

# Wonder and Devotion

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*Imagery and Sacred Objects in Dominican Writing,*

1215-1311

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# Abstract



The Dominican friars in northern France produced an extensive programme of theological writing, notable both for its erudition, and its all-encompassing treatment of varied theological topics. Despite an abundance of Byzantine patristic material discussing the veneration of images, Thomas Aquinas produced a very slight discourse on imagery in his *Summa Theologiæ*. This thesis argues that the traditionalist nature of Dominican scholarship made the friars reluctant to afford religious imagery a greater space than the Latin Church Fathers had allowed. However, Dominican preaching and devotional writing discussed imagery at much greater length. The *Nine Ways of Prayer* describe St. Dominic's habit of prayer before images of Christ crucified, and the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine shows several miracles involving images. In writings for novices and laity, the friars discussed imagery at far greater length.

This thesis aims to trace categorisations of sacred objects in Dominican writing, seeing how the image was treated differently from relics, the idols of 'pagans', and the consecrated Eucharist. This methodology combines historiographies of popular piety and spirituality. Such a method allows the historian to see how scholastic methods of categorisation seeped into popular piety. The thesis argues that because images depicted human emotion, religious imagery, especially crucifixes that showed Christ dying, they were useful to promoting Dominican piety. This interior piety which focussed on interior penitence and the emotional focus on Christ's Crucifixion was a trend promoted by the friars, and was a fundamental departure from the more practical nature of lay piety. Relics and the Eucharist could be 'spiritualised', evoking personal

devotion as well as working marvellous wonders. Images were physical matter, concrete objects which reminded the devotee that Christ had taken human form. This materiality marked the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy after the Fourth Lateran Council against various dualist heresies. In this manner, the image was vital both to Dominican piety, and to the Order's doctrinal mission.

# Acknowledgements



In the time since I first considered this project, the thesis here has undergone all manner of unexpected developments, departing from a general love of medieval art history for a long voyage through the seas of Dominican thought. Those waters have been sometimes turbulent and at other times calm, but I have many people to thank for their help and companionship on this journey.

All thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Chris Jones, whose demand for rigour and precision helped me to find my feet in the labyrinth of possibilities posed, introducing me to the writings of Bernard Gui and the historical writings of André Vauchez, John Bossy and Barnard Hamilton. In directing me toward the world of conferences and articles, he and the university were of the utmost generosity in helping with not only the historian's craft, but in the everyday practicalities of academic survival. The same is to be said for my secondary supervisor, Dr. Richard Bullen, whose art-historical perspective gave me unexpected directions to help layer the thesis. I should also thank Tim O'Sullivan at the University of Canterbury Library for an entertaining afternoon navigating the *Patrologia Latina* on microfiche. The Interloans staff at the library deserve special mention for their wizardry in satisfying even the most capricious of requests – and the most vital.

I extend my gratitude to the University of Canterbury for the generous scholarships that supported this thesis. The John Connal Scholarship in 2012 helped me to fund my Honours year and first year of Masters, together with a Summer Research Scholarship that Chris directed me towards in late 2013. And in order to show as well as to tell, I would like to thank to staff at The

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Finally, I would like to thank my parents and sister, Melissa, for their love and support in some very trying times. And finally another one who remains nameless, who I see very little of, but was there the entire way.

# A Note on Sources



The version of the *Legenda Aurea* used in this thesis is William Granger Ryan's translation. This is an assemblage of tales from multiple versions. In manuscript tradition of the *Legenda*, different manuscripts of contained different selections of text. Therefore, publications of the Latin text have faced the task of deciding which tales ought to be given space. Graesse's 1801 edition sought to assemble a selection of 'typical' entries, and serves as the basis for the Granger Ryan translation. Maggioni's 1998 edition sought to offer a version based on the earliest manuscripts, attempting to trace the roots of the *Legenda* while ignoring the organic evolution of the various sources over time.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, no modern edition of the *Legenda Aurea* is of any one Latin text or a translation of one, but a selection that favours some manuscripts over others. Any use dependant on translations must be aware of this caveat, and in doing so is especially aware of the *Legenda's* textual record.

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<sup>1</sup> N. De Barros Almeida, 'Authorial Intention in the Middle Ages: An Overview Based on the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus De Voragine', *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, vol. 14, no. 4, 2014, pp. 11-19



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**Figure 2:** Veronica’s veil (*sudarium*), Psalter-Hours of Yolande of Soissons. c. 1275-85, French, illumination on parchment, MS M.729, fol. 15r. Last accessed 12/03/2016. © Pierpont Morgan Library.

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# Introduction



## *Prologue: 'Only True Piety Can Make It Effective'*

In Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, the Roman commander Volusian approaches a woman called Veronica. He asks where he might find Jesus Christ, a healer whose powers might cure the Emperor. Christ has been condemned to death, but Veronica tells an astonishing story.

“When the Teacher was going about preaching and I, to my regret, could not be with him, I wanted to have his picture painted so that when I was deprived of his presence, I could at least have the solace of his image. So one day I was carrying a piece of linen to the painter when I met Jesus, and he asked me where I was going. I told him what my errand was. He asked for the cloth I had in my hand, pressed it to his venerable face and left his image on it. If your master looks devoutly upon his image, he will at once be rewarded by being cured.”

“Can this image be bought for gold or silver?” Volusian asked. “No,” Veronica replied, “only true piety can make it effective.”<sup>2</sup>

Jacobus de Voragine makes no further comment on his story, but the anecdote sets out his mission. He was one of the Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, an Order of men sworn to

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<sup>2</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, Chapter 53, ‘The Passion of Our Lord’, in *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, vol. 1, trans. W. Granger Ryan, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 212

poverty, chastity, and humility. Unlike monks, however, their mission was in the world, to preach, root out heresy, and to teach Christian beliefs as defined by the Fourth Lateran Council. The tale of Veronica and her linen cloth embodies all of these principles in motion.

As ascetics in the world, mendicants, like the Franciscans, Augustinians, and Carmelites, the Dominicans had to preach among the people. This required familiarity with popular images of Christ and his saints. These images were already understood to be sacred objects, like relics or the Eucharist. As physical objects, they implied that Christ truly had a physical body, had died, and risen from the dead, unlike the ghostlier Christ of the Cathar heresy that the Dominicans aimed to eradicate.<sup>3</sup> However, the popular mentality of the time was to approach images, relics, or the Eucharist in an almost magical sense, for cures or favours, without the more spiritual aspect of worshipping Christ.

In this narrative, Jacobus de Voragine has retold the tale of Veronica and her cloth; an image which had the presence of Christ and which worked miracles. The tale of Veronica had taken multiple forms. The story had its roots in earlier legends about Berenice, the woman with an issue of blood, who touches Christ's cloak and is cured.<sup>4</sup> Her cloth will heal others in the future, an image whose powers are signified by its mystical origins.<sup>5</sup> However, Jacobus de Voragine subtly

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<sup>3</sup> B. Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, London, Holmes and Meier, 1981, p. 26. A dated but concise overview of the logistics of doctrinal surveillance.

<sup>4</sup> This episode appears in all three synoptic Gospels, in Mark 5:21–43, Matthew 9:18–26 and Luke 8:40–56. For the sake of reproducing the nuances of the Latin Vulgate in the English text, the Challoner-Reims translation will be used throughout this thesis, in A. M. Kinney (ed.), *The Vulgate Bible*, 6 vols., Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2011

<sup>5</sup> E. Kuryluk, *Veronica and Her Cloth: History, Symbolism and Structure of a 'True' Image*, Cambridge, MA, Basil Blackwell, 1991, p. 91

reworks the tale. Veronica wants the image not for a cure, but for the ‘solace’ that Christ had given her. She counsels Volusian not to expect a miracle: he must truly believe before miracles can happen. In this manner, the Dominican friar has given the image of Christ a new significance: it has great power to work wonders, the traditional role of images, but it is a devotional keepsake first and foremost, a stimulant for devotion.

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This thesis examines the ways in which the Dominican friars discussed imagery in scholastic, hagiographical, and devotional texts. It argues that the conservative nature of Dominican scholarship made the friars reluctant to discuss religious imagery in theological texts. However, Dominican preaching and devotional writing discussed imagery at much greater length. The *Nine Ways of Prayer* describe St. Dominic’s habit of prayer before images of Christ crucified, and the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine show several miracles involving images.<sup>6</sup> The thesis argues that because images depicted human emotion, religious imagery, especially crucifixes which showed Christ dying, they were useful in promoting Dominican piety. This piety focussed on interior penitence and the emotional nature of Christ’s Crucifixion, in contrast to the more practical nature of lay piety, which sought material favours in the present. Relics and the Eucharist could be ‘spiritualised’, evoking personal devotion as well as working marvellous wonders. Images were physical matter, concrete objects which reminded the devotee that Christ had taken human form. This materiality marked the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy against various dualist heresies after the Fourth Lateran Council. In this manner, the image was vital both to

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<sup>6</sup> ‘The Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic’, trans. S. Tugwell, in S. Tugwell (ed.), *Early Dominican Writings*, Island Road, Ramsay, NJ, Classics of Western Spirituality, 1982, pp. 94-5

Dominican piety and to the Order's doctrinal mission. In devotional as opposed to formally theological texts, the friars discussed imagery in far greater depth.

It is important to investigate the role of imagery in the Dominican Order because it fills an important gap in the cultural history of medieval popular piety. The Byzantine Greeks developed a distinctive theology of icons as mediators of sanctity, yet the relic-based piety of the Latin West did not have a similar cult until the flowering of image-piety in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Within Dominican preaching, discussions of imagery show the foundations of that later piety. The image is never entirely detached from the relic in its ability to heal and work miracles, but it is associated with miracles around desecration that speak of a more personal piety embodied in the ability of portraiture to show emotions. In this manner, the Dominicans helped to lay the foundations for an extraordinary development in piety. It was both more personal and more sensory than what had been experienced in the Latin West in previous centuries. A study of the roots of such piety in the founding century of the Order of Preachers helps to tell to an important chapter in the story both of the friars themselves, and of the wider Roman church.

The thesis will focus on northern France, with a particular emphasis on the Île-de-France, where the University of Paris hosted much Dominican scholarship.<sup>7</sup> While a major source will be the *Legenda Aurea*, a major compilation of Dominican hagiography with Italian origins, it will focus on the reception of the tales told, rather than their composition. The chronological period will span from 1215, the year of the Fourth Lateran Council, to the opening of the Council of Vienne in 1311, thus investigating the friars in their formative century. Although the Fourth Lateran

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<sup>7</sup> I. P. Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 50-1

Council predates the founding of the Order by a year, it set much of the tone for the early Dominican Order. The period produced an extensive repertoire of theological writing, notable both for its erudition, and its all-encompassing treatment of varied theological topics.<sup>8</sup> Within these texts, the thesis traces categorisations of sacred objects in Dominican writing, seeing how the image was treated differently from relics, the idols of ‘pagans’, and the consecrated Eucharist.

### *Fragmented Historiographies*

Although they played a fundamental role in the religious and cultural life of thirteenth century Europe, there has been very little written about the Dominicans by way of a general scholarly history. Specifically, three general histories of the Order of Preachers were written in English in the course of the twentieth century, the most recent in 1990. Other religious Orders, such as the Benedictines and Franciscans, have generated histories which offer a comprehensive overview of the Order. David Knowles, writing in the 1940s, produced an extensive overview of the various religious Orders in England between the fifth and sixteenth centuries, with a focus on the followers of St. Benedict and St. Francis.<sup>9</sup> Since Knowles’s magisterial work, the Boydell Press’s *Monastic Orders* series has produced volumes on the Benedictines, Cistercians and Franciscans. It also produced a book on such smaller Orders such as the Carmelites, Augustinians, Sack, and Pied Friars.<sup>10</sup> These individual volumes have discussed the development of the distinct ethos of

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<sup>8</sup> Wei, *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris*, p. 218

<sup>9</sup> D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, three vols., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1948

<sup>10</sup> The full *Monastic Orders* series consists of J.G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, London, Boydell Press, 2011; J. Burton, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* London, Boydell Press, 2011; M. Robson, *The Franciscans in the Middle Ages* London, Boydell Press, 2009; F. Andrews, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages* London, Boydell Press, 2015

each Order.<sup>11</sup> This analysis of the pastoral and devotional world of different groups of monks, nuns, and friars reveals the day-to-day existence that informed their doctrinal and intellectual missions.<sup>12</sup> Within this series, however, a general history of the Order of Preachers, accessible to the non-scholarly reader yet of a scholarly standard, has yet to be written.<sup>13</sup>

The reason for a lack of recent general histories of the Dominicans has yet to be written is a puzzling one, but may well be related to a paradigm of personality. St. Benedict and St. Francis are respectively associated with cloistered monasticism and mendicancy, and their well-known biographies form hagiographical ciphers for these two monastic movements.<sup>14</sup> Within this paradigm, saintly personalities form the framework for Orders, which is why the fiery St. Bernard of Clairvaux gave prominence to the Cistercian reform movement.<sup>15</sup> In comparison to the exploits of Benedict, Bernard, and Francis, St. Dominic never had a cult of personality.<sup>16</sup> Afraid of being accused of greed, the friars refused to cover St. Dominic's tomb in silk.<sup>17</sup> This narrative detail may have been intended to enhance Dominic's personality rather than efface it, but according to David Haseldine's analysis of the *Libellus* of Jordan of Saxony, the cult of St. Dominic

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<sup>11</sup> Andrews, *The Other Friars*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, p. 255

<sup>13</sup> At the time of writing, the eight-hundredth centenary of the Order in 2016 may still yet produce a volume for the *Monastic Orders* series.

<sup>14</sup> J. Leclercq, 'Introduction' in G.R. Evans (ed.), *Bernard of Clairvaux: Selected Works*, New York, Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 13-14

<sup>15</sup> Tugwell, 'Introduction', in *Early Dominican Writings*, p. 7

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 'St. Dominic', p. 51

<sup>17</sup> 'The Canonization Process of St. Dominic: Testimony of Brother Ventura (August 6)' on Tugwell, p. 69

was based around his moral example, rather than the miracles worked by his relics.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of causes, the Dominicans did not have an animating personality that seized the popular imagination.

Despite the relatively low profile of St. Dominic, Dominican historiography has taken time to emerge separately from the figure of Dominic. J.B. O'Connor's history, written for the seven-hundredth anniversary of the Order in 1916, notes that 'there is no work in English treating... the biography of St. Dominic and the genius and achievements of his institute'.<sup>19</sup> Although outlining the history of the Order in the most celebratory language, it is still largely a biography, claiming that a Dominican history without St. Dominic was 'like the play of Hamlet with the Dane left out'.<sup>20</sup> Later biographies of Domingo de Guzmán attempted to promote his cult among a devout Catholic readership and contemporary Dominican novices, starting with Bede Jarrett's spirited 1924 *vita*.<sup>21</sup> By 1937, R.F. Bennett had progressed on to a more expansive view, exploring the Order's formative century in the light of the background ecclesiastical reform and millenarian hopes against which Dominic had worked.<sup>22</sup> Bennett also explored the decadence of the Order, arguing that love of money and breaches of chastity were being recorded as early as the mid-

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<sup>18</sup> D. Haseldine, 'Early Dominican Hagiography', *New Blackfriars*, vol. 75, no. 885, September 1994, p. 407.

<sup>19</sup> J.B. O'Connor, *Saint Dominic and the Order of Preachers*, 1916, reprint New York, Aeterna Press, 2015, p. 17

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>21</sup> B. Jarrett, *Life of St. Dominic*, 1924, 2nd edition, reprint New York, Doubleday, 1995, p. 5

<sup>22</sup> R.F. Bennett, *The Early Dominicans: Studies in the Thirteenth Century*, Russell and Russell, New York, 1937, pp. 28-30

1200s, suggesting that Dominic's vision barely lasted thirty years.<sup>23</sup> An even more expansive view of the Order appears with William Hinnebusch's 1966 history, which was more informed by the mentality following the Second Vatican Council.<sup>24</sup> This approach aimed to 'update' twentieth-century Orders to contemporary conditions in light of their original ethos.<sup>25</sup> This approach offered a broader scope to the sweep of Dominican history, promulgating a narrative of cyclical purity, decadence, and reform, the three respective reforms being the Council of Trent, the post-revolutionary reordering of the nineteenth century, and the Second Vatican Council.<sup>26</sup> Hinnebusch's approach is problematic in that the narrative of original purity and subsequent decline lacks nuance. Eamon Duffy's study of pre-Reformation English piety and Ralph Gibbons's examination of the French church in the eighteenth century both cast doubt on the trope of ossification that Hinnebusch unquestioningly accepts.<sup>27</sup> Hinnebusch's work fills an important void, but has had no successor of equal scope for some decades. Benedict Ashley's 1990 history

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 146-51

<sup>24</sup> W. A. Hinnebusch, *The Dominicans: A Short History*, New York, Dominican publications, 1975, p. 2

<sup>25</sup> It is arguable that *ressourcement*, the movement in early-twentieth century Catholicism to return to patristic approaches to the theology and morality, filtered into the approach to religious life. A useful overview of this movement is found in G. Flynn and P. D. Murray (ed.), *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013

<sup>26</sup> *Perfectae Caritatis*, or the *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*, encouraged both the suppression of 'obsolete' practices in everyday life and a return to the original spirit in which various religious orders were founded. It is most likely for this reason that Hinnebusch and Ashley are so preoccupied with searching for evidence of 'flexibility' among the primitive Dominicans, because it would harmonise both the return to Dominican roots with the penchant for 'updating'. A commentary on the text of *Perfectae Caritatis* is found in 'Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life' trans. F. Wulf, and R. Wells, in H. Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 2, London, Burns and Oates, 1968, pp. 333-70

<sup>27</sup> R. Gibbons, *A Social History of French Catholicism, 1789-1914*, London, Routledge, 1989, pp. 3-8. See also E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-1580*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1992

also maintains the modernising spirit, combining Hinnebusch's trope of corruption and renewal with a desire to update Dominican practice to contemporary standards. 'It is unlikely', he wrote, 'that we will go back to Office at midnight, woollen underwear, and flagellation...that would mean living the thirteenth century in the twenty-first'.<sup>28</sup> This is at variance with Mulchahey and Bonniwell's discussion of Dominican ritual as fundamental to the mendicant spirit, and not as mere accretions.<sup>29</sup> In a similar spirit of respect for tradition, G.R. Galbraith's history is at pains to stress the sophistication and flexibility of the Dominican constitutions in their formative century. He argues that these constitutions combined monastic rigour with an ability to deal efficiently with the demands of urban ministry.<sup>30</sup> In addition to these sweeping panoramas, with their preoccupation with present-day concerns, there have also been a number of histories that offer more detailed approaches to various epochs of Dominican history.

Just like the figure of Dominic, biographies of individual Dominicans are well-represented. If many early Dominican histories were mere footnotes to hagiographies, the biographical genre has at least allowed a point for historians to enter into the social life of Dominicans, shedding light on details of daily life. Thomas Weisheipl's biography of Thomas Aquinas, written for the six-hundredth anniversary of the Angelic Doctor's death, is a dispassionate secular biography that sifts

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<sup>28</sup> B. Ashley, *The Dominicans*, Collegetown, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1990, p. 235

<sup>29</sup> The injunction that the friars memorise the Hours of the Virgin, discussed below, was integral to their daily prayer in addition to the Divine Office. See W. Bonniwell, *History of the Dominican Liturgy, 1215-1945*, New York, Josef F. Wagner, 1945, p. 134

<sup>30</sup> G.R. Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order: 1216 to 1360* London, Longmans, 1925, pp. 187-90

through miracles and outlandish tales.<sup>31</sup> However, Weisheipl also offers a panorama of life among the friars in Aquinas's time, as well as the panorama of scholasticism.<sup>32</sup> The search for Greek texts and efforts for rapprochement with the Byzantines is noted, although perhaps exaggerated by the ecumenical concerns of the 1970s.<sup>33</sup>

More recent works have attempted to excavate Dominican thinkers who were initially controversial but later forgotten. A very recent example is the collection of essays edited by Chris Jones investigates the thought of John Quidort of Paris, a scholastic of the 1290s whose theory of royal authority challenged the notion of universal jurisdiction by Popes and Emperors.<sup>34</sup> Other examples treat Dominicans as part of a panorama of the surrounding society. This may be seen in Jean Dunbabin's biography of Pierre de la Palud, the aristocratic friar who became the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Dunbabin's approach uses Pierre's life as a lens through which to study a variety of social and intellectual topics, from crusading politics to sexual ethics in scholasticism. Bernard Guenée's biography of Bernard Gui is part of a history not of Dominican friars, but of prelates. A noted inquisitor, Gui merits mention due to his holding of the see of Lodève.<sup>35</sup> However, Guenée's work is useful for its attempt to break from the then-prevailing *Annales*

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<sup>31</sup> J. A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas of Aquino*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974, pp. 9-10

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-96

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-6

<sup>34</sup> B. Koch, 'Against Empire? John of Paris's Defence of Territorial Secular Power Considered in the Context of Dante's and Marsilius of Padua's Political Theories' in C. Jones, (ed.), *John of Paris: Beyond Royal and Papal Power*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2015, pp. 43-6

<sup>35</sup> B. Guenée, *Between Church and State: The Lives of Four French Prelates in the Late Middle Ages*, trans. A. Goldhammer, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 37-70

school by focussing on individual personality and initiative to balance the *Annaliste* principles of surrounding environment. The four interlocking biographies between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries show how the ecclesiastical environment evolved, while providing a personal touch. These treatments transcend the impersonal nature of much historiography, offering hints of personal experience to the larger picture of ecclesiastical tradition. Perhaps these biographies bring Dominican historiography full circle, from treating St. Dominic's life as a cipher for the entire Order of Preachers to using more obscure lives to explore the nuances of everyday life.

In addition to these sweeping, monumental studies, there have also been a number of smaller-scale histories that offer more detailed approaches to various epochs of Dominican history. Social and cultural histories have steadily developed beyond the constraints of biographical writing to offer both broad panoramas and intimate niche studies. As part of a treatment of mendicancy in general, C.H. Lawrence discussed Dominican practices and institutions concisely in *The Coming of the Friars* in 1975.<sup>36</sup> Lawrence moved beyond the familiar treatments of inquisitorial activities as done by Bernard Hamilton and Malcolm Lambert.<sup>37</sup> Instead, Lawrence drew attention to the Dominican alteration of the Compline service. The monastic office said before sleeping, the Dominicans transformed Compline into a more theatrical liturgy that appealed to lay sensibilities.<sup>38</sup> It culminated in the solemn procession of the friars down the nave to the altar of

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<sup>36</sup> C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society*, London and New York, Longman, 1994, pp. 227-8

<sup>37</sup> M. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA, Blackwell, 1992, p. 151

<sup>38</sup> Lawrence, pp. 81-2

the Virgin, signing *Salve Regina*, thereby involving the laity in devotion to Mary.<sup>39</sup> In drawing attention to these Dominican practices, Lawrence balances better-known Franciscan devotionals such as nativity scenes. By contrast, in her history of the rosary, a well-known devotion promoted by the Dominicans, Anne Winston-Allen acknowledges the interest that the Dominicans took in the devotion.<sup>40</sup> She neglects, however, to examine the mendicant praxis which might have led to an interest in this particular prayer.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, Bonniwell's study of Dominican liturgy shows how a fundamentally monastic liturgy was transposed into a parish environment, not only in Compline, but the severe *horarium* of midnight Matins which was nonetheless brief to allow time for study.

This still largely textual treatment has been recently complemented by a more tactile heuristic. Joanna Cannon's study of art and architecture in Dominican communities in central Italy combines the precepts of Humbert of Romans (1200-1277) with surviving artefacts to recreate the liturgical and devotional environment of the friars in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Cannon's main objective was to examine how the Dominican commitment to apostolic poverty was reconciled with increasingly opulent church interiors.<sup>42</sup> Her main argument was that

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<sup>39</sup> The Dominican Rite of Compline is treated more fully by F. Gorton, 'Compline in the Dominican Rite: 1256 –1949', Unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Indiana, 1949

<sup>40</sup> A. Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, pp. 66-7

<sup>41</sup> According to Winston-Allen, Thomas Esser in the 1880s claimed that it was a case of 'mistaken identity' where a Carthusian, Dominic of Prussia, preached the rosary in the early 1400s. This theory was disputed when in 1977 Andreas Heinz found textual evidence of such devotions going back to 1300. On this basis, Winston-Allen appears to conclude that there is little warrant to investigate Dominican connections to the devotion any further. See Winston-Allen, pp. 16-17

<sup>42</sup> J. Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches: Art in the Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2013, pp. 18-19

Dominican art served both to bring mendicant devotion to the illiterate laity and to stimulate devotion among the friars themselves. However, Cannon's work is also useful for its gathering of the archaeological and textual record that survives from the Roman Province, showing Dominican tendencies such as the placing of an image of the Virgin on the right side of a chancel screen, or the relative absence of narrative compared to churches of the Franciscans.<sup>43</sup> Dominican imagery tended more toward abstract contemplation than engaging narrative.<sup>44</sup> These fragments from the Italian experience show a distinctive Dominican piety. It was part of the mendicant practice of following Christ's life, developing personal devotion and contrition, but in a more remote, intellectualised manner.

