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*Ecce novus:*  
Saint Thomas Aquinas and Dominican Identity at  
the End of the Fourteenth Century

*Abstract*

Thomas Aquinas (1224/25–1274) joined the Order of Preachers around the year 1244 and became one of the most famous friars of his own time. He died in 1274 at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova where his remains were venerated for almost a hundred years. The Dominicans, who had desired the return of the body of their beloved brother, finally received it by the order of Pope V in 1368. The Pope also ordered that the relics should have been transported (*translatio*) to Toulouse, where they arrived on 28 January 1369. In this article, I argue that his joining the Order was considered Thomas's first coming, and the transportation of his relics to Toulouse was his second coming to the Order. I will analyse the Office of *Translatio* (ca. 1371) in the historical contexts of the beginning of the Observant reform of the Dominican Order in a period which was extremely unstable regarding both the papacy itself and politics between France and Italy. I will propose that the Office of *Translatio* inaugurated Thomas as the leader of a new era and the saviour of good Christians in a Christ-like manner. The liturgy of *Translatio* appears to offer a new interpretation of new apostles, the Dominicans, and the construction of eschatological self-understanding for the Dominican identity.

*Introduction*

Thomas Aquinas (1224/25–1274) joined the Order of Preachers when he was studying at the University of Naples around the year 1244. He was sent to have more profound theological guidance in the *Studium generale* of the Dominicans in Cologne where Albert the Great was the Master. After Cologne, Thomas first studied and then taught in Paris, and also acted as a lector in such places as Orvieto and Naples. He gained remarkable fame as a teacher and scholar as well as a master of the Scriptures in his lifetime. Thomas's premature death in 1274 occurred in circumstances highly unfortunate from the Dominican viewpoint: he died in a house of another Order, in the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova (today in Southern Lazio, Italy) and the monks were not inclined to renounce the body voluntarily.<sup>1</sup> The Dominican narrative tradition gives an impression of heated debates between the Orders about the ownership of the sacred remains. The case was resolved only in 1368, when Pope Urban V

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<sup>1</sup> The most authoritative study on Thomas's life so far is Torrell 1996. Weisheipl 1983 is also important. For his youth, see Mandonnet 1924-25. For his last days and death, see Räsänen 2017, 27-72.

(1362–1370) decided to donate the relics to the Dominicans. He also ordered their transportation to Toulouse. The Pope's men seized Thomas's head, which was in the possession of the Cistercian monks, from Fossanova, and the rest of the skeleton from Fondi, where Count Honoratus had secretly kept it for ten years, and handed them to the Dominican friars.<sup>2</sup>

For the Dominican Order, the Pope's donation was important. For the newly elected head of the Order (1367), Master Elias Raymondus of Toulouse, it could not have come at a better moment. Elias was a reform-inclined leader and he easily understood the magnificent prospects which Thomas's saintly figure provided to the promotion of his reforms within the Order.<sup>3</sup> Thomas had been an esteemed Friar Preacher and his memory was essential in many ways for the Dominican identity.<sup>4</sup> The guidelines for Thomas's holy exemplarity were established in his canonization (1323) and the texts repaired in consequence of the sanctification. The main products were hagiographical narrative texts and the liturgy of *Dies natalis*, celebrated annually on 7 March. The transportation of the relics (*translatio*) added an entirely new layer of memory tradition to Thomas's cult. The liturgy of *Translatio* (ca. 1370), the theme of the present paper, is a prominent example of the renewal of Thomas's cult image in many ways. The liturgy of *Translatio* contains tones which were typical for the medieval translation genre. The aim of the tones was to create a strong relationship between the saint and the new community/place where his or her relics were placed.<sup>5</sup> The liturgy of Thomas's *Translatio* also carries strong echoes of the debate regarding the possession and treatment of his corpse in the Cistercian house: the corpse was in darkness until Saint Thomas, the heavenly light, was granted victory over the malice and his body was transported in Toulouse.

In this essay, I will delve deeper into the question of how Thomas's image was reformulated in the liturgy of *Translatio*, and how Dominican friars were intended to perceive this image. I propose that the emphases of the period of darkness and the subsequent enlightenment were not only a dramatic mode of expression connected to the vicissitudes of Thomas's body, but also sustained Master Elias's reform ideology and presented an eschatological view of Thomas's return to his fellow friars. Such a reading of the Office of *Translatio* further presented Thomas as a successor of St Dominic's legacy and a saviour of the Order, even a new Christ. My contention is that the focal point of the eschatological interpretations was the first responsory of the Office, *Ecce novus* (Behold, the new) in which Thomas's new identity as the Christ-like figure was crystallized.

According to the Dominican tradition, it was uniquely the Pope's decision to give the relics to the friars and to order them to be transported from Italy to Toulouse. This picture is probably deliberately simplified; the transportation was likely a consequence of political turmoil under the surface. We can assume that the Master himself was involved in the decisions as the destination of the relics was his own home convent in Toulouse. The Master's role as well as the entire historical context of the translation of Thomas Aquinas's relics is a rich,

<sup>2</sup> For more on the debate, see Delaruelle 1955; Mews 2016; Richards 2016; Räsänen 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Montagnes 2004, 308-309; Meerssemann 1955, 213-257; Mortier 1907, 405. Elias was elected as the Master of the Order of Preachers in the General Chapter of Avignon on 6 June 1367.

<sup>4</sup> On the early regulation regarding Thomas's intellectual heritage in the Dominican Order, see the Acts of the General Chapters, for example in Milan in 1278 (*Acta capitulorum generalium*, edited in Monumenta Ordinis Monumenta Ordinis fratrum Praedicatorum Historica, hereafter MOPH, see volume 3, p. 199), and Paris in 1279 (MOPH 3, 204). See Torrell 1996, 436-453.

