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Thomas Aquinas and German Intellectuals

Neoscholasticism and Modernity in the Late 19th Century

Mature or extensive knowledge of the great theologians of the Middle Ages had considerably diminished among Catholic intellectuals in Germany during the course of the eighteenth century. Except for some centers such as Benedictine abbeys in Salzburg and the Black Forest, Thomas Aquinas was a remote figure whose texts, much less his interpretation, were not easily accessible. While a renaissance in Catholic theology and history of dogma occurred after 1800 in Wuerttemberg and Bavaria — at Tubingen with Drey and Moehler and then in Munich with Baader and Goerres — acquaintance with medieval theology was not extensive.

In speculative philosophy and theology there had been from 1795 to 1840 a Catholic dialogue with Schelling and Hegel.[1] After 1840 the generation which was heir to this German tradition of Catholic intellectual life conversant with modern culture could only feel shock and incomprehension as speculative thought moved away from idealism and romanticism, and scholasticism, under the aggressive leadership of the papacy and the Society of Jesus, struggled for and won a new supremacy in philosophy and theology.

By 1850, J. Kleutgen had written the first sections of his *Theologie der Vorzeit* (1853-1870) soon to be complemented by the *Philosophie der Vorzeit* (1860-1863). Clemens Schrader (1820-1874) began teaching, and among his students at the Roman College, now the Gregorian University, were M. Scheeben and promising Italian Jesuits. While Kleugten — writing in German from Rome — is the standardbearer of a distinctly Roman Catholic return to the medieval, nevertheless that movement in Germany had already brought into existence, even prior to the dissemination of the *Vorzeit* volumes, German neoscholastic centers. There was Mainz with its traditionalist journal *Der Katholik* and its organization for the publication of medieval texts, Bonn with the young lay theologian Franz Jakob Clemens, and even Munich where Goerres' school and journal *Historisch-politisch Blaetter* moved to the right even as it tried to balance tradition and creativity. All of this smoothed the way for Roman writings and Roman

[1] For the history of this period in terms of Schelling, cf. T. O'MEARA, *Romantic Idealism and Roman Catholicism: Schelling and the Theologians* (Notre Dame: University Press, 1982).

theologians such as Scheeben (1835-1883), J. Hergenroether (1824-1890), F. S. Hettinger (1819-1890) in Germany, and German theologians such as Kleutgen and Schrader in Rome. It had become quite clear that in this scholastic revival it would be Thomas Aquinas more than Bonaventure, Duns Scotus or Suarez who would be the dominant figure.

The following essay intends to be a contribution to describing this interim age, roughly from 1840 to 1870, suspended between an earlier time of modern synthesis and a new age of discovery in personality and physics. We will look at three South-German intellectuals from that period — J. Frohschammer, J. N. P. Oischinger and Carl Werner. Each during a lifetime of scholarship pursued the synthesis of modern *Wissenschaft* with Christian faith, and the two Bavarians would agree with the Austrian Werner that ultimately theology is fundamental theology where in the nineteenth century revelation must meet the new science and the new epistemologies. All three wrote books on Thomas Aquinas; there we glimpse the older, German Catholic theology cognizant of post-Cartesian thought challenged by the neoscholastic movement.

The conflict between the new (neoscholastic) and the old (the German tradition for almost half a century) was a theological and philosophical facet of a wider questioning of liberalism by the church. In political, social and economic movements, as well as in science, the church aggressively pursued an approach of questioning all that was new and of offering past centuries as cultural models. The writings of Kleutgen were enhanced by the politique of the papacy and by German disillusionment with the intellectual and political situation after the revolution of 1830 and 1848.

The faithful cultivators of the older tradition, I. Doellinger, A. Guenther, J. E. Kuhn and K. Hefele, a tradition which had tried to come to grips with the culture of the early nineteenth century, feared that the venerators of the Middle Ages would reduce (or retain) Catholicism in an intellectual subservience to German culture and would lead — through Protestant and Prussian power — Catholics back into an intellectual ghetto where they would, as mere archivists, rephrase medieval thought, abandoning the modern world to other forces.

Frohschammer, Oischinger and Werner have ties to the tradition of the University of Munich. That Bavarian university had moved there from Ingolstadt and Landshut in 1826 amid the Munich renaissance of Ludwig I, and during the next two decades a stellar cluster of intellectuals in theology and philosophy — Schelling, Baader and Goerres, Doellinger, Klee and Moehler — attempted syntheses between Catholicism and culture after Herder and Kant. Frohschammer and Oischinger did their philosophical and theological studies at the University of Munich with the former becoming a professor of philosiphy there; Werner, an Austrian follower of Anton Guenther, moved away from Guenther under the attraction of Baader's thought.

Their meeting with Thomas Aquinas occurred in the last half of the nineteenth century as there took place what we might call the first wave of that neoscholastic revival which reached from the 1840s to Vatican II. The philosopher (Frohschammer), the private scholar (Oischinger), the fundamental theologian and historian of theology (Werner) — had been students in the world struggling to interpret Roman Catholic philosophy and theology by taking Jacobi, Schelling and Hegel seriously. Now they were faced by new worlds in church and society. None can be considered a theological radical and each was aware that a golden age had passed; none found an interest in scholastic thinkers objectionable, but insisted that the enterprise of Catholic philosophy and theology should not ignore the directions of German intellectual life in the nineteenth century.