Dominican studies have been investigated within the subfields of biography and studies of scholasticism, including the general history of medieval thought by the Benedictine David Knowles. However, specifically *Dominican* intellectual patterns have been covered in depth by Michèle Mulchahey. She connected the Dominicans' inherent conservatism in intellectual matters – focussed on the Latin Church Fathers rather than the fashionable humanist studies of the twelfth century – with their focus on memorising liturgical texts. The Hours of the Virgin, a popular liturgical office, had to be committed to memory by novices, thus grounding knowledge of the Psalter within the devotional framework of Marian piety.<sup>45</sup> This particular body of work helps us to further understand Claire Waters' writings on late Medieval preaching, examining the subtle

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<sup>43</sup> Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches*, p. 82

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358-9

<sup>45</sup> M. M. Mulchahey, *First the Bow is Bent in Study: Dominican Education before 1350*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998, pp. 100-1

textual and ceremonial distinctions between orthodox and heretical preaching.<sup>46</sup> In many of these areas, details of Dominican habits of piety are situated within partially relevant topics. However, they have not yet been synthesised into a scholarly general history.

Despite the absence of an accessible, up-to-date general history of the Dominicans for the lay reader, therefore, one might nonetheless find a variety of scholarly histories that encompass a variety of heuristics. They offer a scholarly foundation for this thesis, which will explore the role of the image in Dominican scholarship and piety in the Order's foundational century.

### *Combining Methodologies*

The methodology for this thesis combines two historiographical arguments to examine the role of imagery in Dominican piety. Caroline Walker Bynum and André Vauchez have both examined aspects of popular piety from different angles. The thesis combines both approaches to see how the Dominicans sought to transform popular piety.

Caroline Walker Bynum examined how popular piety centred on physical objects teased out the implications of the Incarnation without necessarily offering a coherent theology. Walker Bynum argued that because God took human form in the incarnation, physical matter was believed to have an associated sanctity.<sup>47</sup> This approach had already been offered by Vauchez. However,

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<sup>46</sup> C. M. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures: Preaching, Performance and Gender in the Later Middle Ages*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, p. 61

<sup>47</sup> C. Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*, New York, Zone Books, 2011, p. 30. Although her analysis is largely concerned with the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Caroline Walker Bynum gives full consideration to the thirteenth-century roots that were vital to the flowering of late Medieval piety.

Walker Bynum unfolded the complete implications of this mentality in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The desire for sacred objects was not simply an affirmation of belief in the Incarnation, but an effort to grapple with what it meant. Is a miracle just a sign of hope in Christ, or a way of rewarding faith or banishing doubt as the scholastics taught? Or is it somehow a repository of miraculous power in its own right?<sup>48</sup> Bleeding Hosts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, divergent parts of the body of Christ. It was by no means a coherent piety. The schoolmen were often uneasy with what seemed to be no more than a coarse materialism which seemed to have little to do with faith in Christ.<sup>49</sup> Incarnational piety, according to Walker Bynum, could be problematic on the scholarly level, but remained compelling in everyday life.

André Vauchez, meanwhile, focussed on how material piety was refined and redirected by scholastic interpretations. In Vauchez's analysis, the Dominicans were not so much engaged in spreading a 'deeper' Christianity as much as a different form of Christianity. This form of piety placed more emphasis on the cosmic victory of Christ than the healing miracles and favours that God and His saints granted when supplicated.<sup>50</sup> Vauchez develops his argument in his analysis of the Greater and Lesser Litanies in the *Legenda Aurea*, where an exorcising ceremony is interpreted to form a spiritual battle and victory, rather than merely a fertility rite connected to the harvest.<sup>51</sup> In this analysis, the gap between educated and oral Christianity was bridged by a spiritualising

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<sup>48</sup> Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 34

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33

<sup>50</sup> See also J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 11

<sup>51</sup> A. Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, trans. D. E. Bornstein, Notre Dame, IN, University of Notre Dame Press, 1993, pp. 137-8

hermeneutic.

This thesis aims to combine both approaches. Both Walker Bynum and Vauchez aim to compare and contrast a practical folk piety with the more spiritual approach of educated clerics. Walker Bynum focuses on both the appeal and the contradictions in the popular desire for sacred objects, which defied scholastic attempts at categorisation.<sup>52</sup> Vauchez shows how the two differing pieties could be reconciled by applying a spiritualising hermeneutic to the popular conception of wonders. However, they apply their respective methodologies to different aspects of popular piety and educated efforts to represent them. Walker Bynum is chiefly concerned with sacred objects, and Vauchez with the enactment of rites and liturgy. This thesis proposes to apply Vauchez's spiritualising hermeneutic on the liturgy to Walker Bynum's field of enquiry in holy matter. If Jacobus de Voragine was interested in offering a devotional, moralising interpretation of liturgy in one chapter of the *Legenda Aurea*, then his approach would surely be evident in other chapters. Walker Bynum expands on Vauchez's approaches to material, but does not apply his specific liturgical insights on the nature of piety. If this methodology was applied to the world of objects that is Walker Bynum's main area, then an orderly categorisation which defied formal scholastic treatises will become evident in other fields of Dominican writing – hagiography and devotional writings.

The sources for the thesis draw on a span of thirteenth-century Dominican writing. The issues of using the *Legenda Aurea* have been discussed above. Of the remaining texts, Aquinas's writings show both the importance of Dominican writing and some of the cautions to be exercised in using

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<sup>52</sup> Walker Bynum, pp. 24-5

them. In its systematic handling of information and citation of scripture, Aquinas's writing in the *Summa Theologiae*, *Contra Errores Graecorum*, and *Collationes in decem praeceptis* show the concerns of the Dominicans as preachers, as well as the mode in which they cited scripture and the Church Fathers. However, Aquinas's ease with Aristotelianism was the exception rather than the rule, and he should by no means be assumed to be a typical Dominican author. Bernard Gui's *Inquisitor's Guide*, by contrast, is marked by post-Lateran orthodoxy rather than scholastic disputation, and reflects the concerns with enforcing basic rules of faith, rather than debating subtler points. The *Nine Ways of Prayer* of St. Dominic, written by a Bolognese author between the 1260s and 1280s enjoyed circulation across Dominican houses across Europe, and offer a widespread understanding of the praxis of prayer before imagery. Although the illuminations of the *Nine Ways* in the MS Ross. 3 in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana offer perhaps the clearest illustrations of these prayers, they are Spanish and were drawn in the later fourteenth century, placing them outside the scope of this thesis. For this reason, the thesis will refer to the text of the *Nine Ways*, but not its familiar illustrations.

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The first chapter analyses theological discourses on imagery. It argues that the Dominican friars were the vanguard of efforts by the Fourth Lateran Council to categorise sacred objects and the veneration due to them. To provide context, the chapter will refer to the development of Dominican modes of piety which focussed on the body of Christ through an emotional lens, with reference to the *Nine Ways of Prayer* attributed to St. Dominic. However, despite the arrival of new ideas about imagery from Byzantium and a growth in image-related piety, the role of imagery

in the church as a whole compared to relics and the Eucharist was still relatively minor. Therefore, this chapter will first consider the fragmented mentions of sacred objects in the documents of the Fourth Lateran Council, the Second Council of Lyon, and the Council of Vienne, as well as in the early years of the Dominican Order, which originated in this vital epoch of reform.<sup>53</sup> Secondly, it will look at Dominican scholarship on the role of imagery. Although non-Dominicans such as the Franciscan Bonaventure considered the relationship between divine illumination of the human mind and the objects created by that mind, Dominican schoolmen limited themselves to discussing the perceived *functions* of imagery. Thirdly and finally, it will ask why this area of theological discussion fell outside the field of Dominican scholarship.

From the theological discussions in the first chapter, the second chapter will shift to Dominican hagiographical writings for preaching to the laity. The chapter will argue that the Dominicans were aware that imagery offered a more personal focus for piety than reliquaries. Furthermore, it will argue that image-miracles in the *Legenda Aurea* stressed morality and devotion, rather than practical favours. The chapter will examine the lay view of images and relics as part of a broad spectrum of healing miracles, which did not differentiate between sacred objects as long as they served a practical purpose. Unlike relics, however, image miracles are replete with narratives involving desecration. The final part of the chapter will analyse the desecration narratives, and argue that because of their more 'personal nature' images were associated with the new, personalising piety which the friars were attempting to introduce. Images therefore were part of

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<sup>53</sup> N. P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume One: Nicaea I to Lateran VI*, Georgetown, Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 1990, pp. 233-6

a transition from an older, practical lay piety to a new style of personal, emotional piety brought by the Dominicans.

After discussing the image in terms of Christian materiality, the third chapter will shift to the contrast: non-Christian immateriality. It will be argued in this chapter that the *idol* or non-Christian image played an important symbolic role in how the Dominicans defined the frontiers of Christianity. The chapter will analyse both discussions of heretical worship in the *Inquisitor's Guide* of Bernard Gui and miracles involving idolatry in the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>54</sup> These narratives show non-Christian worship as both the opposite of the official Church and as subverting and parodying aspects of the Church's ritual, creating an 'anti-Church'. It buttressed both the traditional belief that pagan 'gods' were in fact demons, and served the Dominican objective of uprooting heresy. This chapter will underline the deep affinity between the orthodoxy taught by the Dominicans, and the emphasis on the material world.

The fourth chapter will contextualise Dominican discussions of materiality by grounding them in the emotional aspect of imagery in relation to the Eucharist. The image and the Eucharist might seem to have opposite spiritual qualities. Examining discussions of the Body of Christ in the *Legenda Aurea*, it will build on the earlier observation in the second chapter that although images were subject to desecration miracles, unlike relics, they shared this narrative theme with Christ's body. The chapter will begin by examining the doctrine of transubstantiation and its role in the thirteenth-century Church reform that the Dominicans were committed to promulgating. Images

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<sup>54</sup> Bernard Gui, *The Inquisitor's Guide: A Medieval Manual on Heretics*, trans. Janet Shirley, New York, Ravenhall Books, 2006, p. 39

represented what was not present, while the Eucharist contained the presence of Christ while seeming to be only bread. However, the Dominicans used imagery to draw attention to the nature of the Eucharist. By depicting the sacrifice re-presented at Mass, the crucifixes closed the gap between the appearance of bread and the substance of the Host. Next, it will examine discussions of the suffering of Christ and the attack on his body in the *Legenda Aurea*, connecting the Passion entry to a tale of image-desecration in the entry on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This discussion will be contextualised in discussions of crucifixes in the *Legenda*, discussing how the depiction of the Crucifixion in churches conveyed the reality of the Sacrifice of the Mass to the congregation as it occurred. Finally, the chapter will discuss the early version of the Mass of St. Gregory in the *Legenda* to see how these themes of Christ's suffering were applied to the consecrated Host, and its connection to efforts to promulgate the doctrine. This analysis will complete the discussion of Christian materiality in Dominican writing by grounding its focus on materiality in the most essential aspect of Lateran Christianity – Christ's Incarnation and Crucifixion.

These four chapters will show how hagiography and devotional writing articulated the Christianity of the Dominicans in their formative years. In hagiography and devotional writing, the friars articulated a Christianity of materiality, but added a new emotional emphasis. For the Dominicans, orthodoxy could not only be declared, but seen, touched, and experienced in the everyday world.

# I: *'Litterae Laicorum?'*: The Image in Dominican Scholarship



## *Introduction*

In the years after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 the fledgling Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, found themselves at the crossroads of a deep reform of the Roman Church. As preachers and teachers, the Dominicans occupied an important place in synthesising the beliefs and practices of the faithful laity with the desire of higher churchmen and intellectuals for more harmonious practices. In their devotional practices, the Dominicans gave a particular role to devotional images such as crucifixes and realised the potential of imagery for decorative, pedagogical, and devotional functions. However, compared to detailed discussion on the essence and operation of sacraments and the workings of relics, other sacred objects, the friars gave a minor, partial role to imagery.

This chapter will argue that the Dominican friars were the vanguard of efforts by the Fourth Lateran Council to categorise sacred objects and the veneration due to them. This was because, despite the arrival of new ideas about imagery from Byzantium and a growth in image-related piety, the role of imagery in the church as a whole compared to relics and the Eucharist was still relatively minor. This chapter will first consider the fragmented discussion of sacred objects in the documents of the Fourth Lateran Council, the Second Council of Lyon, and the Council of Vienne. The early development of the Order will be considered in the context of the aims and reforms of the councils.

Having examined the institutional blueprint that the Dominicans worked from, this chapter will then look at Dominican scholarship on the role of imagery. Although non-Dominicans such as the Franciscan Bonaventure considered the relationship between divine illumination of the human mind and the objects created by that mind, Dominican schoolmen limited themselves to discussing the perceived *functions* of imagery. There are many discussions of the image as decoration and as a means of teaching in Dominican sources, which draw at multiple points on similar Byzantine discussions. However, a fully developed theology of the ‘icon’ did not evolve in the Latin West in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>55</sup>

Thirdly and finally, this chapter will ask why the discussion of imagery fell outside the field of Dominican scholarship. The reasons for this development are to be found in the contradictory approaches used by the Dominicans towards varied fields of knowledge. As the Order was filled with men who knew the rediscovered philosophy of Aristotle and its tendency toward detailed, synthesised philosophical analysis, the friars continued to utilise an older approach to knowledge. As a result, a mentality existed where the image, used by the Dominicans in their mission to teach the laity and exhort them to a devout life, was analysed in fragments. It never reached the depth employed by the Byzantine Greeks, even as the theologians of the latter supplemented the libraries of the friars.

The evolution of the Order’s approach to imagery is rooted in the development of the reforming ethos that gave the Order a unique position in the thirteenth-century church, both in popular

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<sup>55</sup> In its discussion of images, the thesis will make very limited use of the word ‘icon’. Although applied in recent years to all kinds of religious and indeed secular images (as in the very widespread term ‘iconic’), it seems fitting only to use it to describe the sacred images used in Byzantium, with the specific theology of St. John of Damascus and its very precise canons. The term ‘icon’ was not unknown in the Latin West, not least in the very name of Veronica, ‘true icon’ or ‘*vera icona*’. However, the term ‘icon’ still carries the connotations of the icon as venerated in the Eastern Churches.

piety and in intellectual life. The fragmented Dominican approach to religious imagery must be understood in its effort to straddle these two worlds.

### **I) Imagery in the Conciliar and Early Dominican Texts**

The Dominicans must be understood within the context of ecclesiastical reform, and in particular the General Councils which set the tone of reform. The General or Ecumenical Council, where churchmen gathered to discuss doctrinal or disciplinary crises in the Church, was a central organ of reform in the thirteenth century. Called by the Pope and undertaken under papal aegis, the Council clarified doctrine, pronounced anathema ‘heretics’ of dissenting opinion, and outlined clear laws which would resolve crises of other kinds. The Fourth Lateran Council, the First and Second Councils of Lyon and the Council of Vienne offer strong disciplinary canons and a clear initiative to regulate ecclesiastical life in order to uproot heresy. These offer a glimpse of the Church’s priorities for reform, and the means by which they undertook it. The attitudes of the Councils and their implicit discussions of images in various guises offer the logistical background of Dominican reform. However, before embarking on the conciliar treatment of imagery, a cursory examination of imagery in the Latin Church prior to 1215 offers the context for both the conciliar and Dominican approaches.

By the thirteenth century, the image had achieved only a small niche in the public and private worship of the Roman Church. This could be traced to the aftermath of the Iconoclast controversy between 754 and 787, which had condemned images as idolatrous.<sup>56</sup> As the Iconoclast

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<sup>56</sup> J. Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons*, Princeton, Princeton University Press 2011, pp. 58-9

controversy progressed, the Latin West took two positions on this highly charged issue. Gaul and Italy, being far away from Islam, did not have the urgent circumstances which fostered Iconoclasm. It was in the western reaches of the Byzantine Empire, in the Greek mainland and southern Italy, that the iconodules, the supporters of images, survived.<sup>57</sup> Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604) offered a defence of images - they were, he said, the *biblia pauperum*, the Bible of the Poor. For those who could not read or write, the viewing of paintings in churches taught them their faith in the absence of the Gospels. However, the eventual publication of the Nicene decrees in the West was a fraught process. Due to the poor quality of the translation, Charlemagne was convinced that the Byzantine Council had promoted idolatry, and began his own campaign against images. His defence, the *Libri Carolini*, invoked the best scholarship available to counter corrupt Greek understandings of mere pictures.<sup>58</sup> With Charlemagne's death, the crisis finally subsided; the image had little outstanding opposition, but had missed the opportunity to achieve the larger cult it had been afforded in the East.

The role of paintings and statues in the West was discussed under a contradictory set of authorities. On the one hand, there was the example left by Pope Gregory the Great. The image was an instructor, key to Christianising the uneducated. There was no critique that the image was idolatrous in itself. On the other hand, however, there was the puritanical critique. Pictures were decorations, and in the literate private space of the monastery, their role was a distraction. Beautiful objects could turn the mind away from God, not into polytheism, but into sensuality.

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<sup>57</sup> W. Otten, 'The Texture of Tradition: The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology' in I. Backus (ed.), *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, vol. 1, New York, E.J. Brill, 1997, pp. 4-5

<sup>58</sup> R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 482

For St. Bernard of Clairvaux in the early twelfth century, statuary had no place in the cloisters of Cluny.<sup>59</sup> Abelard, Bernard's lifelong rival, who was more open to such worldly pursuits as dialectic, was also hostile to the image. 'The ornaments for the oratory should be necessary, not superfluous, and clean rather than costly,' he wrote to Héloïse:

Nothing but a wooden cross should be set up on the altar there, though if the sisters like to paint the statue of the Saviour, that is not forbidden. But the altars must have no other statues.<sup>60</sup>

Here, crucifixes were expedient devices. They bore the image of the Saviour, but more importantly, could contain fragments of the original Cross, the highest of relics. In this case, the stricture on ornamentation could be relaxed. If imagery had a utilitarian value for the illiterate, then those with letters and Latinity had no need for it. This position would begin to change as the Fourth Lateran Council, with its ideals of a more disciplined Church, considered the means for bringing the mass of ordinary believers into the correct relation to the sacred.

### *The Fourth Lateran Council*

Of the four general councils surveyed, the Fourth Lateran Council exerted the most ongoing influence, shaping the aspirations and themes of thirteenth and fourteenth-century ecclesiastical policy. In particular, the churchmen of the era were concerned with the eradication of heresy and the reform of morals. Every heretic was excommunicated who did not hold to the statement of

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<sup>59</sup> U. Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1986, pp. 7-8

<sup>60</sup> Peter Abelard, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. B. Radice, London, Penguin, 1974, Letter 7, p. 219

faith opening the canons, and the 'pride' of the Greek Church was also reproved.<sup>61</sup> The clergy where subjected to a special discipline. The council also aimed to punish clerical incontinence and drunkenness, keep them away from 'immoral' entertainments such as taverns and street theatre, and penalise failure to offer services.<sup>62</sup> This disciplinary act was evidently the spearhead of the council's strategy - both dualistic heresies and lay immorality would be fought by the edifying public face of a reformed clergy. It proposed the broad schema of ordering the institutions of the Church, making the sacred – persons and objects set aside for God – offer an orderly system which would be credible to the broad mass of ordinary Christians.

Within the Fourth Lateran Council, images are not explicitly referenced. There is, however, mention of other sacred objects. Most notably, the doctrine of transubstantiation was affirmed at the highest level, thus allocating the Eucharist to the highest rank of the sacred order, the 'Sacrament of the Altar'.<sup>63</sup> The Eucharist, like the Chrism, was to be 'kept locked away in a safe place', to prevent theft for purposes 'horrible or impious'.<sup>64</sup> Annual communion was mandated, with confession beforehand.

For Michael Camille, Suzanne Lewis, and Aden Kumler, following the thought of Michel Foucault, it was the Fourth Lateran Council which prompted a flood of educational paintings and sculptures.<sup>65</sup> The requirement of annual confession 'institutionalised the conscience', making

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<sup>61</sup> *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, pp. 233-6

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244

private thoughts a public concern. Canon 21, which commanded such annual penance, was publicly proclaimed in didactic, moralising wall-paintings, and illustrations in *bibles moralisées*.<sup>66</sup> This theory does not, however, take into account the sparseness of confessions - typically an annual occurrence. One of the services by the mendicant friars was their provision of confession to migrants to the towns who had left their old parish behind.<sup>67</sup> This itself hints at the difficulty of maintaining confession over a transient population. This and the erratic development of penitential methods for the laity (with the exception of Dominican confessors) makes an all-encompassing agenda of surveillance both unworkable and unlikely.<sup>68</sup> The decrees of the council do, however, show ample evidence of another doctrinal programme: the instillation of reverence for the sacred.

The partitioning of sacred from profane within the Lateran Reform took multiple forms. Respect for the church building extended not only to mundane abuses such as priests depositing their furniture in churches, but also mandating clean linen for the celebration of Mass. These decrees should be seen as restoring proper respect for the Eucharist, giving it its rightful place as the Body and Blood of Christ, in case such respect might be lacking. Its place having been thrown into doubt by the heresy of Berengar in the eleventh century, the Eucharist needed defending, its doctrinal place bolstered. Similar ordinances prescribe a correct place for relics, as well as a

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<sup>65</sup> Camille, *The Gothic Idol*, p. 13. A. Kumler, *Translating Truth: Ambitious Images and Religious Knowledge in Late Medieval France and England*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2011, p. 31 See also S. Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995

<sup>66</sup> M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. R. Hurley, Allen Lane, London, 1981, p. 58

<sup>67</sup> R. Cessario, 'Early Dominican Confessional Practices', *New Blackfriars*, vol. 75, no. 885, 1994, p. 425

<sup>68</sup> Hamilton, *The Medieval Inquisition*, pp. 49-50

confirmation of their authenticity. Canon 62 required relics to be verified and their transfer between locations officially approved ‘since the Christian religion is frequently disparaged because certain people put up saints’ relics for sale and display them indiscriminately’.

More importantly for our purposes, it was forbidden to display a relic without a reliquary. ‘In order that it may not be disparaged in the future, we ordain by this present decree that henceforth ancient relics shall not be displayed outside a reliquary or put up for sale’.<sup>69</sup> According to Roland Recht, Canon 62 is a reference to the removal of relics for display, demanded by crowds of pilgrims and leading to indecent exposure of bones and skulls. From now on, relics would not be seen outside of their vessels, but partial exposure grew in the years following 1215.<sup>70</sup>

### *The Councils of Lyon and Vienne*

The decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council were therefore a blueprint for subsequent plans for ecclesiastical reform. The Councils of Lyon in 1274 and Vienne in 1311 – 1312 continued similar themes of delineating a harmonious Church where all holy objects received their due veneration, none more or less. In this field, images would take an important role in enforcing respect and right belief. The aims of the Second Council of Lyon were the calling of a crusade, the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches, and the ongoing Lateran theme of ecclesiastical reform. In addition, the council saw the enforcement of decorous behaviour continued. With regard to the sacred, the church building was given a new level of dignity in Canon 26. ‘Idle and, even more, foul and profane talk’, public meetings, and trials were no longer to occur in the sacred space.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 263

<sup>70</sup> R. Recht, *Believing and Seeing: The Art of Gothic Cathedrals*, trans. Mary Whittall, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008, p. 82

This canon is striking in its aim of make reverence a mental, as well as a physical act. Bowing at the name of Jesus, a common liturgical practice, was decreed by ‘a bow of the head’. However, the layman was also commanded to bow ‘the knees of his heart’. This emphasised not only external conformity, but also internal assent.<sup>71</sup>

By the council of Vienne many of the old moral prescriptions are repeated, but the laws on the church sanctuary are not repeated. It is now also ordained that religious are to receive communion on the first Sunday of each month.<sup>72</sup> However, commands to venerate and lock away the Eucharist do not seem to need repeating. Does this indicate the accomplishment of earlier aims? Of course, the primary purpose of Vienne was the extirpation of the Templars, and not the broader questions of reform elsewhere. It could be argued that older aims such as annual confession and communion were on the way to completion. More ambitious plans like monthly communions behind cloister walls might now be contemplated. However, among the long lists of shortcomings, including idolatry – both of the Templars and of Muslims in company with Christians – the correct attitude to the sacred was an ongoing issue, one which was crucial in the removal of schism and heresy. Such respect for sacred objects was especially marked in a new Order which took root after the Fourth Lateran Council: the Order of Preachers, founded by St. Dominic.

