

# JOHN PICARDI OF LICHTENBERG – A GERMAN THOMIST. A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ASSESSMENT

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**Abstract:** John Picardi of Lichtenberg was a lecturer at the Dominican *Studium* in Cologne in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. The result of his lectures were some *Quaestiones*, which were identified by Landgraff in 1922, and which attracted the interest of the Neo-Thomists in the first half of the twentieth century, including Martin Grabmann. Renewed interest in Picardi's work has emerged in recent years, and a print edition of the *Quaestiones* will soon be published. The present article collects and summarises the main studies on Picardi, highlighting the main points raised by scholars, and proposes possible lines of research. The categorisation of Picardi as a 'Thomist' is based on his views on the relationship between being and essence, form and matter, will and intellect, as well as in consideration of his relationship with the other 'German Dominicans' from the 'Cologne school' in the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Keywords:** John Picardi of Lichtenberg; Thomas Aquinas; Meister Eckhart; Giles of Rome; German Dominicans.

## Introduction

During the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Aquinas' canonization process, as well as the recognised endorsement of his thought as the most relevant doctrinal reference for the Dominican Order, have their roots in the reading, interpretation and dissemination of Thomas Aquinas' works by his Parisian pupils and followers from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Recently, scholars have highlighted the impact of commentaries and works made by early Thomists, such as John of Naples and Giles of Rome in representing Aquinas' thought in the form of a stable, coherent canon. However, some important news also concerns another Dominican, John Picardi of Lichtenberg, who worked at the Cologne *Studium* founded by Albert the Great, and who played a central role in the development of Thomism in Germany. John Picardi of Lichtenberg<sup>1</sup> was a 'Lesemeister' in

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1 LANDGRAF 1922, 511-512 lists the different variants of the name of John Picardi of Lichtenberg, that were: Johannes/Joannes, Picardi/Pickardi and Lichtenberg/Lichtemberg/Leichtenberg/Lechtemberg/Lucemberg/Lichtiniber/Lettemberg/Littimber/Lucido-

the Dominican Order's Cologne *Studium* (1303 ca.), and later bachelor of theology in Paris, where he had read the *Sentences* (probably 1305/1307),<sup>2</sup> receiving his license in theology on November, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1310. In this period, he developed his career and was promoted within the Order.<sup>3</sup> His brothers recognised Picardi as being part of an "aristocratie culturelle, qui dominait alors le panorama théologique allemand."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Picardi's intellectual approach was greatly appreciated by Emperor Henry VII of Luxembourg, who wanted him as his personal counsellor.<sup>5</sup> In 1313, Pope Clement V elevated him to Archbishop of Regensburg, ideally this would have represented continuity with his forebear Albert the Great, but the appointment was soon revoked because of the disapproval of the cathedral chapter in Regensburg, which preferred another candidate, Nicholas of Stachowitz.<sup>6</sup>

Early scholars of Picardi's thought, like Landgraf<sup>7</sup> and Grabmann,<sup>8</sup> and even the most recent, such as Sturlese, Porro, and Beccarisi, have repeatedly underlined that Picardi belonged to the "Thomist tradition."<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the same scholars have often also recognized references in Picardi's work to other, differing sources and doctrinal positions. This is particularly relevant, when considering, for example, Picardi's praise of Albert the Great, *vir optimus*, and

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monte / Lucido Monte.

2 COURTENAY 2010, 248.

3 He was appointed vicar of the Dominican province of Teutonia and, in September 1308, provincial of the Order in Antwerp, see LANDGRAF 1922, 515.

4 BECCARISI 2010a, 288.

5 MINEO 2023 discovered a new document, a *Memorandum* for Henry VII, of which John Picardi was probably the author. Picardi reached Henry VII in 1311 after having after leaving Paris and following the Emperor on the itinerary in Northern Italy, that was in Genova, Savona, Brescia and Pisa. Then, the Emperor sent John Picardi as an ambassador in Roma and Tivoli, where he had a meeting with Pope Clement V.

6 More on John Picardi's biography in LANDGRAF 1922, 510-520 and STURLESE 1983.

7 LANDGRAF 1922, 527: "Johannes v. Lichtenberg ist im vorliegenden Werke thomistischer Richtung im Sinne der neueren aristotelisch gerichteten Dominikanerschule."

8 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 413-414: "Die zahlreichen und teilweise recht umfang reichen Stellen aus dem *Sentenzenkommentar* des Johannes von Lichtenberg in dieser Wiener Handschrift des Johannes von Quidort sind ein Beweis dafür, daß dieser deutsche Dominikaner als Vertreter der Thomistenschule angesehen und hoch gewertet wurde. Offenbar hat sein erster Aufenthalt in Paris ihn mit dem thomistischen Geist, von dem das Dominikanerkloster St. Jaques in Paris beseelt war, aufs beste vertraut gemacht".

9 STURLESE 1981, 140, in which Picardi's *Quaestiones* are defined as "das erste und massivste Monument des ältesten deutschen Thomismus". For BECCARISI 2010a, 287, Picardi is "un fidèle partisan des enseignements de Thomas d'Aquin." See also PORRO 2003, 226.

his own critical positioning with respect to Henry of Ghent and Theodoric of Freiberg.