<sup>5</sup> Classics on the translation genre are Geary 1978 and Heinzelmänn 1979.

although still understudied, theme.<sup>6</sup> This essay seeks to widen the discussion concerning Thomas Aquinas's relics and the office of *Translatio* to better understand their role in the tumultuous religio-political context at the end of fourteenth century.

I will focus on the beginning of the Office, from the first Vespers to Matins, and especially analyse the first antiphons and psalms, as well as the first lesson and the first great responsory *Ecce novus*.<sup>7</sup> Matins is regarded as the most important monastic service from the viewpoint of communal identity, and by default the beginning of the Office was a highly important pathfinder for those who actively participated in the liturgy.<sup>8</sup> The Matins of a saint, as the longest service of the medieval Office, transmitted the sacred tradition of texts and music and the exemplar lives of holy men and women widely.<sup>9</sup> The liturgical performance with its repetitive and emotional words, and age-old melodies, was a powerful tool for conveying the message regarding the new saint and the political and devotional implications of the cult.<sup>10</sup>

I will approach the Office of *Translatio* as a phenomenon of "sonic hagiography", which means that I combine the music, its modes, melodies and tones with the words of the chants in my analysis. The concept of sonic hagiography is borrowed from Susan Boynton, but my approach could also be defined as the study of the "chanted hagiography" in Dominican medieval culture. Chanted hagiography is comparable to contemporaneous textual hagiography, and as Boynton argues, "it has its own conventions and reflects the religious, socioeconomic, and political vicissitudes of the periods".<sup>11</sup> My approach to sonic hagiography is that of a cultural historian: my analysis tracks allegorical and typological meanings of hagiography which I then place in the context of the wider, multi-layered biblical tradition and Dominican history to understand also the "hidden" messages it conveys. This kind of reading parallels the medieval one, such as was suggested by liturgist William Durand in the prologue of his *Rationale*.<sup>12</sup> Thomas Aquinas's liturgies belong to the hagiographical tradition in which bibli-

<sup>6</sup> The relic cult received some scholarly attention at the turn of the twentieth century, but the published texts merely repeat the content of the sources rather than being analytical studies. All the same, they form an important background for this study. See Douais 1903; Mortier 1907. Étienne Dalaruelle's article in 1955 is a good basic study on the transportation and immediate background of the translation. Recently, the main narrative source, *Historia translationis S. Thomae Aquinatis* is studied by Mews 2009 and 2016; Richards 2016. The Office of *Translatio* is studied in the context of the Dominican liturgical tradition by Vuori, Räsänen, and Heikkinen 2019. The cult before the *translatio* has been thoroughly studied by Räsänen 2017. In spite of the recent research activity, more profound studies on the significance of Thomas's relics on the eve of the Observant reform movement and in the Great Western Schism are needed.

<sup>7</sup> The chants of both of Thomas's medieval offices with the notation are recently edited in Vuori *et al.* 2019, and this volume is my principal source for the chants. I have also adopted the system of abbreviations presented in the volume, used in order to indicate the chant in questions. From here on, the *Dies natalis* is abbreviated in the footnotes as *Dn* and *Translatio* as *Tr*. The readings of *Translatio* to which I refer are edited in *Acta Sanctorum*. As a basic hagiographical source I primarily use William of Tocco's *Ystoria sancti Thome de Aquino* which was produced as part of Thomas's canonisation process (1323) and completed immediately after the conclusion of the process.

<sup>8</sup> On the importance of Matins in medieval liturgy, see the liturgical manual of William Durand from the thirteenth century. In his text, William defined the daily services as a voyage, and he also used the dichotomy of dark/light: the Matins service was a sign of leaving behind the darkness and sin and starting the passage to the light and resurrection. William Durand, *Rationale* V, p. 119. On Matins as a part of the medieval offices, see Heffernan 2005; Reames 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Palazzo 2000, 87-92; Heffernan 2005; Reames 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Boynton 2009; Palazzo 2014, esp. 12-14; Vuori *et al.* 2019, 13-14. On political implications of liturgy in the Dominican milieu, Gaposchkin 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Boynton 2009, 243.

<sup>12</sup> Thibodeau 2015, 26. On Durand and allegorical interpretation of liturgy, see also Boynton 2011.

cal references are not only numerous but compulsory. In medieval liturgy in general, such conventional references were deliberately utilized in new compositions. Their presence, and their prestige, linked every saint to earlier models in a sacred lineage. It is important to keep in mind that however commonly used a biblical citation was, each new context in which it was compiled (including hagiographical texts) presented it from a different angle and, in doing so, offered its own specific message.<sup>13</sup>

Together with this hagiographical methodology, my approach gathers inspiration from the recent studies on the sensorium. The liturgical service demanded the use of incense, candles, golden vessels, and bells. Numerous other objects were collected especially for the processions, and the celebrants wore special vestments. All of this, together with the formulas of speeches and chants, offered rich sensorial experiences of the transcendent. Through liturgy, the saints and biblical characters were imaginable as living companions of the devotees, the sacred became perceptible, even realizable in a temporal world at least momentarily as long as the service lasted, perhaps longer.<sup>14</sup> This sacred history was performed and contemplated during Matins and the following hours. The liturgy formed the foundation for daily life and existence, so to speak, for the Dominican community and identity.<sup>15</sup>

Before entering the analysis of the Office of *Translatio*, I will briefly sketch the general outlines of Thomas's *Dies natalis* as it formed an essential basis for Thomas's image and since it was partly reused in the composition of the new office of *Translatio*. With regard to the *Translatio*, I will discuss its message, proceeding in order from chant to chant from the first antiphon to the first great responsory, *Ecce novus*.

