his defense of scholasticism. While the Fathers were the Church’s “impregnable towers” and “most excellent teachers,” it was only with the scholastics that the Christian commonwealth “received a full and well-formed theology,” where the “immense ocean of the ancient Fathers was channeled by their industry into confined limits.” For this reason, according to Vielmi, the scholastics have been admired and given a place of honor in the Catholic Church. They brought order to the teachings of the Church Fathera on Scripture.

Gianambrogio Barbavara presented a similar narrative during his year of lectures on Lombard’s Sentences. He sought to defend the Master of the Sentences from certain attacks. Barbavara supported the Lombard by placing him within a narrative of the development of Christian theology. The letters and occasional writings of the Fathers were the foundation of orthodox Christianity, but these writings lacked method and order. Not until John Damascene was theology organized according to a proper method. Barbavara made the important point that only scholastic theology was amenable to pedagogical practice. In contrast to this methodical theology, Barbavara offered a rough sketch of the different types of early Christian literature. Some Church Fathers wrote about ceremonies, rituals, and practices, particularly the ancient popes from Clement of Rome to Damasus I (d. 384); others, such as Origen, Chrysostom, and Ambrose, wrote to educate the Christian people. Several of the Church Fathers explained the obscure

---

179 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 15r.
180 This whole discussion occurs on Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 1r-2v.
passages in the prophets and evangelists and thus mirrored the ancient practices of the synagogue. There were others who set out to call pagans from “superstition” and the “profane worship idols” to faith in “God and Jesus Christ, the Savior.” In these ranks were counted Tertullian, Eusebius, Cyprian, Lactantius, and Arnobius of Sicca. Barbavara concluded with those Christian writers who defended the faith against Jews and heretics.

Barbavara’s objective was to underscore that, despite the various times and reasons for writing, it took centuries to bring order to these diverse genres. It was not until the work of John Damascene, An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, written in the first half of the eighth century, that a Christian theologian brought together the “dispersed parts” and “formed them into the single likeness of a true and complete body.” Whereas theology, Barbavara believed, was the most excellent discipline of all—he used the term “art”—this discipline did not yet have a “method” like the other disciplines. He considered Dionysius the Areopagite’s The Celestial Hierarchy to be worthy of praise, but that work was “not sufficiently accommodated to teaching.” Even Augustine, a man whom Barbavara referred to as “among the most subtle in his genius and erudition, touching on almost every topic in theology,” spent much of his energy in conflict with the heretics of his day. He wrote no works that presented the whole of Christian doctrine in a methodical way. On Christian Doctrine and On Ecclesiastical Dogmas moved in this direction, but, Barbavara responded, these works were written with a popular audience in mind, establishing certain rules for the understanding of Scripture, for the instruction of
the people, and for grasping the principles of the “theological art” rather than laying out the subject itself.

Barbavara marveled that it took so long for someone to organize (componere) and arrange (dirigere) theology. Damascene’s arrangement had four books that dealt, in succession, with the Trinity, creation, Christ, and what Barbavara referred to as “miscellanies,” such as the sacraments, relics, images, antichrist, and the resurrection. The eastern Father’s work suffered, though, from its scantiness and narrowness in treating theological dogmas. But the first cultivators of any discipline, Barbavara said, always had such difficulties. Nevertheless, theology’s breadth did not come across clearly, and these four books did not bear much fruit. Only after four hundred years was Damascene’s example followed by Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris. He skillfully gathered the opinions of the ancient fathers on the faith, illuminated obscurities in their writings, and harmonized those points where they contradicted each other. He enriched and expanded Damascene’s theology so that future generations would hail the Lombard as their Master, an ornament of the Latin Church, and set aside Damascene. Latin Christians received the Lombard as the real founder of the school of theology. Barbavara argued that Peter chose particular Church Fathers for his special guides and that he chose them for their appropriateness to the topic that he was treating: Augustine and Hilary for the Trinity; Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose, and a few others on creation; the African Fathers and Roman synods on grace and free will; and so on. Barbavara did not deny that Damascene was a model, but Peter Lombard not only improved upon Damascene in his method but also corrected some of Damascene’s
theological errors. The eastern doctor neglected the issue of original sin, and there was some meagerness in his discussion of the Church’s seven sacraments. Barbavara rightly pointed out that these “errors” had, in fact, given occasion to contemporary theologians to doubt whether these were the ancient beliefs of the Church. Because of these improvements on what had come before, Peter Lombard’s authority reigned for centuries in the schools. Barbavara observed that he could name over two hundred commentators on the *Sentences*. Among these commentators, Barbavara believed the foremost (*princeps*) clearly to be Thomas Aquinas.  

Vielmi’s perspective on a certain sort of progress after the scholastics ordered the theology of the ancient Fathers provides an appropriate conclusion to this discussion. This discussion bears out his complex, though generally sympathetic, attitude to the major concerns of the humanist movement. Vielmi could assent to the notion that the Paduan Thomists had a role to play. Thirteenth-century theology, even the achievements of Thomas Aquinas, did not mark an endpoint for the discipline; there can be no earthly finality to theological inquiry. Vielmi pointed to Boethius’ statement that “philosophy increases with the contradictions of those professing it.” The dialectical struggle with the opponents of Aquinas gave rise to learned defenders like Giles of Rome, Hervaeus.