### *The Councils and the Early Dominicans*

The tale of St. Dominic, the Spanish canon whose diplomatic journeying exposed him to the extent of heresy in the Languedoc, fed into the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the Fourth Lateran

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 328

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 371

Council.<sup>73</sup> According to his biographer, Jordan of Saxony, he dreamed of ‘an order which would be called preachers’, with no bounds. Industrious study would be their weapon for the salvation of souls in proving the truth.<sup>74</sup>

The origins of the Dominican Order may, however, be considered less clear-cut. Because the Fourth Lateran Council placed a limit on the foundation of new religious Orders, the early friars adopted the Rule of St. Augustine, counselling a common habit, evangelical poverty, chastity, and obedience, with a stress on the *vita apostolica*.<sup>75</sup> In the context of extinguishing heresy in the Languedoc, their role was, from its earliest stages, the spread of truth.<sup>76</sup> In its origins, therefore, the Order of Preachers first had to contend with the Lateran fear of unregulated proliferation of Orders. At the same time, however, the Dominican mission supplied the solution to multiple questions of Church reform in the two decades following the Council. Indeed, the 1209 Council of Avignon’s letter instructed bishops to employ ‘virtuous and wise men’ if they and the secular clergy could not preach orthodoxy. A body of professional preachers was therefore part of the disciplinary trends leading up to 1215.<sup>77</sup>

The implications of Canon 62 are already visible in the so-called *Nine Ways of Prayer*, compiled between 1260 and 1288, which report the habits of prayer which Dominic undertook. This text

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<sup>73</sup> Tugwell, ‘Introduction’ from *Early Dominican Writings*, pp. 8-9

<sup>74</sup> Mulchahey, *First the Bow is Bent in Study*, p. 405

<sup>75</sup> Tugwell, ‘Introduction’, p. 14

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

shows how the new Dominican piety was wedded to the various conciliar canons. The First Way shows Dominic bow deeply toward the altar while reciting the *Gloria Patri*, ‘as if Christ, whom the altar signifies, were really and personally present and not just symbolically’.<sup>78</sup> This reputed act shows how the site of the Eucharist and reliquary was the object of veneration, underlining the new emphasis on reverence.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the emphasis on Dominic’s love and the recitation of a liturgical text hints at ‘bending the knees of the heart’.

The sacrificial nature of the Eucharist animates the other Ways, in the acts of homage and penance before loci of the sacred. At various points, Dominic makes deep bows to the crucifix before scourging himself, prostrates himself before it ‘a hundred times perhaps’, and keeps vigil before the Cross in the Chapter House. He was also reputed to stand upright, arms outstretched, before the altar.<sup>80</sup> Altars, where Christ was sacrificed in the Mass, were a vital symbol of the orthodoxy affirmed by the councils of the thirteenth century.<sup>81</sup> Of course, these typically Dominican acts of homage have parallels with other streams of mendicant mysticism.<sup>82</sup> The example of St. Francis, stigmatised by a seraph, was a mystical encounter where the Crucifixion literally made its mark on living flesh.<sup>83</sup> However, the Dominican examples reflect a more pragmatic mentality. These are not spiritual experiences for a few privileged mystics, but gestures which the friars could all

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<sup>78</sup> Tugwell, ‘The Nine Ways of Prayer’, pp. 94-5

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97-8

<sup>81</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, p. 444

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376-7

<sup>83</sup> Walker Bynum, pp. 226-7

undertake.<sup>84</sup> Most importantly for our purposes, they placed the image of Christ crucified, as opposed to a vision, at the centre of spirituality. In other words, the Dominican experience was based around *the* vision of Christ, rather than *a* vision. Although they occurred in the private setting of religious houses, they were preparation for the mission of evangelical preaching, enacting the truths preached by the friars. In worship, they expressed the desire to categorise sacred objects. This desire to categorise was at the heart of the Dominican intellectual enterprise.

## II) Images and Dominican Study

Dominican scholarship followed much of the Lateran agenda of creating clearly defined boundaries to sacred objects. However, the friars also increasingly partook of the intellectual trends of the era, in which they gradually took a key role as teachers and intellectuals. On the one hand, the sacred must be cordoned off from the corrosive associations of profane life. On the other, the rediscovery of Aristotelian philosophy created the desire for an ever more precise view of the sacred world, more so than previous patristic texts.<sup>85</sup> The period saw the careful discussion and definition of the sacraments, as well as the nature of sacred objects.<sup>86</sup> The image was referenced at various points, just as it was implicitly important in Lateran reform. However, rather than defining the nature of religious imagery, the Dominicans limited themselves to discussing its functions. To understand the context for this discussion, it is important to consider

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<sup>84</sup> Tugwell, 'Introduction', pp. 30-1

<sup>85</sup> D. Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, Vintage, London, 1964, p. 30

<sup>86</sup> J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 3, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1978, pp. 210-13

the context for Dominican teaching and scholarship, and its gradual assimilation of Aristotelianism.

### *Aristotle and Dominican Studies*

The Dominican approach is frequently understood as a tendency to systematise and categorise phenomena along Aristotelian lines. The clear, systematic nature of Aristotle's surviving works rapidly influenced the nature of pedagogy, and came to be associated with the friars.<sup>87</sup> This is largely due to the work of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who attempted to create as pure as possible a synthesis of the patristic heritage with Aristotle's metaphysics.<sup>88</sup> This was a difficult enterprise, since many of Aristotle's theses, such as theory that the world existed eternally without a creator, and that the soul was mortal, flew in the face of Christian orthodoxy.<sup>89</sup> There were varied approaches as to how the two could be blended. Some contemporaries, such as the Franciscan Bonaventure, hewed to a traditional Augustinianism with minimal Aristotelian influences.<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, Avërroism – taking its name from the Spanish Muslim commentator on Aristotle – argued that philosophy and religion offered parallel paths to truth.<sup>91</sup> Between the extremes of a detached appropriation of Aristotle and proposing an alternative path to truth, Aquinas's attempt at a pure synthesis proved problematic. John Peckham, a Franciscan scholar in

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<sup>87</sup> Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, p. 192

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 267-8

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265

<sup>90</sup> Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 306

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291

Paris, accused Aquinas of Avërroist tendencies. Aquinas died en route to the Second Council of Lyon, attempting to defend his orthodoxy from Pecham's accusations.<sup>92</sup>

Although Aquinas was undoubtedly Aristotelian, the Dominican connection with the Philosopher developed some decades into the Order's existence. The early Dominicans were opposed to study of secular subjects and the liberal arts, seeing it as a deviation from the type of study which aided the Church. Not until 1325 would Thomas Aquinas's canonisation be taken as a definitive approval of Thomism, which at Aquinas's death in 1274 was mired in controversy.<sup>93</sup> Thomism never grew to define the thought of the Dominican Order in our period. Yet in giving the Order of Preachers a scholar of some stature, individual aspects of Thomism were being promoted in Dominican texts in the early 1300s.<sup>94</sup> As one of the friars who had intellectual stature, his cause became associated with Dominican prestige. By the Council of Vienne, therefore, Thomism was on its way to influencing many aspects of Dominican thought.

In spite of this disputed early history, there were aspects of secular philosophy that were undoubtedly in accord with the Dominican enterprise. The Order of Preachers was focussed on attracting educated men to the task of erudite preaching which would dispel heresy. So if there was a tendency to the abstract and the systematic in Dominican studies and preaching, it was because both the Lateran decrees and new philosophy were a part of the milieu of its more sophisticated members. The Order of Preachers was charged with implementing the conciliar

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<sup>92</sup> Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas of Aquino*, pp. 329-30

<sup>93</sup> Mulchahey, pp. 160-1

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7

decrees, and accepted men who were immersed in learning. The Dominicans were, in other words, a product of their environment.

Despite the eventual growth of Aristotelianism, which would make the Dominicans champions of the relatively innovative Thomism, the friars remained conservative in their formative decades. The Church Fathers, or Christian authors writing from the Apostolic period into Late Antiquity, were the primary authorities for the interpretation of scripture and the settling of doctrinal disputes. In the eyes of the friars, they offered Christian wisdom (*sapientia*), whereas dialectic was merely knowledge (*scientia*).<sup>95</sup> The general chapter of 1220, addressing disputes over the nature of books owned and used, ordered that only *libri theologici* were to be studied – secular philosophy and letters were a frivolous distraction. If this was innovative, the new approach was to be more focussed on learning that serviced fundamental ecclesiastical concerns. In this regard, the Dominican selection of texts was a notable departure from the relative diversity of monastic libraries.<sup>96</sup> However, in other aspects, the methods of the Dominicans prioritised the pursuit of knowledge over secular pursuits. Another innovation of the Dominicans was the *magister studentium*, originating from the *magister scholarum* of the cathedral schools, who oversaw the studies of brothers. Friars might even receive the dispensation to study in their cells at night, if deemed sufficiently erudite.<sup>97</sup>

These aspects put the friars in a position in which they were much demanded. By 1221, the bishop

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<sup>95</sup> B. Pranger, 'Sic et non: Patristic Authority between Refusal and Acceptance: Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux' in Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers*, p. 168

<sup>96</sup> Mulchahey, p. 40

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 41

of Metz was requesting that his secular clergy ‘aid’ the preachers, while noting the pedagogical abilities they would provide in return. In Michèle Mulchahey’s analysis, such requests indicate that the bishop was in fact attempting to procure the friars’ services. By 1228, when the friars allowed secular clergy to study in their *studium generale*, they were realising the Lateran aim to have diocesan schools for clerical education.<sup>98</sup> This milieu helps to account for why the Order had many experts in secular letters and philosophy, while being reluctant to teach such arts. While they attracted intelligent men from the university towns, the Dominicans were also dispersed in *studia* in many smaller towns. This reinforced the conservative nature of their teaching, even as the new knowledge was increasingly available.

The other vital framework for study was the use of liturgical texts. This began during early formation. Novices were required to memorise liturgical texts, notably the *Salve Regina*, as well as the Hours of the Virgin. After they had learned the constitutions of the Order, their memorisation of the entire Psalter began, including *hymni*, by which was meant the chant.<sup>99</sup> Their confession of sins was surely influenced by the use of prayers which in the Dominican service books categorised sins as *cogitatione, verbo, opere et omissione*. This rooted study in the everyday rhythms of worship. Texts which could be easily memorised formed the framework for a friar’s approach to sources. This tie was reinforced by the spiritualisation of study. Humbert of Romans referred to the metaphorical classroom of the spiritual life, where the pursuit of Wisdom led to ever-increasing Beatitude.<sup>100</sup> This tie between worship and doctrine constantly reminded the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-1

<sup>99</sup> Mulchahey, pp. 100-1

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 120

friars, even their more innovative, Aristotelian members, that the pursuit of knowledge was ultimately directed toward spiritual battle. It also led to the study of devotion itself, and what devotion was appropriate to this situation. At this point, the importance of the image comes into clearer focus.

### *Functions of the Image*

Within this textual environment, a piecemeal Dominican study of the image unfolded. However, unlike their Byzantine counterparts, the Dominicans led a very different discussion of imagery. Working among an urban laity, growing but with low literacy, they were aware of the role that images played. In this practical mode, they were required to discuss the *functions* of imagery. Of these, the Dominicans found three. Aquinas argued that images are for the instruction of the people, to promulgate the mystery of the incarnation and examples of the saints, and finally to excite feelings of devotion. Jacobus de Voragine listed reminders of Christ's Passion, excitement of devotion, and inspiration of virtue.<sup>101</sup> From these overlapping criteria, three broad functions may be deduced. Images could be decorative, the objects of devotion and veneration, and could teach.

Although this was the discussion that the Dominicans cultivated, other Orders hosted different discourses. Bonaventure, a Franciscan (1221-1274), articulated an unusual consideration of the origin of human artefacts in *De Reductione atrium et theologiam*. This treatise articulated the connection between the illumination of the mind by divine revelation, a common Augustinian

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<sup>101</sup> Cannon, p. 51

theme, and the human role in crafting an object.<sup>102</sup> God's revelation animates the mind of the human artisan to create. This work has interesting implications for the craftsmen whose glass, sculptures, and paintings filled the burgeoning mendicant churches, including those of the Dominicans. Indeed, in Emma Thérèse Healy's analysis, it is the urban world of the craftsman within which *De Reductione* must be considered. Dominicans as well as Franciscans must have considered the divine purpose of urban workers, including their output.<sup>103</sup> However, this blend of the mystical and technical never explicitly touches the subject of imagery, leaving only a hint of what theological speculation might have occurred.

In terms of decorative value, the friars inherited a well-formed theological tradition. Beautiful paintings, statues, and stained glass were a gift to God, while simultaneously impressing that glory on the minds of believers. This tradition could be found in the Church Father Pseudo-Dionysius, in which rich colour and light remind the wandering soul of the Father of Lights.<sup>104</sup> In this view, spiritual light emits from God into the fallen material world, with physical light and colour reflecting the heavenly realities. By contemplating these earthly manifestations, the human soul can discern Christ the Light. Beauty thus becomes a signpost of sorts, leading the lost home.<sup>105</sup>

While there were objections, such as those expressed by Abelard and Bernard at the start of this

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<sup>102</sup> Bonaventure, *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, trans. Emma Thérèse Healy, New York, Franciscan Institute, 1955, p. x

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi

<sup>104</sup> J. Leclercq, 'Influence and noninfluence of Pseudo-Dionysius in the Western Middle Ages' in P. Rorem (ed.), *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, New York, Paulist Press, 1987, pp. 25-32

<sup>105</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, 'The Divine Names', pp. 79-86

chapter, the Dominicans shared in the mendicant practice of constructing lavish churches for the urban population. To the Dominican mind, human beings were part of the world of senses and flesh set out by Aquinas in the first part of the *Summa theologiae*. They were not angelic, that is, disembodied spirits who already saw God, and who were morally incorruptible. Rather, they were beings of flesh and blood who needed illumination.<sup>106</sup> They needed a vision of heaven, vicariously provided in a liturgy where paradise was re-enacted. If the believers could see the celestial world and delight in it, then souls could be saved. The awe felt in the experience of worship used material means to speak of an immaterial world.

A second function for the image allowed by the Dominicans lay in teaching. The idea that images are the *litterae laicorum* (books of the people) is explicitly stated in the letters of Gregory the Great, an authoritative Latin Father. Earlier generations of art historians, such as Émile Mâle, saw the Gregorian view plainly on display in Gothic churches.<sup>107</sup> This view does offer a visual counterpart to the Dominican tendency to compile knowledge such as the *Speculum Maius* of Vincent of Beauvais, turning cathedrals not only into Gospels and hagiographies, but also horoscopes and bestiaries. While based on careful observation, Mâle's view is somewhat romantic, derived from nostalgia for a pre-industrial society of independent artisans. His approach has also been challenged by Michael Camille, who cited worried churchmen who complained that the laity could seldom understand religious imagery outside its correct context.<sup>108</sup> However, the

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<sup>106</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. C. E. O'Neill, Blackfriars, London, 1965 (60 vols.), I, q. 51, a. 1

<sup>107</sup> E. Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Thirteenth Century*, trans. M. Matthews, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. v-vi

<sup>108</sup> Camille, p. 108

Dominican role in preaching helped to explain the meaning of imagery. Wolfgang Kemp argued that the upward movement of narrative glass cycles drew on Aristotelian theories of *reminiscentia*, or the revisiting of past memories.<sup>109</sup> In other words, Dominican teaching would have had a role in explaining to the laity the meaning of their visual environment.

Finally, images were used for devotion and were venerated. The idea of venerating a sacred object was well-established in the Latin West by the time of the Fourth Lateran Council. Veneration of images, a representation of the sacred, was however a different matter. Thomas Aquinas distinguished between *dulia* (veneration), *hyperdulia* (special veneration for Mary), and *latria* (worship). *Latria* is a sacrificial worship reserved for God alone.<sup>110</sup> Aquinas does, however, express the belief that the True Cross was worthy of *latria*, in the context of the kissing of the Cross on Good Friday. In defence of this practice, he cited the Passiontide hymn, *Vexilla Regis*:

Hail, O Cross, only hope  
In this Passiontide  
Increase to the just grace  
Grant forgiveness to the guilty.

Aquinas combines this liturgical evidence with the words of St. John of Damascus, the adversary of Iconoclasm. Quoting St. Basil, John argued, ‘the honour given to an image reaches to the prototype’.<sup>111</sup> In this sense, the Cross is not worshipped, but worship passes through it.<sup>112</sup> This

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>110</sup> *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 84, a. 1

<sup>111</sup> John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith*, from P. Schaff, H. Wace, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9, Buffalo, NY, Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1895, no. 4, a.16, p. 88

chapter follows a similar exposition of relics, demonstrating the Byzantine tendency to give both sacred objects equivalent importance.<sup>113</sup> By quoting John of Damascus, Aquinas comes close to the Byzantine concept of the passage of worship through an image. However, saints' images are nowhere mentioned in the *Summa*. This is probably because relics were the most visible objects of public devotion belonging to saints, and received most attention. While ubiquitous, religious imagery had a comparatively limited cult in the friars' estimation.

### III) The Limited Discussion of the Image

The Dominican discussion of imagery is peculiar in that it contains only the most fragmented elements of Byzantine iconographic theory. Although they undoubtedly absorbed Greek ideas about the nature of the sacred image, a fully-fledged 'theology of the icon' never developed.

In order to understand Dominican discussion of imagery, the Greek theory of imagery must first be examined.<sup>114</sup> The repudiation of iconoclasm led to the explosion of imagery within Byzantium, which had long been in full flower by the thirteenth century. Furthermore, the Fourth Crusade of 1204, which had ended ignominiously with the sacking of Constantinople, had led to a flood of Greek loot spreading to the Latin West.<sup>115</sup> This consisted of icons such as the *Imago Pietatis*, an icon of Christ as Man of Sorrows, began to circulate in Western iconography from 1300.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 25, a. 3

<sup>113</sup> John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith*, iv.15, p. 87

<sup>114</sup> H. Belting, *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Bartusis, R. Meyer, New Rochelle, NY, A.D. Caratzas, 1990, pp. 55-6

<sup>115</sup> D. H. Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of St. Louis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 190-1

<sup>116</sup> Belting, *The Image and its Public*, p. 216

Furthermore, the works of John of Damascus, John Chrysostom, and other Byzantine theologians began to circulate in the libraries of the Latin West in translations of increasing quality.<sup>117</sup>

In addition, as depictions of the incarnate Christ and saints who would be resurrected, images were uncompromising statements of the sacredness of physical matter. The Roman Church felt threatened by Cathars, with their tendency to empty sacraments of material connotations, turning the Baptism, the Eucharist, Holy Orders, and Extreme Unction into symbolic, commemorative rites. In such a context, this theological trend would surely have been of great importance.<sup>118</sup> In such an environment, infused with various aspects of Greek theology and sacred objects, it is surprising that no corresponding discussion of imagery took place among Thomas Aquinas or Jacobus de Voragine. At many points, aspects of the Greek discussion surface. The difference between *latría* and *dulia* was articulated, and the idea that the Cross might transmit *latría* was also articulated. However, the role of the Cross was ambiguous, because it stood on the boundary between image and relic.

The reason for this was the framework into which new knowledge was fitted. As we have seen, early Dominican education followed a traditional patristic outline, and it was as purveyors of traditional education that the Order was in demand among bishops. Friars who possessed newer kinds of knowledge fitted it into older patterns. The result was an influx of Greek material fitted into a resolutely Latin framework with little systematic role for the image.

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<sup>117</sup> Weisheipl, p. 168

<sup>118</sup> R. B. Brooke, *The Coming of the Friars*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1975, p. 156

### *The Latin Framework of Knowledge*

The Church Fathers and their role in scriptural exegesis continued to be the mainstay of Dominican education. It is a mistake to view Thomas Aquinas's various *Summae* as his principal achievement. Rather, he was appreciated first and foremost by his Order as a *magister sacrae paginae* (master of the sacred page), whose scriptural commentaries were prized.<sup>119</sup> These efforts short-circuited the arduous knowledge of researching the Fathers for writing sermons, and as such ranged from skeleton sermons to the highly polished exegesis found in Aquinas's commentaries on the Gospels, Epistles and Psalms.<sup>120</sup> Summaries of texts such as the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, *Summae* and the anthologies (*florilegia*) of patristic quotes were all aimed at the vital work of the Dominicans – preaching.

Within these various compilations, the surviving body of patristic literature was largely Roman, and the Latin heritage offered the existing range of opinions on imagery. Of the ancient authorities on doctrine, Gregory the Great, with his simple style and focus on concrete issues, was among the most accessible Fathers.<sup>121</sup> Of these, it was Gregory who offered the clearest path to take on imagery. In his letter to Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, Gregory objects to the Bishop's destruction of pictures of Christ and the saints, lest they be adored. While it is of course wrong to worship an image, Gregory writes, to destroy one is both an act of sacrilege and a barrier to the education of the illiterate. Ordinary people could learn the events of the Gospels and lives of the saints from

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<sup>119</sup> B. Roest, 'Mendicant School Exegesis', from S. Boynton, D. J. Reilly (ed.), *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 184

<sup>120</sup> Mulchahey, p. 420

<sup>121</sup> Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 16

the paintings on church walls, filling the gap caused by illiteracy.<sup>122</sup> This was the essence of the Gregorian dictum, offering a coherent position on the use of imagery. It had occurred prior to the Byzantine trauma of the 700s, and continued to serve as a justification for imagery. Therefore, although it had some measure of writing on imagery, the Latin body of patristics could not proceed beyond a utilitarian outline of functions.

### *The Appearance of Byzantine Patristics*

The thirteenth century, meanwhile, saw a revival of study in Byzantine scholarship. The period is typically associated with the efforts of secular and religious scholars to unearth Aristotle with various Jewish and Islamic commentators, yet Byzantine patristics also led to a shift in the nature of Western scholarship.

The dramatic increase in Byzantine scholarship can be seen in the shifting ratio of glosses in compilation texts. Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, written in the mid-twelfth century, had a thousand quotes from Augustine, ninety and eighty-five from Ambrose and Hilary respectively, fifty-five and fifty for Gregory and Jerome respectively, but only twenty-seven from John of Damascus and seventeen from Chrysostom, undoubtedly culled from *florilegia*.<sup>123</sup> By the 1230s, William of Auxerre's *Summa Aurea* gave Augustine 1,242 quotes and Gregory the Great 218. The Augustinian and Gregorian lists of glosses have increased, but have also been supplemented by Latins of lower stature, as well as a new selection of Byzantines: William of Auxerre quotes Pseudo-Dionysius a hundred times, Jerome ninety-seven, Boethius eighty-three, John of Damascus seventy-seven and

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<sup>122</sup> Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistolarum* trans. J. Barnaby, in P. Schaff, H. Wace in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. xiii, Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1895, no. 9, Letter 13, p. 23

<sup>123</sup> L. J. Elders, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Fathers of the Church', in Backus, p. 338

Ambrose fifty-three.<sup>124</sup> While Augustine still dominated exegesis, a certain equality between Latin and Greek texts had become more widespread. In addition, full texts rather than mere *florilegia* became available, and the Greek studies of the English Franciscan Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253) made fuller translations available.<sup>125</sup>

Thomas Aquinas was an importer of both new and improved Latin translations. Weisheipl draws attention to Aquinas's efforts to gain more accurate understandings of Byzantine theology, especially in light of the ongoing schism with the Greek Church.<sup>126</sup> Thomas did not know enough Greek to read Byzantine texts, but searched for the latest and most accurate translations. The *Summa Theologiæ* contains Rufinus and Jerome's translation of Origen's *De principiis*, with anonymous translations of Basil and Chrysostom. John Burgundio's mid-1100s translation of John Chrysostom's homilies on Genesis and the Gospels of St. John, and St. Matthew were also used. John of Damascus's *On the Orthodox Faith*, the third part of the longer *Fons Scientiæ*, had an unknown translator, but was accepted.<sup>127</sup> Aquinas's compilation of patristic commentaries on the Gospels, the *Catena Aurea*, uses a sizeable minority of Byzantine passages without distinguishing between the texts of Christian antiquity and those of more recent centuries.

*On the Orthodox Faith* does not neglect the topic of images. Indeed, the sixteenth chapter of the fourth volume contains a concise exposition of Byzantine image-theory. The icon carries homage

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<sup>124</sup> J. Guy-Bougerol, 'The Church Fathers and *auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure', in Backus, p. 292

<sup>125</sup> N. Lewis, 'Robert Grosseteste and the Church Fathers', in Backus, p. 200

<sup>126</sup> Weisheipl, p. 168

<sup>127</sup> L. J. Elders, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Fathers of the Church', p. 344

to its divine prototype, the First Commandment should be considered applicable only to images of other gods, and that it only applied to images of the God of Israel while He completely transcended physical matter. The Incarnation reversed this state, and now images may be made due to God's physical form, making them a sign of Christ's humanity. This is the argument repeated by Aquinas in the question on giving *latria* to the Cross.