### *The basis of Thomas's liturgical memory*

As mentioned above, Thomas's image and his life as a model for the friars was established in his canonization process, which was concluded in 1323. In the bull of canonization, Pope John XXII emphasized Thomas's intellectual heritage and described poetically how Thomas had illuminated the world by his doctrine in a similar manner to the apostles and Church Fathers before him. John XXII ordered Thomas's feast, *Dies natalis*, to be celebrated throughout the whole of Christendom on 7 March.<sup>16</sup> Understandably, the Dominicans immediately set down to prepare the liturgy for the feast.<sup>17</sup> Among all the material associated with Thomas

<sup>13</sup> On similar understanding of re-utilizing traditional texts and on their interpretation in new situation, see Frazier 2005, 11-12. On writing and re-writing of the Dominican hagiography, see the vast study of Dubreil-Arcin 2011, esp. 261-306. On liturgy and its allegorical, typological and Christological interpretations, see Boynton 2011.

<sup>14</sup> There is an interesting example in the canonization testimonies which refers to a friar who was able to re-imagine the presence of Thomas's relic and smell its good odour repeatedly where ever he was since he had once experienced the real relic and the smell at the Dominican church of Salerno, see *Processus [...] Neapoli*, XCV. On the liturgy, senses and the saint's presence, see Palazzo 2014 and 2016. The liturgy was not, however, the only way to make a sacred history, perceivable in daily life of the laity, but all kinds of devotional practices which were able to activate the whole *sensorium* had the same capacities, see the recently published anthology by Laugerud, Ryan and Skinnebach 2016.

<sup>15</sup> On the liturgy and the Dominican identity, see especially Fassler 2004; Hamburger 2008; Hamburger and Schlotheuber 2014; Smith 2018.

<sup>16</sup> *Redemptionem misit*, p. 529-530. *Dies natalis* is usually celebrated on the day on which the Saint had died and it refers to being re-born in heaven. Thomas's canonization is rather extensively studied; most of the studies were inspired by the seventh centenary of his canonization in 1923, see Mandonnet 1923; Torrell 1996; Walz 1974.

<sup>17</sup> From a letter of a Dominican friar called Bentius, for example, we know that he urged his fellow friars to start composing the liturgy immediately following the canonization. The letter is edited, see Laurent 1937, 513-518.

Aquinas's saintly cult, the Office of *Dies natalis* was very likely the most widespread. Even today, the surviving evidence of copying and using the Office as a part of the Dominican liturgical material is abundant. We can presume that the Office of *Dies natalis* anchored the memory of Thomas quite rapidly and fairly efficiently among the Dominicans.

What kind of Thomas did the Dominicans present in the *Dies natalis*? The answer is, mostly a rather metaphorical and traditional Saint Confessor. In a nutshell, metaphors and tradition, as well as short lines of more personal information on a new saint alternated in different types of chants and readings. For example, an antiphon-psalm combination is a rule of the liturgy and together they can be seen to have created a saintly "stratigraphy": the first layer (antiphon) offered a piece of information about a new saint, the next layer (Psalm) implanted the given character of the saint in the deep soil of biblical tradition. At the beginning of every nocturne of Matins, for example, the system continued for up to six layers.<sup>18</sup> In the first nocturne of Thomas's *Dies natalis*, the attendants started singing about Thomas's exemplarity: the saint "flees the faults of flesh, the world and the enemy as an example to all the ages".<sup>19</sup> The following Psalm 1 enforced the antiphon by praising a blessed man, one who was – just like Thomas – living without sin and meditating on the Lord's law day and night. As a result of the holy life, according to the psalm, "all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper".<sup>20</sup> As the Psalm implies, every single act would be blessed since the basis was sinless, solid. The function of the antiphon-psalm alteration is explained by Boynton as follows: "The choice of a psalm for the antiphon text often reflected principles of allegorical interpretation".<sup>21</sup> In Thomas's case, the allegory implies strongly the sinless life, the life in chastity as the primary model Thomas offered, the rock upon which to build.

Chastity and purity are the main features in Thomas's model of exemplary life as a friar and good Christian. They also form the cornerstone for Thomas's sainthood. Reflections of purity, explicit and implicit, are ubiquitous in the Office of *Dies natalis*. The chastity and purity both refer to the virginity which comes forth as essential to all that Thomas stood for; even his wisdom was primarily a consequence of the purity of flesh. The hagiographical episode which describes how Thomas was tested on his vow of chastity became one of the most popular single stories in regard to Thomas's life, and it had already been adopted into the Dominican literature before Thomas's canonization.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, chastity and bodily purity were signalled in Thomas's corpse and relics, the remains which, according to different contemporary reports, continued to perfume the air sweetly decades and centuries after his death.<sup>23</sup>

The model Thomas offered in his *Dies natalis* was quite simple. Its different elements were already familiar and doubtlessly dear as well to the Dominicans when Master Elias introduced his ideas for the new liturgy to honour the act of *translatio*. In late medieval

<sup>18</sup> William Durand, *Rationale*, IV, 26-29. See also Dyer 1989; Boynton 2007.

<sup>19</sup> *Tr MA1*.

<sup>20</sup> Douay-Rheims Bible, Ps. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Boynton 2011, 14. See also Boynton 2007 and 2009; Dyer 1989.