---

181 See Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 3v, 5rv, where Barbavara addressed objections that might have arisen because a certain view of the progress of theology supposedly created a situation in which students thought it unnecessary to read what had come before. Indeed, the humanists charged the scholastic theologians with reading the Church Fathers and even the Bible through the medieval florilegia and collections of sententiae rather than through encountering the actual text. As Barbavara put it, students of theology read Scripture in the works of Augustine and learned the teachings of Augustine in Peter Lombard, and Peter Lombard in John Duns Scotus.

Natalis, Capreolus, and Cajetan. Vielmi said, “Through the assaults and opposition of
great men, the most excellent teaching of this doctor was day by day made much more
solid, bright, and august.” Vielmi stated that, unlike the light of the sun which is most
loved when it rises, the splendor of Thomas’ teaching increased over the centuries.

Although opponents of Thomas rose up almost immediately after his death, Vielmi
argued that, as more diligent study and reflection was given to his works, his writings
were received by almost all Catholic doctors, had become part of the curriculum in the
great European universities, and had even been translated into Greek and spread outside
of Latin Christendom. Vielmi thus recognized that Thomas Aquinas only achieved the
status of the common doctor many decades after his death. Aquinas’ position as the
standard medieval theologian and philosopher was not a product of the Middle Ages but
of the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation. These Thomists at Padua were not only
aware of the changes between the death of Aquinas and the sixteenth century but made
their own contribution to this process.

Conclusion

The triumph of humanism in Italy was profound. The extent to which these Dominican
professors of theology and metaphysics embraced substantial elements of the humanist
educational programme indicates the extent of its victory. Dominicans associated with
Padua criticized Mussato’s view of poetry in the early fourteenth century and Bruni’s

183 Vielmi, De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis, 26r.
184 Ibid., 74v-75r.
approach to Aristotle in the early fifteenth century, but much changed since then. By the sixteenth century, Thomists had almost entirely embraced humanist views of eloquence, poetry, Greek learning, and history. Renaissance Thomism does, therefore, represent a substantial shift in the history of scholasticism and is characterized by certain identifiable features.

These Thomists, though, were not just passively receiving the influence of humanism into the friary and the lecture hall. They were valued by printers for their expertise in medieval academic texts. The Dominican professors had authority in the intellectual culture of the Veneto. Their standing brought forth requests from writers to evaluate and to defend literary works like the comedies of Andrea Calmo. They accepted the humanist perspective on the limits placed on intellectual activity by the relatively primitive state of letters and learning in the thirteenth century. But they offered sophisticated views of progress between antiquity and the age of Thomas Aquinas that acknowledged the monumental achievements of the scholastic doctors. Furthermore, they clarified the progress that occurred between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Perfection was unattainable by scholars, philosophers, or theologians in this world, even Thomas Aquinas. The Renaissance Thomists at Padua believed that there was always more to do.

These Dominican theologians were certainly not hidden behind their convent walls, poring over medieval texts while ignoring the intellectual movements of their own time. Rather, they used this platform at the preeminent university in the Renaissance to articulate a form of eloquence appropriate to the theologian. Without abandoning the
achievements of the medieval theologians, this Renaissance theology could withstand the critiques of the “antiquarians” that opposed it, while incorporating much of what humanism had to offer.\footnote{For some warnings about problems with the periodization of humanism, see John Monfasani, “The Renaissance as the Culminating Phase of the Middle Ages,” \textit{Bullettino dell’Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo} 108 (2006): 172-76. His comments about medieval humanism are very perceptive.}
Conclusion

The Dominican professors of theology and metaphysics *in via S. Thomae* made major contributions to the intellectual culture at the University of Padua. They participated in and were substantially affected by the intellectual currents of their day. Like their colleagues in natural philosophy, the Dominican metaphysicians treated Aristotle’s texts without much consideration for revealed theology. They frequently made reference to the Greek commentary tradition (in new humanist translations) and were willing to criticize the Latins, even Thomas Aquinas, for errant interpretations. The Dominican professors almost universally admired Pietro Pomponazzi and the secular Aristotelians who taught at Padua, but they deepened their articulation of the relationship of Aquinas and Aristotle and of faith and reason in response to the challenges of their intellectual milieu. Like the humanists in northern Italy, the Dominican professors appreciated and could themselves employ eloquent Latin, they understood the significance of Greek learning to the progress of philosophy, and they had great admiration for the poets, the ancient pagan *vates*, who were interspersed in their lectures and published writings—along with invocations of the gods (*O dii!*).