However, a fundamental question remains about the use of *On the Orthodox Faith* when it comes to the adoration of the Cross. Why is the adoration of the Cross not discussed at greater length? Or rather, why is the question not extrapolated to include other images of the Virgin or of other saints? In Aquinas's analysis, the image is a kind of pseudo-relic, comparable to the True Cross, but not to images of saints.

### *A Latin Mentality?*

The materials for Byzantine theories of the icon were available in the Latin West during the thirteenth century, and circulated within Dominican scholarship. However, discussions of the image as a channel of adoration took a comparatively minor role in Dominican scholarship, limiting the role of adoration to the crucifix and blurring distinctions between crucifixes and the True Cross. In a period where scholastic clarity was a key priority in theological writing, this ambiguity is an anomaly. The reason for this absence of clarity lies in the Latin frame of thought within which Byzantine sources were studied.

Because of their innate conservatism, the Dominicans were still wedded to Latin patterns of thought. Although they had innovative spirits, the framework of their study was the promulgation of traditional orthodoxy in the face of heretical objections. Despite Aquinas's involvement with

the Byzantines in *Contra Errores Graecorum*, and his use of Byzantine texts, these were still used in the context of the Latin theological project.<sup>128</sup> Due to the stunted discussion of images which resulted from the *Libri Carolini*, the older suspicion of the image remained in Western thought. Although the hostility faded with time, the *Libri Carolini* did leave a lasting mark in its promotion of the cult of relics over that of imagery. When church authorities considered the veneration of a saint, they immediately thought of the saint's relics.<sup>129</sup> The translation of relics on canonisation, pilgrimages to venerate the relics, and the creation of reliquaries were not foreign to Byzantium, but in the West such practices formed the central pillar of the saint's cult. This approach was absorbed by the Dominicans, with their traditionalist approach to theology.

Dominican thought tended to reaffirm fundamentally these old patterns. It was not a self-consciously innovative Order, wanting to buttress traditional religious thought with the best scholarship available. Its focus on the material implications of the Incarnation, on the sanctification of material objects, was served by the defence of relics. Byzantine thought was useful in widening the patristic base of texts, but was interpreted to fit the older pattern of Latin thought. This tendency is at its most striking in Aquinas's *Contra Errores Graecorum*. Most of the seventy-two tractates on the differences between East and West discuss the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed.<sup>130</sup> Papal primacy of jurisdiction, original sin, purgatory, and unleavened bread for the

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<sup>128</sup> Elders, p. 351

<sup>129</sup> Bartlett, p. 99

<sup>130</sup> Thomas Aquinas, trans. P. D. Fehlner, *Contra Errores Graecorum*, Dominican Province of St. Joseph, 1947, II, a. 32, <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/ContraErrGraecorum.htm#b32>, last accessed 3 January 201

Eucharist are all treated in the nine final sections.<sup>131</sup> This shows just how strong the Latin lens was in even the most innovative Dominican minds. Such an object as the image, which had a comfortable place in such devotional texts as the *Nine Ways of Prayer*, was not yet problematic, and as such could be ignored. Although it had a growing place in Dominican prayer, the image continued to have a small niche in Dominican study. For this reason, the image, despite its increased proliferation in Western devotional life, remained subservient to the relic in the theological imagination.

### ***Conclusion***

The Dominicans inherited an ultimately ambiguous position on images. Certain kinds of visual depiction, such as crucifixes, were the object of veneration, and indeed, of full adoration. The Roman church did not have the fully developed iconic culture which had been fostered in the Byzantine Empire. Yet as the conciliar texts show, especially Canon 62 of the Fourth Lateran Council, images took on a vital role by paradoxically *not* being seen, or at least not seen as images. They were to be found as reliquaries, encasing a seemingly mundane object to draw attention to its miraculous powers. These fragments of discipline show awareness of the sensory appeal in objects to create devotion, and coincided with the devotional methods in the *Nine Ways of Prayer*, where crucifixes were used as stimuli to prayer.

Within this framework, the Dominicans brought about the efforts of creating a clear, synthesising theology, in tandem with the orthodoxy of the council, achieving its aims of an orderly church. The Thomist summary of *latria*, *dulia*, and *hyperdulia* created a system that was clear in theory. The discussion of functions of imagery included the Byzantine theory of icons derived from St.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., II, a. 33, a. 40

John of Damascus, but this role was applied only to the crucifix. Images of the Virgin and saints were either merely decorative or educational, but took a subservient role to relics in the burgeoning cult of saints.

The ultimate reason for this was the Latin framework of Dominican thought. Although they had access to Byzantine texts on the icon, they were committed to a traditional programme of education which continued old patterns. With regard to the veneration of images, this included the continual side-lining of imagery in favour of relics. This was still understandable in 1215, when reliquaries were the undisputed conduits of divine grace through saintly intercession. However, in the course of the century this pattern would change, and as a result of Dominican piety, imagery would have a greater acknowledged role. An increasingly visual piety and pastoral adaptations to a new situation sat alongside a static framework for the analysis of worship. Even as the piety of the Dominicans gave an ever-increasing role to the image to teach, decorate, and inspire fervour, their scholarship continued to give the image comparatively little attention.

This popular piety that the Dominicans promoted merits attention. It fell outside the old certainties of their study and preaching, yet many glimpses of the devotion seen in the *Nine Ways of Prayer* can be found in hagiography. Although the friars continued to privilege relics over imagery in the cult of saints, these two sacred categories were merging in the field of popular piety. It is this piety to that we now turn.



## II: *'Ave, Spes Unica'*: The Image and the Relic in Dominican Discourse



### *Introduction*

For Christians of the thirteenth century, the public cult of relics was an important facet of popular piety. The veneration of a saint's remnants offered a tangible point of contact with the sacred. Because the bodies of the saints, individuals who had gone straight to heaven because of exceptional grace, could expect resurrection on the last day, their bodies awaiting resurrection were repositories of grace that could work miracles. Because it affirmed the belief that Christ himself had taken human form, died and risen from the dead, the cult of relics occupied an integral part of the piety inherited by the Dominicans. In this way, the cult of relics was a bridge between popular religious sentiment and the orthodox teaching affirmed by the Fourth Lateran Council.

There were, however, ambiguities at the very heart of the cult of relics. Was it homage to gain intercession, as the friars taught, or were there superstitious elements which prompted much of the popular enthusiasm? This ambiguity stood in contrast to the relatively minor role of the image in popular piety. By being a signification of the sacred, rather than a physical remnant, and an invitation to meditation, imagery offered a different method of piety, one which focussed on Christ as redeemer and moral exemplar, rather than a granter of favours. In relation to this official discourse, how did the popular mind relate to the relic, as opposed to the image?

When discussing the hagiographical relationship between images and relics, the *Legenda Aurea* or ‘Golden Legend’ (c. 1260) of Jacobus de Voragine is perhaps the closest to a complete panorama of the cult of saints and their miracles. Based on both the *temporale* and *sanctorale* of the liturgical year, it provided sermons for the clergy to instruct and edify the faithful, compiling legends of varied age and geographical provenance. It offers a sense of the preaching methods of the Dominicans, blending popular piety with a special focus on orthodox doctrine and an interior, moralising piety.<sup>132</sup>

This chapter will argue that, unlike the devotions of the Dominicans, popular piety tended to conflate various categories of sacred object, based on their perceived healing powers. It will argue that although the friars were aware that image-reliquaries were vital in shaping perceptions of the relic, the popular mind tended to blend images and relics. Next, using the *Legenda Aurea*, the chapter will examine the lay view of images and relics in connection with a broad spectrum of healing miracles, which did not differentiate between sacred objects as long as they served a practical purpose. Unlike relics, however, image miracles are replete with narratives involving desecration. The final part of the chapter will analyse the desecration narratives, and argue that because of their more ‘personal nature’, images were associated with the new, personalising piety which the friars were attempting to introduce. Therefore, images were part of a transition from an older, practical lay piety to a new style of personal, emotional piety brought by the Dominicans.

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<sup>132</sup> William Granger Ryan, ‘Introduction’ in *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, pp. xiii-xiv

## I) The Dominicans and the Laity

The Dominicans were well-schooled in an intellectualised Christianity based on the careful categorisation of sacred objects. Relics and the Eucharist, unlike the image, had carefully defined places in an orderly, classified world. *Latria*, *hyperdulia*, and *dulia* are examples of a piety where the gradation of homage meant that God and His saints received homage that was neither more nor less than their due.<sup>133</sup> However, while this system worked harmoniously in theory, the extent to which the laity understood it is another matter. Although the laity may have had trouble distinguishing different objects defined by different types of veneration, their understanding of the sacred was profoundly linked to the Incarnation, offering a starting-point for the preaching of the friars.

### *The Uncategorised Sacred*

Prior to examining the Dominican presentation of imagery in hagiography, it is important to question the beliefs of the laity to whom they ministered. If Christianity is defined as the statement of faith at the start of the Fourth Lateran Council, were the friars' flocks Christian? Was their devotion rooted in Lateran doctrine, or was it a series of superstitions from a pagan tradition, grafted onto the institutions and customs of the Church? John Van Engan summarises this historiographical attitude by describing popular religion as 'in broad stretches a religious consciousness that can hardly be called Christian'.<sup>134</sup> When George Fedotov attempted to

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<sup>133</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 84, a. 5, a. 6

<sup>134</sup> J. van Engen, 'The Christian Middle Ages as a Historiographical Problem', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 3, June 1986, p. 520

compare Russian peasant piety to that of the Medieval West, he argued that Russia had not experienced 'either the Reformation or Counter-Reformation with their cleansing, spiritualizing, and sweeping out of medieval...heathen customs, heathen cults, and even heathen world-view...'.<sup>135</sup> Fedotov is correct in that the conciliar fixing of the sacraments at seven was a relatively late development, reaching a consensus during the thirteenth century, and not officially codified until the Council of Trent.<sup>136</sup> Until then, a blurred line separated the Church's liturgical rites and theology from such 'heathen' practices endorsed by local rather than formal ecclesiastical authority.<sup>137</sup> However, on closer inspection, Fedotov's casual assumption becomes far more tenuous, given that the 'spiritualising' of the popular worldview was well underway in the thirteenth century, thanks to the effect of educated mendicant preaching on the popular religious worldview.

With regard to images and reliquaries, the question is how well the official teaching on relics was understood. Jean Delumeau and Robert Muchembled delight in tales of peasants who paid homage to the sun and moon, and prayed at various rocks and springs as their ancestors had done.<sup>138</sup> Few could demonstrate understanding of doctrines such as the Trinity, and many could not recite basic Christian prayers until the late seventeenth century, let alone understand them.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> G. P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind: Kievan Christianity: The Tenth to the Thirteenth Centuries*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1960, pp. 3-4

<sup>136</sup> Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, pp. 204-14

<sup>137</sup> F. Heer, *The Medieval World: Europe, 1100-1300*, trans. J. Sondheimer, London, Weidenfeld, 1993, p. 4

<sup>138</sup> J. Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation*, trans. J. Moiser, London, Burns and Oates, 1977, p. 176

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193

The obvious implication was that if the peasantry was barely Christianised in early modernity, then it must surely have been even more 'pagan' in the Middle Ages. Within this viewpoint, the cult of relics, as well as miracle-working statues, was an example of primitive fetishism, based on Indo-European cults with the thinnest ecclesiastical veneer.<sup>140</sup> However, other historiographies offer a more charitable view. John Bossy argued that far from being a nominal veneer, popular Christianity was a living reality. The issue was, according to Bossy, the means by which such beliefs were expressed. Instead of measuring popular adherence to early modern catechisms – a relative anachronism, excepting the catechical homilies preached by Dominicans – Bossy argued that Christianity was understood by analogies to the structure of society and relationships. The cult of saints, as well as the veneration paid to their relics and images, was understood in terms of feudal patronage. The mediating role of a hierarchical saint made intercession easily understandable, as one might gain the attention of a superior through an intermediate vassal.<sup>141</sup> Likewise, human sin and guilt and the satisfaction made by Christ was understood in judicial terms of grievance and rightful compensation.<sup>142</sup> The degree to which Christendom was truly Christian is key to understanding popular views of relics. Basic doctrines such as a single deity with a son in human form could be easily grasped by analogies to the human world, if not fully understood in abstract terms.

There was, however, an aspect of popular piety that did profoundly differ from the piety of the Dominicans. This was the fundamental priorities of faith, rooted to concepts of salvation. Earlier

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<sup>140</sup> Van Engen, 'The Christian Middle Ages as a Historiographical Problem', p. 529

<sup>141</sup> Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, pp. 9-10

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4

theologies of salvation ultimately looked to the Ransom theory, where Christ's death on the Cross was a ransom paid to the devil to release the trapped souls of mankind. From here, Christ broke out of hell, which was unable to contain His divinity.<sup>143</sup> This soteriological model emphasises divine victory over malign elements and the piety which flowed from it stressed the Church's rituals as a way of expelling evil, whether in exorcisms, harvest rituals, or blessings for crops. Derek Rivard's analysis of the surviving blessings for various crops and objects shows God depicted both as the creator of all good things and as a kind of doctor who prescribes remedies for various evils.<sup>144</sup> Although heavily concerned with the immediate concerns of a rural community, the blessings are nonetheless produced by priestly authors who share the concerns of the faithful. These blessings focus on the repulsion of the Devil, who threatened the survival of the community, through the invocation of divine power.<sup>145</sup> Divine victory over evil was harnessed in the service of practical needs.<sup>146</sup>

The Dominicans, meanwhile, were heirs to Anselm's theory of satisfaction. In this system, Christ's death was a penalty paid to God, an innocent man paying the fine of one condemned.<sup>147</sup> This theology gave birth to a new piety, focussing on individual guilt, morality, and devotion. Evil was not out on the edges of the community in need of exorcism, but within one's soul and

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<sup>143</sup> Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, pp. 142-3

<sup>144</sup> D. A. Rivard, *Blessing the World: Ritual and Lay Piety in Medieval Religion*, Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2009, p. 8

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-57

<sup>146</sup> Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 138

<sup>147</sup> Bossy, p. 5

needed to be repented.<sup>148</sup> Of course, guilt and fear of sin were also present in the older piety, where a victorious Christ cast the souls of the damned into hell.<sup>149</sup> However, the new imagery associated with this new trend in piety was not Christ the warrior-king doing battle with the forces of darkness. Instead, crucifixes that showed the dead or dying Christ, images of the Virgin which were more overtly emotional, stressed the suffering humanity of Christ in addition to His victorious divinity.<sup>150</sup> The Franciscans and Dominicans both inherited this ‘humanising’ piety which was moral and penitential, as well as personal and emotional. So Jacobus de Voragine’s commentary on the Rogation processions at sowing and harvesting interpret the rites as a penitential occasion, a chance to reflect on the state of one’s own soul.<sup>151</sup> Although this new mentality was quick to take root in the towns, it was slower in rural areas, giving the impression of a superstitious, immoral peasantry.<sup>152</sup>

This was the gulf between the piety of the friars and of their flocks. In the towns, the friars shared a common view of salvation with increasing numbers of urban devotees. However, they needed to reach out to the rural majority of Christians, whose beliefs had very different implications. However, as well as these differences, there was a common pious concern among both the friars and the laity – the sanctification of physical matter.

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<sup>148</sup> L. Bouyer (ed.), *A History of Christian Spirituality*, vol. 2, *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages*, London, Burns and Oates, 1968, pp. 243-4

<sup>149</sup> R. Fulton Brown, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 182-3

<sup>150</sup> Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 137

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132

### *The Stuff of Faith: Christian Materiality*

From at least the second century, there has been a literary and archaeological record of Christians venerating saints. These were initially martyrs, but later bishops and ascetics.<sup>153</sup> This included the invocation of the healing properties of the bodies of martyrs, which continued Christ's work of healing the sick and affirmed that the martyrs dwelt in heaven as intercessors.<sup>154</sup>

The thirteenth-century drive against Catharism made the relic important in that it was sacred matter. Dualism, or the belief in a good god of spirit, and an evil god of matter, caused increasing alarm as it spread in southern France and northern Italy during the late twelfth century.<sup>155</sup> The implication of such a belief was not only the irrelevance and corruption of relics and the sacraments, all of it dead matter. In a Dualist framework, the very notion of Christ taking on a human body and dying for the people was the height of absurdity. Flesh was corrupt, and no redemption could be found in it. In addition to this extreme position, other heresies developed which were not hostile to a human God, but were sceptical of material form. Waldensian belief in celibacy and poverty was conjoined with a denial of Real Presence in the Eucharist, which was celebrated simply in a private home without an ordained priest, chant, or other ornament.<sup>156</sup> In this capacity, the Dominicans and their Franciscan counterparts offered a model of apostolic poverty which appealed to the mentality of the dualists, but while preserving both the Incarnation, and its sacramental and material implications. The physical body of Christ was being disputed, as

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<sup>153</sup> Bartlett, p. 3

<sup>154</sup> Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, p. 175

<sup>155</sup> Lambert, p. 58

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63

well as the physical sanctity implied in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>157</sup> The holiness of a dead body was above all an affirmation of the Incarnation, the belief that Christ took human form.

The practice of venerating relics grew steadily through the first millennium, and had a well-established cult at the advent of Dominican expansion. It was a vital part of the orthodoxy that the Dominicans were committed to defending. Over the period of Dominican expansion, where the relic was defended and exposed to a wider public, the reliquaries mandated by the Fourth Lateran Council became substantially more elaborate. At the outset of the period, altars commonly had feretories, or reliquaries with holes through which pilgrims could reach in and touch the relics.<sup>158</sup> At the same time, there was an increase in portable shrines which incorporated portraiture of saints.<sup>159</sup> These were not a new development. As early as 830 the basilica of St. Riquier in Picardy boasted thirty ivory relic chests with gold and silver.<sup>160</sup> However, the volume of these objects increased in the thirteenth century, and the adornment became more experimental.<sup>161</sup> Initially, these took the form of flat panels on boxes shaped like churches, underlining the Lateran theme of partitioned sacred space. Prime examples of these are the champlevé enamel chasses of Limoges, which were still relatively impersonal, with mass-

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<sup>157</sup> Walker Bynum *Christian Materiality*, p. 48

<sup>158</sup> R. Malo, *Relics and Writing in Late Medieval England*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013, p. 34

<sup>159</sup> M. Bagnoli, K. Gerry, *The Medieval World: The Walters Art Museum*, Baltimore, the Walters Art Museum, 2011, pp. 44-5

<sup>160</sup> Bartlett, p. 277

<sup>161</sup> M. Bagnoli, 'The Stuff of Heaven Materials and Craftsmanship in Medieval Reliquaries', in M. Bagnoli, H. A. Klein, C. Griffith Mann and J. Robinson (ed.), *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2010, p. 142

produced scenes which leant themselves to multiple interpretations.<sup>162</sup> Saints were depicted upright on these objects, in contrast to tombs and feretories, where a reclining position was customary.<sup>163</sup> By the 1310s reliquaries were regularly taking the form of statuary, but the trend had begun by the late twelfth century. The 1180s German head of St Eustace is an early example of how a reliquary could re-animate a relic such as a skull (*fig. 2*).<sup>164</sup> These reliquaries increasingly blurred the line between statuary which represented the saint and remnants of the saint's body.

Amidst these official affirmations of relics in conciliar canons and artistic patronage, the attitudes of the laity show a common appreciation for the reliquary. This can be seen in Caroline Walker Bynum's discussion of how religious sentiment evolved over the later Middle Ages. It was in this period that mendicant piety began to create a religiosity which was both more interior, and more preoccupied with the materiality – the 'fleshliness' implicit in God becoming man and dying.<sup>165</sup> A mentality based on sanctified matter requires sacred objects to have the very sensory qualities which inspire love and awe from the devotee. In particular, Walker Bynum discusses the expected appearance of relics. Due to beliefs in the incorruptibility of a saint's body, medieval Christians expected relics to be smooth and firm, 'jewel-like', in contrast to the flesh of sinners, which slackened and decayed in death.<sup>166</sup> One result of this perception was the boiling of bodies for the

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<sup>162</sup> B. Drake Boehm, ' "A Brilliant Resurrection": Enamel Shrines for Relics in Limoges and Cologne, 1100-1230' in Bagnoli (2010), pp.149-59

<sup>163</sup> Malo, pp. 272-3

<sup>164</sup> C. Hahn, 'The Spectacle of the Charismatic Body: Patrons, Artists, and Body-Part Reliquaries', in Bagnoli, (2010), p. 191

<sup>165</sup> Walker Bynum, p. 29

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187

bones, so that no corruption occurred, and the bone could be displayed in a reliquary, smooth and fair like ivory, seemingly immortal.<sup>167</sup> This creates a direct link to the Lateran decrees on the compulsory use of reliquaries. Unadorned pieces of bone, redolent of death, were not going to excite devotion for the saints or for the doctrine of bodily resurrection. Encased in a reliquary which resembled a saint, however, they were obviously miraculous treasures, signs of eternal life and channels of sanctity. The Church, and the Dominicans in particular, were therefore highly aware of the need to influence perceptions. The reliquary, a gilded and bejewelled image, held little worth in itself, yet was vital to giving a holy object its due homage. The heavenly hierarchy would be preserved by the image, making the invisible visible.

Walker Bynum's view has been recently disputed. She ultimately argues that the power of relics lay in their ability to link heaven and earth. In addition, Walker Bynum emphasises the point that lay piety appreciated the sensory quality of relics, 'inviting touch and taste, as well as sight'.<sup>168</sup> However, Robyn Malo called into question the 'closed loop of scholarship' by Walker Bynum and other authors.<sup>169</sup> Malo countered the emphasis on sensory contact by pointing out that as shrines became larger and more elaborate, relics were removed from sensory experience and needed textual construction.<sup>170</sup> It was the description of relics in saints' lives and homilies, not direct sensory experience of the reliquary, that aroused devotion. Although Malo allows that relics were normally hidden from sight, she understates the degree to which they were

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 188

<sup>168</sup> Walker Bynum, p. 105

<sup>169</sup> Malo, p. 14

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 15

encountered in processions and translations.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, she neglects Jacqueline Jung's analysis of chancel screens, where veiling and obscuring was itself a sensory experience, where the act of concealment made a treasure within even more alluring.<sup>172</sup>

Although the laity was less aware of the careful categorisations of scholastic thought, the sense of physical objects taking sacred form was deeply rooted in lay piety. This is shown in hagiography, where Dominican preaching could draw upon a keen sense of Christian materiality, tying an appetite for wonder-working bodies to the moral exemplar of the incarnate Christ.

### *The Legenda Aurea: A Dominican Work?*

The objectives of thirteenth century piety, and the ongoing growth of personal devotion in addition to practical favours, is best seen in the preaching of the Dominicans. The Lives of the Saints, with colourful tales which could regale audiences on important feast-days, form the bulk of entries in the most complete compilation of Dominican preaching: Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. Through the choosing of different narratives and emphases within tales, the *Legenda* shows how wonder-working miracles could be used as moral and devotional narratives, and how sacred objects wove into the fabric of Dominican piety.

In order to understand the meaning of the work, a discussion of the *Legenda's* workings is necessary. Sherry L. Reames argues that while the modern term 'legend' may include inherited stories of dubious authenticity, the medieval understanding was simply of a written account.<sup>173</sup> In

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 16

<sup>172</sup> J. Jung, *The Gothic Screen: Space, Sculptures, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany*, ca. 1200-1400, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 69

Reames's analysis, Jacobus de Voragine was a prime exemplar of the values of educated churchmen.

The fundamental reason that the *Legenda* overtook other hagiographical collections in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was its emphasis on unswerving moral purity, a criterion for canonisation from the 1270s. This is demonstrated in the peculiarly whitewashed life of St. Augustine. Although clearly culled from the *Confessions*, Augustine's tale is seemingly devoid of the sexual and intellectual struggles that the *Confessions* explore in depth. Indeed, references to the mercy of God are somewhat scant. Instead, the tale is chiefly concerned with the role of St. Ambrose in Augustine's conversion, turning Augustine from a restless sinner into a paragon of virtue.<sup>174</sup> Rather than being a mere recounting of the extraordinary, Jacobus de Voragine had a series of clear themes which run through his interpretation. Primary among these was the aim of stressing the saintly rejection of 'the world', and the turning of the mind to God. In other words, it was aimed at drawing the reader away from the practical approach of popular piety, with its focus on gaining things in this world. Instead, a contemplative mentality is emphasised, with reflection on the figure of Christ and His moral example at the heart of spiritual experience.<sup>175</sup> While the miracles were undoubtedly important to a lay audience, they also encompassed a broader agenda. A practical lay piety fixated on wonders was to be supplemented with a stress on the person of Christ.