<sup>22</sup> For the episode in the hagiography, see William of Tocco, *Ystoria* XI, and Räsänen 2010. On religious vows, see Desmazières 2018.

<sup>23</sup> In the liturgy, see *Dn*, lectio 2 in Räsänen 2017, 269, and *Dn MR2* in Vuori *et al.* 2019. The canonization testimonies refer to the odour constantly, see *Neapoli* VIII, X, XV, XX, LII, XCV. See also William of Tocco, *Ystoria* LXVI; *Historia translationis*, p. 85. On Thomas' image in the hagiography, see also Dubreil-Arcin 2011, 82.

liturgical culture, conserving and re-utilizing old elements in the new liturgy was extremely important, although the old stories may have been interpreted in a way which better fitted to a different time (or place).<sup>24</sup> Thomas's image as a pure and unstained friar, whose doctrine enjoyed the same purity, appears to have been an ideal model to be reinvigorated among the Dominicans. The Order had faced strong criticism, and as a result it had suffered from the loss of the original simplicity and other ideas set by the Founder of the Order, St. Dominic. In the liturgy of *Dies natalis*, Thomas is presented as having confronted the seductions of the world but to have kept his vocation and chastity decisively, and when he doubted the directions of his doctrinal ideas, he prayed and received personal guidance from God.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Thomas appears to have been an ideal model whose image was easily adaptable to advancing the concept of personal reform in the Order. The Office of *Dies natalis* also continued to be celebrated as before, and the *Translatio* ought to be seen as a fulfilment rather than a replacement of the old Office.

### *The return – a rejuvenated relationship*

The casket containing Thomas's bones arrived in Toulouse on 28 January 1369.<sup>26</sup> The Dominicans decreed that from there on, the entire Order would celebrate the feast of Thomas Aquinas's *translatio* annually on that day.<sup>27</sup> Master Elias was personally involved in the transportation of the relics, and together with his secretary Raymondus Hugonis he had prepared a lengthy narration, *Historia translationis*, on different phases of the negotiation to obtain Thomas's sacred remains and how they were transported to Toulouse.<sup>28</sup> Parts of the *Historia* were utilized in preparing the liturgy of the *Translatio*, which in all probability was carried out under the guidance of the Master of the Order.<sup>29</sup>

Certain themes of the Office of *Translatio* derived from *Dies natalis*. An examination of the ways in which tradition and novelty mingled in practice reveals that great importance seems to have been given to the reinvigoration of the contents the *Dies natalis* and to the transferring of its message to the *Translatio*.<sup>30</sup> The similarity of the beginnings of Thomas's two offices manifests the idea of the continuation of Thomas's original sainthood. The *Dies natalis* begins "Blessed Thomas, teacher of the church, light of the World, splendour of Italy, a virgin shining in the flower of his purity, rejoices in his twofold crown of glory", and the Office of *Translatio* says: "O how blessed art thou, mother Italy, who hast given birth to the ray of a new sun. Equally blessed art thou, O Gaul, who hast received this Sun's cloak, O Toulouse, the magnificent feast will bring thee perpetual delight".<sup>31</sup> Both antiphons are based on similar

<sup>24</sup> Boynton 2009, 242. On re-writing of hagiographical (including liturgical) material, see Frazier 2005, 1-13.

<sup>25</sup> On the imitation of Christ as a Dominican *modus vivendi*, see Newhauser 1998, and, especially among Dominican Penitent women, Lehmijoki-Gardner 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Rich documentary material in connection to the *translatio* is edited by Douais 1903.

<sup>27</sup> MOPH 4, p. 412.

<sup>28</sup> *Historia translationis*. See especially Mews 2009 and 2016.

<sup>29</sup> It seems that Aldobrandinus of Ferrara, an Italian friar, was probably asked to compose the chants of the office and the lessons were abbreviated and updated from a longer *Historia translationis*. Aldobrandinus of Ferrara is first time named in the *Acts* of the General Chapter of Udine in 1401, see MOPH 8, p. 104.

<sup>30</sup> On needs, messages, and the idealism of rewriting different hagiographical texts in the Renaissance, see Frazier 2005, 7-13, and *passim*.

<sup>31</sup> *Tr* VA1. The chants of the office of the *Translatio* are also transcribed in Douais 1903, 228-238.

metaphors of light. In *Dies natalis* the references are slightly more allegorical, while the *Translatio* equates Thomas with the most powerful materialized source of light, the sun. All these elements symbolize Thomas's shining purity in flesh and doctrine. Enlightenment of the world makes possible the purification of individual lives. Personal reform was ideally possible if one dedicated oneself to following Thomas in the liturgy and taking his model of *modus vivendi* as a guiding principle in life.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the necessity of making the linkage between Thomas's *Dies natalis* and *Translatio*, it was also important to emphasize Thomas as an heir of Saint Dominic's legacy. After the service of Vespers on the preceding evening, the beginning of the next service, the invitatory of Matins, states: "Let the faithful celebrate, delighting in a new joy; Thomas returns to his father's bosom, leaving his tomb behind".<sup>33</sup> Thomas is here linked to the father, namely the father of the Order, Saint Dominic. Every Dominican friar was, in theory, a son of Father Dominic, the founder of the Order. But, with Thomas, we ought to see more than the common father-son metaphor.