We know little about the history among Catholics of philosophy and theology in Germany during the second half of the nineteenth century; Doellinger, a venerable but almost mythical figure, hardly exhausts the decades from 1860 to the event of World War I. H. Schnaedelbach has described the philosophical shift in that epoch:

> The alienation from Absolute Idealism in the name of history was thus the prelude to the general revolution in the concept of science.... The transformations in the conceptions of history and science after Hegel had the consequence that the unity of the historical and systematic which Absolute Idealism had proposed broke down ... (no longer giving) a complete systematic interpretation of reality which could justifiably make claims to scientific status. The need for such an interpretation, not satisfied by science, is taken over by word views, "life-views"... (opposed by) what Nietzsche diagnosed as "nihilism." [2]

Into this breakdown and vacuum, scholasticism entered as not a new "life-view" but as a coherent system and ontology of reality.

We are looking briefly at the careers of German philosophers and theologians who lived in a time of transition when what they saw as the "older" tradition of Schelling and Baader, Drey and Moehler was faced by the new scholastic revival. Their three books evaluating Thomas Aquinas in the 1850s (Frohschammer's work begins then even if his book is published later) give us a valuable focus for understanding not only this conflict but the transition from one era in German theology to another. We look at the three German priests not because they are great students or interpreters of Thomas Aquinas (or, of Hegel), but rather because they throw light on two histories: the first is the slow coming to end of the tradition begun with J. S. Drey of a Catholic intellectual life in conversation with philosophy after Descartes and Kant; the second is the momentous neoscholastic renaissance

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[2] *Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), pp. 10f.

which swept through Roman Catholicism during these decades. In thia interesting meeting between these theologians and Thomas Aquinas we have an interplay between scholastic and modern interpretation of Christian revelation. That combat and later dialogue continued through the first half of this century up through the theologians and the event itself of Vatican II.

I. J. FROHSCHAMMER, *Die Philosophie des Thomas von Aquino kritisch gewuerdigt*

Jacob Frohschammer was a gifted but tragic figure in German intellectual life in the last half of the nineteenth century.[3] He wanted to include in the expression of Catholic faith the world of natural science. But this scientific realm was changing rapidly after 1850. (It was replacing idealist philosophy as the apologetic partner of Catholicism.[4]) The new sciences were experimental, increasingly materialistic, and skeptical of ontological frameworks, skeptical of not only scholastic but post-Kantian morphologies. Catholicism seemed to flee this confrontation, protecting its retreat with global scholastic demands or dismissals and a certain dogmatic or ecclesiastical fundamentalism.

Like many Catholic intellectuals of the nineteenth century Frohschammer was born in rural Bavaria. In 1841 (Schelling moved that year to Berlin to counter Hegelianism), he began his philosophical studies at the University of Munich attending the classes of Thiersch, Goerres and Schubert who were among the geniuses of idealist natural philosophy. Despite years of doubts over a clerical vocation, in 1847 he received a doctorate for a dissertation on Pentecost and charisms and took the first steps towards the priesthood. Frohschammer finished his studies, completed a *Habilitationsschrift* on Pelagianism and began teaching theology. He accepted in 1855 a position in the philosophical faculty where his real interests lay.

In 1854, however, the Munich scholar had published a study on the origins of the soul, espousing the theory of generationism and traducianism which described the spiritual soul emerging essentially from conception. Admitting that important Christian dogmas were linked to this field, the author argued that they could, nevertheless, be reconciled through a new view of dogma open to respectful but historical interpretation. Past metaphysicians, including Aquinas, should not have the last word for they

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[3] Cf. the earlier studies of J. FRIEDRICH and L. ATZBERGER; J. HAUSL, "J. Frohschammer," *Katholische Theologen Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert*, H. FRIES, G. SCHWAIGER, eds (Munich: Koesel, 1975) 3, pp. 169ff.; E. HOCEDEZ, *Histoire de la théologie au XIXème siècle* 2 (Bruxelles: L'Edition universelle, 1947), pp. 60ff.

[4] Typical of this development is PAUL SCHANZ's work, *A Christian Apology* (New York: Pustet, 1891), 3 vols.

were not addressing these new problems.[5] For Frohschammer the dialectic of dogma and philosophy of science necessitated a deeper view of philosophy itself. An *Introduction into Philosophy and the Basic Outline of Metaphysics* in 1858 searched for continuity between Anselm, Augustine and Aquinas, and Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Schelling and Baader, even as it took into account contemporary philosophers such as I. H. Fichte, F. Trendelenburg and F. Hoffmann. Human existence and consciousness of God are the themes, but — recalling Schelling and the early philosophers of nature — the mode of both and human life and intellectual system is organic, developmental. It would be a mistake, however, to see Frohschammer, for all his linguistic and conceptual similarities to the older Munich school, as simply an anachronism repeating the old idealist philosophy of nature: he was quite conscious of living in a new age dominated by new sciences, one whose philosophical bridge to Christian faith could not be supplied by figures such as Guenther or Kuhn but had to be hammered out anew. Books on teleology, energy and matter indicated that he was not particularly sympathetic to neoscholasticism, and the initial work on generation was placed on the *Index* in 1857 at the urging of Kleutgen in Rome.