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<sup>173</sup> S.L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination of Its Paradoxical History*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 11

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138, 147

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133

A number of editorial details mark the *Legenda* as an especially Dominican work. As a systematic compilation of preaching for the year, it served Dominican interests, growing from earlier *florilegia*.<sup>176</sup> Entries on the significance on different parts of the liturgical year underpins Jacques Le Goff's argument that, in tune with Lateran reform, it captured time within an undeniably Christian framework.<sup>177</sup> Le Goff argued that the *Legenda* was primarily a commentary on the liturgical year, where the *vitae* express a conception of time as the ongoing work of salvation. This conception of time integrated the seasons of the year and the irrevocable change instigated by Christ.<sup>178</sup> This approach combined discussion of liturgical seasons with legends of saints whose feasts appeared in that season. In this manner, a single narrative flow was constructed from the double cycle of liturgical time.<sup>179</sup>

The *vitae* and liturgical commentary offer a mixture of doctrinal theory and popular legends which reflect the breadth of religious experience in the Latin West in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. On the one hand, a series of reflections on Good Friday have the dry, considered tone of a scholastic treatise.<sup>180</sup> On the other, the colourful stories which appear absurd to the modern

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<sup>176</sup> Mulchahey, p. 420

<sup>177</sup> J. Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and the Golden Legend*, trans. L. G. Cochrane, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2014, pp. 100-01

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179

<sup>179</sup> This approach was not deemed satisfactory by subsequent preachers, who desired preaching aids that treated the temporal and sanctoral cycles separately. Guy of Châtres, abbot of Saint Denis in the early fourteenth century, produced his own hagiographical compilation, the *Sanctilogium siue speculum legendarum*, which divided the seasons and feasts in this manner. It was however based on large sections of both the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, another eminent Dominican. Guy and the *Sanctilogium* are discussed by C. Mews in 'Re-structuring the Golden Legend in the Early Fourteenth Century: The *Sanctilogium* of Guy of Châtres, abbot of Saint-Denis', *Revue Benedictin*, June 2010, vol. 120, no. 1, pp. 129-44

<sup>180</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 53, 'The Passion of Our Lord', p. 203

reader reflect the audience of the friars: an audience steeped in the older communal piety, focussed on wonders and practical favours.<sup>181</sup> This tendency encouraged the stress of Dominican preachers on the virtues rather than miracles of the saints from the 1230s onward.<sup>182</sup> The efforts of the friars were to instil a clerical piety within the popular religious culture. In the world of images and relics, the *Legenda*'s narratives harness the common belief in Christian materiality to the contemplative, systematic piety of the Order of Preachers.

## II) Similarities between Images and Relics

The blurring of the image and relic in the popular mind was most visible in the deeds of healing attributed to both. The curing of sickness was an especially common type of miracle, effected by the intercession of a saint through contact with their relics.

### *The Cult of Healing*

St. Nicholas of Myra's first miracle came when holy oil flowed from the head of his corpse, and holy water from his feet, through the tomb. 'Even today a holy oil issues from his members and brings health to many'.<sup>183</sup> One day, the oil stopped flowing when the rightful bishop was driven out of Myra; on his return, the oil resumed its flow. In this mentality, miracles are conditioned by the deference to authority. They are a reward for obedience. The ability of the saint to work

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<sup>181</sup> See J.C. Bledsoe, 'Practical Hagiography: James of Voragine's *Sermones* and *Vita* on St Margaret of Antioch', *Medieval Sermon Studies*, vol. 57, 2013, pp. 29-48. In this sermon from outside the *Legenda Aurea*, Jacobus de Voragine dismisses St. Margaret of Antioch's bursting from the stomach of the dragon after being swallowed as '*apocryphum et frivolum*'. This particular example goes beyond moralising to scepticism of the sort that the *Legend*'s detractors applauded.

<sup>182</sup> A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1997, pp. 530-1

<sup>183</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 3, 'St. Nicholas', p. 25

healing miracles brought pilgrims to Myra, but later, after his body was seized and taken to Bari, the miracles followed him there. The qualities of healing were a fundamental practical favour which animated popular religion, and his patronage of merchants made the saint popular in a specifically practical sense.<sup>184</sup> Yet the connection to St. Nicholas's benevolence in his own life drew a link between virtuous acts and the seeking of favours. In this manner, the more materialist thrust of folk piety could be reconciled with the official emphasis on good works.

If the cult of St. Nicholas was one of the sacred being transported, the Procession of St. Gregory tells a story of the profane outside world being transformed. When the plague struck Rome, St. Gregory held a procession around the streets of the city, including the image of the Virgin painted by St. Luke kept in St. Maria Maggiore. The image dispelled the putrid odour in the air, bringing about a 'wonderful serenity and purity in the air' and angels could be heard singing the antiphon *Regina Caeli*, associated with the season of Easter:

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia,  
For he whom you merited to bear, alleluia,  
Has risen, as he said, alleluia...

The final line, '*ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia*' ('Pray for us to God, alleluia') was added by Gregory. Instead of attempting to escape evil, Gregory brings out a tangible point of the sacred to confront the forces of darkness. The putrid city becomes a type of paradise where resurrection is proclaimed. In both cases, the image is a conduit of divine favours in the same manner as a relic.

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<sup>184</sup> P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 115. Geary discusses this 'piety' in his analysis of how theft could be a sacred act.

The manner in which the image and relic could either blur, or serve distinct functions, can be understood in the visual similarities and differences between reliquaries and various types of image.

### *Ambiguous Categorisations in the Text*

There were occasions where the image could not be easily disentangled from the relic. In a reflection of scholastic discourse, the image and relic could converge, as in the case of the crucifix, which both resembled the body of Christ and contained a fragment of the True Cross.

The chapter in the *Legenda* for the Exaltation contains another story of desecration avenged, which delights in the intermixing of categories. It tells of an incident in Syria where a Christian hung a picture of Christ in a room subsequently rented by a Jew. The tenant's guest proceeded to tear the image down and pierce it with a lance, in a repetition of the Good Friday narrative. The image bled, the blood was collected in phials, and it was used in synagogues to heal the sick. Some of the phials were kept as relics, one came into the possession of the bishop, who in its honour, introduced a feast on 27 November.<sup>185</sup>

The narrative offers three different types of sacred nestling in one another. Within a chapter devoted to that greatest of relics, an image-miracle is to be found, which in turn yields another relic. Within this narrative, the categorisations drawn upon by Thomas Aquinas are clear. The Cross may receive *latria*, because it passes worship on.<sup>186</sup> In an extension of the theory, an image becomes a point of transit for the matter of Christ's blood. It offers a clear statement of the

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<sup>185</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 3, 'St. Nicholas', p. 170

<sup>186</sup> Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 25, a. 4

complex theory of *latría* for lay appreciation. In this capacity, the *Legenda* reflects the mendicant desire to instruct the flock in traditional doctrine. There is no clear reference to the Cross in this story. It may simply be a dramatic tale which needed to be placed somewhere in a striking, easily remembered sequence. But it is highly likely that there is an implicit connection between images of Christ crucified and an attack on the person of Christ.<sup>187</sup> These casual thematic links show the subconscious connection between images and desecration which distinguished it from the relic.

It is unlikely that such narratives had any serious impact on the faith of the laity. The acquisition of sanctity could come either from association, with its echoes of sympathetic magic in the popular mind, or the ability of relics to connect heaven with earth in the Chain of Being.<sup>188</sup> As a series of intermixed sacred categories, the image was equivalent to the organic jumble of the church, where reliquaries, statues, and altars combined different categories of sacred object.<sup>189</sup> It is also perhaps evidence for the association of the relic with its reliquary. If a remnant of the sacred was housed within a depiction of itself, then the two obviously had a connection.<sup>190</sup> The result of this was to graft some of the sacred onto depictions of the image. In this manner, the image and relic could blend in popular perception, but without any complication.

### ***Materiality in Action***

The image narratives found in the *Legenda Aurea* were not the creation of Jacobus de Voragine. They were the product of several centuries of Christian folklore, and were well established before

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<sup>187</sup> Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time*, pp. 128-9

<sup>188</sup> Walker Bynum, pp. 234-5

<sup>189</sup> Recht, *Believing and Seeing*, pp. 82-3

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-3

their compilation.<sup>191</sup> Indeed, the fantastical nature of the miracles and etymologies in the *Legenda Aurea* would later lead to it being seen as a quintessential specimen of popular superstition. Humanist, Protestant, and Tridentine critiques in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would attack the *Legenda* as a prime specimen of credulity. The compilation of miracles without any distinction of true miracles from subsequent accretions was considered a demonstration of the intellectual poverty of the late medieval laity, and the corrupt cult of saints which needed pruning.<sup>192</sup>

Yet the *Legenda* also displays the attributes of Dominican piety. The etymologies, where various explanations for the saints' names are proffered, merit defence by Jacques Le Goff as being primarily speculative, rather than definite assertions.<sup>193</sup> They are signs of inquisitive thought, not boorish credulity. Yet as discussed above, the systematised retelling of older tales which blend categories of sacred object affirm one of the deepest aspects of Christianity.<sup>194</sup> The idea that material objects might be conduits of sacred power is an implicit reference to the saving power of Christ's own body.<sup>195</sup> While the friars themselves did not consider the specific properties of images to work miracles, they held in common with the laity the ability to see sanctified objects as somehow linked to Christ by association.<sup>196</sup> Both the friars and their flocks saw sanctity as

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<sup>191</sup> C. Erickson, *The Medieval Vision: Essays in Perception*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 80-1

<sup>192</sup> Bartlett, p. 12

<sup>193</sup> Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time*, pp. 35-6

<sup>194</sup> Walker Bynum, pp. 34-5

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19

somehow connected to sacred objects by association.

For the very reason that they were ill-defined, image miracles could easily blend with relic miracles in the Dominican mind. Their categorisations of sacred objects did not include the image, and this allowed imagery to blend inconspicuously with the relic. It was as if a relic was simply a physical repository of sacred power.<sup>197</sup> Ambiguous categorisations allowed for imagery to take on a proxy power, despite the absence of a clearly articulated theology surrounding the icon. This ambiguity, the intellectual inheritance of the friars, therefore was not in conflict with the broad strokes of popular piety. Both the older system of learning and the older piety were content to give little close analysis to these topics. Furthermore, the conservative nature of Dominican scholarship made any overt alterations of the existing tales unthinkable. These affirmations of Christian materiality at its most vernacular were a vital part of affirming the Lateran project. However, in other miracles, the newer piety of the friars could be affirmed subtly.

### **III) Differences between Images and Relics**

Although images had some similarities to relics, they did have one remarkable difference: their ability to be desecrated. There were ceremonies which were outlawed by the Fourth Lateran Council. Even so the *humiliatio*, where relics were placed on the church floor to punish saints for not gaining favours remained a legal practice until the Second Council of Lyon (1274).<sup>198</sup> No miracle stories involve a sceptic attacking a saint's bones. Yet, an image of the saint was capable

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p. 117

<sup>198</sup> Bartlett, pp. 100-01

of being defaced. An image of Christ might be attacked, but various miracles asserted His triumph in the end.

These miracles served two distinct purposes. On the one hand, by including a miracle in a hagiography, emphases on Lateran doctrine and order could be reaffirmed in the face of scepticism. On the other, images, which always included a saint's face, offered a personal face to devotion, and accordingly emphasised the themes in Dominican piety: the life of Christ and the internal conscience.

### *Narratives of Desecration*

The *Legenda* contains a number of tales involving desecration of sacred objects. The preoccupation with desecration in these stories shows the influence of the reforms following the Fourth Lateran Council on Dominican preaching. These tales of desecration also reflect hostility to religious outsiders, whose refusal to conform to the Lateran statement of faith is reflected in tales of them defacing depictions of Christ. They also reinforce respect for sacred objects and liturgical order, reflecting Lateran canons on the fabric of the church building and reliquaries.

The entry for St. Nicholas of Myra offers the most dramatic example of this kind of narrative. A Jew, seeing the miracles of the saint, kept a statue of St. Nicholas in his house as a talisman to guard his goods. When he was away, the house was robbed, and the Jew retaliated by smashing the statue. The Christian thieves, meanwhile, were haunted by dreams of a bruised, beaten Nicholas, and returned the goods, causing the Jew to be baptised.<sup>199</sup> In this miracle the theme of

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<sup>199</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 3, 'St. Nicholas', pp. 25-6

authority is continued. The image is a proxy for the genuine authority – the vision of a bishop beaten black and blue clearly links themes of desecration to the violation of authority. It also trades on the concern to convert Jews. As in Boccaccio's *Decameron* a century later, the miracle shows the concern with which the episcopate viewed Christian misdemeanours as undermining Christianity's claim to truth.<sup>200</sup> The theme of converting Jews is tied to the concern with presenting a positive example.

A similar story is found in the entry for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross concerning the return of the True Cross to Jerusalem in 638. Although the entry consists chiefly of the Cross as relic, it also contains a tale where the theme of desecration is explored. The story concerns a Jew who, on seeing an image of Christ, struck it on the throat. Subsequently, the image bled over his face and beard. The Jew then seized the image, threw it down, and fled. Apprehended by a Christian, he was accused of murder, and it becomes clear that by attacking the image, he attacked Christ himself.<sup>201</sup> The man in question was subsequently baptised, and the wound remained on the image from that day on. There is an apparent blurring of image and relic: the image might be a crucifix which contains fragments of the True Cross, but by having the figure of Christ on it, the object becomes far more personal. By having the physical resemblance to Christ, the narrative laces the ultimate victory with the horror of seeing Christ insulted.

A third and final narrative miracle juxtaposes sin and sanctity. The story of St. Mary of Egypt offers an encounter with the image of the Virgin, representing saintly purity juxtaposed with

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<sup>200</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G.H. McWilliam, London, Penguin, 1972, pp. 84-6

<sup>201</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 2, Chapter 137, 'The Exaltation of the Holy Cross' p. 170

human sinfulness. Mary, a prostitute, motivated by curiosity about the Holy Land, journeys to Jerusalem, and tries to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to adore the true Cross. However, an invisible force will not let her enter. After a brief struggle, she becomes fully conscious of her sins. Seeing an image of the Virgin on the Church wall, she prays before the image to the Virgin, promising to repent. After this, she was able to cross the threshold, and subsequently lived a life of extreme asceticism.<sup>202</sup> In a sense, this miracle could be considered an example where the line between relic and image is blurred. It is ultimately the Holy Sepulchre, with its association with the body of Christ, that Mary is barred from. But the image of the Virgin acts as a cypher for unity with God, and acts as a symbolic doorkeeper to the Holy Sepulchre. Before desecrating the site, Mary is confronted by the image. It is a personal, visual presence that makes her conscious of her sin. This sin is a kind of ritual impurity which threatens to desecrate the most sacred site in the world. This is connected to the new emphasis in thirteenth-century church reform on respect for church buildings, relics, and decorous behaviour during services. At the same time, it is the image which offers a point of recourse and repentance. Because it depicts a person, the image personifies personal guilt, and the possibility of forgiveness.

### *Wonder and Devotion*

Respect for sacred objects was also related to another theme in Dominican analysis - the moralised understanding of sacred wonders. Instead of being merely a physical object which worked favours, the friars were keen to emphasise a form of Christianity which stressed the events of Christ's life and a personal sense of devotion.<sup>203</sup> St. Dominic approached the crucifix and the altar

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<sup>202</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 56, 'St. Mary of Egypt', p. 228

<sup>203</sup> Tugwell, 'The Nine Ways of Prayer', pp. 94-5

not as mere outlets of divine power, although this was undeniably important.<sup>204</sup> Rather, he sought to meditate on the Passion, just as he scourged himself to understand Christ's suffering rather than merely to undertake a meritorious act.

The Dominican emphasis on personal devotion formed a profound alternative to popular perceptions of sanctity. Miracles in hagiography, in Jacques Le Goff's analysis, form part of a continuum with fantastic tales of a secular nature, such as distant lands and creatures. It is in this capacity that objects which repel evil formed part of practical wonder-working piety.<sup>205</sup> Exorcisms and blessings were not contrary to Lateran decrees, but the Dominicans did seek to supplement this recourse to wonders with a more profound piety. The narrative of the Veil of Veronica shows the way in which an old narrative may be shown to have devotional qualities.

It is at this point that we return to the tale told at the beginning of this thesis. We have seen how in the *Legenda's* entry for Good Friday, the emperor's intimate, Volusian, met a woman called Veronica, a follower of Christ who wants to have a painting of Christ so she could have 'the solace of his image', and miraculously has Christ's face imprinted on her veil.<sup>206</sup> The tale ends with the cloth being brought back to Rome for the Emperor Tiberius, who is cured of sickness by it. This tale was the basis for subsequent images of Christ's face, popular by the thirteenth century (*fig.* 3). As said originally, this tale embodies the subtle re-interpretation of miracles by the

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96

<sup>205</sup> J. Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 31-42

<sup>206</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 53, 'The Passion of Our Lord', vol. 1, p. 212

Dominicans, and the role that imagery had to play in this enterprise.

Originally, Veronica was the *hemorrhissa*, or haemorrhaging woman, who touched the hem of Christ's cloak and was cured. In the fourth century exegesis of Ephraim the Syrian, her cloth to wipe Christ's bloodied face mirrored the old legend.<sup>207</sup> In Byzantine piety, the Veil of Veronica was a proof for the use of icons; in contrast to idols 'made by human hands', Christ miraculously left His image on earth.<sup>208</sup> Indeed, Laura Skinnebach takes this line in assuming that Veronica and Volusian were consoled merely by the wonder-working aspect of the cloth. Such an interpretation ignores Veronica's insistence that the image required true piety.<sup>209</sup> However, it was not until the 1160s that the German ballad *Dit is Veronica* gave an emotional dimension to the legend, where Veronica longs for Christ's picture, where he only prints His face on the cloth that she gives him. The version where the imprint occurs on the *via dolorosa* is to be found in Roger d'Argenteuil's *Bible en françois*, compiled in prose in the early thirteenth century.<sup>210</sup> This underscores the power of the image. But the *Legenda Aurea* articulates Veronica's desire even more forcefully, for we hear the tale from her lips, rather than a detached account in the third person.

Furthermore, her motivations for wiping Christ's face are absent in the original narrative; she is simply there and wipes His face. For once, however, Jacobus de Voragine does not seem to

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<sup>207</sup> Kuryluk, *Veronica and Her Cloth*, p. 91

<sup>208</sup> L. Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978, pp. 60-2.

<sup>209</sup> L.K. Skinnebach, 'The Solace of His Image: Images and Presence in Late Devotional Practice' in H. Laugerud (ed.), *Instruments of Devotion: The Practices and Objects of Religious Piety from the Late Middle Ages to the 20th Century*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 2007, pp.189-90

<sup>210</sup> Kuryluk., pp. 123-4

indulge in etymologies, notwithstanding Veronica's name signifying her *vera icona*: True Icon.<sup>211</sup> Jacques Le Goff makes no mention of it. Yet this entry is highly significant, because the addition of Veronica's desire for 'the solace of His image' turns the miracle from a legendary 'marvel' into a far more personal experience, the experience which St. Dominic had before the crucifix.

### ***Conclusion***

While it had little place in Dominican studies, the image had a powerful potential in the preaching and hagiography of the friars. Jacobus de Voragine, whose compilation of hagiographies formed a significant text within the Dominican Order, largely confined himself to miracles surrounding relics. Both images and relics are the subject of narratives where sacred objects work wonders and heal, drawing on the contemporary taste for miracle-working objects. This appetite for physical objects reflected the doctrine of the Incarnation, a doctrine at the heart of Dominican preaching. Having taken human form and having atoned for the sins of the world on the Cross, Christ brought sanctity into a fallen world. This had implications for both imagery and for relics. Because Christ had risen from the dead and promised it to the saints, the earthly remains of a saint had a certain sanctity while they awaited resurrection. This sanctity rubbed off onto the objects surrounding them. A reliquary was a vessel for grace, and an image was a depiction of it. Theology took concrete form in these wondrous objects, even if much of the piety surrounding it seemed absurd if not downright superstitious.

The image miracles that are recorded in the *Legenda* show the ability of images to elicit a personal response, and thereby personalise devotion. The image miracles show a preoccupation with desecration, for the reason that the attack on an image was more than mere vandalism. It was an

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., pp.63-4

attack on persons, rather than mere objects. The ruined images of Christ and St. Nicholas could be tied to doctrinal disputes about the reality of the Incarnation. In the task of eradicating heresy, the image gave a personal face to sacred objects which were not necessarily present in a chase for relics. God was personalised, and individual scepticism was tied directly to a repudiation of Christ.

However, image miracles also show a gentler form of piety. The personal nature of imagery offered an avenue to turn popular piety away from an exclusive focus on practical favours, and toward the more 'spiritual' business of morality and salvation. Personal conscience and devotion could be heightened when sanctity was not simply an object which contained supernatural powers, but the example of Christ suffering and dying on the Cross. In this aspect, the hagiographies of the *Legenda Aurea* reinterpret well-known narratives to emphasise morality and salvation, as well as wonder.

The Dominicans taught that relics and images were both aspects of the broad spectrum of Christian materiality, where Christ's incarnation infused holiness into tangible objects. However, they opposed very different varieties of Christianity which either associated the physical world with evil, or at least treated the entire system of materiality with profound suspicion. The Cathars and Waldensians offered a counter-faith of immateriality that the Dominicans treated as the complete inversion of orthodox Christianity. We now turn to toward Dominican attitudes to these beliefs.



# III: *'Noctium Phantasmata'*: Themes of Idolatry in Dominican Discourses on Heresy



## *Introduction*

The images of Christ and His saints played an increasing role during the formative century of the Dominican Order. They were important as physical reminders of Christ's incarnation, and as reminders of His Passion. However, this cult of materiality was challenged in the thirteenth century by various sects which diminished or entirely removed the physicality of Christ's presence. As inquisitors, the Dominicans were highly involved in the eradication of the Waldensians and Cathars, who challenged their conceptions of Christian materiality. This chapter will argue that Jacobus de Voragine used existing tropes on *idolatry* or worship of non-Christian images to portray heretics as devious and ghostly. Depictions of idolatry in the *Legenda Aurea* often use the device of demons inhabiting idols, which flee when the image is exorcised. The themes of trickery and evasiveness are also found in Bernard Gui's *Inquisitor's Manual*, depicting both the simplicity of Cathar and Waldensian ritual, as well as their reticence when interrogated. This chapter will show how selected Dominican authors instinctively drew from a reservoir of vocabulary which conflated immateriality with the qualities associated with ghosts and demons. It underlines the cult of Christian materiality by treating sacred matter as good, and rejecting the idea that matter is evil.

The first section of the chapter will examine the Dominican discourse on idolatry. Strictly speaking, idolatry involved the images of 'false gods'. Non-Christian gods were believed to exist,

but as demons rather than gods. To look at definitions and analyses of idolatry within Dominican communities, the section will use the passages on worship in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. Then, to explore how these ideas were articulated to the community, it will go to Aquinas's *Collationes in decem praeceptis*. Having examined the popular articulation of these views, the section will then examine how these ideas also occurred in an inquisitorial context. Bernard Gui's *Inquisitor's Manual* shows the confrontation between material and dualist conceptions of Christianity, as defined by a friar whose mission was to police the frontiers of post-Lateran orthodoxy.

From considering the definitions of idolatry in Dominican discourse, the second section of the chapter will then turn to narratives exploring idolatry in the *Legenda Aurea*, to see how Dominican thought was undergirded by popular narrative. Repeated tales show idols as inhabited by demons, which flee the statue as soon as they are exorcised. This establishes the idol's demonic inhabitant as fleeting and ghostly, not embodied in matter as Christ and His saints are, but easily exorcised from the object it inhabits. Finally, these tales will be contextualised with Bernard Gui's concerns around divination and sorcery which appear in his *Inquisitor's Manual*. This guide to prosecuting heretics shows how evasiveness was regarded as a suspicious quality, in contrast to the Dominican taste for clearly formulated statements of belief. These common themes show the manner in which idolatry and heresy were discussed in similar terms in Dominican writing, in terms of evasiveness and hiddenness.

Having examined the idea of a demonic 'presence' in idols, the chapter will then turn discussing the themes of evasiveness and hiddenness in false religions. This third and final section will use

less overtly 'supernatural' idol narratives in the *Legenda Aurea*. and instead associate idols with the stereotypes which the Dominicans assigned to heretics. It will begin by analysing depictions of Diana, pagan goddess of the hunt, as a forest demon. By the thirteenth century, hagiography depicted Diana as a demon, sometimes as Satan himself. This was because in the process of Christianisation, centuries before, the cult of Diana had proven especially resilient in rural areas. Her traditional habitat, the forest, was a dark, frightening place. It was symbolically marginal to Christianity, a religion which preferred to associate itself with light. These motifs associated with Diana predated the Dominicans, allowing the friars to think of heresy as a similarly shadowy phenomenon. These terms of discussion were drawn upon by Bernard Gui in noting the difficulty in getting straightforward answers out of recalcitrant heretics. The marginal existence of heretics by the early 1300s reinforced the notion of unorthodox practices as secretive and devious, in contrast to the public nature of the Church that the Dominicans served.