The invitatory of Matins is linked to Psalm 95, which follows it. This psalm also appears to function as an invitatory as it summons all to praise the returning Christ who will rebuild the Church after years of captivity. The parallels between the two chants appear clear as Thomas's transportation to the "father's bosom" can be interpreted as a liberation from his long captivity in Fossanova where his body was kept against the Dominican wishes. The similarity between the two invitations includes the choice of words: when the *Translatio* reads "Let the faithful celebrate, delighting in a new joy", the Psalm exhorts: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad".<sup>34</sup> The parallelism between the chants seems to be deepening and anchoring Thomas's image to biblical history as was customary in medieval liturgical practice.<sup>35</sup> Two invitations chanted one by one call people to a collective praise of Thomas and Christ, unifying the two holy figures. As Christological interpretations of the Psalms originated with Augustine and this allegorical interpretation flourished in the Middle Ages, it seems reasonable to suggest that the linkage of the Psalm and Thomas's invitatory referred to Christ's return to his Father and Thomas's in a Christ-like manner to his father (Dominic).<sup>36</sup> Metaphorically, in the invitatory part of Matins, Thomas appears from the darkness, and the chants, from the allegorical reading of the medieval liturgy, allude to the forthcoming age of perfection under Thomas's guidance and protection as another Christ.

The invitatory antiphon and Psalm 95 were followed by the Hymn *Jubar celorum* (The light of the heavens) which completed this part of the service. The hymn is in the form of a hagiographical narrative containing the abbreviated story of the transportation of the relics to Toulouse and the first miracles there. The message of the hymn is that Thomas's bones with his saintly presence brought the light, and not only to Toulouse but to the wider area: "When the splendour, born in the East, the Light of Campania, is received by Toulouse, illuminating

<sup>32</sup> See more on comparisons between Thomas's *Dies natalis* and *Translatio* in Vuori *et al.* 2019.

<sup>33</sup> *Tr* MI.

<sup>34</sup> Ps 95, 11.

<sup>35</sup> On this practice, see the previous sections and literature given there. Thibodeau's introduction to Durandus's *Rationale* is an excellent summary of the medieval way to see the role of psalms in the liturgy.

<sup>36</sup> On Augustine and the Christologized reading of Psalms, see Thibodeau 2015, 17; Boynton 2011.

the coast of Spain”.<sup>37</sup> The hymn sounds forcefully to guide the singers back to Father Dominic’s footsteps: Dominic was born in Spain (Hispania) and his most fervent activity as well as the born of the Order of Preachers took place in the area of Toulouse. The hymn appears to suggest that, metaphorically, Thomas, who had been described at the beginning of Office of *Translatio* (see above) as a new sun, travelled from east to west and took possession of Dominic’s old lands. Now, it was Thomas’s turn to re-illuminate the Order. The assimilation of St Dominic and St Thomas goes much deeper than the verbal level alone; the musical structure of the Office of *Translatio* is borrowed entirely from St Dominic’s *Dies natalis*. These kind of inter-musical (as also intertextual) references, referring to the authority and respect of earlier saints, were typical in the Middle Ages.<sup>38</sup> In Thomas’s case the model was deliberately chosen: both the texts and the music shaped Thomas as Dominic’s successor, his descendant, the man who would enlighten, essentially restore, the Order following the father’s model. In this context, Thomas appears to have become the new Dominic who had returned to, or perhaps was even re-born in, the birthplace of the Order. The return itself is a typical concept of the reform. By considering the historical context in which Thomas’s translation was realized and by whom, I propose that the core message of the Office proclaimed the renewal brought by the act of Thomas’s *translatio* and its beneficial effects to the Order.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Ecce novus Thomas*

The next step in the liturgical service is the invitatory of the first nocturne of Matins. The invitatory introduces the emergence of Thomas Aquinas together with the prophecies of Christ’s new coming. The same message with more or less the same technique, combining novelty and biblical history, was further intensified and amplified at the beginning of the nocturne. The special relationship between Thomas and Christ, as I will demonstrate in this section, was emphasized in the first reading (readings were normally the longest and the most narrative single unit of a saint’s Office) and its important fulfilment, the first responsory, which repeated the most essential details of the reading. The reading and the responsory together, end even more explicitly the responsory *Ecce novus* (Behold, the new) introduces Thomas as the new leader who would restore the entirety of Christianity to its original state.

The first nocturne began with three pairing antiphons and psalms (up to the fifth, the psalms follow numerical order). The first two antiphons basically have the same idea presented with slightly different words. The first says, “A light that was long hidden, shines with its outspread rays, and the jewel, concealed in the ground, is brought forth with its miracles”, and the second, “The body once lay hidden in its tomb in Terracina; later it appeared to all in Toulouse with wondrous signs”.<sup>40</sup> For the singers and listeners, the message of the dichotomy between hidden (darkness) and revealed (light, miracles) relics should have been evident: it was Thomas himself in his bones who arrived in Toulouse and his miraculous presence began

<sup>37</sup> Tr MH. The whole hymn in English, see Vuori *et al.* 2019, 298: Here, the transcription contains an unfortunate mistake, deriving from the old edition of Douais: he has read the word “decus” as “deus”, although the manuscripts consistently give us “decus”. On St Dominic and the Order’s early history in Toulouse where Dominic received the first privileges, see the classic, Vicaire 1964.

<sup>38</sup> Vuori *et al.* 2019, 69-107.

<sup>39</sup> More on Thomas’s cult and the reform, see my forthcoming article.

<sup>40</sup> Vuori *et al.*, 2019, 299.

to affect the city. Again, the psalms fulfilled the dichotomy with the good (righteous) and bad (ungodly) and called for deeper meditation on Thomas's place in the eschatological history.<sup>41</sup> The third antiphon praised the body, which was already present "The clergy and the common people hasten to the sacred body. All rejoice at such a gift, great and small alike".<sup>42</sup> In a similar vein, the pairing psalm expresses joy and thanksgiving to the protecting God.<sup>43</sup> The psalm expresses the gratitude of the people of Toulouse and the Dominican Order, who were aware of their good fortune in receiving a new protector and guide to bring the city new prosperity.