What do Catholic intellectual life and natural science have in common? Just as there is an immanent power in matter which unfolds in history, so in human consciousness there is a power capable of attaining a knowledge of God, of comprehending a revelation. Frohschammer's philosophy of immanence recalled the systems of Franz von Baader while his epistemology of the interplay of total subjectivity and objectivity harkened back to Schelling. In almost his first published pages he wrote: "Theology must overcome its shyness before the powerful, upward striving research into nature, while natural science must temper its pride and not turn progress into a new religion or a destroyer of religion."[6]

"The Frohschammer Case" exemplifies the tensions between ultramontane neoscholasticism and the ethos of liberal Catholic German theologians in the second half of the nineteenth century.[7] After 1861, Frohschammer was involved in controversy with Rome: the Congregation of the Index communicated a number of criticisms, and Frohschammer answered both publicly and privately in an increasingly disappointed and hostile way; in 1863 a letter of the Pope and a critique of the Munich theological faculty was followed by suspension.[8] Frohschammer in the

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[5] *Ueber den Ursprung der menschlichen Seelen. Rechtfertigung des Generatianismus* (Munich: Rieger, 1854), p. 98.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[7] HAUSL, p. 181.

[8] A chronological survey of the numerous documents can be found in HAUSL, pp. 181ff. For Frohschammer's condemnation, PIUS IX, "*Gravissimas inter*," (Dec. 11, 1862), *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (DENZINGER-SCHÖNMETZER) (Freibug: Herder, 1968), 2850ff.

remaining twenty-five years of his life was neglected by natural scientists even as he lacked significant Catholic critiques or students. He was buried outside the church in 1893.

Frohschammer describes how he stayed up late in his student years to study Thomas Aquinas: particularly, on the advice of an important but unknown professor, the *Summa contra Gentes*. "To be sure, in the academic lectures on philosophy at that time the name of Aquinas was hardly mentioned, especially because lectures on the history of philosophy at the University of Munich during the 1840s were not held."[9] In composing his doctoral study and for his first work on the generation of the soul Frohschammer looked at Aquinas' philosophy and exegesis concerning the origin of a human being — both disappointed him.

Frohschammer studied Aquinas in the 1850s for a precise purpose, to show scholasticism's incapacity of dealing with the subjective-immanent or the historical-organic. Neither "reason as an empty power without content" nor religious ideas "which lack the dynamic of growing, organic seeds" can serve the independence of either faith or natural science.[10] By 1889, Frohschammer evidently felt his *oeuvre* should include a study of Thomas Aquinas — "a critical study," as the title of his work indicated — and it is this work to which we now turn.

Frohschammer tells us that he had planned a large work on Aquinas very early in his career; the "Thomas-Cult expanding since the 1850s" and the declaration by Leo XIII of Aquinas to be "the quasi-official and solely mandated theologian... a result of the union of Jesuitism and papal world-dominance"[11] made such a work necessary. Frohschammer's "Foreword" chronicled his condemnations by the church, some of which he attributed to the idolatry of Aquinas, indeed to the unwritten decree forbidding any critique of Aquinas. The Munich philosopher asserted repeatedly that simply to set aside any single opinion of Aquinas was enough to be designated as "pestilential" by the writers of *Civiltà Cattolica*, particularly by Matteo Liberatore.[12] He would study "the entire philosophy of Thomas whose foundation had been employed so much against me."[13] Philosophy would be the object of his study because it was philosophy which treated science, and it was in philosophy that the cultural limitations of Aquinas and the links with Aristotle were apparent. Full of respect for the

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[9] "Vorrede," *Die Philosophie des Thomas von Aquino kritisch gewuerdigt* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1889), p. vi.

[10] *Einleitung in die Philosophie und Grundriss der Metaphysik* (Munich: Lit.-Art. Anstalt, 1858), pp. 219f., 271ff.

[11] "Vorrede," *Thomas von Aquino*, p. v.; cf. "Der Generativismus und die Wissenschaft der Jesuiten. Zur Characterisierung und Wuerdigung der Scholastik," *Athenaeum* 3 (1984), 597-640.

[12] "Vorrede", *Thomas von Aquino*, p. xi.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. x.

person and thought of Aquinas, reminding his readers that Aquinas did not establish himself as the end of theology or the personification of dogma, and observing that Aquinas' thought has ramifications not only in theory but in practical life, Frohschammer pursued "not a complete, exhaustive presentation and criticism of the entire Thomistic science, for the particular, positive theology is set aside and only the most important problems are handled, even if they are problems decisive for the entire philosophical world-view",[14] but two themes: "the objectivity of scholastic philosophy vis-à-vis the so-called subjectivism of modern philosophy, and, second, the empirical foundation of this scholastic philosophy, reaching through intellectual activity to the highest object, God, and from that standpoint constructing and arranging everything else."[15] In fact, much more is accomplished in the book's five sections: [a] Aquinas' epistemology; [b] theology and faith along with philosophy; [c] Aquinas on God; [d] Aquinas' philosophy of nature; [e] Aquinas' psychology viewed as an anthropology; [f] ethics and politics.

The chapter on "Philosophy and Theology" offers his views on scholasticism and Christianity, arguing against the sharp division now inserted by many between philosophy and theology, and against a purely servile, controled role for philosophy and science. (This topic was a way of addressing a more delicate one: academic freedom for Catholics). Frohschammer blamed Aquinas for a complete separation of revelation from the world and for the debilitation of human science. Both lead to the epistemological parallelism of two kinds of truths: those of philosophy bestowed by causal proofs, and those of revelation accessible to humans only through supernaturally grounded faith.[16] Examples of the latter would be the Trinity, the Incarnation, the sacraments. Frohschammer argued that in all these areas, revelation need not be fully separated from human reason; there are analogues, similarities with reason and world. The divine activity in the sacraments, though different, is not unlike the activity of the one God in the world where matter and energy too have their mysteries. For students of Aquinas, it is strange to have him ("who ... limited by church and culture ... came to this unsophisticated determination of supernatural truths"[17]) accused of severily dividing world and grace, reason and revelation.