### **I) The Dominican Approach to Idolatry**

Although they undertook a diverse variety of intellectual and pastoral activities, the Dominican friars are best known today for their roles as scholars and inquisitors. This is partly rooted in their historical context. The Order developed in response to an upsurge in heresy, and its mission was shaped by the ecclesiastical concerns that emanated from the Fourth Lateran Council. The Dominican mission was partly one of preaching and teaching traditional beliefs, but also of persecuting heresy.<sup>212</sup> In their definitions of idolatry, the Dominicans worked within their traditional educational programme, using biblical and patristic sources to fit heresy within their

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<sup>212</sup> Hamilton, p. 36

intellectual paradigm.<sup>213</sup> In referring to Catharism as ‘Neo-Manichaeism’, for example, the inquisitor Bernard Gui was able to categorise this modern heresy within the range of historic heresies known to the early Church Father St. Augustine in the fourth century. Use of traditional terms fitted new problems within a traditional frame of reference. In this manner, the term ‘idolatry’, so widely known from the psalmody which occupied the life of any religious Order, could be understood to circumscribe broader activities which threatened the Church.

An ‘idol’ (*idolum*) could be understood to refer to the image of a non-Christian god, or of a demon, based on its appearance in the Vulgate.<sup>214</sup> To understand medieval interpretations of scripture, it is important to understand the nuances of how the Vulgate text was arranged.<sup>215</sup> The original Hebrew text of the Ten Commandments was written as a single paragraph, leaving the division into ten clauses to ecclesiastical tradition.<sup>216</sup> The Vulgate, or Latin text of the Bible standard in the Middle Ages, included as one commandment the two commandments common in the Hebrew text.<sup>217</sup> In the latter, the First Commandment requires that Israel ‘have no strange gods before Me’ (The God of Israel). The second is that Israel, and subsequently the Church should not make ‘...a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore

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<sup>213</sup> Mulchahey, pp. 40-1

<sup>214</sup> Camille, p. 30

<sup>215</sup> Y.S.L. Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes: Biblical Studies and Ethics*, Plymouth, Sheed and Ward, 2012, p. 26

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44

them, nor serve them'.<sup>218</sup>

Idols were also known as *simulacra*, or false likenesses.<sup>219</sup> This latter term would have been well-known from the fifth psalm of Sunday Vespers.<sup>220</sup>

The idols of the gentiles are silver and gold, the work of men's hands,

They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes, but they see not,

They have ears, but they hear not, noses but they smell not,

They have hands, but they feel not, feet but they walk not

Neither speak they through their throat.

Let them that make them be like unto them, and all such as trust in them.<sup>221</sup>

The idea of falseness, whether in false images or false beliefs, could be applied to the heretics whom the friars understood as enemies, both in inquisitor's tribunals, and in theological discussion.

### *Idolatry in the Summa Theologiæ*

Within the scholastic tradition, much of the discussion of idolatry turned on the nature of worship. In particular, the term 'adoration', used for the kind of worship wrongly given to idols,

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<sup>218</sup> 'Non facies tibi sculptile, neque omnem similitudinem quæ est in cælo desuper et quæ in terra deorsum nec eorum quæ sunt in aquis sub terra. Non adorabis ea, neque coles'. Exodus 20.4-5

<sup>219</sup> Chan, p. 31

<sup>220</sup> J. Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, p. 160

<sup>221</sup> The positioning of this psalm in the Dominican vespers is found in *Breviarium juxta ritum sacri Ordinis prædicatorum*, Mechelin, Archdiocese of Mechelin, 1850, p. 78

had a complex meaning. The word can mean either physical homage or interior *latria*. When Bathsheba visits the ailing King David in 1 Kings 1.16, the Vulgate text says that she ‘bowed herself, and worshipped the king’ (*Inclinavit se Bethsabee, et adoravit regem*). However, the word *adoratio* is less important if the prohibition on strange gods and graven images is read as a single commandment. In this arrangement, the texts on ‘graven things’ seems to refer only to ‘strange gods’.<sup>222</sup> The result is a strict monotheism which does not allow for other gods, yet restricting idolatry to the worship of images of false gods, not the *dulia* of images of the saints, or *latria* of images of Christ.

Thomas Aquinas’s discussion of idolatry is clearly categorised within the *Summa Theologiæ* alongside other forms of deformed religious observance. The subject of adoration (*latria*) is discussed by Aquinas in the *Secunda Secundae Partis*, under the heading of ‘Religion’. This means, according to Aquinas, ‘offering service and ceremonial rites to a superior nature that men call divine’. Adoration is therefore a ritual and liturgical apparatus rather than religious belief in itself.<sup>223</sup> This leads on to the discussion and classification of various types of ritual acts. Aquinas envisions two ‘vices contrary to religion’. The first is Superstition, or giving honour to God ‘in an undue mode’. Superstition may consist of imported pagan practices, remnants of Jewish worship, or other practices which express incorrect ideas.<sup>224</sup> Idolatry therefore fits within this category.

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<sup>222</sup> The Iconoclasm which occurred in Byzantium had the commandments on false gods and idols in separate commandments. This defined idolatry without reference to false gods and implicating images of Christ and the saints. In this aspect, the Byzantine iconoclasm was similar to the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

<sup>223</sup> Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 81, a. 1

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 92, a. 2

According to Aquinas, idolatry is ‘giving worship to a creature’, or worshipping an object created by God rather than its Creator. It is ‘the greatest sin’, emanating from human pride and vanity, directly tied to the rebellion of Lucifer. However, it is in the discussion of how idolatry is superstitious that many of Aquinas’s opinions on its nature are expressed. An idol might either symbolise the creature being worshipped, or be believed to receive worship in its own right. In this manner, there is an echo of the Byzantine idea that the icon passes *latria* on to God. Likewise, idolatry may be either the worship of a tangible object other than God, or a false deity that the idol represents. In the case of idolatry, this false god would be a demon, a fallen angel created by God. This analysis adheres to Dominican traditions of conservative patristic exegesis. Aquinas’s study treats the legendary sage Hermes Trismegistus as an authority on the subject, with the claim that sorcerers could make statues move by invoking demons. This essentially magical perspective was combined with Augustine’s extensive critique of paganism in *The City of God* as trust in malevolent forces.

Idolatry is therefore defined by Aquinas within a field of additional categories of incorrect worship. The adoration of false gods is the supreme form of false worship, but various other forms of incorrect religion are also implicated. This analysis informs the popularisation of such teaching in Aquinas’s preaching to the laity.

### ***Idolatry in Catechical Instruction***

Aquinas’s analysis in the *Summa* was an ‘introduction’ to theology. It was aimed to educate students on the nature of idolatry, rather than provide moral formation in the front line of the

Dominican mission to the laity.<sup>225</sup> Meanwhile, the *Collationes in decem praeceptis*, an exposition on the Ten Commandments, was composed to guide the laity in the essential outline of Christian doctrine and morals. It drew on similar concepts to the *Summa*, explaining doctrine for the laity, although the *Collationes*, like later works of its nature, was re-formulated as a scholarly treatise. Composed in 1273 as Lenten catechesis, the homilies condemn the worship of other gods.<sup>226</sup> Unlike the *Summa*, however, the *Collationes* addresses breaches of the First Commandment which did might occur among the otherwise-observant laity:<sup>227</sup>

Even now there are many who transgress this Commandment: all such as practise divinations and fortune-telling. Such things, according to St. Augustine, cannot be done without some kind of pact with the devil. 'I would not that you should be made partakers with devils.'

This form of reasoning reflects some of the methods used in the *Summa Theologiae*. In the *Summa*, Aquinas argues for the unlawfulness of practicing magic. This includes fortune-telling and good-luck charms involving biblical texts.<sup>228</sup> However, this method of searching for all possible implicit meanings is also integral to the structure of the *Collationes*. The homily is an expounding on the Ten Commandments, and such an endeavour required a detailed list of the various ways in which each commandment could be broken. The instruction on the Sixth Commandment, for example,

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<sup>225</sup> Weisheipl, p. 133

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., pp. 402-43

<sup>227</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Collationes in decem praeceptis*, trans. J. B. Collins, Baltimore, Dominican Province of St. Joseph, 1939, a. 3, <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/TenCommandments.htm>, last accessed 3 January 2016

<sup>228</sup> Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 96, a. 2

also condemns fornication, because ‘adultery’ is understood as a shorthand for varied sexual offences.<sup>229</sup> However, this mode of discourse is also influenced by the traditionalism of Dominican scholarship, which sought to discuss contemporary issues within traditional categories. Idolatry was one of the Ten Commandments, but offered a space in which to discuss matters of incorrect attitudes to the supernatural. By the thirteenth century, there were few contemporary objects which could be considered ‘idols’, largely due to previous ecclesiastical campaigns. The overt ritual signs of paganism had been the first manifestations of the old religion to go in the first millennium.<sup>230</sup> For this reason, the main concern of Aquinas in the *Collationes* has less to do with worship of pagan gods than the existing remnants of pre-Christian practices. Traditional taxonomies were utilised holistically to discuss contemporary issues.

### *The Inquisitor’s Manual of Bernard Gui*

The *Collationes* show how a particular sin could be defined more broadly, and how idolatry could be redefined to include un-Christian religious observances and beliefs. These instructions focussed on Christians within the approved ecclesiastical fold, but the focus on incorrect ritual is most noticeable in efforts to regulate heretics whose beliefs were at variance with approved belief. Just as the friars might construe fortune-telling as evidence of idolatry, so they were quick to understand the habits of heretics as evidence of a breach of the First Commandment. The *Inquisitor’s Manual* of Bernard Gui described the beliefs and practices of various groups of heretics in the early fourteenth century, with instructions on how to trap them. Gui rose to prominence within the Dominican Order as an inquisitor in Toulouse, then spending his final years as Bishop

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<sup>229</sup> Aquinas, *Collationes.*, a. 8

<sup>230</sup> Camille, p. 197

of Lodève.<sup>231</sup> His work dealt variously with Cathars, Waldensians, ‘The False Apostles’, and Beguins. He also devoted a smaller area of space to the practices of Jews and various sorcerers.

Gui devotes a considerable amount of his book to discussing the worship as well as the beliefs of heretics.<sup>232</sup> Gui begins with the ‘Neo-Manicheans’ or Cathars, who were supposed to believe that an evil God created the world and trapped mankind in a cycle of rebirth while masquerading as the God of the Old Testament.<sup>233</sup> Christ was the good god who offered salvation in the form of release from the cycle, freed from the corruption of physical matter.<sup>234</sup> Gui spends more time, however, in detailing the ‘neo-Manichean’ liturgy. The Cathars observed forty-three fast-days per year. The first extended from the feast of St. Brice on 13 November to Christmas, the second from Quinquagesima Sunday to Easter, and the third from Pentecost to the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul on 28 July. The first and last weeks of fasting seasons were restricted to bread and water. For the remainder, bread and water was only required for three days per week.

Gui makes these detailed observations while analysing how the Cathars altered the fundamental meaning of various ecclesiastical customs. Fasting was not just a denial of self in imitation of Christ, as the Dominicans taught. Products such as meat, milk, and eggs were contaminated because they originated from sex, the mechanism through which the cycle of rebirth was maintained. Cathar fasting was undertaken as an expression of belief in rebirth that differed from

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<sup>231</sup> Guenée, pp. 44, 70.

<sup>232</sup> Bernard Gui, *The Inquisitor's Guide*, p. 39

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

orthodox notions of Heaven and Hell.

The fundamental approach taken to the Cathars by Bernard Gui is to understand cultic practices as signs of heretical belief. Just as Aquinas had widened idolatry to include improper attitudes to supernatural forces, so Gui had made a broader, casual connection between distorted patterns of worship and heresy. In this regard, the inquisitor was part of a Dominican pattern which can also be detected in Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda Aurea*.

## II) The Demon-Inhabited Idol

There exist a number of narratives in the *Legenda Aurea* which depict idols as dwelling spaces of evil spirits. Piety emanating from the Ransom Theory of salvation may have contributed to this emphasis in some parts of the *Legenda*. Cyril Mango's analysis of Byzantine approaches to idolatry stresses the appeal of Christianity as the victor over a demon-infested world. The *daemons*, who inhabited all elements of nature and who constantly needed appeasing, could be simply expelled by the Church's rites, following Christ's miracles in healing the sick by expelling demons.<sup>235</sup> These sorts of narratives were appropriated by the Dominicans in showing scenes of idolatry to a populace which at least nominally adhered to Christianity.

### *Narratives of Demonic Presence*

Two tales exist in the *Legenda Aurea* which depict idols as dwelling-places for demons. The tales of St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew occur in India, sufficiently far from Christendom for imaginative elaboration. St. Thomas, forced to worship the sun god, invokes Christ to destroy

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<sup>235</sup> C. Mango, 'New Religion, Old Culture' in C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 105-110

the idol, and commands: ‘O demon lurking inside, to destroy this idol’. The statue subsequently melts ‘like wax’ and provokes the priests to martyr Thomas. This suggests that demons were believed to inhabit images, in a diabolical parody of transubstantiation.<sup>236</sup> In like manner, St. Bartholomew goes to a temple in India with an idol called Astaroth, who apparently cured ill, but in reality ceased to inflict ill upon its worshippers. Astaroth ceases to work wonders, however, when Bartholomew arrives. They proceeded to another town where an idol by the name of Berith was worshipped. The people ask the idols why they no longer work wonders as they once did. Berith blames ‘the apostle Bartholomew’, who by God purged the province of its gods. Berith even describes Bartholomew’s appearance, but the apostle is not found for two days, when the demon in a possessed man begs Bartholomew for mercy, who then expels him.<sup>237</sup>

The names of these idols suggest the link between polytheism and the demonic. Astaroth is a Latinisation of Astoreth, a Phoenician goddess mentioned in the Old Testament (1 Kings 1.15). Likewise, Berith is a Canaanite deity whose temple is destroyed in the Book of Judges.<sup>238</sup> The *Legenda* is dutifully observing a tradition of Christian demonology that identified non-Christian gods with demons. ‘Not believing’ in other gods does not necessarily mean that they do not exist, but that they are malevolent spirits usurping the role of God.

Bartholomew eventually finds the king, begins to explain Christian doctrine to him, and promises to show the king ‘his god bound in chains’ if he is baptised. The next day, the god cries out in pain on being offered sacrifices. This is consistent with Bartholomew’s explanation that just as the

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<sup>236</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, ‘St. Thomas, Apostle’, pp. 34-5

<sup>237</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 2, Chapter 123, ‘St. Bartholomew’, p. 110

<sup>238</sup> J. B. Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1972, p. 184

devil conquered Adam, 'made of virgin earth', so he should be conquered by Christ, the son of a virgin.<sup>239</sup>

### *Defining Presences*

Despite the lurid tales around St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, there was no consistent authority on what an idol contained. In Christian teachings of idolatry, it was sufficient that to even outwardly pay homage to the likeness of another god was the ultimate sin, the betrayal of the First Commandment. However, the Fourth Lateran Council offered no definitions of idols and idolatry: its decrees were preoccupied with categorising the sacred.

Within the narrative of the *Legenda Aurea*, there is a similarity between the Eucharist and the Idol. Both were believed to contain 'presences', whether God or a demon. However, the modes of presence were fundamentally different. In transubstantiation, the Host became Christ's body, with simply the external accidents of bread. The opposite occurs however, in the narratives of idolatry. The demon is exorcised by a saint's power, often destroying the idol in the process. Furthermore, the idol is not *the* demon, but simply a vessel containing a ghostly presence. For these purposes, the understanding of idols in the *Legenda Aurea* is largely a matter of conjecture. However, the narrative of the Mass of St. Gregory, and the Greater and Lesser Litanies, offer points of comparison which enable some understanding of how the idol was differentiated from other sacred objects.

In the tale of the Mass of St. Gregory, a woman kneeling at Mass openly laughs at the idea of any Real Presence. The Host then appears to the woman as the severed finger of Christ. The miracle

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<sup>239</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 2, Chapter 124, 'St. Bartholomew', p. 111

restores her faith, and inspires her repentance for having ever doubted. This tale presents a vision of the body of Christ which is, despite being a vision, emphasises the physical reality of that body. The entire emphasis of the narrative is that Christ's body is true flesh, something tangible. The crux of the narrative is belief or doubt in the truth of the Eucharist, and doubt leads to an experience of the deeply visceral reality in seeing whether the bruised body of Christ.<sup>240</sup> For this reason, a 'transubstantiation' cannot be understood to have ever occurred in the tales of St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew. However, it does provide a very different notion of presence, even if incidental. The presence of the demon in the idol does the opposite of that to Christ in the Eucharist. It is not conected by a priest saying the words of consecration, but exorcised by divine power. If the orthodoxy taught by the *Legenda Aurea* is that Christ comes to earth, it also says that demons flee before Him.

The same theme is taught again in the Greater and Lesser Litanies. The narrative of divine wonders is, as is usual for the Dominicans, moralized: Jacobus de Voragine is quick to remind his audience that that Christ had previously allowed evil spirits to enter swine, and could send demons into the farm animals of sinners. Because such happened to the Church in Vienne, this particular feast was instituted.<sup>241</sup> Nevertheless, redemption is provided in the litanies through exorcism. In the procession, before the varied Crosses, images of Christ's saving work, 'demons flee'. The work of the clergy is to expel evil, just as their apostolic predecessors did. Exorcism of ghostly demons is a fundamental part of the church's mission as presented in hagiography. In contrast to the physical nature of the Eucharist and other sacred objects, the demonic presence it

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<sup>240</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 46, 'St. Gregory', pp. 179-80

<sup>241</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 70, 'The Greater and Lesser Litanies', pp. 286-7

is applied to is ghostly and easily controlled through priestly powers. The narratives of idols being exorcised show this dynamic at work.

### *Idolatry and Sorcery in Bernard Gui*

The ghostly, fleeting nature of demons which is found in the *Legenda Aurea* is also found in the *Inquisitor's Manual* of Bernard Gui. Amidst his writings on various forms of heresy, Gui also expresses concern about occult activities which must be eradicated. The *Inquisitor's Manual* refers to nocturnal activities by sorcerers, including the summoning of demons, necromancy, and the invocation of female spirits called 'good people'.<sup>242</sup> Interestingly, the rites use leaden images, although their exact function is left unclear.<sup>243</sup> A non-Christian rite would be a breaking of the First Commandment according to the *Collationes*, but the use of an image in such a rite would be idolatry in the most direct manner. As we have seen, there were multiple ways in which a commandment could be rejected. However, the involvement of the image makes this form of sorcery the plainest rejection of Christ, in the worship of a 'graven thing'. At the same time, these idols are worshipped not in a fine temple, but under cover of darkness, making their use something hidden and sinister.

Bernard Gui's description of the Waldensians stresses the ephemeral nature of their rites. The Waldensians celebrated 'Mass' only on Maundy Thursday. Bernard Gui describes the rite: a layman places a cloth on a table or chest with a cup of 'pure wine' and 'flat cake or loaf of unleavened bread'. The ceremony is sparse compared to the ornate ritual of traditional

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<sup>242</sup> *The Inquisitor's Guide*, p. 150

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151

Christianity. Penitential prayers are followed with seven *Pater nosters* said kneeling. Then, the Sign of the Cross is made over bread and wine. Leftover bread is kept until Easter, and given to the sick.<sup>244</sup> Otherwise, their only prayer is the *Pater noster*, with no *Ave* or *Credo*.

These practices are secretive domestic rites, not the fine public liturgy of the established Church. Gui's description of the Waldensian rites stands in contrast to the extended description of church buildings and ceremonies in the *Legenda Aurea*. In its final chapter, the *Legenda* describes the correct things which belong in a church building: the holy images, the chant, the Mass and the offices.<sup>245</sup> This may seem like a basic description of what happens in a church. However, it shows that the Dominicans understood orthodox Christianity to be a religion of solid, tangible things, whether relics, the Eucharist, or images. Just as Christ took human form, so there must be a strongly material dimension to worship. Meanwhile, like the fleeing spirits in the idol narratives, the heretics are elusive, lacking substance, and lurking in darkness. Exorcism, a rite which invokes Christ as Light, would naturally expel such evil.

The *Legenda Aurea* and Bernard Gui both draw upon a common set of conceptions for their understandings of demons, idolatry, and heresy. Demons do not become present within idols through the prayers of the Christian clergy, but are expelled. They are associated not with the gold and silver from which Old Testament idols were fashioned, but with the vast nothingness into which they are banished. Likewise, heretics did not have the corpus of Christian materiality that the Dominicans associated with the Incarnation. However, the friars associated orthodoxy

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<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54

<sup>245</sup> 'The Dedication of a Church', *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 2, pp. 386-7

not only with materiality, but with the steadfast proclamation of belief. As proscribed groups, the Cathars, Waldensians and others were reticent about expressing their views, offering another means for the Dominicans to associate them with demonic evasiveness.

### III) Paganism and Heresy

The *Legenda Aurea* also considers idolatry in the form of worshipping non-Christian gods. In this consideration, idolatry is the worship of demons themselves rather than their images. At this point, non-Christian religion is depicted without any imagery at all. Roman gods are shown as having no fixed material form, but merely as evil spirits exorcised by the saints. This depiction of the non-Christian as elusive is echoed by Bernard Gui's observations of heretics as devious and corrupt.

#### *Tales of Diana*

Diana, pagan goddess of the hunt, was one of many deities worshipped in pre-Christian Gaul believed by Christians to be demons.<sup>246</sup> Although these cults were eradicated by Christianisation, the names of gods hung on in popular demonology.<sup>247</sup> The depiction of Diana as a shadowy spirit capable of great evil informed Christian perceptions of what characterised demons.

The entry on St. Nicholas in the *Legenda Aurea* shows the manner in which the pagan goddess Diana was depicted as a forest demon. We are told that there were 'rustics who practised pagan rites under a tree dedicated to the wicked goddess Diana.'<sup>248</sup> The term 'rustic' could easily be applied

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<sup>246</sup> P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, 200-1000* London, Blackwell, 1996, p. 65

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., pp. 146-7

<sup>248</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 3, 'St. Nicholas', p. 23

to peasants who practiced superstition.<sup>249</sup> Nicholas cuts down the tree dedicated to Diana, eradicating the object of pagan worship. In Jacques Le Goff's analysis, the episode is a rendition of justice, the expulsion of chaotic pagan practice, and the establishment of Christianity in its place.<sup>250</sup> This analysis offers two parallels to Vauchez's commentary on the Greater and Lesser Litanies.<sup>251</sup> If the *Legenda Aurea* is appealing to a popular desire for order, to the victorious Christ who expels demons, then any remnants of paganism can be eradicated by attaching them to the scapegoat of 'disorder', of rebellion against the divine order. Jacobus de Voragine is subtly attaching a practice he considers idolatrous to the forces that peasants feared. The fundamental question in this analysis is how effective such a critique was. How many remnants of paganism were there to be eradicated? Jacobus's critique is less revealing of paganism than it is of an attempt to view contemporary Northern European cults through the lens of a classical paganism that had long since disintegrated.

Another similar narrative is found, one that also focusses on St. Nicholas. Following St. Nicholas's destruction of the tree dedicated to Diana, the 'ancient enemy' takes his revenge. However, the identity of the 'enemy' is unclear. 'He' takes the form of a nun. Finding a ship filled with pilgrims en route to Myra, he offers a jar of oil to anoint the church walls. However, another passing ship, bearing a man who resembles St. Nicholas, tells them that the nun was 'the shameless Diana herself'. The gender of the spirit is left unclear, an apparent contradiction. The man resembling St. Nicholas orders the pilgrims to throw the jar into the water. On hitting the water, the jar

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<sup>249</sup> Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire*, p. 118

<sup>250</sup> Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time*, p. 42

<sup>251</sup> Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, pp. 134-8

bursts into flames, burning ‘contrary to nature’. This tale is highly reminiscent of the Greek Fire known to the Latin West through the Crusades. However, Greek Fire is last mentioned by Anna Komnene in the *Alexiad* and is not mentioned in the Fourth Crusade, suggesting that it had time to enter the realm of legend. But this legend does show the flexibility of the legends around Diana as a demon, incorporating new types of magic to strike fear into the hearts of the devout. The completely alien, frightening nature of the demon is described in detail, even as St. Nicholas is victorious over evil.<sup>252</sup>

### *The Evasive Qualities of Paganism and Heresy*

The rhetoric of the Diana tales existed before the Dominicans. There was no settled dogma surrounding Diana, and in the tale of St. Nicholas, Diana and Satan were conflated. Jeffrey Russell argues that missionaries in France and Germany during the seventh and eighth centuries struggled to eradicate the collection of fertility cults. To clerics schooled in classical Latin literature, these cults would have resembled the worship of Diana, a Roman forest goddess. Because these varied cults were such a formidable challenge to the Church’s authority and by extension Christ, Diana was seen as Christ’s opponent, and therefore could become interchangeable with Satan, the eternal Enemy of God.<sup>253</sup> However, this body of legend was part of a loose, shifting consensus, without clear doctrine established on demonology.<sup>254</sup> In the *Legenda Aurea*, the frightening world of demons, ‘contrary to nature’, exists in contrast to the settled world of Lateran doctrine.