While being part of this Renaissance intellectual milieu, these Dominicans nonetheless believed that, whatever the limitations imposed upon scholastics like Thomas Aquinas by the circumstances of the thirteenth century, the scholastics were not to be abandoned. They believed that the scholastic theologians put the teachings of the Church Fathers into a coherent order more suitable for teaching. The scholastic theologians allowed the student to grasp the shape of Christian theology without spending a lifetime
poring over the writings of the ancient Fathers. Even without the advantages provided by progress in good letters, the skillfulness of Albertus Magnus, John Duns Scotus, and especially Thomas Aquinas in interpreting Aristotle was owed admiration; these figures remained worthy guides for any student hoping to achieve order in his pursuit of theological and philosophical truth. These Dominican professors, however, should be seen as Renaissance Thomists because their devotion to the theological achievements of the thirteenth century did not entail a rejection of the scholarly and literary developments of the past couple of centuries. Indeed, these Thomists embraced much of humanism and Paduan Aristotelianism as fundamental to their own theological and philosophical efforts.

These developments within the Thomist tradition at Padua were rooted in the collegial intellectual environment of the university. Conflicts between currents and rivalries between professors certainly existed. But modern historians can get caught up in the different “-isms”—Averroism, Alexandrism, Thomism, Scotism, humanism, and so on—and interpret everything through this sort of lens. The account of the creation of the chairs of metaphysics and theology provided in this study is a story of more or less mundane institutional developments, not strongly related to any hostility between different schools. Francesco Securo was an inexpensive, well-trained metaphysician residing in the Dominican convent of S. Agostino. After the death of a great philosopher, Gaetano da Thiene in 1465, the Venetian Senate probably called upon this friar to teach philosophy. There is no evidence that the hiring of Securo was part of some programme to steel the university community against Averroism through the introduction of Thomism. Indeed, it is not clear that the teaching of Securo or the early stages of the
teaching of theology in the arts course by Thomas Penketh were conceived as the beginning of permanent professorships. And the connection of the Dominican professors teaching as part of the Paduan arts course to Thomas Aquinas was not made explicit until 1490 when Ludovico Valenza was called to the university. The 1551 creation of the chair of Sacred Scripture, often interpreted as a response to humanist frustrations with the Thomist and Scotist theologians, was actually another rather straightforward development. The Dominican professors likely initiated the effort to offer lectures on the Bible during Lent. The students and rulers of the university liked the idea, and so the Venetian Senate hired a third Dominican to teach in the arts course so that these Bible lectures could be provided without any neglect to the teaching of theology or metaphysics.

The professorships of theology and metaphysics in via S. Thomae, of Sacred Scripture, and of theology and metaphysics in via Scoti became permanent professorships that existed throughout the seventeenth and well into the eighteenth century. And the evidence shows that these professors in the arts course certainly did not exist on the fringes of the university. The intellectual engagement with their colleagues and students has already been made clear. The theologians and metaphysicians held a prominent position in evening circles and public debates.¹ Sisto Medici reported in his personal notes that the rector of the artisti and a significant number of Venetian nobles were attending his lectures.² The Dominican convent of S. Agostino needed to have a special

¹ Nardi, Saggi, 290.
² BNM cod. lat. cl. XIV MS. 62, 151r-152r.
room built because of all the students who were visiting the professors.\textsuperscript{3} The theologians were also called upon to speak to matters relevant to the whole university. When Pope Pius IV required all graduates at universities in Catholic states to profess the Roman Catholic faith, Gianambrogio Barbavara gave an official response in 1568 arguing that Jewish students were not included in this requirement.\textsuperscript{4} The general chapter of the Dominican order recognized the prominence of the professors of metaphysics and theology when they were chosen to examine student-friars—even if these professors did not have an official position in the order’s educational hierarchy.\textsuperscript{5}

Pope Pius IV’s bull actually points to one of the major missing elements in this study. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation had an impact on the intellectual activity of these Dominican friars. Most of the Dominican professors during this period attended the Council of Trent. Vielmi lectured at Padua on the importance of preaching and teaching for a bishop. Indeed, as suffragan bishop, he was the first to undertake Tridentine reforms in the city and administered the profession of faith required by Pius IV.\textsuperscript{6} Gianambrogio Barbavara worried about putting Scripture in the hands of laypeople and served as the inquisitor in Milan. The Dominicans addressed Lutheranism in their

\begin{footnotes}
\item[3] AGOP IV, reg. 31, 226r.
\item[5] Part of the reason that scholars may have overlooked these professors is the documentation related to degrees. Students from Germany, England, or the Netherlands would not have received degrees in theology from the faculty of theology created in 1363. But they probably did attend the lectures of the friar-professors as part of the general arts course.
\end{footnotes}
 lectures, albeit rather infrequently. Girolamo d’Ippolito actually wrote treatises, published posthumously, on good works and the Eucharist with *contra Zuinlgium* in the title, an exception to the widespread imprecision of simply referring to all Protestants as Lutherans.\(^7\) And though Vielmi would end up being an agent of Tridentine reform, he found himself before the Roman Inquisition, having been accused of heresy and of association with heretics.\(^8\)

But this missing element, while worthy of further research, was not central to their intellectual activity nor to their legacy. Although figures like Securo, Pellegrini, and Vielmi are unknown today, the teaching and writings of the Dominican professors at Padua did have an impact—even though much of it indirect—that went beyond the university community. For instance, Francesco Securo’s views on the major debate in the School of Padua on the problems with demonstrative regress appear in Galileo Galilei’s student notebooks on logic.\(^9\) Moreover, the important Lutheran Aristotelian, Michael Piccartus,