In this paper, the historiographical representation of John Picardi of Lichtenberg as a 'Thomist' will be considered. All the studies published on Picardi's work, as well as the arguments and references made in favour of Picardi's Thomism will be examined. Subsequently, studies that focus on similarities, or contrasts, with Picardi's philosophical ideas compared to those of his Dominican contemporaries, especially Theodoric of Freiberg and Meister Eckhart, will be considered. Finally, there will be a critical review and aspects on the historiographical interpretation of Picardi which remain unclear will be highlighted.

The aim of the paper is to facilitate future research on John Picardi of Lichtenberg's thought, which will be further simplified by the publication of Picardi's *Quaestiones disputatae* in the series "*Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi*."<sup>10</sup>

### Thomist Questioning

The codex in Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859, ff. 151r–182v, collects John Picardi's *Quaestiones* that were posed to him (probably) in 1303 while he was a *Lector* in Cologne Dominican *Studium generale*.<sup>11</sup> The text on the last *folio* of that manuscript ends abruptly, without a real conclusion, suggesting that other *folia* completed the codex at the time, and that, in all probability, other *Quaestiones* were also reported in them. However, no trace of these has been found as yet. Interestingly, Picardi's *Quaestiones* found in that Vatican codex currently represent the oldest attestation of this type of exercise for students in Cologne. Another manuscript, currently in Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, 748, 56r–58r, merely includes a copy of Picardi's *Quaestio* on being and essence, which was listed in the Vatican manuscript as the twentieth, which was published, in 1961, by Seńko.<sup>12</sup> The discovery of another partial copy of

10 From two different research projects, one of which is based at the Universities of Cologne, the edition of John Picardi of Lichtenberg's *Questiones disputatae* is expected.

11 Titles of these *Quaestiones* were transcribed by LANDGRAF 1922, 554–555.

12 SEŃKO 1961a. The manuscript in Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859 also contains copies of Harvey of Nédellec's works, ff. 1r–118r. In the same period of his studies on Picardi's *Quodlibeta*, Seńko was working on Thomism in Harvey's work,

Picardi's *Quaestiones* by Maxime Mauriège in a codex owned by the Bibliotheca Amploniana in Erfurt was recently announced in an article written by Giovanni Lasorella.<sup>13</sup> Finally, fragments of Picardi's Parisian commentary on the *Sentences*, Book IV, are still to be found in Cracow, Jagiellonian Library, 1583, ff. 118r-142v, and some excerpts from his commentary on Book I are contained in a manuscript preserved in the Austrian National library at Vienna.<sup>14</sup> These copies further confirm Picardi's authority over the monasteries in the so-called 'Teutonic province' of the Dominican Order, from which the Cracow and Vienna manuscripts originate. In the 1920s, Landgraf<sup>15</sup> and, especially, Grabmann<sup>16</sup> proposed a number of arguments in support of Picardi's Thomism.<sup>17</sup> Brief summaries of selected examples, especially those that have featured in recently published studies, follow:

1) The *Mens Thome* and the authority of Aquinas:

Landgraf declared that the most important justification for Picardi's Thom-

see SEŇKO 1961b, SEŇKO 1970.

13 LASORELLA 2023, 81-82. The other witness of Picardi's *Questiones* is in Erfurt, Bibliotheca Amploniana, 321.

14 Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 2165, ff. 4r, 18v, 21v, 34v-35r, 62v-63r, 73v-74r, 78v.

15 LANDGRAF 1922, 527-550.

16 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 414-420.

17 Artur Michael Landgraf (1895-1958), who was bishop of the Diocese of Bamberg, and Martin Grabmann, a Catholic priest and professor at the Universities of Vienna and Munich (1875-1949), pursued the scholarly project of reconstructing the history of medieval philosophy from a neo-Thomist perspective. However, their historiographical approach, which combined philosophy with philology and palaeography, was different from the French and Italian neo-Thomist approach, which focused on Thomism as a "perennial philosophy," see COLISH 2000, 6: "On the German side of the Rhine, a different set of political issues converged with the excitement of the neo-Thomist revival that could have shaped the scholarship of the leading medievalists of the early twentieth century, Artur Michael Landgraf and Martin Grabmann. In Germany, the issue was not a stand-off between the Catholic church and republican or left-wing politics. But, as German Catholics, these scholars might well have been caught in the crossfire of the Second Reich's *Kulturkampf* [...] While both scholars were deep admirers of Aquinas, their work was not so closely focused on the need to advance Thomism as a perennial philosophy as was true of some of their compeers. To be sure, Landgraf is well known for developing the concept of *Frühcholastik*. He agreed that the thought of Aquinas was the terminus of that trend, often selecting the themes he studied in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries because they had a pay-off in the thought of the Angelic Doctor." Landgraf's and Grabmann's studies on Picardi's work must be contextualised within this framework. Concerning Grabmann's perspective on Thomism and Scholasticism, see GRABMANN 1909 and GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 525-560. Concerning Landgraf, see SIRI 2008.