Three antiphons and three psalms together introduced the elements which were regarded as the most essential in the reading and in the great responsory. The reading which followed the above-mentioned antiphons and psalms requires some background knowledge of the history of Thomas's corpse. As stated, Thomas died in Fossanova in 1274 and his body remained there against the wishes of the Dominicans. The text *Historia translationis*, which was completed after the translation, tells us that the Cistercians had actually already lost the corpse in 1349, when Count Honoratus of Fondi took it and carried it to his castle. Soon, Honoratus returned the body to the monastery for some years but then he re-took it and kept it until the day that the pope's men came to collect Thomas's relics in 1368.<sup>44</sup> This information is also given in the Matins readings in the *Translatio*. The first reading begins with gratitude and prophetic sounds:

Let us praise the Lord, beloved brothers, let us rejoice in spiritual delight, for the glory of the translation of blessed Thomas Aquinas, is recollected: the friar Preachers have indeed found great joy now they have returned their treasure home. It has taken a long time, 75 years since in the year 1274 from Lord's incarnation the saintly doctor left this life and his esteemed corpse was placed in a tomb at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova, in the bishopric of Terracina, in Campania. Then, under the eye of the divine justice [the corpse] was brought back to the Dominicans so that the prophecy would be completed: *Hec requies mea in seculum seculi* ("This is my rest for ever and ever"). That consists of one Jubilee and a half, which amounts to 75 years, the number predicted by the saint doctor in prophetic spirit.<sup>45</sup>

The lesson is full of the joy of finally having Thomas's precious body in Dominican custody. It is also joyous because of the fulfilment of the prophecy which had promised the return of the saintly doctor. According to an old, common tradition, Thomas himself pronounced the words *Hec requies mea* before his death in Fossanova, and their interpretation had alternated

<sup>41</sup> Ps. 1 and 2. In general, on eschatological discourse between bad and good, and expectancy of renovation / reform / new era, see Garin 1962.

<sup>42</sup> *Tr* MA3.

<sup>43</sup> Ps 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Historia translationis*, 85-90. For more detailed analysis of the eventful history of Thomas's body, see Räsänen 2017.

<sup>45</sup> "Exultemus in Domino, dilectissimi, & spirituali iucunditate lætemur quia B. Thomæ de Aquino translationis gloria recolitur: magna quippe Prædicatorum Ordini est allata iucunditas, cum thesauro suo in alieno retento inde proprias diuitias reportauit. a Cum enim longo temporis spatio, id est annis LXXV, fluentibus ab anno Dominicæ Incarnationis MCCLXXIII, quo dictus Doctor ex hac luce migrauerat, eius venerabile corpus in Terracinæ Campaniæ monasterio Fossæ-nouæ Cisteriensis Ordinis sub deposito iacuisset, diuina desuper inspectante iustitia, ad ipsum Prædicatorum Ordinem est reductum: vt illud Propheticum compleretur elogium: Hæc requies mea in seculum seculi. Per seculum iubileum continens quinquagenum; per medium seculi medium iubilei, quod in septuagesimum quintum pergit numerum prophetali spiritu a sancto Doctore præfixum". *Alia historia*, col 738 D-E. The translation is mine.

depending upon the interpreter.<sup>46</sup> In the reading above, the Dominicans appear to have re-interpreted the words as Thomas's own prophecy that he would be returned to the friars 75 years after his first entombment in Fossanova.<sup>47</sup> Presenting the year 1349 as the year when Count Honoratus took Thomas's remains from Fossanova for the first time and the year 1368 as the year when the Dominicans received the same remains, we arrive via simple mathematics at the number 75. However, the year 1349 is doubtful as the date for Honoratus's acts, and the year may have been chosen for the story simply because it offered a convenient number of years for the Dominican purposes.<sup>48</sup>

Thomas's words *Hec requies mea* do not include any exact number but the reading hints that the Dominicans wanted to understand *seculum* as a certain period, in this case as 75 years.<sup>49</sup> The *seculum* seems to consist of, according to the words of the reading, "one Jubilee and a half". At that time, when the Office of *Translatio* was composed, the Jubilee was in fact celebrated in a sequence of 50 years which was the sequence given in Leviticus (the first Jubileum was organized in 1300 and the next in 1350, but the following Jubilees did not respect this rule).<sup>50</sup> With a 50-year frequency, half a Jubilee would have been interpreted as 25 years, and a one and a half Jubilee as 75 years as the Dominicans apparently did in the reading of *Translatio*. The reference to the Jubilee was not only a way to calculate years and give a more convincing prophetic sound to Thomas's words but was also a way to draw a parallel between the prophesied new comings of Thomas and Christ.

As we have seen, the beginning of the Matins service presented Thomas as bodily resurrected from his old tomb and becoming a saviour of Toulouse, and on a more metaphorical level, the world. The resurrection receives the most explicit form, I believe, in the first great responsory, the task of which was traditionally to collect the preceding elements given in the chants and reading together.<sup>51</sup> Musically and textually, the responsory was the most elaborated part of the service. The first great responsory *Ecce novus* is as follows:

R. Behold, the new spring of the gardens, long hidden in the earth; it nourishes the rivers, watering the world from the heavens. This is Thomas, the light of the learned, inspired by God.

<sup>46</sup> Räsänen 2017, 31-38.