\(^9\) See William A. Wallace, ed. and trans., *Galileo’s Logical Treatises: A Translation, with Notes and Commentary, of His Appropriated Latin Questions on Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 172. See also ibid., 213, n. 7, where Wallace discusses incorrect spelling of Securo’s toponym (“Neritonensis”) as “Eritonensis.” See also William A. Wallace, *Galileo’s Logic of Discovery and Proof: The Background and Use of His Appropriated Treatises on Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 184-85: “Galileo begins his exposition of the demonstrative regress with five different opinions, enumerated successively as those of Aristotle’s predecessors, of the followers of Avicenna, of some moderns who follow Ugo Senensis, of Franciscus Neritonensis and his school, and of Aristotle himself [D3.3.1-5].” He might have learned about the position by way of Girolamo Balduino, *Quaesita aliquot* (Venice, 1562), 217v-218r. Note that these *quaesita* are part of a larger collection of logical treatises with continuous pagination. See also Giovanni Papuli, “La teoria del regressus come metodo scientifico negli autori della Scuola di Padova,” in *Aristotelismo veneto e scienza moderna*, ed. Luigi Olivieri (Padua, 1983), I: 231-33. See also Trombetta, *Opus in Metaphysicam*, 18v-19r. For more on the scholarly debate, see John Herman Randall, *The School of Padua and the*
cited Tommaso Pellegrini to address a controversial position in Protestant scholasticism regarding the place of God in the science of metaphysics.

The scholarly discussion of Thomas’s life, works, and reception in Barbavara and Vielmi had a much more direct influence on later discussion. Barbavara’s view that the *De regimine* was not written by Thomas Aquinas remained controversial. Vielmi’s argument about the false ascription of a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount was dismissed entirely throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but was later vindicated by modern scholarship. Vielmi’s claim about the importance of the writings of Aquinas at the Council of Trent and his approval by the popes was often quoted.

Furthermore, the important discussion of Thomas Aquinas’ Latinity in Vielmi and the authorities that he quoted also appear long after his death. The Jesuit scholar, Antonio Possevino, simply lifted a substantial part of Vielmi’s *De scriptis* to address Aquinas’ writings on the philosophy of Aristotle.

Girolamo Vielmi had the widest reception probably because he published more than the other professors of theology and metaphysics *in via S. Thomae*. His work on the first chapter of Genesis, based upon his lectures as professor of Sacred Scripture in 1570,
was quite influential. The major Jesuit theologian and philosopher, Benito Pereira, employed Vielmi a number of times in his commentary on Genesis. He used Vielmi to support his own opposition to a common interpretation of the creation of birds out of water, a view grounded in a closer reading of the Hebrew and Chaldean texts.\textsuperscript{14} Pereira also challenged Vielmi on the creation of the stars.\textsuperscript{15} The more famous Jesuit, Francisco Suárez, seems to know the conclusions of Vielmi on a few points by way of Pereira.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, the same issue regarding the creation of the birds came up in the writings of the renowned German physician, Daniel Sennert.\textsuperscript{17} Ulisse Aldrovandi cited Vielmi’s discussion of whether irritating insects would have existed before the Fall, though the naturalist seems to have been a bit frustrated by the length of Vielmi’s discourse on the matter.\textsuperscript{18} Vielmi’s views on the age of the earth were cited by the important biblical scholar, Thomas Malvenda and even by James Ussher in his notorious biblical chronology.\textsuperscript{19}

The most profound legacy, though, was Vielmi’s view, rooted in the shared vision of his Dominican teachers and colleagues, about how the thirteenth-century

\textsuperscript{14} Benito Pereira, \textit{Commentariorum et disputationum in Genesim, Tomi Quatuor} (Cologne, 1601), 64.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{17} Daniel Sennert, \textit{Operum tomus primus} (Lyons, 1656), 296.
\textsuperscript{18} Ulisse Aldrovandi, \textit{De animalibus insectis} (Bologna, 1638), 362. Other issues that brought forth references to Vielmi were the appropriateness of baptizing aquatic monsters (Michiel Boudewyns, \textit{Ventilabrum medico-theologicum} (Antwerp, 1666), 440) and some issues pertaining to the heavens in the work of the Jesuit, Adam Tanner, \textit{Dissertatio peripatetico-theologica de coelis} (Ingolstadt, 1621), 17, 169. See Edward Grant, \textit{Planets, Stars, and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200-1687} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 102, n. 73, where it is observed that Christopher Scheiner, a Jesuit, made use of Vielmi’s views of the heavens.
\textsuperscript{19} Thomas Malvenda, \textit{De Antichristo} (Lyons, 1647), 101-02. James Ussher, \textit{Chronologia sacra}, in \textit{The Whole Works}, vol. 11 (Dublin, 1654), 495. Malvenda also pointed to Vielmi’s discussions of the different assertions about when the world was going to end. See Malvenda, \textit{De Antichristo}, 119.
circumstances imposed limitations on the intellectual activity of the scholastics. His
general defense of scholastic theology found its way into the disputation on scholastic
theology of the leading Dutch Calvinist theologian, Gisbertus Voetius, and late-
eighteenth-century discussions of scholasticism.\textsuperscript{20} But not many later thinkers picked up
his subtle remarks on the deficiencies of Thomas Aquinas and his age. Indeed, on at least
two occasions, scholars using Vielmi’s defense of scholastic theology rejected his
conclusion that Aquinas did not know Greek. One of his successors at Padua, Serafino
Piccinardi, quoted Vielmi quite extensively in his works but claimed that, like Cato the
Elder, Aquinas learned Greek in his old age.\textsuperscript{21} Furthermore, Vielmi’s biographer and
editor in the middle of the eighteenth century, Serafino Maccarinelli, said that Vielmi was
wise not to make a strong judgment on this point, which was so controversial even
decades later.\textsuperscript{22}