ism is that he seems to consider Thomas Aquinas' doctrinal positions as the basis from which to judge the correctness or falsity of a philosophical argument. Picardi evaluates thought according to what he himself calls "the mind of Thomas Aquinas" (*Mens Thome*). This is evident in his *Quaestiones disputatae*, when Picardi, for example, answered the question *utrum Deus sit subiectum in theologia* (*quaestio* no. 10), by asking whether the philosophical position analysed therein is consistent with the "mens Thome," and, when asking, conversely, in his *quaestio* no. 26, whether the argument was inconsistent with Thomas Aquinas' doctrine – "hec non fuit mens Thome."<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Picardi claims the authority of Thomas Aquinas as a guarantee of correctness on certain controversial philosophical statements following Etienne Tempier's condemnation, such as on the nature of the intellect, being like a faculty of the soul, or on the perpetuity of the world.<sup>19</sup>

Picardi's attitude towards using Thomas Aquinas as a criterion seems to anticipate institutional decisions made later by the Dominicans. For Landgraf, it should not be forgotten that in 1309, the general chapter of the Dominicans in Saragossa, in which Picardi participated as head of the 'Teutonic province', promoted the use of Thomas Aquinas' writings in lecturing in the Dominican *Studia*. However, the confirmation that Picardi had completely absorbed Thomas Aquinas' mentality is demonstrated, according to Grabmann, by his sure mastery of Aquinas' 'metaphysics of being', that can be found in some passages of Picardi's work, especially in the *quaestio* on the distinction between being and essence, which we will examine further shortly. According to Grabmann, Picardi's approach to Thomas Aquinas is also shown in the fact that his method of reasoning echoed Thomas Aquinas' – "the clear structure of the entire investigation, the careful and thorough proof, the calm and objective criticism of opposing opinions, the unprejudiced approach to all difficulties and, last but not least, the familiarity with the philosophical sources."<sup>20</sup>

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18 STURLESE 1983, 708, in which is found the reference to this Picardi's sentence, see Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859, f. 176ra, q. 26.

19 LANDGRAF 1922, 535.

20 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 419: "Die souveräne Beherrschung und Durchdringung der Seinsmetaphysik, die klare übersichtliche Gliederung der ganzen Untersuchung, die sorgfältige, in die Tiefe gehende Beweisführung, die ruhige sachliche Kritik gegnerischer Ansichten, das vorurteilsfreie Eingehen auf alle Schwierigkeiten, nicht zuletzt auch die

## 2) Essence and existence:

Picardi not only assumed some of Thomas Aquinas' most typical metaphysical positions, but also, albeit more rarely, made direct quotations or paraphrased his works. This is the case in *quaestio* no. 20, in which Picardi made the distinction between essence and existence. Landgraf pointed out that some textual passages from Picardi's text are paraphrases from Thomas Aquinas' *De ente et essentia*.<sup>21</sup> This topic has traditionally been considered as being representative of Thomism.<sup>22</sup> Picardi had already dedicated extraordinary attention to it, to the point that, according to Sturlese, this *quaestio* seems almost like a treatise in itself. Not surprisingly, this question soon aroused the interest of twentieth-century Thomists, such as Grabmann and Sénko – as already mentioned, Seño published the textual edition of this *quaestio*.<sup>23</sup>

Grabmann highlighted that Picardi, in *quaestio* no. 20, introduced references to the *Book of Causes* and Boethius' *De hebdomadibus* but without mentioning Thomas Aquinas' name or texts.<sup>24</sup> However, Grabmann noted that what is relevant in every medieval *quaestio* is the 'main answer' (*responsio principalis*) and he devoted his analysis to that, especially to Picardi's Thomist *solutio* in its third part.<sup>25</sup> Grabmann, then, underlined that in Picardi's *quaestio* the Late-medieval distinction between (four) *auctoritates* and (also four) *rationes* is quite evident. As far as the former is concerned, Grabmann also identified some textual passages from Avicenna, and also concluded that he must have used Proclus' *Elementatio*

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Vertrautheit mit den philosophischen Quellen, all dies gemahnt an die Geistesart des Aquinaten selbst."

21 LANDGRAF 1922, 538.

22 The actual distinction between essence and existence was considered as the milestone of Thomism more by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century neo-Thomists than by the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Thomism, see PORRO. GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 419: "Aus unserer Skizzierung dieser *quaestio*, die ich in einer eigenen Untersuchung über die Lehre von Wesenheit und Dasein in der ältesten Thomistenschule ganz veröffentlichen werde, dürfte sich ersehen lassen, daß bei Johannes von Lichtenberg die Denk- und Arbeitsweise, die Methode des heiligen Thomas von Aquin sich widerspiegelt".

23 SEŃKO 1961a.

24 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 416, specifically works on this topic. In this regard, however, it is interesting to note that the combination of sources between *De hebdomadibus* and the *Book of Causes*, which characterized the metaphysics of the Albertist school in the fifteenth century, was already present at the time of Picardi. However, this is founded in the commentaries on these works by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

25 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 418.