"Thomas developed (philosophy and theology) in an outstanding way," Frohschammer wrote, "and as much as some of it proves a failure under critical examination, still his serious striving and his great work during a relatively short life deserves our recognition, indeed our amazement."[18] The church and certain religious orders have divinized Aquinas, removing him from the controversies (including his own ecclesiastical censures), texts and

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. xix.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Thomas von Aquino*, pp. 104f.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[18] "Schlussbemerkungen," *Thomas von Aquino*, p. 505.

enterprises of his own time, a time which encouraged a variety of intellectual directions. Yet, the very clarity of medieval epistemology hides within itself a kind of mechanization of the process of knowing, and Aquinas' view of philosophy's relationship to theology undermines theoretically the independence of creation and of thought.[19] When Aquinas is employed to argue against new discoveries of geology and embryology pointing towards evolution, his God is suspended apart both from an idealist perfection and from the dynamic of development in nature. The natural dimensions in ethics and politics are asserted but then undermined by a supernaturalism which leads to authoritarianism not only in the state but in the church.

Aquinas' thought must be evaluated and then what is true complemented by philosophy and science of each age. "Fixed formulae do not have unconditional value but only the living, serious striving for knowledge and truth.... One attacks modern science because of its pluralism. But only in this way is progress in knowledge possible. The world offers many facets of its being and activity."[20] Frohschammer's work illustrates the formal tension between the old and the new ontologies, and the extension of this tension into dogma, creative thought before discovery and academic freedom. The two next thinkers will treat more extensively the content of Aquinas' thought.

II. Johann Nepomuk Paul Oischinger's *Die speculative Theologie des hl. Thomas von Aquinas*

A devotee of personal scholarship and the author of numerous books on speculative theological topics, a product of the Munich school and yet never a university professor, J. N. Oischinger's work on Thomas Aquinas attracts our curiosity because it was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1859. Information on the Bavarian priest is sparse.[21] Born in 1817, Oischinger was able to hear Schelling, Baader and Goerres during his university years and they permanently formed his thought. Before entering the Regensburg seminary he also attended for a few semesters at the University of Munich theological lectures by J. A. Moehler, Doellinger and H. Klee. Oischinger studied and wrote as a private scholar-priest — but with an enormous ambition: he intended to examine philosophy from Kant to

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[19] Frohschammer examines the role of Aquinas in the new apologetics of *praeambula fidei* leading to *credibilitas* (*Thomas von Aquino*, pp. 127ff.).

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 509.

[21] "Dr. J. N. P. Oischinger," *Augsburger Postzeitung, Beilage 3* (1877), 9-11; A. Stoeckl, "Oischinger, Nepomuk Paul," *Kirchenlexikon* (Freiburg: Herder, 1895), 9, 789-793; P. Wenzel, "Oischinger, J. N. P.," *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 7, 1123; a rare allusion to Oischinger can be found in Bernhard Casper's study on Friedrich Pilgram (1819-1890): *Die Einheit aller Wirklichkeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 1960), p. 125. In 1980 Minerva Verlag began to issue reprints of Oischinger's works.

Hegel and then to present a Christian critique. He published in 1843 a "basic sketch of a new system of philosophy" and in 1849, *Philosophie und Religion*; in the next year the first of two books on the Trinity (which he viewed as *the* contemporary speculative problem); and in 1852 a study of Anton Guenther. After completing in 1854 a detailed examination of Descartes, Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel (*Speculative Entwicklung der Hauptsysteme der neuern Philosophie*...), Oischinger turned to theology, and to a never to be completed, multi-volume dogmatics. The work on Thomas Aquinas served as a bridge from philosophy to theology. Respected as a virtuous and generous priest, never tiring of "a life in still withdrawal from the world like that of an anchorite",[22] Oischinger died in 1876.

The book on Thomas Aquinas introduced itself as "a fundamental sketch of the speculative theology of Thomas Aquinas developed systematically with particular attention paid to the basic principles of speculation, the teaching of the church and the needs of our times."[23] Oischinger looked not at the "positive side" of Aquinas' thought, his Christian teaching, but only at the speculative principles which fashion or injure the system of Aquinas. The odd independence of the autodidact appear quickly as he asserted in Aquinas a false mechanisation, a raw realism, and an inaccurate use of Aristotle, all of which have been set aside by modern philosophy brought forth through the Reformation. Since past speculation should neither be ignored nor adored, his critique will set scholasticism free for a right appreciation.

> The author has his task, despite the unfavorable times, to work for the restoration of scientific and speculative theology..., illuminating the central points of Aquinas and separating the true from the false in Thomistic theology. This process of discrimination must be undertaken since many do not see the inner connection of speculative principles with dogma and now watch this development only externally. Others hide pieces of scholastic theology which are doctrinally unemployable and see Thomistic speculation as a palliative against every error, something to be restored by all their powers; they are suspicious of anyone who ventures a different philosophical approach. Finally, others consider philosophy itself, when active within Christianity, to be ruinous.[24]

The Bavarian priest fearlessly concluded his introduction by listing four broad inadequacies of Aquinas which departed from church teaching: the nature of God and the triune persons, the substantial unity of the human person, the effects of original sin on human personality, the union of the human nature with the Logos in Christ.

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[22] STOEKL, 793.

[23] *Die speculative Theologie des hl. Thomas von Aquina des englischen Lehrers. In den Grundzuegen systematisch entwickelt* (Landshut: Thomann, 1858), p. iii.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. vii.