The much more famous Dominicans who taught at the University of Salamanca
like Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, Domingo Bañez, and their Jesuit rivals—
most famously, Francisco Suárez—seem not to have taken Vielmi’s approach. In their
defenses of scholasticism, Soto and Melchior Cano did acknowledge the need for renewal
in scholasticism, but they did not put as much emphasis on Greek learning and even Latin
elegance as some of the Paduan Thomists. As Soto wrote in the preface to his Tridentine
work, \textit{De natura et gratia}, “I frankly confess that I did not organize my studies in a way
that would allow me to improve my languages with the greatest care. And if the option

\textsuperscript{20} Gisbertus Voetius, “De theologa scholastica,” in \textit{Selectarum disputationum theologicarum pars prima}
(Utrech, 1648), 27; Juan Bautista Gener, \textit{Theologia dogmatico-scholastica}, vol. 1 (Rome, 1767), 59.
\textsuperscript{21} Serafino Piccinardi, \textit{Deapprobatione doctrinae S. Thomae} (Padua, 1683), 364.
\textsuperscript{22} Maccarinelli in Vielmi, \textit{De divi Thomae Aquinatis doctrina et scriptis} (1748), 97.
were presented again, under the present circumstances, I would prefer to be given a spirit
that merely resembles a Christian rather than eloquence that is most like that of Cicero."[23]
The unwillingness to point out the limitations in the age of Thomas Aquinas seems to
extend to metaphysics as well. Tommaso Pellegrini and the far more famous
metaphysician, Francisco Suárez, both agreed that God was the preeminent part of the
subject of metaphysics; the traditional Thomist explanation that God was the principle
but not part of the subject of metaphysics, being in common, was unsatisfactory to both.
But while the Paduan Dominican, Pellegrini, frankly pointed out the errors of Aquinas,
Suárez attempted to offer a charitable gloss of Aquinas to make Aquinas’ position more
acceptable.[24] The same sort of thing occurred in theology. Professors at Salamanca like
Domingo Bañez argued for the harmony of the ancient Church Fathers with Augustine on
the matter of predestination.[25] Gianambrogio Barbavara candidly admitted that the
Fathers before Augustine believed that predestination was based upon God’s
foreknowledge that some would respond well to grace. The Paduan Dominican even

---

[23] Domingo de Soto, De natura et gratia (Paris, 1549), 2v-3r. Now, he did go on to say, “But I do not
disavow that the expertise in and the cultivation of languages, which is more diligently focused upon in our
day, is of great use for understanding the holy books. Augustine reminds us of this in Book II of De
doctrina christiana.” Nevertheless, his final remarks about humanism in the preface were the following:
“the cultivation of languages, the contempt of scholastic theology, and the uproar of heresies began among
the same people [the Germans], at the same time.” See the words of one of his successors, Bartolomè
Medina, in Expositio in Primam Secundae Angelici Doctoris D. Thomae Aquinatis (Salamanca, 1582), at
the very end of his dedication to Serafino Cavalli (sig.*4v): “Sane volui D. Thomam imitari, virum plane
divinum, et in omni disciplinarum genere singularem, quem omnes vere et solide docti venerantur, et
Graecia ipsa admirat; qui non voculas sectari didicit, et unde graeca, vel latina verba sint deducta
curiosius exquirendi curam habuit, sed in res cognitione dignissimas omne studium et operam contulit.
Scribant, rescribant latinissimi homines et Ciceroniani quantum et quam polite velint Latinie, Graece, et
Hebraice; adde etiam, si vis, Arabic et Chaldaice: eorum monumenta, si cum D. Thomae scriptis
comparentur, verba erunt, et merae nugae, non res seriae.”
<http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/michael.renemann/suarez/suarez_dm1.html>. See esp. 1.1, nn. 19-
20.
criticized Thomas Aquinas for his effort to gloss the other Church Fathers as in agreement with the Augustinian position.\textsuperscript{26} The humanists had their effect on the Paduan Thomists. Renaissance Thomism in Padua seems to be distinct from Thomisms elsewhere. They are far less famous mainly because they did not publish the great commentaries on the \textit{Summa theologiae} that contributed to the lasting influence of the School of Salamanca.