*theologica* as translated into Latin by William of Moerbeke in 1268. Thus, there could have been a sort of ‘Neoplatonic’ influence in Picardi’s doctrine on the real distinction between being and essence. This may have been seemed curious to Grabmann, who had theorized a distinction between Thomist, ‘scholastic’ traditions and Axiomatic-Platonism.<sup>26</sup>

However, the references to these Platonic sources seem to be limited to these textual passages in *quaestio* no. 20, and reflect the main ideas considered by Thomas Aquinas in his *De ente et essentia*. Nevertheless, as Pasquale Porro theorised,<sup>27</sup> hidden in this *quaestio* is a response to Henry of Ghent, Picardi’s most vocal critic at the time. It seems that Picardi wished to contradict Henry’s *Quodlibet* no. I, although, this is more evident in other *Quaestiones*, such as no. 22, which discusses the human soul as image of the Trinity.<sup>28</sup> Picardi does not appear to quote Henry of Ghent, however, in the second part of his *quaestio*, Picardi develops Henry’s theoretical position “through demonstrative arguments (*probationes*), distinctions and examples”<sup>29</sup> and then refutes it, as he does with the doctrine of the *duplex esse* and the semantic difference between *res*, *ratio* and *intentio*, as well as the participation of beings. Significantly, Henry of Ghent mentions examples, which Picardi also reiterates – “*essentia*,” “*ens*” and “*esse*” relate to each other like “*lux*,” “*lucens*” and “*lucere*,” or “*vita*,” “*vivens*,” “*vivere*” and “*cursus*,” “*currens*” and “*currere*.”

Porro also articulates the theoretical aspects of Picardi’s answer to Henry, showing that his *Quodlibet* testifies to the evolution of doctrinal position, from Thomas Aquinas to Thomists, such as Henry of Ghent himself, and also Giles of Rome, with regard to the distinction between being and existence – less and

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26 Concerning the Axiomatic tradition, it is relevant that Picardi mentions Alain of Lille on f. 151va, l. 6, see LANDGRAF 1922, 547.

27 PORRO 2003, 231-238; see 231: “Giovanni sembra avere presente qui soprattutto il ‘Quodlibet I’ di Enrico, e non le tesi più mature espresse nel ‘Quodlibet X’ e nel ‘Quodlibet XI’, e cioè negli sviluppi della disputa con Egidio Romano successivi al ritorno di quest’ultimo a Parigi nel 1285.”

28 This study of Mojsisch will be considered later. Porro corrected Landgraf’s claim, according to which, Picardi would not refer to Henry of Ghent, although both agree on many issues. However, Landgraf correctly notes that the two authors addressed some topics with divergent methods, thus appreciating the theoretical distance of their positions, as in the case of *rationes seminales*, see LANDGRAF 1922, 548-549.

29 PORRO 2003, 231.

less importance was attributed to “divine simplicity,” for example, and more and more was paid to the “contingency of creatures.”<sup>30</sup>

### 3) Form and matter:

As far as Picardi’s understanding of the *ens* as a composite of form and matter is concerned, Landgraf stressed that Picardi, in his *quaestio* no. 11, rejects Albert the Great’s doctrine on the *incohatio forme*. In fact, Picardi argued that form is passively present in matter and that, in coming into being, it is ‘actualised’ together with matter. Therefore, essence is not merely determined by form, but much more so by the composite of form and matter – this is the same doctrinal position as Thomas Aquinas. Thus, Landgraff stressed that Picardi also rejects the Augustinian doctrine of ‘seminal reason’,<sup>31</sup> which is presupposed in Albert the Great’s idea of the “*incohatio forme*.” However, it should be added that Picardi’s rejection of Augustine of Hippo’s theory as a source seems to be one of his most significant divergences from those of other Dominicans in the ‘Cologne school’, such as Ulrich of Strasburg or Theodoric of Freiberg. Picardi’s relationship with his Dominicans contemporaries will be explored further in chapter II hereinunder.

However, systematic analysis of Picardi’s philosophical perspective on the matter can be found in a paper by Marienza Benedetto, which is dedicated to Picardi’s *quaestiones* 21, 25 and 34. In all of these, Benedetto underlines that Picardi assumes the same philosophical perspective as Thomas Aquinas and that, at the same time, he contests both Henry of Ghent’s and Giles of Rome’s doctrines. The specific case of *quaestio* no. 25, which concerns issues such as

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30 PORRO 2003, 244: “L’intervento di Giovanni Picardi nel dibattito sulla composizione di essere e essenza permette forse di cogliere alcuni tratti cruciali del processo di consolidamento nella scuola tomista della dottrina della distinzione reale - un processo in cui il cuore del problema sembra gradualmente spostarsi dall’esigenza di salvaguardare l’assoluta semplicità e inoggettivabilità della natura divina a quella di marcare con maggior decisione la contingenza creaturale. Alcuni degli argomenti addotti da Giovanni a favore della distinzione reale vanno già in questa direzione, così come d’altra parte l’utilizzo esplicito del sintagma *diversae res* per indicare l’essere e l’essenza, il frequente ricorso all’analogia con la composizione fisica di materia e forma e l’insistenza sulla natura formale o quasi-formale dell’essere - tutti elementi che sembrano avvicinare la posizione del domenicano tedesco alla sistemazione di Egidio Romano più ancora che a quella originaria di Tommaso.”