The book has an opening foundational section and three parts. The "*Allgemeine Grundlage*" treats epistemological issues beloved of idealist thought: forms of knowing, unity, system and development, the relationship of reason to religion, revelation and theology. Three parts treat God, creation and humanity, religion and revelation. Oischinger runs through a wide range of topics drawing Aquinas' theology indiscriminately from various works and then indicating briefly their deficiencies. The book is quite different from Frohschammer's in that it is to a large extent concerned with theological issues — e.g., the sacraments, Christ as the New Adam, eschatology. The author's intellectual milieu seems to be that of the first half of the nineteenth century.

Oischinger's opening "list" of Aquinas' errors endangering the church should indicate that the solitary scholar was not without limitations and eccentricities. Curiously, for Oischinger shallow directions in Aristotle and scholasticism anticipated the errors of idealism. For instance, the theory of the active intellect working upon sense species, the foundation of the universal concept in reality, the real distinction of existence from essence, further positions prominent in post-Kantian thought not easily reconcilable with dogma. Aquinas both as theologian and philosopher lacked a mediating position between medieval realism and the idealism of the immediate past.

His discussion of nature and person in the Trinity exemplifies Oischinger's rather confused critique of scholastic dogmatic theology. A sharp distinction must exist between Trinitarian person and the divine nature, and Aquinas' explanation of the one divine nature participated in by the persons is monistic. Nor does the approach to the Trinity beginning with processions and relations escape modalism. "The result is that Thomas hypostasizes an abstraction, and that these three abstractions are either modes of the substance or exist as subsistences or persons outside the essence (a fourth reality). These two views are extremes while the church's teaching affirms the three persons *ad extra* are only one principle and so one personality and substance, while the three persons *ad intra* appear as relative selves or members which are as a unity-of-members one substance."[25] Oischinger's own Trinitarian theology seems to be structured around entities which have an unclear relational community and are a triadic mediation of a fully distinct deity to an independent world. What is of interest is Oischinger's insistence upon the real relations of creation and incarnation to be real also on the part of God; Aquinas' one-sided relationship removes God from the very realms over which he is lord.[26]

Many of Oischinger's summaries as well as his evaluations lack not only depth but accuracy. Oischinger's facile critique of innumerable aspects of the

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 185, 287.

Angelic Doctor would hardly insure a warm welcome for the step he took: sending his book into Roman circles in November 1858. The Munich Nunciature presided over by Prince Archbishop Flavio Chigi and Archbishop Matteo Gonella during the decade after 1856 was very active in forwarding works to Rome for an evaluation of their orthodoxy. In the introduction to his letter of December 11, 1862 to the Archbishop of Munich forbidding various works, Pius IX declared that "to his sorrow he had learned that in various areas of Germany Catholic theologians and philosophers exercised an unheard of freedom in teaching and writing, introducing new and erroneous views." [27] Among these Bavarian Catholics Frohschammer had the most writings placed on the *Index*, but Ernst von Lassaulx, J. Huber, A. Pichler were also condemned while F. Hoffmann's new edition of Baader's ideas critical of an incipient Roman rigidity barely escaped. Of Oischinger's many works only this study on Thomas Aquinas — but not even his later defenses published in the subsequent eighteen months or his study on Frohschammer [28] — were listed on the *Index*. The priest-theologian quickly expressed his submission to the decree of the Congregation of the Index.[29]

Oischinger was an eccentric, a man of wide learning but superficial, limited in his knowledge of Aquinas and in critical acumen. Nevertheless, his book on Aquinas can tell us something about the knowledge of medieval thought at this time. For many circles Aquinas had not yet reached the point where error in his thought was unthinkable, where he could not be criticized, even dissected. Oischinger too represents the ambiguity in Catholic intellectual life after 1850: the age of idealism is past but is still understood; the crusade of neoscholasticism seems immature. His inability to interpret Aquinas' writings tells us something about the weak level of Thomistic

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[27] "*Gravissimas inter*," *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, 8 (1874), p. 429; "*Tuas Libenter*" referred to "false views against the old school and against the teaching of the highest doctors whom the universal church venerates because of their wisdom and holiness of life" (*Ibid.*, p. 438). Cf. H. REUSCH, *Der Index der verbotenen Buecher* 2:1 (Bonn: Cohen, 1885), p. 1127, and subsequent pages for an itemization of the considerable censoring in Rome of German publications. For a contemporary critique, cf. FROHSCHAMMER, "Die roemische Index-Congregation und die Freiheit der Wissenschaft," *Athenaeum* 1 (1862), 228-355.

[28] *Die spekulative Theologie des Thomas von Aquinas gegen die Lehren und Angriffe der Wiener Literaturzeitung* (Munich, 1859); *Commentarii theologici quibus questiones de theologia scholastica ... explanantur* (Munich, 1860).

[29] OISCHINGER wrote to Gregor von Scherr, O.S.B., Archbishop of Munich on April 26, 1859: "Journals from the 21st of this month have been announcing that my book on the speculative theology of Thomas Aquinas has been condemned by the Congregation of the Index. But before having received any knowledge of this condenmation I did not hesitate to express to the Holy Father by letter on the 19th of this month my submission in case of condemnation and my request to learn of the reasons." A later report from the Munich Nunciature concerning Oischinger's book on Frohschammer mentioned that he was considered to be an eccentric. Documents from ASV, Arch. Nunz. Monaco, n. 133, fasc. 2b.

understanding among many. A historical knowledge of medieval thought, a comprehension of Aquinas enhanced by an adequate awareness of Aristotle, the diversity of scholasticism and the role of the great Thomistic commentators — all this lay in the future.