Close examination of the Dominican professors \textit{in via S. Thomae} at Padua has challenged almost every prediction made about their academic activity and their role at the university. Their engagement with Renaissance Aristotelianism and humanism was unexpected; scholars guessed that they would be reading little but the medieval textbooks and that they would remain foreign elements—on the fringes—in the dynamic intellectual milieu of the University of Padua. Our assumptions about the history of scholasticism, the religious orders, and Roman Catholic theology are misleading, and I have little doubt that similar discoveries would be made in other university centers. Indeed, it should be obvious that well-trained scholars chosen to teach at one of the most important intellectual centers in Europe would be up-to-date with the intellectual trends of the previous several decades.

The findings of this study are surprising because scholars continue to associate scholasticism with the Middle Ages, and this is a vestige of Protestant and Enlightenment narratives of the history of theology and philosophy. Perhaps the contributions of Vielmi, Barbavara, and the other Paduan Thomists do not simply raise difficulties but might

\textsuperscript{26} Ambrosiana MS. D 366 inf., 82r-83r.
suggest a solution. A scholar like Vielmi was a part of a major Renaissance intellectual center and was an expert in medieval theology and philosophy. Is it possible that his perspective on how to think about the relationship of scholasticism and the Renaissance might be one worthy of deeper consideration? So many grand stories about the development of scholasticism since the sixteenth century have linked this method inextricably with the medieval cultural backwardness challenged by the Renaissance humanists or the papal hegemony rejected by the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Vielmi thought of the deficiencies of medieval scholasticism in Latin style, Greek learning, and even narrow Aristotelianism as accidental or external to scholasticism itself. For him, it was easy to extract the scholastic method and even the major achievements of schoolmen like Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Duns Scotus, and others from the limitations of the age in which they lived and worked.

It is obviously difficult not to be somewhat skeptical of Vielmi’s perspective because of his profound devotion to Thomism. Nevertheless, though it barely touched the Anglophone historiographical tradition, Vielmi’s basic vision was shared by others like Tommaso Campanella and Pierre de Villemandy. And, by way of conclusion, consider the perspective of a young Gottfried Leibniz who saw the revival of learning as liberating scholasticism from the features that prevent it from actualizing its potential. In the preface to his edition of Mario Nizzoli’s *De veris principiis*, Leibniz, like Vielmi, said that the “rude” aspects of scholasticism are not attributable to the scholastic enterprise but to the broader intellectual, cultural, and social context: “Since there was very little civil and philosophical history, and the best writers could be read only in very bad translations,
and since, lacking the benefits of printing, their works had to be copied out at very great expense...it was no wonder that learning frequently often sank to a very low level, and it has to be considered a miracle that true philosophy was held in such esteem.”  

27 The consequence of such a view would seem to be that, once these handicaps were removed, even scholasticism could be reformed with the other disciplines. And this is just what Leibniz believed: he stated that Melchior Cano and Paolo Cortese were part of the restoration of the discipline of scholastic theology, while the Dominican, Chrysostom Javelli, the Jesuit, Pedro Fonseca, and the lay Italian Aristotelian, Agostino Nifo, were all part of the restoration of Aristotelian metaphysics. A narrative like Leibniz’s—or Vielmi’s, for that matter—would have led us to expect rather than to be surprised by what Renaissance Thomists were doing at the University of Padua.

---

27 See Gottfried Leibniz’s opening dissertation to his edition of Mario Nizzoli’s De veris principiis et vera ratione philosophandi contra pseudophilosophos (Frankfurt, 1670), sig.d3r-sig.d4. See also the prolegomena of Hugo Grotius’ De iure belli et pacis (Amsterdam, 1720), xxxiii: “Qui his successerunt Scholastici, quantum ingenio valeant, saepe ostendunt: sed in infelici et artium bonarum ignara saecula inciderunt: quo minus mirum si inter multa laudanda, aliqua et condonanda sunt. Tamen ubi in re morum consentiunt, vix est, ut errent: quippe perspicaces admodum ad ea videnda, quae in aliorum dictis reprehendi possunt: in quo ipso tamen diversa tuendi studio laudabile praebent modestiae exemplum, rationibus inter se certantes, non, qui mos nuper adeo literas inquinare coepit, convitiis, turpi foetu impotentis animi.”
Appendix:

Preliminary Outline of Girolamo Vielmi’s Printed Lectures on Genesis

Lectio 1: Introductory material on authorship.

Lectio 2: Discussion of commentators and Genesis 1:1, particularly renderings of beginning and created.

Lectio 3: Genesis 1:1: Matters relating to the word God (such as its plurality in the Hebrew) as well as heaven and earth.

Lectio 4: Genesis 1:1: Matters relating to God’s creation of all things out of nothing as well as God’s liberty and power. He also discussed the question of whether the world’s non-eternity could be demonstrated.

Lectio 5: Genesis 1:1: The date of Creation.

Lectio 6: Genesis 1:1: The duration of the world.

Lectio 7: Genesis 1:1: The creation of the angels.

Lectio 8: Genesis 1:2: Matters relating to the Hebrew words translated inanis et vacua by Jerome. Vielmi discussed whether this stage of Creation should be considered to be Chaos. He addressed the nature of the “Spirit of God” mentioned in this passage.

Lectio 9: Genesis 1:3: Matters relating to the words of God (dixit) in the act of creation and the nature of created light.