<sup>47</sup> Prophecies are by no means a rarity in medieval hagiographical narration. One of the most popular hagiographical prophecies dealt with the birth of the future saint. Further, Thomas's *Lives* and *Dies natalis* liturgy presents this kind of story, and they do it with particularly strong biblical tones: a hermit predicted to Thomas's mother that she will have a baby boy who will be called Thomas and he will enter the Order of the Preachers and illuminate the world, see William of Tocco, *Ystoria* II.

<sup>48</sup> Mews 2016; Räsänen 2017, 185-188.

<sup>49</sup> With respect to the Dominican narrative, they seem to interpret *saeculum* as the period of Thomas's exile or the period of Dominican anticipation. In the eschatological context, for example for Augustine, *saeculum* was malignant, as Robert R. Lerner has stated. In the late Middle Ages, different prophecies and interpretations for the future of mankind were more positive than Augustine's were. Undoubtedly the Dominican text reflects the pro and contra arguments of millenarianism. See Lerner 1976, and also 1992; Fredriksen 1992.

<sup>50</sup> Leviticus 25, 10-12. Jacobus de Voragine used the same symbolism of the number fifty in his *Legenda aurea*, see Le Goff 2014, 86-89.

<sup>51</sup> On the function of the responsory according to William Durand, see his *Rationale*, 105-107. Vuori *et al.* 2019, 59-61.

V. This is the drink of the Hebrews, the hidden rain of the heavens, restored under Elijah. R. This is Thomas.<sup>52</sup>

With his new, or second, coming to the Dominicans, Thomas was presented as promising a similar renewal to that which Christ had offered for mankind via his death and second coming. According to the *Ecce novus*, Thomas was a new spring, which “nourishes the rivers, watering the world from the Heavens”. He was presented as a Christ-like saviour and life-bearing force. The wording strongly connects Thomas to the Eucharist and Christ.<sup>53</sup> Yet, there is, another, deeper level, and that is the utilization of the metre as noted by Vuori *et al.* Their analysis of the verse forms has shown that the *Ecce novus* is written – quite surprisingly – in a trochaic tetrameter. This is a metre that had been used in the Eucharistic chants for centuries but rarely in the Office for late medieval saints.<sup>54</sup> The selection of the metre serves to merge Christ and Thomas.

An important basis for connecting Thomas’s image both by metaphorical language and music to Christ and to the Eucharist in *Translatio* is his life story. Thomas had written remarkably influential works on the Eucharist, and in the Office of *Translatio* special attention is given to his composition of the Office of the Corpus Christi, the liturgy which praises the transubstantiation. Thomas composed the Corpus Christi at the request of Pope Urban IV in 1263 or 1264 – and it was done in trochaic tetrameter.<sup>55</sup> Thomas’s work on the Corpus Christi were important to Elias: according to the *Historia translationis*, Elias asked Pope Urban V for Thomas’s body on the day of Corpus Christi. The date received an exceptionally prominent position in the Office of the *Translatio*. The event – the pope who was celebrating the Corpus Christi and the discussions between him, Elias and the whole curia – were commemorated in the eighth reading of the Matins service. Moreover, and this notably accentuates the connection of the day of Corpus Christi to Thomas’s corpse, the event was also described in the third great responsory *Corpus datur*. This responsory was selected to be the only great responsory already chanted in the preceding service of the feast, in Vespers. A responsory that was sung in two services must be considered of special significance: In Vespers, it launched the theme and mode which gave direction to the entire feast, and in Matins it enforced the overall atmosphere of the hour. There may have been several reasons for this particularity of the *Corpus datur*, but I would like to suggest that the most important were that, first, it established a connection between the bodies of Christ and Thomas, and, second, it

<sup>52</sup> *Tr* MR1: “R. Ecce novus fons ortorum/ Diu terre conditus/ Fit augmentum fluviorum,/ Rigans orbem celitus./ Hic est Thomas lux doctorum/ Instructus divinitus/ V. Hic est potus Hebraeorum/ Ymber clausus hic celorum/ Sub Helya redidit./ R. Hic est Thomas”.

<sup>53</sup> The theme of *Ecce novus* grows from the psalm *Rigans montes*, i.e. *Watering the hills* (103,13). On William Durand’s Christological interpretation of the psalms, see Thibodeau 2015, 17. The psalm *Rigans montes* presumably provided the inspiration to Thomas for his disputation in Paris in 1256; see, for example, Torrell 1996. *Rigans montes* was also the Psalm to Thomas’s daily devotion in the Dominican Order according to the decision of the General Chapters of 1352.

<sup>54</sup> Vuori *et al.* 2019, 111-112.

<sup>55</sup> On Thomas’s role as a composer of Corpus Christi, see Mulder-Baker 2005, 78-117; Rubin, *Corpus Christi* 1991; Wielockx 1998 and Pierre-Marie Gy’s vast production of studies on the Eucharistic liturgy, see for example Gy 1980. For a brief historical context of the feast and a profound analysis of different versions of Corpus Christi, see Walters, Corrigan, and Ricketts 2006.

emphasized Master Elias's own achievement, as he began the negotiations for granting the body to the Dominicans on the day of Corpus Christi.<sup>56</sup>