III. Carl Werner, *Der heilige Thomas von Aquino*

Among our three "Thomists," Carl Werner's access to Thomas Aquinas was the most complex and his knowledge of him the most extensive. A disciple of that Catholic thinker whose critique and appropriation of Hegel was judged the most extreme, Anton Guenther, Werner acquired after the age of thirty a knowlegde of medieval, Tridentine and neoscholastic thought which remains extraordinary even for much of our own century.

> A large number of students from all areas of culture attached themselves to this thinker (Anton Guenther) who developed a "Christian dualism" drawn from a philosophical anthropology. The most significant of these disciples, some of whom were laymen prominent in various areas of society, was Werner. No one else had such gifts in intellectual capacity and energy; what he left behind in research and publication is of such a range that his contemporary theologians in Germany cannot equal him.[30]

The Austrian theologian was born in St. Poelten in 1821 and received his gymnasial education at the great Rococo abbey of Melk. His most prominent teacher was a Franz Werner, a disciple of Guenther, who urged the young seminarian to consider theology as a career, and whose library suggested to the young man in 1843 research in the great figures of the Middle Ages.[31] Werner completed his doctoral studies in 1843 and returned to St. Poelten where he taught moral theology for the following decades. Meeting Guenther the year before, he had begun to study the writings of the "Augustine" of the Vienna religious circle. Becoming by 1847 an enthusiastic disciple, he drew the Viennese idealist's format into his own first major work, a three volume system of Christian ethics which appeared from 1850 to 1852. The following year Werner defended his mentor against the attack of F. Clemens, but after the placing of Guenther on the *Index* in 1857, Werner became more critical of him. The dualism, the "schizophrenia" [32] of Guenther seemed unresolved; the traditional dogmas of Christianity surely if slightly refashioned. The strict dualism of Guenther should be directed

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[30] J. Pritz, "Carl Werner," *Katholische Theologen Deutschlands im. 19. Jahrhundert* 3, p. 145.

[31] J. Pritz, *Mensch als Mitte. Leben und Werk Carl Werners* 1 (Vienna: Herder, 1968), p. 43. Werner also studied with M. Beyr who drew extensively on J. A. Moeller and S. Drey; *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

towards a better synthesis by means of other elements from other philosophies and theologies even those from earlier Christian times. Two new mentors, one medieval and one modern, namely Franz von Baader and Thomas Aquinas, entered his thought.

Baader linked Werner with the Munich school, with the world of Frohschammer and Oischinger. In Baader (we might recall that in the midst of composing his vast systems at the end of his life Baader was studying Aquinas, particularly the commentaries on Scripture), Werner glimpsed the mystical side of speculation. Baader's systems of intuition and development explored not simply mental categories but those of society and religion. While rehabilitating Meister Eckhart, Baader could also coin the words "proletarian," and "nihilism", work for theoretical and practical unity with Orthodoxy and forecast the nature of the papacy for the coming century.[33] Werner saw in Baader rather than in Hegel the presence of an interior, religious center for human life — something important to Werner for it was in philosophical anthropology that he had always grounded his Christian ethics.

Werner became professor in Vienna in 1870 teaching no longer moral theology but New Testament. Because he found his colleagues in systematic and fundamental theology unimaginative he held free lectures in the history of philosophy and the philosophy of religion. Intent upon the renewal of theological studies he developed the project of a journal which became the *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* in 1875. Always an eminent mediator between the church and state, he accepted in 1881 a government position in the ministry concerned with religion and education. In the next seven years before his death he wrote his history of late medieval scholasticism as well as volumes on medieval psychology, Rosmini, Vico, and modern Italian philosophy and aesthetics in general. In short, Werner wrote twenty-three volumes on medieval topics.

In the turbulent 1850s Werner's contemporaries were, of course, surprised when he turned to the study of Aquinas. This project had its beginnings in the neoscholastic critiques of Guenther whose arguments he wished to check.[34] An extraordinarily rapid development took place: three years after the publication in 1855 of the Guentherian *Grundlinien der Philosophie* Werner had completed a three volumes work on Thomas Aquinas. Far from inhibiting the growth of his own speculation, Aquinas' motifs of mediation amid levels of realities, of the formal unity of the human person, of order and goal, of the intellect active and yet receptive within sense data gave him new insights, ones which ultimately led the Austrian away from philosophical anthropology into vast historical surveys of

[33] Cf. F. HARTL, *Franz von Baader* (Graz: Styria, 1971), pp. 40ff.; "Das Verhaeltnis C. Werners zu Franz Baader," PRITZ, *Mensch als Mitte*, pp. 209-243.

[34] PRITZ, "Carl Werner," p. 153.

Catholic philosophy and theology since the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Guenther was alienated by Werner's sympathetic turn to Aquinas and by 1861 ridiculed him as "an old Dominican," "the great Thomist".[35]

The first volume on Aquinas includes a biograghy, an intellectual history and a survey of works ("the product and result of the process of development in the mind of their composer"[36]), and the third presents a history of Thomism. When we realize that Werner was working some decades before H. Denifle, A. Peltzer and M. Grabmann, his knowledge is astonishing and, in terms of his contemporaries, exceptional. Werner had considerable knowledge of the life and world, the historical development and the textual diversity of Thomas Aquinas.