31 LANDGRAF 1922, 527.



quantity and extension, is of particular interest,<sup>32</sup> because it not only provides a specific example of Picardi's opposition to one of Giles of Rome's theses, but also because it reveals a philosophical judgement of him as a Thomist. While recent historiography perceives Giles to be "a faithful disciple of Thomas Aquinas," on the contrary, Picardi, as one of his 'German' contemporaries, highlighted that there were a number of "points of disagreement" between Giles of Rome and Thomas Aquinas.

Benedetto explains that in *quaestio* no. 25, Picardi's aim was to re-establish support for Thomas Aquinas' original thought, in favour of the Thomist *solutio* as the only correct answer, rather than those of Giles of Rome. It is, thus, apparent that the formation of Thomism in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century was much less harmonious than has been accepted, and that, already, at this time, there was discussion about Thomas Aquinas' authentic doctrine in order to distinguish it from those of his followers. Porro and Benedetto have, indeed, considered Picardi's *Quaestiones* from the historiographical perspective of the clash against his contemporaries in order to identify the most 'authentic' Thomist perspective in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

However, further sources have emerged which also explore the theme of the relationship between form and matter. Landgraff stated that, in Picardi's understanding, the form that passively underlies matter is not the "forma diminuta," as it is for Averroes. In fact, Picardi rejects plurality of form, and maintains that each composite has a single substantial form, which "non habet esse per se, sed compositum."<sup>33</sup> As is well known, this is a typical position assumed by Thomas Aquinas, which was also held by his pupils and followers, such as Giles of Rome. Nevertheless, Franciscan authors fought hard against this particular proposition by Thomas Aquinas, which had even been condemned by Robert Kilwardby in 1277. Picardi's negative reaction to 'English authors' was evident – interestingly, there is no specific study that takes into account Picardi's feelings about Franciscan thought.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Martin Grabmann also addressed

32 Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859, f. 175va, q. 25: "Utrum materia extensa per quantitatem differât realiter a se non extensa."

33 LANDGRAF 1922, 528, quoting Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859, f. 161va, q. 18.

34 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 415: "eine beachtenswerte Fragestellung erkenntnistheoretischen Inhalts, welche den Gegensatz der aristotelisch-thomistischen Erkenntnislehre V zur II-

this topic of plurality of form, considering Picardi's answer to the *quaestio* "utrum in homine sit tantum una forma substantialis," and he also made, and recognised, explicit references to Avicbron and John of Dacia.<sup>35</sup>

Given his acceptance of the uniqueness of the substantial form, Picardi, in *quaestio* no. 19, asks whether the introduction of the substantial form into matter is preceded by the presence of some "unfinished forms" (*forme non terminate* or *interminate*),<sup>36</sup> the idea for which originated with Averroes and was further developed by Thomas Aquinas. This was also historically important for the consolidation of German Thomism.<sup>37</sup> Landgraff had already noted that Picardi had an original position concerning the "dimensiones interminate," so it is not surprising that this issue has already been re-examined numerous times in historiography.<sup>38</sup> However, Thomas Aquinas' opinion concerning the presence of *forme* or *dimensiones interminate* was not entirely coherent. While in his early works, namely in his commentary on Boethius' *De trinitate*, Thomas Aquinas recognised the possibility that "un-terminated form" precedes the "infusion" of substantial form, in his later works, such as the *Summa theologiae*, he seemed to reject this hypothesis. Thomas Aquinas' aim was to explicitly reject any formulation that might echo the notion of "forma incohata," which Picardi also rejected, as already discussed. For Thomas, beings are individuated because of the "materia signata," but accepting the presence of these "un-terminated forms" in matter could lead to erroneous acceptance of Albert the Great's model. Picardi evaluated six different, possible, solutions, being inspired by those suggested by Avicenna, Averroes, Giles of Rome and Henry of Ghent. Picardi, however, later rejected four of these, and only considered the other two to be *verisimiles*. Finally, these led him to conclude that he was in agreement with Thomas Aquinas' authentic idea that there cannot be "un-terminated forms" that precede the "infusion" of substantial form into matter.

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luminationstheorie der Franziskanerschule berührt, spricht sich in der folgenden Quaestio aus: Utrum esse rei sit in mente a deo vel ab aliis creaturis".

35 GRABMANN 1926, vol. 1, 420.

36 Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859, ff. 166v-168v, q. 19.

37 For instance, consider this topic in Nicholas of Strasburg's *Summa philosophiae*, on which see PELLEGRINO 2010.

38 BECCARISI 2010a, 295-298; BENEDETTO 2010, 348-354, but commenting Picardi's q. 25; RADEVA 2020, 236-239.

This conclusion is not surprising. Instead, the two plausible opinions are noteworthy, since both of them come from Thomas Aquinas' texts and, furthermore, are contradictory to each other from a theoretical perspective. Picardi, hence, recognizes that there is some incoherence in Thomas Aquinas' works, although he considers both of Aquinas' textual passages as being likely to be true, however, only one of these is coherent with Averroes' intention (*intentio Commentatoris*).<sup>39</sup> What, then, is Thomas' true opinion? Picardi's solution to avoid contradiction is to reconsider the chronology of Thomas Aquinas' works. Thus, he states that Thomas Aquinas would have commented on Boethius after having written the *Summa Theologiae* and that, therefore, his opinion on the presence of "un-terminated forms" must be interpreted together with the contrasting one on their absence from a chronological perspective. Picardi's historicist perspective is as original as it is significant for understanding the conciliatory intent, that inspires his 'Thomism'.