The Office of Thomas's *Translatio* appears to have carried a strong eschatological message. The liturgical rite created the world in which Thomas's new coming was a sign of the beginning of a new and better era. Around this time, Thomas became a saintly patron and protector, comparable to Saint Dominic. Deeper in eschatological interpretation, Thomas was parallel to Christ, even the second Christ. The message was expressed by allegories in the wordings (for example Thomas, like Christ, was presented as a new spring and as rain) and the rhythm of music (especially the trochaic tetrameter utilized in *Ecce novus* and the Office of Corpus Christi). The great responsory *Ecce novus* makes an explicit reference to "Elijah", which can be read as an allusion to Master Elias, but also to Prophet Elijah whose prophecies and prayers were studied in apocalyptic interpretations.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps it was not incidental that Elias's contemporary, John of Rupescissa, who, according to Lerner, was the author of the boldest prophetic system of the later Middle Ages, was active in Toulouse. Rupescissa prophesied that the "Antichrist would come in 1366, and be destroyed at the end of 1369", which would be followed by a Sabbath of one thousand years.<sup>58</sup> In this kind of atmosphere, parts of the Office of *Translatio* may have been inspired by Rupescissa, especially because Thomas's body reached Toulouse on January 1369. Similarly, Rupescissa's opinions may have affected the contemporary understanding of the Office. In any case, it seems apparent that *Translatio* signalled the beginning of the new period. According to Mater Elias's wishes, the period would have seen the reform and witnessed the emergence of new apostles, the Dominicans.<sup>59</sup> My contention is that the *Translatio* was aimed to present Thomas as the new leader of the Order and influence the eschatological self-understanding of the Dominicans.

The eschatological message of Thomas's translation may also have had a connection with royal politics in France. The kings of France had a keen interest in the political uses of the eschatological narrations and symbolism, and they represented themselves as the sovereigns of the new era in different media.<sup>60</sup> In Thomas's Office of *Translatio*, King Charles V and his brother Louis d'Anjou are both present. The last reading glorifies the French crown in connection with the body, depicting the King's brother, Louis d'Anjou, in the first row of the reception committee in Toulouse and King Charles V himself humbly receiving Thomas's arm relic in Paris some months later. The King's symbols were present on both occasions, bestowing the prestige of the royal house upon Thomas's relics. The arm relic was placed in the Dominican church of Paris, but in the chapel of the royal family. The text of the reading

<sup>56</sup> *Historia translationis* also gives the impression that the memory of Thomas's authorship in regard to the Corpus Christi was neglected for decades and Master Elias somewhat resurrected it during the negotiations with Pope Urban V in 1368; see Räsänen 2016. There is a considerable number of medieval manuscripts in which Thomas's Offices and the Office of Corpus Christi follow each other, emphasising in a material way the connection and fusion between Thomas and Christ. As Thomas wrote about the Eucharist, he seems to have been connected to representations such as crucifixes or Eucharistic vessels.

<sup>57</sup> Lerner 1976.

<sup>58</sup> Lerner 1992, 66-67. Rupescissa was active in the middle of the fourteenth century.

<sup>59</sup> On newness in the Dominican Order, see Le Goff 2014, 118-120.

<sup>60</sup> Rusconi 1979, 134-135; Hablot 2015. On symbolism representing the king's sovereignty on a more general level, see also Hablot 2006. Rupescissa's (see above) eschatology was, according to Theseider, highly favourable to the French crown: the future reign of the French king would be some sort of *translatio imperii* for the last millennium after the Antichrist; see Theseider 1962, 105-113, and esp. 110-113.

which describes a magnificent performance together with acts such as depositing Thomas's arm relic in the King's family chapel and the King's generous donations to the Dominicans makes the link between Master Elias, the French Dominicans and the royal house of France strong.<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, the nuns of the royal monastery of Poissy (near Paris) were in exile in Paris when the hand relic arrived in the city and they are fittingly reported to have participated in the celebrations. The manuscripts of Poissy contain early copies of the Office of *Translatio*. All this alludes to the close collaboration between the Dominicans and French crown.<sup>62</sup> The theme of this entanglement in an eschatological sense and the role of Thomas's *translatio* in it is but superficially addressed here (or in any research), and it appears to provide an auspicious perspective for further studies.<sup>63</sup>

### Conclusions

On 28 January 1369, the Dominicans and the people of Toulouse celebrated the arrival of Thomas Aquinas's relics in the city for first time. Master Elias and his assistants began to create a common, emotional memory of translation which would appeal to both the friars and the laity. The most essential sign of this memory is the Office of *Translatio*. For the Office, Master Elias's team re-utilized and re-interpreted the traditions in regard to Thomas's saintly fame but also caused the recent history of Thomas's corpse to flourish: The Office of *Translatio* spoke of Thomas's new coming and his connection to St Dominic and Christ. It appears to have suggested that Thomas brought a renewal to the current time.

The antiphons and psalms, the reading and the great responsory of the first nocturne of Thomas's *Translatio* denounced the vain efforts of persecutors who threatened old prophecies and the joy of Thomas's arrival, the second coming, and reconnection with the Dominicans, which were mingled with prophesies of Christ's resurrection. First, the new and old mingled in the nocturne, and then the responsories and readings began to guide the singers and listeners deeper into Thomas's hagiographical tradition. The system ensured that Thomas was easily recognized as a saint whose image and authority benefitted the centuries-old sacred tradition. The re-use of Thomas's "original" liturgy of *Dies natalis* resonated perfectly with the idea of the Observant reform, that is, the return to the origins of the Order. Allegorically, Thomas began to guide the friars and sisters towards the new era and salvation. In the politico-cultural context of the period, the office of *Translatio* sustained Dominican self-understanding as the new apostles of the earthly as well as heavenly kingdom.

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<sup>61</sup> *Alia historia*, col. 740A-B. Mews 2009 and 2016; Richards 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Naughton 1993 and 1995; Stinson 1993; Mews 2009 and 2016; Vuori *et al.* 2019, 25-26, 33-34.

<sup>63</sup> See Richards 2016.

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