Nevertheless, Werner's approach to Aquinas is marked by philosophical interests, by the format, categories, and epistemology of the nineteenth century. Revelation and the intellectual life are concerned with modes and objects of knowledge. "We must distinguish a dual object of the human person existing in time: one knowable through an intuition mediately or immediately complete with reason's certitude, and another given to be known according to the measure of human grasp, complete only in the intuition of future life."[37]

Werner's second volume, on Aquinas' teaching, begins with a "Noetic," and "Philosophy of the Real." The noetic has three large sections: thinking, knowing and science while the philosophy focuses upon ontology, aitiology and teleology. After three hundred pages we are ready to turn to Aquinas' theology, which Werner recognized as the goal of his philosophy. As the outline of the volume shows, the thought of Aquinas, left more or less undisturbed in its content, is interpreted and arranged according to the project of nineteenth century philosophy and theology with the specifically Christian teaching appearing only after a long noetic and ontological morphology is in place. The format of the exposition lies in a genre different from those of Aquinas' own works: that of the collection, encyclopedia, textbook, popular in the scholastic revivals of the Baroque and the nineteenth century.

The theological exposition of the second volume, extending over four hundred pages, does follow the plan and content of the *Summa theologiae* frequently citing in notes long passages in Latin. Treating the *Summa* as a post-Kantian system (which it is not) Werner omitted some questions and areas but by and large presented the great work's entire scope. His particular interests led him to give extensive attention to the moral theology in the II-IIa, less to Christology, and only a few pages to the sacraments. Curiously, between the sacraments and the eschatology (drawn from the *Supplement*'s

[35] PRITZ, *Mensch als Mitte*, p. 202.

[36] *Der heilige Thomas von Aquino* 2 (Regensburg: Manz, 1889), p. 3 (not the edition of 1858/9 but the revised edition will be cited).

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

use of the *Commentary on the Sentences*), he inserted a brief ecclesiology, "Concerning the Servants of Salvation," limited to the hierarchy, particularly the papacy.

Indicative of the approach of the Austrian theologian is his presentation of Aquinas on grace. Neglecting the central position of this topic in the entire *Summa theologiae* as well as in the *IIa Pars* Werner hardly mentioned it as he moved from summarizing Aquinas on the Old Law to the numerous virtues. He cited Aquinas' more radical principles, e.g., that the grace of the Holy Spirit is the New Law, and that grace brings a new, interior freedom [38] but passed over the questions on topics such as the divine missions, justification, actual and sanctifying grace, merit. Passing immediately to the virtuous life, he lacked any awareness of the anthropological framework mediating grace and the Christian life. A second curious aspect is the similarity he gave to the Old Law and the New. Although he knew that Aquinas sees grace as the fulfillment of the law, Werner saw the differences of the two covenants to lie in difficulty, information and ceremonies. This is, of course, a very superficial reading of Aquinas for whom continuity in religious history does not obscure the essentially new presence of grace through Christ. The reader cannot miss Werner's static psychology and religious anthropology, his neglect of grace as divine presence and new human life. Over all, the philosophical depth he employed to analyze world-fashioning consciousness in Guenther is not strong in these volumes.

Werner's tireless research into medieval, late medieval and Baroque scholastic theologies served as a critical supplement to the neoscholastic movement. While he wrote a few individual, speculative works — a moral theology in 1863, books on philosophical anthropology in 1867 and 1870 — Werner was irresistibly drawn to the history of theology. The range, size and productivity of books on medieval, late medieval or Baroque and later scholasticisms, whose value remains to this day, was astonishing. There is a history of apologetics in five volumes, a two volume study of Suarez and post-Reformation scholasticism, a history of theology from Trent to 1900; books on Averroism and nominalism, Venerable Bede, Henry of Ghent, Gerbert of Aurillac, William of Auvergne, Alcuin; special studies on Bonaventure and Scotus and Roger Bacon. As we mentioned above, this bent for research remains alive up to Werner's death.

IV. *Conclusions*

Oischinger spoke of the 1850s as "unfavorable times", unfavorable to a philosophy and theology which would not dismiss German modernity. The next decade brought decisive events: Doellinger's address at the Odeon in

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 571.

Munich in 1860; the *Katholikentag* at Munich and then at Aachen in 1861 and 1862 discussing political and social issues; in 1863, the assembly of theologians in Munich where Doellinger tried to heal the split between the "German" and the "Roman" directions; and in 1864, the *Syllabus*.

As young university graduates in 1794, Schelling, Hoelderlin and Hegel believed that they were serving a unique birth of the kingdom of God. But no epoch lasts forever, or even for long. Frohschammer's colleague in the University and in the short-lived journal *Athenaeum* Alois Schmid reminisced in 1879:

> "That was the time of youthful, creative romanticism which came out of the desolation of the Enlightenment (the leveler of every trace of poetry and history). It began with a captivating philosophy of nature, and after the difficult years of revolution moved to the historical powers of positive Christianity and Catholicism. ... It was a beautiful time of courageous struggle and work; it is gone like a dream of youth. It was — and is no more!" [39]

These three books on Thomas Aquinas illustrate Catholic intellectual life in the second helf of the nineteenth century, a period quite distinct from the earlier time of synthesis, one weakened by the unfulfilled expectation of the cultural past and challenged by a return to the coherent medieval past. Our three authors were both overconfident and uncertain, knowledgeable and ignorant. For a period almost left unresearched they describe the pluralism and modernity still alive after 1848 and even 1870, but also the course of a neoscholastic revival in the process of becoming world-wide.