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<sup>252</sup> J. Haldon, A. Lacey, C. Hewes, ‘“Greek Fire” Revisited: Recent and Current Research’ in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 316

<sup>253</sup> Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, p. 80

<sup>254</sup> Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, p. 103

The Roman church of the thirteenth century was still digesting the Lateran conceptions of Christian doctrine and discipline. Both in their letter and spirit, the Lateran mentality emphasised that Christianity was a religion of light, clarity, and harmony. The decrees began with a clearly defined set of beliefs, pronouncing anathema on those who rejected them. Furthermore, the decrees aimed to remove disorder, whether infrequent reception of the sacraments (by the standards of the time, penance and communion once a year), disorderly behaviour among the clergy, or the cleanliness of the church building. This spirit was in keeping with the nascent spirit of scholasticism and general order, and in reaction to the lack of order previously existing. If orthodoxy was synonymous with clearly stated beliefs and explicit order, then heresy was associated with confusion and disorder.

These collected mentalities animated both attitudes to heresy and the reception of tales about the cult of Diana. Darkness was an important influence on Dominican conceptions of non-Christian religions. The forest, a dark, frightening place, suggested liminality. Hymns focussed around darkness, temptation, and evil spirits. One example is the prayer for defence against tempting *phantasmata* in the Compline hymn *Te lucis ante terminum*.<sup>255</sup> In such hymns, light is associated with Christ, as is clarity. Meanwhile, the devil's domain is darkness, as is lies, or more accurately, the refusal to speak truth. These hymns formed a serious source for understanding evil. This kind of darkness and hiddenness, and the demonic origin of non-Christian beliefs, would surely form a common source of understanding for all non-Christian beliefs, whether heretical or pagan.

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<sup>255</sup> *Breviarium juxta ritum sacri Ordinis prædicatorum*, p. 186

## *Hidden Heresy*

False religions were depicted by the Dominicans as unclear, elusive, and therefore frightening. This stood in contrast to the clear, straightforward nature of the preaching of the friars. In the *Collationes*, Aquinas sets forward a clear, straightforward exposition of Christian belief. Despite being a ‘mystery’, which exists at least partially beyond the realm of human reason, Christianity offered clarity and little ambiguity. This was constantly restated by the friars, whether in preaching or in persecution of heretics.

In contrast, heresy was far more ambiguous. Bernard Gui noted the difficulty in getting straightforward answers out of recalcitrant heretics. Gui depicts the enemies of the Church, whether Jews, heretics or sorcerers, as cunning and secretive. In this vein, he refers to the slippery verbal tricks used by the Waldensians during questioning. If, Gui wrote, an inquisitor asks a Waldensian whether he believes the Host is Christ’s body, the Waldensian will answer in the affirmative. This is not because the Waldensian believes in transubstantiation, but because all bodies are Christ’s. If asked on the Incarnation, a Waldensian will say: ‘But Sir, don’t you believe this?’ If the Inquisitor states his belief in the doctrine, then the heretic will reply ‘and that I believe too’. The Waldensian therefore means that he believes the *inquisitor* believes in the Incarnation. Unlike the early Christians in the *Legenda*, who profess their faith fearlessly before martyrdom, heresy will hide itself with tricks, despite professing to speak plainly.

Bernard Gui is primarily instructing inquisitors on how to trap heretics. He tells his students that the only way to trap a Waldensian is to make him swear on the Gospels. He may try to sidestep the issue by mumbling an oath without meaning it, or changing one word to empty the oath of its

meaning.<sup>256</sup> Yet there are still more wiles to bear with. If asked whether they believe in a sacrament, they will answer 'by the will of God', so as to only swear that they believe in God's will. But these multiple examples are aimed not only at trapping heretics, but in forming the friars engaged in prosecution. All of the church's enemies, whether idolaters, heretics, Jews or sorcerers, will not plainly display their belief. Rather, their furtive behaviour implies that they stand for something shameful, something which will try to flee when questioned. In these circumstances, the tales of demons fleeing when exorcised ties the contemporary quest to eradicate heresy with pre-existing discourses on exorcism. In this regard, the demonic 'presence' lurking within an idol is the exact opposite to Christ, and all of the solid paraphernalia of sacraments, relics and images that the Dominicans espoused.

### *Conclusion*

Idolatry occupied a joint category with paganism in Dominican teaching. These two categories sat outside the ambit of orthodox Christian belief taught by the Fourth Lateran Council which the Dominicans were committed to defending. Because it was condemned by the Church, heresy had a casual association with idolatry. Dominican writing drew on similar vocabulary to describe the two. Idolatry, paganism and heresy were all secretive, dark, and elusive, to be purged by the forces of the Church which was associated with forthright declarations of faith and the material objects of sacraments, relics and images. The paradox of this rhetoric is that so much Christian literature was devoted to condemnations of idolatry, associated with lifeless images whose materiality was a sign that they were not spiritual. However, in the world of the Dominicans, the image was central to the practice of Christianity. Material objects were signs of God made Man,

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<sup>256</sup> *The Inquisitor's Guide*, p. 51

and conduits of divine grace.<sup>257</sup> A world without the material world embodied in images was, therefore, implicitly lacking in grace.

This materiality was at its clearest in the most profound ramification of Christ's incarnation: transubstantiation of the Eucharist. It was in relation to this sacred object that images expressed not only this vital doctrine of the thirteenth century, but the unique qualities of Dominican piety.

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<sup>257</sup> Walker Bynum, p. 29



# IV: ‘*Sensuum Defectui*’: The Dominicans, Imagery and the Eucharist



## *Introduction*

So far, this thesis has discussed the relationship between images and other religious objects in Dominican writing. It has been argued that relics were associated with imagery in Dominican writing in order to express the concept of Christ’s Incarnation, with imagery enabling a more emotional form of piety because it depicted saints as persons. The thesis has also examined the relationship between idolatry and heresy in showing how important the cult of the material was to the orthodoxy of the Fourth Lateran Council that the Dominicans were devoted to defending. However, one more sacred object is of vital importance to discussing the place of imagery in Dominican writing: the Eucharist.

The belief that Christ was truly present in the Eucharist was a deeply rooted part of Christian faith in the Europe of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The particular kind of presence was defined by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 ‘in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, having been changed in substance, by God’s power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he has received from us’.<sup>258</sup> The Aristotelean term ‘*transsubstantiat*’ added precision to the nature of the Eucharist. The definition of this term accompanied the evolution of a new reverence for the Host, or

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<sup>258</sup> *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, pp. 230-1

consecrated bread in which Christ appeared to His followers. A branch of piety devoted to the Eucharist developed over the remainder of the thirteenth century. This piety involved the use of imagery. At the outset, the image and the Eucharist might seem to differ starkly. The Eucharist *was* Christ, but seemed only to be bread, while the image could resemble Christ or a saint, but only be wood, stone, or metal. However, new trends in piety focussing on the life of Christ and interior penance could be promoted by the use of images around the Eucharist, around churches where the Mass was celebrated. Furthermore, the image and the Eucharist were both the subject of miracle narratives involving desecration, where unbelievers attacked these sacred objects, only to be repelled by divine intervention. In these narratives, precisely by its vulnerability, the image had a certain resemblance to Christ.<sup>259</sup>

This chapter argues that Dominican writings on the Crucifix and the Eucharist were part of a widespread trend of using depictions of Christ's Crucifixion to suggest the Real Presence. While the sacrifice of Calvary was hidden by the appearance of bread, images of the Crucifixion around churches made it visible, closing the gap between reality and perception. This practice was not unique to the Dominicans. However, although their practices reflected wider trends of thirteenth-century doctrine and piety, the association of crucifix and Eucharist was of heightened importance for the Dominicans. This can be seen both in miracles in the *Legenda Aurea* that show both images and Christ's body as objects of desecration. As part of the movement for ecclesiastical reform following the Fourth Lateran Council, instilling correct beliefs and reverence for the Eucharist was of special importance to the Dominicans, as it was for relics.

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<sup>259</sup> E. M. Ross, *The Grief of God: Images of the Suffering Jesus in Late Medieval England* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 13

The chapter will begin by discussing the trends of Eucharistic belief and piety that emerged in the thirteenth century. These emerged as the Order of Preachers was maturing, and were vital to informing Dominican attitudes to the Eucharist. Having established this relationship, the chapter will then proceed to examine narratives surrounding the desecration of images in the *Legenda Aurea*. These will show the common traits that the Eucharist shared with Christ's body, namely narratives involving attack. This will initially be examined in comparing discussions of Christ's body in the chapter on the Passion to those of His image in the chapter on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. These narratives will be grounded in an examination of the significance of Crucifixion scenes to show how the *Legenda* reflected concerns of the time. Finally, the explicit connection between imagery and the Eucharist will be discussed in the Mass of St. Gregory, an early Eucharistic miracle where the vision of Christ's suffering is connected to the mystery of transubstantiation.

## **I) The Eucharist in the Thirteenth-Century Church**

Transubstantiation was not an invention of the Fourth Lateran Council, but it became a major component both of the theology and of the worship during the thirteenth century. Because the Order of Preachers was developing against a backdrop of intensifying Eucharistic devotion, a strong focus on the Eucharist became an established part of Dominican piety.

### ***The Implications of Transubstantiation***

The Dominican mission after the Fourth Lateran Council was rooted in the doctrine of transubstantiation. This is the belief that the bread and wine of the Eucharist, when consecrated by a priest, becomes Christ's body and blood, although their physical nature remains that of bread

and wine. In addition, the doctrine of the Mass as sacrifice taught that Christ's sacrifice on the Cross was offered again during the Mass. This was fundamental to the orthodoxy spread by the friars, and their devotional life.

The term *transsubstantio* was relatively new, and its exact meaning continued to be debated. Yet it offered some clarification to the pre-existing belief in Real Presence. Godefridus Snoek has chronicled this development. While the Host was believed to be the Body of Christ before 1215, it was understood as Christ's body in the same way that a relic was a saint's body. It was a body part, which was sacred, but otherwise fairly inanimate. In the course of the thirteenth century, however, views of the Eucharist shifted from being a body part to 'the Whole Christ'. An important aspect of this shift was the development of new ways of honouring the Host. Many forms of Eucharistic devotion evolved out of the cult of relics, but reached new heights of solemnity in the thirteenth century. For example, the use of sanctuary lamps began in the 1250s, based on the candles lit around relics.<sup>260</sup> Monstrances, or special shrines for consecrated Hosts, developed from reliquaries, and the practice of priests blessing congregations with relics became increasingly confined to the consecrated Host. Meanwhile, the burial of Hosts in altars in the same manner of relics disappeared. This marks a shift towards a more holistic understand of the Host, because it was now 'the Whole Christ', more alive than the bodies of saints. The living, resurrected body of Christ could not be entombed like the body of a saint still awaiting resurrection.

It is fundamentally inaccurate to describe the advent of transubstantiation as a reversal of previous

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<sup>260</sup> G. J. C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction*, Leiden, Brill, 1995, p. 207

doctrine. The doctrine of the Real Presence had been already vindicated by the dispute between Lanfranc (1010-1089) and Berengar of Tours (1059-1088).<sup>261</sup> But the nuances of what such a presence implied were explored in the development of Eucharistic piety in the course of the thirteenth century. In order to understand this, it is important to see how the new focus on the Eucharist altered the celebration of the Mass, the ceremony in which transubstantiation occurred.

### *The Sensory Experience of Mass*

By the thirteenth century, the Mass had come to exist in two forms. The older *Missa Solemnis* or Solemn Mass, sung behind the chancel screen, with deacons to assist the priest and a choir to accompany, comprised the centrepiece of worship in larger churches.<sup>262</sup> In contrast, the *Missa Lecta* or 'read Mass' was said rather than sung, offered by a solitary priest without accompanying deacons.<sup>263</sup> Instead of a single, all-encompassing act, multiple religious activities occurred simultaneously.<sup>264</sup>

This environment emphasised communion primarily as a visual experience. To consume the Host, one had to confess all of one's sins and be absolved. Furthermore, one had to fast from midnight. Such requirements meant that reception of communion had long become an especially rare experience. Indeed, the Fourth Lateran Council established annual communion as a bare minimum. However, even the unconfessed could see Christ appear on the altar. The practice of seeing the Host, raised by the priest above his head after consecration, was already beginning to

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<sup>261</sup> Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, pp. 200-01

<sup>262</sup> Jung, *The Gothic Screen*, pp. 66-7

<sup>263</sup> J.A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, vol. 1, trans. F. A. Brunner, New York, Benziger, 1951, pp. 229-30

<sup>264</sup> Jung, p. 68-9

spread in the 1180s, and by 1208 a Parisian synod specified that the Host be held higher for easy viewing (*fig. 4*).<sup>265</sup> By 1312, the Carmelite Friars were being instructed to limit the use of incense during the elevation, so the faithful could see the Host clearly.<sup>266</sup> All this indicates a highly visual experience of the Eucharist, where the act of seeing was as powerful as eating God. By the mid-thirteenth century, the elevation had become the centrepiece of the Mass. Christ appeared to His followers at His altars, to be offered for the sins of the world.

There are two different views of the role of the Medieval laity in worship. On the one hand, Josef Jungmann, the Austrian Jesuit and theologian writing in the 1940s, saw the proliferation of ritual as a sign of the removal of Mass from common experience.<sup>267</sup> Seeing replaced the earlier practice of consuming the Host, and increasing votive Masses obscured older ideas of communal celebration.<sup>268</sup> Jungmann focussed on the broad scheme of how Christian worship had developed, and thus critically scrutinised the practices of the thirteenth century in contrast to those of the early Church, rather than evaluating the experiences of contemporary devotees on their own terms.<sup>269</sup> The long-term effect of Jungmann's work was the idea of a passive, disenfranchised medieval laity. On the other hand, however, Jacqueline Jung offers a very different story of medieval devotion to that of Jungmann. By contrast, Jung's analysis of chancel screens stresses that instead of being clerical inventions to underlie their separation from ordinary worshippers,

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<sup>265</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*, p. 55-56.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58

<sup>267</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, vol. 1, pp. 113-14

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121-2

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

the screens were often collective lay efforts.<sup>270</sup> These ‘partitions’ were in fact outcrops of a galvanised lay piety, which saw the Mass as emphasising the collective.<sup>271</sup>

### *The Eucharist in the Dominican Order*

The Dominican Order grew up amidst these new directions in Eucharistic thought and practice. In many, if not most aspects, these new directions were reflected in the patterns of Dominican thought and worship. However, there was a Dominican tendency at work to expand upon the new trends around them, and use imagery to press Lateran doctrine more forcefully. One can see a specific Dominican nuance in the forms of imagery used on church sanctuaries to explain the Mass.

Chancel screens became common in Western European churches during the thirteenth century. The screen covered the chancel, the site of Solemn Mass, but often had additional altars for the *missa lecta* along the side facing the nave.<sup>272</sup> Any imagery on the screen helped to frame the Eucharist for adoration.<sup>273</sup> The evolution of the screen was uneven across Europe. We know little of the screen in the Dominican convent of St. Jacques in Paris, but the Order of Preachers did give the screen a certain prominence. The Dominican General Chapter, meeting in Trier in 1249, ordered chancel screens so the friars were not disturbed when saying the Offices.<sup>274</sup> In this aspect,

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<sup>270</sup> Jung, p. 139

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67

<sup>272</sup> Jung, p. 68-69

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38-40

<sup>274</sup> M. Mersch, ‘Programme, pragmatism and symbolism in mendicant architecture’, in A. Müller, K. Stöber (ed.), *Self-Representation in Medieval Communities: The British Isles in Context*, Münster, L.I.T. Verlag, 2009, p. 155

the Dominicans were following current custom for the arrangement of churches for religious orders. Yet their design of the screen shows Dominican concerns in clear focus.

The Dominican Church in Erfurt offers an example of how a Chancel screen expounded the views of the Eucharist that the friars had inherited from the Fourth Lateran Council. Built in the early 1300s, the screen has an alcove on the left with a statue of the Virgin and Child on the right, and a Crucifixion scene on the left (*fig. 5*).<sup>275</sup> Joanna Cannon argues that this was an arrangement in conformity with screens in other Dominican churches in Italy and northern Europe.<sup>276</sup> This uniform arrangement shows how the Dominicans had a uniform schema for teaching the doctrine of the Incarnation and of transubstantiation together. On the right, the statue of the Virgin and Child proclaim Christ's taking of human flesh. At the end of Compline, singing the Marian antiphon *Salve Regina*, the friars processed to this image. This final practice was unique to the distinctive Dominican Rite of Compline, as Gorton argues.<sup>277</sup> On the left, the Crucifixion scene shows the congregation what occurs at Mass: Christ's sacrifice, re-presented under the form of bread. At the centre of the screen, however, there is no imagery at all, but an open doorway. In this aspect, the Dominicans departed from the arrangement in many other French and German churches. Screens in these arrangements had Crucifixion scenes or altars for the *Missa Lecta* at the centre, thus hiding the celebration of Solemn Mass from worshippers.<sup>278</sup> In the Dominican arrangement demonstrated at Erfurt, however, the open arch leaves a clear view for worshippers to see the elevation of the Host during Solemn Mass. The images of the Virgin and Child on either

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<sup>275</sup> Jung, pp. 23-4

<sup>276</sup> Cannon, p. 82

<sup>277</sup> Gorton, pp.120-5

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57

side close the gap between perception and reality, showing Christ's humanity and His sacrifice, hidden under the accidents of bread and wine.

This difference in arrangement reflects aspects of the *Nine Ways of Prayer*. In this text there was a clear association of altars and Crucifixion imagery, and bowing to such objects reinforced the connection between Christ's sacrifice and the altar, where the Eucharist was celebrated, and the crucifix, which portrayed it. The association of these types of imagery was typical in the thirteenth-century church, but it held a special significance for the Dominicans, not only because it reflected the teaching of the Fourth Lateran Council, but because it reflected the methods of prayer by their founder. It is for this reason that images and the Eucharist took on a special connection in the *Legenda Aurea*.

## **II) The Body of Christ in the *Legenda Aurea***

At first, the *Legenda Aurea* does not appear to have much discussion of the Eucharist. This is largely due to the liturgical framework of the text. The Roman liturgical year had two feasts dedicated to the Eucharist in the thirteenth century. The first of these, Maundy Thursday, celebrated Christ's institution of the Eucharist. However, it also dealt with Judas's betrayal of Christ and occurred the day before Good Friday, clouding the day with a sense of pathos.

For this reason, a second feast, Corpus Christi, had originated in order to offer a more joyful interpretation of the Eucharist. Originating in Liège, Corpus Christi secured episcopal approval

in 1246, and papal approval in 1264.<sup>279</sup> The prayers and readings for the Mass and offices went through a period of gradual evolution.<sup>280</sup> Popularly attributed to Thomas Aquinas, the third and definitive version of the office, *Sacerdos in aeternam*, emphasised the nature of transubstantiation.<sup>281</sup> The Eucharist was Christ's body and blood, the priest's consecrating words effected the consecration and offered the Host to God in reparation, and the Host sanctified those who received it worthily. Those in a state of sin, however, were damned by unworthy reception. Falling on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi fell on the same day of the week as Maundy Thursday. However, in being outside of Lent it could be far more joyful, despite the stern message on proper reception of communion.

Despite the legend of Aquinas's authorship, no entry for Corpus Christi is found in the early editions of the *Legenda Aurea*. This was likely because it was still a relatively young feast. It was still spreading in the 1260s, and the preference of the Dominicans for liturgical uniformity meant that it took time to be integrated into all of the liturgical books. Even with these logistical considerations aside, the conservative intellectual framework of the Dominicans was sceptical of new feasts, preferring to focus on older, more venerable feasts. For this reason, any discussion of the Eucharist in the *Legenda Aurea* must begin with the entry on the Passion, which addresses the sacrifice of Christ's body. This entry shows a close association between the sacrifice of Christ's body and the Cross on which he died.

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<sup>279</sup> M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992 pp. 176-7

<sup>280</sup> B. R. Walters, Vincent Corrigan, P. T. Ricketts, *The Feast of Corpus Christi* University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006, pp. 13-34. This offers a detailed guide to the evolution of the liturgical texts.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53

### *The Passion and the Eucharist*

The *Legenda Aurea* treats Holy Week as one sequence, with aspects of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday combined. In this entry, Jacobus de Voragine speaks of how the Cross was painful in the shame it brought to the King of Kings, yet brought about eternal glory.

The aspects of Christ's sacrifice are discussed by Jacobus de Voragine at mournful length. Indeed, he names five different types of pain that Christ suffered. The Passion brought shame upon Christ because it occurred on Calvary, a death for criminals on the Cross. Yet the Cross, once a shameful symbol, now symbolises 'unbounded glory' because of the salvation it achieved. Christ died alongside criminals; he was betrayed by His closest friends; His 'tender body' was scourged, and because in each of the five senses, His intellect and His divinity all voluntarily suffered their own torments, which Jacobus de Voragine discusses in the greatest depth. They all extrapolate a single theme: the contrast of Christ's divine perfection with the untold pain of His death.<sup>282</sup>

Within this text, both the Cross and the Body of Christ are given their own praises. As has been discussed above, the Cross had an ambiguous place in the Latin Church because the term could convey both relics of the True Cross, and representations of the instrument on which Christ died. As a symbol of 'unbounded glory', the Cross is worthy of *latría*, and it may well be referred to in this context as a precursor to the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday. It is both as image and as relic that the Cross is intimately associated with Christ and His Passion. A blurring between the two begins to occur: as a representation of the unspeakable shame of Christ's death, the Cross blends together with the body of Christ, its shame and glory intertwined.

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<sup>282</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, Chapter 153, 'The Passion of Our Lord', pp. 203-4

Jacobus de Voragine also mourns Christ's 'tender body'. The preacher contrasts the tenderness of the divine flesh with the scourges and nails that tortured it. This can be interpreted to refer to the exquisite perfection of Christ's body with the spiritual filth of those who tormented it. These observations are completed with a quote from St. Bernard of Clairvaux: 'O Jews, you are stones! You strike a softer stone, out of which the chime of mercy resounds and the oil of love gushes!'<sup>283</sup> Bernard takes the themes of salvific glory and desecration of Christ's body, and links them to Judaism, a body of aniconic unbelievers who formed an obstacle to the Dominican priority of total Christianisation. In other Eucharistic miracles, the figure of the Jews was expanded to include other unbelievers, including heretics and sceptics. However, any accusations against the Jews are complemented with a reflection on what has come about as a result of the Passion. The image of a rock yielding sweetness allows the suffering of Christ's body contrasted with the fruits that it yields: the chime of mercy and the oil of love are grace, mediated through the sacraments. This phrase has connections to other parts of the *Legenda Aurea* where images are struck, only to yield sanctity.

### *'Mercy Flows'*

The theme of striking Christ in cruelty and drawing forth sanctity is visible in other sections of the *Legenda Aurea*. Christ's image is defiled by attacks which outrage His majesty. Yet in the midst of these outrages, the divine order reasserts itself. Sinners are converted, and the divinely instituted order is upheld. In the second chapter, it was noted that image-miracles differ from relics in one crucial aspect: their ability to be desecrated. Because it depicted the human face of a saint, the image was open to a personal, emotional interpretation that that a chase for relics was

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<sup>283</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 53, 'The Passion of Our Lord', p. 204

not. Yet it is this very difference between images and relics that forms a striking similarity between images and the body of Christ.

This narrative trope is shown in the legend from the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a miracle which has already been shown to be very complex. This tale has a Jew enter the Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, and see an image of Christ. He strikes the image on the throat, and causes it to bleed.<sup>284</sup> His accusation of murder leads him to the realisation that he attacked Christ Himself; he repents, and is baptised. To read this tale is to be teased by a question as to the kind of sacred object this image is. Are we seeing an image or a relic of Christ's body? Because it depicts Christ, the image is worthy of *latria*, but the shedding of blood – Christ's blood – suggests that the sacrifice is somehow repeated. An unbeliever desecrates a resemblance of Christ, only to be confronted by the blood by which salvation is obtained. Furthermore, that blood appeared on the altar in the celebration of the Mass, thus creating a specific connection between the image of Christ and His crucified body.