Benedetto also examined this same issue in Picardi's *quaestio* no. 25, which concerned the difference between the "materia extensa" (i.e. the four elements) and "non extensa" (or "materia prima"). Picardi introduces this issue of distinguishing between the two different perspectives, one belonging to Giles of Rome ("extension" is an intermediate form between "matter" and "quantity," and thus the real distinction is between "extension" and "quantity") and the other by Thomas Aquinas, according to whom the difference between "materia extensa" and "materia non extensa" is due to the "species" of quantity. This *quaestio* goes on to clarify the position of Picardi on Thomas Aquinas doctrine, according to his *Summa theologiae*, through other statements and replies. However, what is of interest for the present analysis is that in *quaestio* no. 25 Picardi's opposition is only to Giles of Rome – and he does not contradict Henry of Ghent, as he does elsewhere. This suggests that, to a certain extent, Giles was considered by Picardi as being one of the more distant from the 'truer' Thomas Aquinas – contrary to what subsequent historiography might have us believe.

#### 4) Will and intellect:

Previously, it has been emphasized that Picardi had, above all, to consider Henry of Ghent's *Quodlibet* I as a starting point for criticism in order to better artic-

<sup>39</sup> RADEVA 2020, 237.

ulate his doctrinal position on the distinction between essence and existence. In that same *Quodlibet*, Henry also considers the relationship between the will and the intellect in human being,<sup>40</sup> criticizing the idea of the superiority of the intellect over the will, which was supported, instead, by Thomas Aquinas. Picardi also made some criticisms of Henry of Ghent on this issue, thus defending Thomas Aquinas' ideas. Marialucrezia Leone took some core passages concerning the issue of the will in Picardi's *Quaestiones* nos. 28, 29, 32 and 37 (the latter edited by Martin),<sup>41</sup> and contextualised them in the debate between 'intellectualists' and 'voluntarists', which occurred both on the occasion of the Tempier-condemnations in 1277 and subsequently continued. *Questiones* nos. 32 and 37 address this topic directly, while *quaestiones* nos. 28 and 29 are dedicated to theological issues, such as union with God "in patria" (*quaestio* no. 28) and the role of intellect and will in "future life" after Resurrection.

Leone develops the comparison between Picardi-Thomas Aquinas' and Henry's philosophical perspectives, representing Picardi as an apologist for Thomism, who sometimes goes so far as to paraphrase Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and *De malo*.<sup>42</sup> Leone stresses the idea that Picardi wanted to defend Thomas *ex-post* from the accusations brought against him by Henry of Ghent. This is deduced from the fact that Picardi would critique precisely those textual passages from *Quodlibeta*, in which Henry explicitly accuses Thomas Aquinas of excessive intellectualism.

On Picardi's doctrinal position on will and intellect, Leone explains that he, just as it was for Thomas Aquinas, supports the primacy of the intellect over the will in human actions. Indeed, the intellect will also have that primacy in the "future life," *in patria*. The movement of the intellect toward an object permits choice for the will in consideration of the object itself – whether to perceive it as

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40 Henry of Ghent's *Quodlibet* was read in 1276. In 1270 and, especially, in 1277, the Bishop Étienne Tempier condemned two different kinds of "determinism," that insist either on the total uncontrollability of the will by the intellect or on its total controllability. According to the formers, because of the *appetitus*, the human being would be driven to act. Therefore, ultimately, the human being would not be responsible for his actions, since they do not fall under the control of the intellect. Vice versa, for the latter, the total subordination of the will to the intellect generates a geometry of passions, in which everything is rational and in which, therefore, there is no moral responsibility.

41 MARTIN 1924, 150-157.

42 LEONE 2010, 316, 322-323, 328-333.

being desirable or not. Therefore, the intellect represents a pre-requisite for free will. The influence of internal factors in human beings on the choice of the will, such as passions, is less clearly specified in Picardi's text, and neither are external factors, such as the influence of the stars. Neither Thomas Aquinas, nor Picardi, recognise a direct influence of the stars on the will, however, this position was condemned in 1277, even though they were both open to the hypothesis of some sort of indirect influence.

Specific investigation into the function of intellect in acquiring knowledge of the external world from Picardi's perspective has not yet been made.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, there are some *Quaestiones* which are specifically dedicated to this topic, such as some hitherto unstudied parts of *quaestio* no. 28, and, more specifically, *quaestio* no. 30. However, scholars have pointed out some important aspects of Picardi's approach to intellect, when considered in relation to other philosophical positions expressed by his contemporary German Dominicans, such as Meister Eckhart and Theodoric of Freiberg. These have not shaken the image of Picardi as a Thomist, but have contributed to clearer delineation of 'German Thomism', bringing attention to some typical connotations of philosophy in Germany and the surrounding area during the Middle Ages, the most important of which is the critical confrontation with Albert the Great's thought.