1. Frohschammer, Oischinger and Werner reacted to the monopolistic claims of medieval philosophy in a way in which the following hundred years of philosophers and theologians did not; they found a full replacement of all philosophy and theology by medieval figures incredible. Moreover, they viewed this *imperium* in abstract thought — and this must have been unintelligible in Rome — as potentially destructive of a vital Catholicism north of the Alps.

2. Oischinger and Frohschammer lacked by and large a historical understanding of Thomas Aquinas, and this makes Werner's works all the more extraordinary. Absent from all three is the methodological and textual acquaintance with Aquinas growing in neoscholastic circles. It is to the credit of neoscholastic schools, Roman and German, that a decade later, Catholic intellectuals, even those skeptical of a Thomistic monopoly, have a deeper knowledge of Aquinas than did Oischinger and Frohschammer, or their intellectual parents, Baader, Goerres and Kuhn. Yet, the authors saw that the neoscholastics' knowledge of Aquinas was also limited textually and

[39] "Ueber Schelling, Baader und Goerres," in ANDREAS SCHMID, *Geheimrat Dr. Alois Schmid...*, (Regensburg: Manz, 1911), p. 233.

contextually, that the breadth of Aquinas' works was not referred to, and that their historical milieu was neglected. The authors seemed to have drawn some of their knowledge from early neoscholastic apologetics, for they accuse Aquinas of subjecting the human to the ecclesial, true philosophy to church authority. In fact, authority and church authority play a very small role in Thomas Aquinas, and his entire thought is based upon giving due autonomy to nature and reason.

3. Although they knew of German centers and of various religious orders devoted to scholastic teachers, they identified the neoscholastic revival of the Dominican Thomas Aquinas with a campaign of the Jesuits centered in Rome[40], and with the intent of the papacy to control not simply theology but the total cultural life of Catholics north of the Alps. German neoscholastics through their articles and books were present, but they did not seem to represent the vital center of the movement.

4. Surprisingly all three related Thomas Aquinas to the world after Kant, Hegel and Schelling, Baader and Goerres. Werner placed Aquinas' thought within issues drawn from modern epistemology and faith-noetics. On the other hand, Frohschammer and Oischinger could be critical of Aquinas when he resembled an idealist philosophy of active consciousness. Each views Aquinas through the history of modern philosophy, an optic which in a few decades will die out. German modern philosophy survived, then, in the analysis of consciousness and one cannot overlook the repeated epistemological setting for theology and metaphysics.

Similarly, whether in reaction to or drawing upon the *Zeitgeist*, from its inception in the nineteenth century neoThomism was occasionally fashioned by nineteenth century interests in epistemology and apologetics. Idealism had yielded to precise scientific and political issues. While the philosophies of value and life moved towards an anthropology, neoscholasticism was publicly intent upon restoring Greek metaphysics. And yet it spent increasing energy on the epistemology of knowing reality and believing revelation. Apologetics, with its constant focus upon rational proofs, credibility and the act of faith tended to avoid the larger, more supple metaphysical issues.[41]

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[40] FROHSCHAMMER mentions the Dominicans' oath to support Thomas Aquinas and disparages Aquinas by arguing that by being a Dominican he was a theoretical support for the Inquisition (*Thomas von Aquino* pp. xi, xvii; 148).

It is interesting that it is the Society of Jesus through men like Pierre Rousselot, Joseph Maréchal, Gaston Fessard and Karl Rahner who initiate for the next century the dialogue between scholasticism and transcendental thought. On the pluralism among the Roman Jesuits after 1860 (and the entire subsequent development), cf. G. MCCOOL, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Seabury, 1977), pp. 236ff.

[41] MCCOOL also traces the paradoxical interrelationship of post-Cartesian and scholastic philosophies and theologies in the decades from 1880 to 1960, showing their roots in certain earlier interpretations of Aquinas' metaphysics; *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 10f., 237ff.

5. Three important issues for twentieth century theology emerge from this historical conversation between German Catholic theologians of the idealist tradition and the neoscholastic revival of the nineteenth century: [a] a dualism between science and faith, a form of the distinction between nature and grace; [b] an intellectualisation of revelation which shifts emphasis from the grace as power and horizon to the concepts, words and dogmas of faith receiving revealed truths; [c] a legitimate pluralism, a historical diversity in the forms of human consciousness which influence human contact with God's Word and grace.

One suspects that this dualist theology of nature and grace also probably has its roots in a neoscholastic reaction to what seemed monism and pantheism from the German past. All of our authors insisted that Aquinas supports not only distinction but dualism. Ironically new sciences, new forms of epistemology and new forms of social and political autonomy in fact influenced formally several generations of neoscholastic writers.

* * *

Movements of thought and culture are never simple. Even as German Catholicism struggled to preserve its intellectual past, it was drawn into the path of historical research which would lead to our vastly improved knowledge of Thomas Aquinas. Neoscholasticism, no matter how contemptuous it was of every thought-form after Luther and Kant, occasionally drew a morphology for its medieval content from the nineteenth century. On the other hand, idealist, developmental, intuitive philosophies did largely die out after 1840, being replaced by sciences, psychologies and anthropologies which retained, even furthered, the centrality of the subject. The German school's initial confrontation with a rather anemic Aquinas encouraged in several ways the elaboration by historians of a much richer cultural world and intellectual achievement in the Middle Ages.

If Vatican II marks the passage from a juridical view of church to a historical one, it is equally true that the Council moved faith and revelation from an excessively logical and epistemological analysis of faith and revelation to a fundamental theology which admits history and creativity in the world of human consciousness and society. In this the life of the church was invited to appropriate and surpass both romantic idealism and neoscholasticism.

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