In the thirteenth century, there was less emphasis on the blood of Christ than on His body. Although the elevation of the Host was becoming ever more common in this period, the elevation of the Chalice only began to spread in the fourteenth century. This was partly because the Host itself formed a climactic point in the Mass, after which the faithful returned to their individual prayers. However, it could also be argued that the wine consecrated as Christ's Blood was invisible in a metal vessel. In this aspect, it was superfluous to the ritual of showing Christ for worship. The faithful had already seen Christ in the Host, and could return to their prayers. Nevertheless, the doctrine that the wine became Christ's blood was established doctrine, and the

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, Chapter 137, 'The Exaltation of the Holy Cross', pp. 170-1

flowing of blood was of heightened importance in the emotional response to the miracle. Furthermore, the faithful would have seen the shedding of Christ's blood on the crucifixes on where the Passion was depicted. The wound on Christ's side from which blood and water poured would have been visible on representations of the Crucifixion found in churches in the thirteenth century. The tale in the *Legenda Aurea* reflects the connection between the body and blood of Christ and its depiction in Crucifixion scenes.

### *The Crucifix*

The miracle of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross drew upon a Dominican tradition that held the crucifix in high regard. Although the friars were not the architects of either the image or the doctrine, the example of their founding saint was tied to the sacrifice of Christ and its representation in visual form. St. Dominic prayed before the Crucifix and altar. His act of stretching his arms in the form of the Cross before the image of Christ mirrors one of the gestures in the Dominican Rite of the Mass: after lowering the chalice, the priest outstretched his arms, to show the continuity between the Passion and the Eucharist.<sup>285</sup>

St. Dominic's spiritualisation of the Cross did not obliterate its reputation as a wonder-working symbol. Alongside the symbolism of crosses, their practical ability to work wonders was still described by the *Legenda Aurea*. In his entry for the Greater and Lesser Litanies, Jacobus de Voragine informs the devout that:

The demons are afraid of this standard . . . in certain churches, when storms come up,  
the cross is brought out of the church and held up against the tempest,

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<sup>285</sup> A. A. King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1955, pp. 385-7

precisely so that the evil spirits may see the standard of the King and flee in terror.<sup>286</sup>

Just as sight of the divine repelled demons, so manifestations of the reality of the Crucifixion could repel forces inimical to the mission of orthodoxy. In this instance, the depiction of the Jew striking an image of Christ and drawing blood shows how dark forces were repelled by the representation of Christ. In the chapter on the Greater and Lesser Litanies, the demons flee before the Cross because it reminds them of the Atonement, but this significance may be harnessed to such practical tasks as averting storms.<sup>287</sup>

The crucifix was in also tied to the Eucharist because of the rites of Good Friday, the day of Christ's death. On Good Friday, adoration of the Cross occurred inside the chancel. After the veiling of Passiontide, two weeks before Easter, all the images in the church were covered in violet cloths. On Good Friday, the emergence of the image of Christ crucified from this penitential shrouding and its lifting before the congregation with the words '*Ecce lignum crucis*' would have been especially striking and mournful. Within the choir enclosure, barefoot, the friars then prostrated themselves before the Cross. Crucially, Good Friday was the only day of the year when no Mass was celebrated, offering the Cross as a seeming substitute for the Elevation of the Host. It is this *latria* that Aquinas defends in the *Summa Theologiæ* with verses of *Vexilla Regis*, discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.<sup>288</sup> On this day, the faithful were deprived of Christ's substantial presence, and instead confronted by its graphic representation. The *Legenda* draws on

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<sup>286</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 70, 'The Greater and Lesser Litanies', p. 288

<sup>287</sup> Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 10

<sup>288</sup> Cannon, p. 166

similar themes in its depiction of Christ's image. The substantial presence of God may be absent, but its depiction is another kind of presence that admonishes those present.

These discussions of the body of Christ tie His sacrificed presence to the image. Yet the *Legenda Aurea* shows another example of the connection between the Eucharist and the depiction of Christ's Crucifixion: a vision of the Passion during the Mass itself.

### **III) Christ Crucified at Mass**

In the tale of the Mass of St. Gregory recorded in the *Legenda Aurea*, the Jewish unbeliever found in the Exaltation tale is supplemented by another kind of unbeliever – the Christian sceptic. Disbelief is confronted by a vision of the visceral reality of the Crucifixion, showing the Dominican concern with correct belief. Before long, this vision took on the form of a concrete image that depicted Christ's sacrifice occurring on the altar itself.

Depiction of Christ's wounds had very deep roots in Christian worship. The ordinary devotee would have been used to the wounds on any crucifix or representation of the Passion. They were eminently a sign of the human fragility that Christ had taken, in analogy to the injuries and disfigurements that their own bodies suffered. Such visceral piety ranged from the Gospel narrative of St. Thomas reaching into Christ's pierced side, to the depiction of wounds which symbolised entry into the temple of Christ's body.<sup>289</sup> These links were even more vivid in that this was not just a symbolically broken body, but a real one: Christ eternally present to His

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<sup>289</sup> R. C. Trexler, 'Gendering Jesus Crucified', Brendan Cassidy (ed.), *Medieval Iconography at the Crossroads*, Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 107-8

worshippers in the broken body and flowing blood in every Mass. This sense of sacred suffering and the salvation gained from it provided an intimate link between the crucifix and the Host.

### *The Mass of St. Gregory*

In the life of St. Gregory, the sainted pope is shown celebrating Mass. One particular woman is brought to the audience's attention. She brings bread to the altar for the celebration of Mass each Sunday morning, and thus has a special connection to the Eucharist. On one Sunday, the time comes for him to administer communion to her, and Gregory pronounces the well-known formula, 'The Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your soul unto everlasting life.' At this point, the seemingly devout woman suddenly laughs. Asked why, she is openly scornful of the notion that 'this bread, which I made with my own hands' is the Body of Christ. Shocked by her disbelief, Gregory prostrates himself, and on rising, finds the Host turned into the shape of a human finger. On seeing this, the woman's faith is restored, and she devoutly receives communion, contrite for having ever doubted.<sup>290</sup>

Within this tale, the image of the severed finger has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, the audience is confronted with the reality of Christ's incarnation and Crucifixion. The physical form of a human finger affirms the literal truth that it is the battered body of Christ. On the other, the tale targets any doubt about the truth of transubstantiation in the audience, inspiring horror at the bloody reality which the woman doubted.<sup>291</sup> Is this the suffering that she personally caused Christ, or is it the collective suffering that everyone imposed? It is at this point that the familiar themes

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, Chapter 46, 'St. Gregory', pp. 179-80

<sup>291</sup> Ross, *The Grief of God*, pp. 19-20

of guilt and compunction move beyond the non-Christian outsider, to the evils perpetrated by Christians themselves.<sup>292</sup> The death of Christ is a collective responsibility, and the fruit is what binds that very collective together. The severed finger is in fact a reproach to Christians, a reminder of their sins. In this aspect, the *Legenda*'s use of the tale reflected Dominican concerns with the faithful holding correct beliefs.

The *Legenda Aurea* depicts the Mass of St. Gregory with Christ appearing in the form of a severed finger. It is probably the earliest form of the legend, which received its first depiction in the ninth century.<sup>293</sup> However, the depiction of the miracle was still evolving in the thirteenth century, and by the start of the fourteenth century, the doubting woman had been replaced by a deacon, and the finger had become a visionary appearance of Christ.<sup>294</sup> Before 1311, this narrative shift had paved the way for the phenomenal popularity that the image would enjoy from the mid-fourteenth century, where St. Gregory knelt before Christ crucified, the accidents of bread removed.

### *The Fruits of Disbelief*

The doubting woman at the Mass of St. Gregory is a very different figure from the Jew in the chapter on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. She is a professing Christian, and indeed helps in preparing the bread without which the celebration of Mass would be impossible. Furthermore, she is not engaging in open defiance of the Church. On the contrary, in laughing at the traditional

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 30

<sup>293</sup> M. Heinlen, 'An Early Image of a Mass of St. Gregory and Devotion to the Holy Blood at Weingarten Abbey', *Gesta*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1998, pp.55-62

<sup>294</sup> Belting, p. 36

Eucharistic formula she seems barely conscious of any transgression. Yet her unbelief leads to a miracle where she is confronted by the bloody reality of the Passion and its re-presentation at Mass. To her contemporaries, she would have been a familiar figure: the sceptic.

The task of forming of correct belief by the Dominicans had to contend with the figure of heretics, but also simple ignorance. Cracks of disbelief in the Incarnation of Christ were familiar to inquisitors like Bernard Gui whose *Inquisitor's Manual* had notes on recalcitrant heretics who took great pains to hide their true beliefs.<sup>295</sup> Doubting of transubstantiation was a mark of a Cathar or Waldensian because it could not be held without a pre-existing belief in the Incarnation and the Church's ability to provide the sacraments. However, in her open doubt the woman is very different from heretics that Dominican inquisitors often encountered. Unlike the stereotypical heretic, she makes no effort to hide her beliefs. Her doubt stems rather from an incredulity at such an extraordinary concept as bread becoming Christ's body. In this regard, she is still evidence of incorrect beliefs in everyday life, hiding in plain sight. But she is not such a great threat to the Church as 'true' heretics are. As Bernard Hamilton notes, there was a difference between doubt, a lack of conviction, and heresy, a positive rejection of the orthodox position.<sup>296</sup> She merely has a poor grasp of what the Church teaches, and finds it absurd. The miracle occurs in this context to correct her ignorance, not the rejecting of Christ associated with heresy or Judaism.

In its dwelling on the fruits of disbelief, the tale bears similarities to aspects of the Corpus Christi liturgy. The sequence 'Lauda Sion' reflects the concerns of the friars with the necessity of correct

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<sup>295</sup> *The Inquisitor's Guide*, p. 51

<sup>296</sup> Hamilton, p. 15

belief concerning the Eucharist. In the chant, any lack of faith or devotion leads to damnation.

Good and bad, they come to greet Him:

Unto life the former eat Him,

And the latter unto death.<sup>297</sup>

Seen from this perspective, the woman's disbelief is an horrific sacrilege. But in the tale, she is not damned, but has proof of reality thrust before her. In this aspect, this tale serves as an ideal version of the friars' work: confronted with the reality of the Real Presence, orthodoxy would be assured. But for the majority of Christians, who did not have to the good fortune to witness miracles, imagery could serve as an eternal admonition against doubt. And it is at this point that the vision of Christ in the Mass of St. Gregory became fixed forever as an image for all.

### *The Imago Pietatis*

To understand the narrative transformation of the Mass of St. Gregory, it must be understood in context with the arrival of a new image in Latin Christendom by the early fourteenth century: the *Imago Pietatis*.<sup>298</sup> A figure of the wounded Christ, standing, His wounds prominently displayed, yet alive and alert, travelled west from Byzantium after the Fourth Crusade of 1204.<sup>299</sup> It was quickly converted, in Belting's assessment, from a cultic to a devotional image, a means for meditating on the Passion. In other words, it was a 'wonder-working' object transformed into a

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<sup>297</sup> A. Byrnes (ed.), *The Hymns of the Dominican Missal and Breviary*, London, B. Herder Book Co., 1943, pp. 180-9

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60

stimulant for private devotion. In this aspect, it was part of the tendency to ‘spiritualise’ ritual objects that the Dominicans tended toward. At the time that Jacobus de Voragine was compiling the Mass of St. Gregory into the *Legenda*, the *Imago Pietatis* was spreading. By the fourteenth century, depictions of the Mass of St. Gregory were using precisely this image to convey the reality of the sacrifice of Christ on the Altar. As Joanna Cannon argues in the case of Siene painting, the *Imago Pietatis* on the altar seemed to erase the boundary between substance and accidents. However, the presence of a crucifix, candles, paten and chalice would have partially obscured the image, not to mention the body of the priest himself.<sup>300</sup> An image of Christ suffering, that elicited a personal emotional response, drew attention to what was really occurring during Mass: the sacrifice on Calvary.

The transition of the Mass of St. Gregory from finger to the whole Christ was not complete when the *Legenda Aurea* was being compiled; however, the same transformation was underway in other narratives. The story of the Veil of Veronica, discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, shows how the nuances of preaching altered the meaning of an imported Byzantine image. Originally a wonder-worker, almost like a relic, the Veil came to be understood in terms of a personal object, a keepsake which evoked sorrow over the Crucifixion of Christ. The re-working of the Good Friday narrative offers a useful parallel case in how personalising tropes could change the meaning of an image. The Mass of St. Gregory experiences a less radical alteration than the Veil of Veronica, but the visual shift does show how the themes of repentant sorrow could be drawn out

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<sup>300</sup> Cannon, p. 152. Siene painting that blended Byzantine and Gothic elements was highly influential in fourteenth-century France. Although the arrival of the Siene painter Simone Martini spearheaded the reception of Siene style from the 1340s, compositions in the manner of Duccio had circulated for several decades before. A fuller explanation may be found in A. Chastel, *French Art*, vol. 1, *Prehistory to the Middle Ages*, trans. D. Dusingere, Paris, Flammarion, 1994, pp. 284-5

more clearly. An inanimate finger, as found in the *Legenda Aurea*, may call to mind horror. However, the whole Christ shows how the whole person of Christ might suffer, evoking the Passion more vividly. The bruised and bloody face of Christ in the *Imago Pietatis*, as on the Veil, encapsulates the personalisation of the Passion. Belting's study of these images explores how the tortured face of Christ in both images personalised and emotionalised studies of the Passion. These visual and narrative embellishments show a trend which the Dominicans did not create, but played an important role in disseminating. It was a piety that combined an insistence on the nature of the sacrifice of the Mass with admonitions against doubt. The shift in piety toward personal devotion and sorrow was an ongoing trend in the images and hagiography of the thirteenth century, which the *Legenda Aurea* captured in transition.

### ***Conclusion***

Dominican discussion of the Eucharist was firmly in the service of the Lateran decrees. Their approach toward imagery was part of a broader trend within the Church. A new piety fixated on the Body of Christ had already begun to develop before the Lateran decrees, but thirteenth-century reform placed the Eucharist at the forefront of the Church's concerns. In its focus on the importance of the Sacrifice of Christ at Mass, whether in writings on the Body of Christ or on the spread of Eucharistic imagery, the Dominicans reflected widespread concerns of the time. However, given their role in disseminating post-Lateran orthodoxy, it was of special importance to them.

Within the *Legenda Aurea*, the Eucharist is given little space because of the small number of feast days allocated to it. Corpus Christi was too new to have a chapter, and the themes of Maundy Thursday are submerged into a wider discussion of the Passion of Christ. However, the Passion

chapter sets the tropes associated with Christ's death, juxtaposing the sublime purity of Christ's body, the cruelty of His death, and the wonder of salvation brought about. This framework appears in two miracles: in the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the image of Christ is attacked and bleeds, while in the Mass of St. Gregory a woman's doubt leads to a miracle where the bloody reality of the Crucifixion is revealed to the congregation. There was an intrinsic connection in the hagiographical record between doubting the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the sorrows inflicted on Him in the Passion. These are old tales, but their compilation in the *Legenda Aurea* speaks both of the new emotionalism of Passion piety, and the pastoral and doctrinal concerns of the Dominican friars. They had the responsibility of ensuring that the laity had the correct beliefs on the Eucharist, and received Communion worthily. These visions of the Eucharist were critical to their efforts to reform Christian belief and practice.

The focus on desecration in the *Legenda Aurea* is reflected in the images used in the Mass itself. In the mentality of transubstantiation, the accidents of bread and wine formed a curtain over the senses of believers, obscuring the mystery. Objects such as the chancel screen, which separated the Mass from the congregation, and adjacent images of the Crucifixion showed the reality of the Eucharist to the congregation. Insofar as the Mass was a sacrifice, images reminded the faithful that they were kneeling at the foot of the Cross. The only thing separating them from the Passion was the sensory illusion that the elements were bread and wine.

The Dominican use of imagery reflected wider practice, but it was still a particularly important part of their piety. The practice of fixing Eucharistic visions in imagery has much in common with the *Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic*. In contrast to St. Francis, whose experience of being stigmatised by a seraph was far beyond the daily lives of most Christians, St. Dominic's prayer

consisted of gestures before images that anyone could perform. It was a piety involving devotional images rather than mystical visions. The full influence of the *Imago Pietatis* on the Mass of St. Gregory was yet to fully develop. However, the placing of images of the Crucifixion and the Christ Child on the Chancel screen showed the tendency to close the gap between perception of the Eucharist and reality. The visions of the few were frozen into images for all. In this way, the Dominican contribution was one neither of new miracles nor of new images, but merely of setting the vision of Christ at the heart of everyday Christian experience.

# Conclusion



At the outset of the thesis, a question was asked. How did the Dominicans discuss the nature of sacred imagery? The methodology employed aimed to see how textual nuances emphasised the personal, emotional, devotional aspect of imagery, as opposed to the more familiar thaumaturgical aspect.

The thesis argued that imagery received very little study in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, one of the most noted Dominican thinkers. This was because the friars tended toward the Latin theological framework, even though they used Byzantine material which placed a far greater emphasis on images. However, the crucifix was important to Dominican devotion, and imagery was discussed at length in the *Nine Ways of Prayer* and *Legenda Aurea*. Imagery was vital to the Dominican mission both because its materiality reflected the Christian precept that Christ took human form, and that the presentation of human facial features in imagery gave personality to sacred objects, making them important to the style of devotion used by the Dominicans.

The thesis drew on a relatively limited historiography. Much has been written about the inquisitorial and intellectual activities of the Dominicans, but their devotional and pastoral work has received little attention, except in general works on mendicancy which discuss the Dominicans together with the Franciscans and other groups of friars. The thesis managed the issue by consulting a variety of overlapping historiographies, combining the existing historiography on Dominican scholasticism together with works on thirteenth-century imagery and piety. This

fragmented record allowed the thesis to address, in some small way, the gulf between the small volume of Dominican-specific studies and the large record on the rich fabric of medieval piety. This neglect is surprising because the Dominicans provide such promising material. The *Nine Ways of Prayer*, for example, offers potential insights into how imagery offered devotional stimulation for medieval piety in all walks of life. The Dominicans were part of a broader mendicant movement that promoted new opportunities in lay piety, as well as scholars who discussed the theology of worship. They offered a meeting point between the sophisticated learning and vibrant religiosity of the thirteenth century.

The thesis began by arguing that there was a theoretical gulf between the scholarly activities of the Dominicans and their devotional emphasis on images. St. Dominic's prayers and gestures before the crucifix showed that imagery was vital to the piety of the Dominicans, offering a means of meditating on the Passion. In their scholarly pursuits, however, the image was discussed far less. Thomas Aquinas had access to Byzantine texts that discussed the veneration of icons at length. Much of Aquinas's writing on imagery reflects that of John of Damascus: the image of Christ transmits adoration to Christ. However, the volume of this writing is far smaller compared to John of Damascus's *On the Orthodox Faith*, even though the text is cited extensively in the *Summa Theologiae*. This is because imagery was given a small role in the Latin patristic texts which formed the core of Dominican education. Even as imagery animated Dominican worship, it had a far smaller role in the writing of its most illustrious philosopher. In contrast to these theological writings, however, Dominican discussion of imagery was far more extensive in hagiographical writings. Because it fell outside of the traditional framework of theological writing, hagiography could incorporate discourses on varied issues, constricted only by the liturgical year.

Imagery was vital to the Dominicans within the hagiographical genre because it stressed the materiality of Christianity. In Caroline Walker Bynum's argument, the belief that Christ took human form, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven was the key impetus for the cult of relics and images. Because they were parts of Christ or His saints, or resembled them, relics, images, and the Eucharist offered a tangible connection to heaven. This trend in popular piety was vital to the Dominican message, but also problematic. Material piety was in accord with the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, the Second Council of Lyon, and the Council of Vienne: decorous behaviour in church and respect for the fabric of the church building were affirmed as they showed the priority of respect for the sacred. However, the more visceral manifestations of this piety, such as bleeding Hosts, seemed ludicrous to scholastic theologians, and the heavily practical nature of popular piety was more focussed on the gaining of favours than meditation on Christian doctrine.<sup>301</sup> The thesis maintained a strong awareness of material piety to understand the cultural context in which the Dominicans related to imagery.

In order to gain new insights into the way in which the Dominicans negotiated images as sacred objects, the thesis utilised the methodological approach of André Vauchez. Vauchez focussed on how traditional piety was refined and redirected by scholastic interpretations. In the analysis of Vauchez, practical piety focussed on favours and healing was in fact an earlier religiosity spread by missionaries in the early stages of Christianisation. The Dominicans spread a new piety focussed on interior contrition and salvation. This can be seen according to Vauchez in Jacobus de Voragine's discussion in the *Legenda Aurea* of the Greater and Lesser Litanies. An exorcising

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<sup>301</sup> Walker Bynum, pp. 155-6

ceremony which brought a good harvest had moralising themes superimposed.<sup>302</sup> The thesis applied Vauchez's spiritualising hermeneutic of liturgy to the world of material, devotional objects associated with Carolyn Walker Bynum. If Jacobus de Voragine was interested in offering a devotional, moralising interpretation of liturgy in one chapter of the *Legenda Aurea*, then his approach would surely be evident in the field of relics and the Eucharist, utilising the Dominican piety found in the *Nine Ways of Prayer*.

With this approach, a spiritualising interpretation became apparent in the treatment of images in the *Legenda Aurea*. Because imagery conveyed Dominican themes of Christ's Passion, interior penitence, and the emotional connection with the Christian story, it could be explored in a series of image miracles where both similarities and differences with relics and the Eucharist were implied. Images and relics were found to exhibit the tendency to work healing miracles which was integral to popular piety. This piety could be easily appropriated by the Dominicans to appeal to the popular instinct for healing objects. Furthermore, non-Christian images such as idols, well-known objects of disdain, could be connected with heresy by depicting demons as the exact opposite of the solid materiality to be found in sacred objects. Heretical ideas that the Dominicans sought to eradicate could be described as devious and evasive in the same manner as the demons who abandoned idols when exorcised. It served to underline the connection between the orthodoxy that the Dominicans were spreading and the most enduring aspects of popular piety. In this respect, images and their healing miracles aided the Dominican mission simply through their materiality, in a similar manner to relics and the Eucharist.

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<sup>302</sup> Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 10

However, images differed from relics in that they were the subject of miracles featuring desecration, which aroused an emotional response tied to the Passion of Christ. For this same reason, the Eucharist was also the subject of desecration miracles. The sufferings inflicted on Christ's body were reflected in miracles where either Christ's image or His presence in the Host were desecrated, either through physical attacks or scepticism. In both of these miracles, Christ's true presence is revealed, using the emotional response to the Crucifixion to underline the risk of disbelief about Real Presence. Because of this similarity in discussion, images of the Crucified Christ were important in churches. The image of suffering and torment depicted in the crucifix showed the sacrifice concealed by the accidents of bread and wine. In this manner, images such as the crucifix and *Imago Pietatis* influenced perceptions of the Eucharist in the same way that reliquaries influenced relics. However, they were of special importance to the Dominicans because of the Eucharist was tied to the most fundamental articles of Christianity: the teaching that Christ took human form, and died for the sins of the world.

The piety of the Dominicans is but one niche of a broader world of medieval devotion. However, the study of Dominican piety in the world of imagery is nonetheless vital because it incorporates so many of the layers of medieval piety. Scholastic learning, the common liturgy and the mentalities of popular piety form boxes within boxes. Like the chancel screen veiling the high altar with its suspended pyx which in turn contained the consecrated Host, itself in turn believed to veil the Body of Christ, the study of medieval religion is one of drawing back multiple curtains, multiple human efforts to grapple with the reason for life on earth and the things existing beyond. Because they sought to imprint the teachings of the Fourth Lateran Council on the hearts and minds of the faithful, the Dominicans simultaneously reached out to the laity and inhabited the

uppermost echelons of Christian culture. Further study of their world will show how the multi-chambered edifice of the medieval Church operated – politically, socially and culturally.

In the tale of St. Mary of Egypt in the *Legenda Aurea*, the saint is held back by mysterious forces. After appealing to an image of the Virgin at the door of the shrine, however, she can pass through to the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>303</sup> The thesis has aimed to pass beyond the scholastic and inquisitorial tropes which have been the mainstay of Dominican historiography. The evolution of medieval lay devotion, with its florescence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, has been studied in depth, but its mendicant origins have been given less attention. Jacobus de Voragine sought to harness lay piety to the cause of ecclesiastical reform by infusing it with scholasticism and monastic devotion. Due to the traditionalist framework of Dominican scholasticism, ontological impulses tinged by Byzantine patristics were released in the tales of saints. In a parallel to the Egyptian ascetic, the image offered the Dominicans the power to capture the hearts of a restless laity in an age of reform. For the historian, the cult of images can break down our barriers of misunderstanding. Through the image, it has been possible to pass into the heart of the Order of Preachers, seeing the concerns which animated their ministry.

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<sup>303</sup> *Legenda Aurea*, vol. 1, Chapter 56, 'St. Mary of Egypt', p. 228

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