### Picardi and other German Dominicans

Arthur Landgraf explained that Picardi had not merely reiterated Thomas Aquinas's doctrines, as being his "sklavischer Nachbeter," but that he also considered Albert the Great's arguments to be very valuable.<sup>44</sup> The relevance of Albert the Great's work in understanding Picardi's *Quaestiones* was later confirmed by other scholars. Nevertheless, the number of explicit citations of Albert the

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43 There is only a brief reference in EMERY 2001, 65: "referring to Thomas, John asserts that a 'sane and natural intellect' is fully aware of its own cognitive acts. Moreover, to remove any doubt that there cannot be any action of God in the soul that would be unknown to us, John cites a famous text by Dionysius the Areopagite, who attained the 'highest contemplation': 'Impossible est aliter nobis superlucere radium divinum nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum' (*De coelesti hierarchia*, c. 1), that is, without phantasms."

44 LANDGRAF 1922, 540: "aus dem bereits Gesagten erhellt, daß Johannes von Lichtenberg nicht ein sklavischer Nachbeter der Lehrmeinungen des hl. Thomas gewesen ist. Er zitiert ihn zwar 15 mal ausdrücklich und erkennt ihn neben Albert d. Großen als *optimus vir* an".



Great's name and works in Picardi does not justify an 'Albertist' interpretation of his thought. Indeed, it confirms his dependence on Thomas Aquinas – there are fifteen citations of Thomas Aquinas' name, but only four of Albert the Great's. This ambiguous influence of the work of Albert the Great is significant in order to understand the thought of a 'German Dominican' like Picardi, who could not avoid making a critical comparison with the Master, Albert, even if he only did it for biographical and historical reasons. In fact, he was not only discussing his *Quaestiones* in the Cologne *Studium* founded by Albert the Great himself, but, in subsequent years, he would hold institutional roles in the Dominican Order similar to those that Albert the Great had had in the past, and he was even on the verge of being elevated to the same episcopal bishopry in the Diocese of Regensburg, which had been occupied for two years by Albert the Great. Moreover, more generally, Picardi was operating within a broader German Dominican cultural framework, that was gaining greater and greater autonomy from Paris between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the figure of Albert the Great was assuming a more and more pivotal function.<sup>45</sup>

Considering these and other arguments, Sturlese evaluated the quality of these few mentions of Albert the Great's name in Picardi's *Quaestiones* to understand what impression Picardi had had of the Master, Albert. From Sturlese's research, it emerged that Albert's name had occurred in textual passages that Picardi had devoted to natural science topics, such as the mixing of natural elements and light. Therefore, Sturlese concluded that Picardi would have interpreted Albert the Great's intellectual personality as being that of an "interpreter of Aristotle" and a "scientist" (*Wissenschaftler*).<sup>46</sup> It is noteworthy that this same label would later become popular among German Dominicans who studied at Cologne and held Albert the Great's works in high esteem merely for the invaluable "scientific" contribution they represented. Henry of Lübeck, Nicholas of Strasburg, Henry of Herford, Hartmann of Augsburg were some of these admirers.

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45 STURLESE 1981, 134-135. See 139: "Eine junge, aggressive Generation von deutschen Dominikanern folgte damals auf die ersten Albert-Schüler: Dietrich von Freiberg, Johannes Picardi von Lichtenberg und Meister Eckhart sind die Hauptfiguren dieses Nachwuchses". STURLESE 1989, 193-195 reports a "cultural primacy" of the German Dominicans at time, among whom he also includes Picardi.

46 STURLESE, 1981, 141.

Sturlese speaks of a 'Picardi operation' to define the attempt to encourage his contemporary Dominicans to evaluate Albert the Great's intellectual work purely from the perspective of its contribution to natural science. In this way, Picardi was able to incorporate Albert the Great's work in a broader philosophical and theological framework, which was inspired, instead, by Thomas Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*.<sup>47</sup> In this way, not only was any competition between Albert the Great's doctrines and Thomas Aquinas' on topics such as the theory of knowledge or theology avoided, but the two also became tacitly complementary, as if to provide a homogeneous, unitary impression of Dominican thought.

One negative consequence of the 'Picardi operation' was the manipulation of Albert the Great's thought, which would have to be swallowed by followers of Thomist Metaphysics. Therefore, Neoplatonism, Hermeticism and all other contrasting influences with respect to Thomist-accepted Aristotelianism, were expelled from Albert the Great's work. In following centuries, and at least until the 17<sup>th</sup>, this 'normalization' of Albert the Great found favour among the Dominicans, and not only those in the Germanic area.