Lectio 10: Genesis 1:3: The difficulty of light existing without the sun.

Lectio 11: Genesis 1:4-5: Matters relating to the divine “vision” and God’s recognition of the goodness of creation as well as considerations of the Hebrew words for evening and morning.

Lectio 12: Genesis 1:5: The evening and morning.

Lectio 13: Genesis 1:6-8: The firmament.

Lectio 14: Genesis 1:6-8: The heavenly waters.

---

1 The purpose of this outline is to indicate the pace of the lectures and the broad subject matter addressed in each lecture. This outline does not reflect the immense erudition on display in Vielmi’s lectures, as he interpreted the text of Genesis 1 in light of ancient Greek and Roman literature, Rabbinic commentary, scholastic debate, and contemporary scholarship.

Lectio 16: Genesis 1:11-13: Matters relating to the earth bringing forth plants as well as the issues surrounding the creation of poisonous plants, thistles, and so on. He also addressed questions regarding minerals. He dealt with the third day of Creation without revisiting at length the passages referring to the evening and morning, God’s recognition of these things as good, and so on (v. 13).

Lectio 17: Genesis 1:14a: Creation of the heavenly bodies. He also dealt with arguments of figures like Augustine that the Creation took place in one moment.

Lectio 18: Genesis 1:14a: The nature and movement of the heavenly bodies.


Lectio 20: Genesis 1:14a: More discussion of the animation of the heavenly bodies. He also addressed the time of their creation.

Lectio 21: Genesis 1:14b-19: The office of the heavenly bodies. He took this opportunity to oppose certain astrological views. He discussed the sun and moon in more detail.

Lectio 22: Genesis 1:20-21: Creation of sea creatures and birds, including considerations of the Hebrew words translated by Jerome as producant aquae, reptile, and so on.

Lectio 23: Genesis 1:22-23: The blessing of these creatures. He also discussed their ability to reproduce themselves.

Lectio 24: Genesis 1:24-25: Creation of land animals. He addressed their capacities for sensation and reproduction as well as the issue of spontaneous generation.

Lectio 25: Genesis 1:26a: Creation of human beings. He took up the significance of the passage’s use of the plural, faciamus, in reference to the Trinity.

Lectio 26: Genesis 1:26a: The image and likeness of God.

Lectio 27: Genesis 1:26a: More discussion of the image of God as well as Adam’s original gifts.

Lectio 28: Genesis 1:26b-28: Human dominion and the creation of the woman as well as issues pertaining to the command to “increase and multiply.”
Lectio 29: Genesis 1:29: Food for living things. He also discussed dominion over other human beings.

Lectio 30: Genesis 1:30-31: More discussion of human dominion as well as whether the nature of the beasts changed at all after human sin. He also addressed the reason for the number of the days of Creation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAUP</td>
<td>Archivio Antico dell’Università di Padova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGOP</td>
<td>Archivio Generale dell’Ordine dei Predicatori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrosiana</td>
<td>Biblioteca Ambrosiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF, MdP</td>
<td>Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Medico del Principato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPd</td>
<td>Archivio di Stato di Padova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAV</td>
<td>Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Biblioteca Civica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNM</td>
<td>Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOP</td>
<td>Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHLMP</td>
<td>The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRP</td>
<td>The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI</td>
<td>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHI</td>
<td>Journal of the History of Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOPH</td>
<td>Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QSUP</td>
<td>Quaderni per la storia dell’Università di Padova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIb</td>
<td>Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

Consulted Archives and Unedited Sources

Belluno

Biblioteca Civica, MS. 505.

Florence

Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Medico del Principato, MS. 10, 1170.

Milan


Padua

Archivio Antico dell’Università di Padova, MSS. 651, 660, 661,

Archivio di Stato di Padova, Corporazioni soppressa, S. Agostino, MSS. 260-63.

Rome

Archivio Generale dell’Ordine dei Predicatori IV, regs. 9, 12, 15, 20, 21, 29, 31

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. MS. 4633.

Venice

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. lat. cl. I MS. 45; cod. lat. cl. VI MS. 39; cod. lat. cl. XIV MSS. 58-66.

Vicenza

Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, MSS. 1305, 1378.
Primary Sources and Works before 1815


Adam, Melchior. Vitae eruditorum cum Germanorum tum exterorum. Frankfurt, 1705.


Bacon, Francis. *Of the Advancement and Proficience of Learning or the Partitions of Sciences*. Oxford, 1640.


Balduino, Girolamo. *Quaesita aliquot*. Venice, 1562.


———. *Scholastica commentaria in secundam secundae: de fide, spe, et charitate*. Salamanca, 1584.


Beato, Gianfrancesco. *Dubii nuper renati an Liber Praedicamentorum Aristotelis metaphysicus sit, an logicus...resolutio*. Venice, 1543.

———. *In librum secundum Metaphysicae interpretatio: in qua, certis rationibus ostenditur, eum librum ad Metaphysicam omnino non pertinere, sed esse proemium secundi libri de auscultatione Physica*. Venice, 1543.

———. *Quaesita in quo Averois ostendit quomodo verificatur corpora Coelestia cum finita sint, et possibilia ex se acquirant aeternitatem ab alio*. n.d. (after 4 September 1542).


Cajetan. *Aureum opus de ente et essentia divi Thome aquinatis cum commentariis fratris Thome Cajetani sacre theologoe doctoris et fratri Armandi eiusdem ordinis doctoris clarissimi*. [Venice], 1496.


Capreolus, Johannes. *Defensiones theologie in quattuor libris sententiarum...Thome de Aquino*. Venice, 1514-1515.

Cavriolo, Elia. *Delle historie bresciane*. Brescia, 1585


Contarini, Giambattista. *De episcopis ad Istrianas ecclesias ex ordine praedicatorum assumptis dissertatio*. Venice, 1760.


———. *Notizie storiche circa li pubblici professori nello Studio di Padova scelti dall’Ordine di San Domenico*. Venice, 1769.


———. *Oratio de humanae industriae praestantia*. Venice, 1555.


Pasquali, Alberto. *De optimo philosophorum genere libri duo*. Venice, 1532.


Piccartus, Michael. *Isagoge in lectionem Aristotelis, hoc est, Hypotyposis totius philosophiae Aristotelis*. Altdorf, 1660.


Quaini, Girolamo. *De sacra historia oratio*. Padua, 1572.


Razzi, Serafino. *Istoria degli huomini illustri...del sacro ordine degli Predicatori*. Lucca, 1596.


———. *Orationum volumen secundum*. Padua, 1591.


Simplicius. *Commentarii in libros de anima Aristotelis*. Translated by Giovanni Faseolo. Venice, 1543.

Spina, Bartolomeo, *Opulscula [!]*. Venice, 1519.


*Statuta Dominorum Artistarum Achademiae Patavinae*. Padua, c. 1600.


Doi aurei opuscoli o vero tractati de lo angelico doctore sancto Thomaso de aquino...dechiarati e vulgarizati dal Reverendo Professore de sacra Theologia Maiestro Guasparre da Perosia del sacro ordine de li predicatori. Perugia, 1510.


In libris de generatione et corruptione Aristotelis clarissima expositio: nuperrime recognita; innumeris castigata erroribus, ac proprio vultui restituta, cum duplici textuum translatione, Antiqua scilicet, et Petri Alcyonii elegantissima nuperrime addita. Venice, 1549.

Logica. Venice, 1496.


Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, Doctoris Angelici, opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P. M. edita. Vol. 4: Pars prima summae theologiae a questione I ad


Trithemius, Johannes. De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis. Cologne, 1546.


Vala, Giorgio. De expetendis et fugiendis rebus. Venice, 1501.


Vernia, Nicoletto. Contra perversam Averroys opinionem de unitate intellectua et de animae felicitate quaestiones divine nuper castigatissime in lucem prodeuntes. Venice, 1505.

———. Perutilis et subtilis Questio de philosophiae naturalis subjuncto. Leipzig, c. 1495-1500.

Vielmi, Girolamo. *De divi Thomae Aquinatis doctrina et scriptis...libri duo, nunc primum annotationibus illustrati. Accedunt Orationes duae, habitae in Gymnasio Patatavino, altera Apologetica, altera De optimo episcopi munere*. Brescia, 1748.

———. *De D. Thomae Aquinatis scriptis...libri duo, addita est, eiusdem quoque Oratio Apologetica, qua obtrectatoribus eius, Theologiae, quam Scholasticam, vocant egregie occurritur*. Padua, 1564.

———. *De sex diebus conditi orbis liber*. Venice, 1575.


Secondary Sources


Henninger, Mark G. “Hervaeus Natalis (b. 1250/60; d. 1323) and Richard of Mediavilla (b. 1245/49; d. 1302/07).” In *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle*


Kessler, Eckhard. “The Intellective Soul.” In CHRP.


Lampertico, F. “Materiali per servire alla vita di Giulio Pace, giuresconsulto e filosofo.” *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere, ed arti*, ser. 6, 6 (1885-1886): 735-68.


———. “Metaphysics,” In CHRP.


“Antonio Trombetta and Agostino Nifo on Averroes and Intelligible Species: A Philosophical Debate at the University of Padua.” In *Storia e cultura al Santo di Padova fra il XIII e il XX secolo*, edited by Antonino Poppi. Vicenza, 1976.


**Malpangotto, Michela.** “Graphical Choices and Geometrical Thought in the Transmission of Theodosius’ *Spherae* from Antiquity to the Renaissance.” *Archive for History of Exact Sciences* 64 (2010): 75-112.


**Marangon, Paolo.** *Alle origini dell’aristotelismo padovano (sec.XII-XIII).* Padua, 1977.

**Mariani, Ugo.** *Il Petrarca e gli Agostiniani.* Rome, 1959.


———. Il Cardinale Marino Grimani (Rome, 1960)


———. “I maestri reggenti dello studio generale domenicano in Pavia a cavalla del Quattro e Cinquecento (1478-1516).” AFP 72: 253-319.


Vasoli, Cesare. “The Renaissance Concept of Philosophy.” In CHRP.


———. “Traditional Natural Philosophy.” In CHRP.


Wippel, John F. “Essence and Existence.” In CHLMP.