However, 'Operation Picardi' did not meet with universal success. In fact, some of Picardi's Dominican brothers in Cologne recognized the dissonance between the thoughts of the two authoritative 13<sup>th</sup> century-masters, Albert and Thomas Aquinas. Even while Picardi was still lecturing, some of the 'German Dominicans' were already beginning to favour the doctrines of Albert the Great over those of Thomas Aquinas, not only from a philosophical, but also from a theological viewpoint. These German Dominicans included Meister Eckhart, Theodoric of Freiberg and Bertold of Moosburg, among others. They highlighted doctrinal aspects and sources that Picardi had ignored in Albert the Great's texts because of their incompatibility with Thomas Aquinas' thought. These criticisms of Picardi's oversights included the theory of the agent intellect and his use of Neoplatonic sources, such as the *Book of Causes*, and the *Asclepius*, as well as Dionysius' Ps.-Areopagite's mystical theology.<sup>48</sup>

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47 STURLESE, 1981, 144.

48 Until the mid of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there was an established continuity in reading Albert the Great's Commentaries on the corpus of Dionysius the Ps.-Areopagite, which concerned not only Albertists, like Heymericus de Campo, but also Nicholas of Cusa, see for example FIAMMA 2017 and FIAMMA 2022.

However, some ‘German Dominicans’, such as Theodoric of Freiberg, also appreciated the value of Albert’s contribution to natural science, expressed in his works, demonstrating that they did not want to fall into the trap of ‘Operation Picardi’, which would have forced them to split Albert the Great up into two or three separate personalities. Instead, the specific nature of Albert the Great’s philosophical and theological thought appeared to them to be his distinguished, open approach to the universality of knowledge.

Obviously, Picardi’s influence on his contemporary Dominicans was, above all, the interpretation and further appreciation of Thomas Aquinas’ philosophy. Although he moved within the international framework of Thomism, as shown by Porro,<sup>49</sup> his influence as a Thomist authority in debate has so far only been recognised in works written by certain German Dominicans from Cologne, such as Nicholas of Strasbourg and Peter of Godin. This present chapter is devoted to the reconstruction of Picardi’s intellectual and personal relationships with these ‘German Dominicans’.

#### 1) Theodoric of Freiberg:

Given the above-mentioned premises, focusing on the relationship between Picardi and Theodoric is of particular importance. In fact, the two Dominican brothers could have known each other personally although some scholars consider this unlikely.<sup>50</sup> If their meeting actually took place, it is not difficult to imagine that they might not have got on very well with each other given their differing attitudes. Theodoric complained about his contemporary Thomists, and perhaps included Picardi among them. Beccarisi has explained that “Die- trich a lu et critiqué Picardi (et non l’inverse, comme on l’a admis jusqu’à au- jourd’hui,”<sup>51</sup> thus highlighting the relevance of Picardi in ‘international’ Thom- ism and not only in Germany.<sup>52</sup> In fact, Kent Emery had already formulated the

49 See above.

50 EMERY 2001, 65 considers this meeting as unlikely. Similarly, STURLESE 1983, 708, under- lines the difference in authority between the younger Picardi and Theodoric of Freiberg.

51 BECCARISI 2010a, 286-287. Concerning the “anti-thomism” of Theodoric of Freiberg, see IMBACH 1997.

52 BECCARISI 2010a, 295: “Il doit donc s’agir d’un important groupe d’influence, aussi bien sur le plan politique que culturel. Un groupe qui s’est proposé de maintenir l’enseignement de Thomas et de trancher entre les interprétations véridiques et fallacieuses, les interprétations justes et fausses de sa doctrine.” Concerning the “German Thomism,” see the introduction written by HOENEN, IMBACH, KÖNIG-PRALONG 2010 to the same issue of

hypothesis that Picardi, in his *quaestio*, had criticized not only Henry of Ghent, but had also inserted some hidden references to Theodoric of Freiberg's theory of the *abditum mentis*.<sup>53</sup> The epilogue of the *quaestio* was as planned: all seven of the opinions that he had chosen to be taken into consideration were 'incorrect', because the only one which was coherent was that of Thomas Aquinas. Finally, De Libera goes so far as to define Picardi's *Quaestiones* in terms of a "true war-machine against Dietrich of Freiberg."<sup>54</sup>

Instead, by analysing more closely selected excerpts from texts by Picardi and Theodoric that Emery had studied and by thus broadening the focus on Theodoric's text, Beccarisi concluded that Theodoric was criticizing Picardi and not vice versa.<sup>55</sup> There is no doubt that Picardi was criticizing the doctrine of *abditum mentis*, which reflected Theodoric's position, but which did not exactly coincide with all features of it.<sup>56</sup> Picardi considered it to be an overinterpretation of the Augustinian *dictum* on the 'interior man', which led many interpreters, including Henry of Ghent, to believe that this "depth of the soul" coincides with an "intellect in the act of understanding." In fact, it is also possible to encounter this idea in other texts from the same period, including the anonymous *Quaestio* from a manuscript held in Basel, with incipit "Utrum beatitudo consistat in intellectu agente."<sup>57</sup>

However, Theodoric's doctrine of the *abditum mentis* went one step further, in that he affirmed that *intelligere* is the same 'agent intellect' as described by Aristotle, and that, for this same reason, the 'intellection' in the *abditum mentis*

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the "Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie," in which it is possible to find the afore mentioned studies by BECCARISI, LEONE and BENEDETTO 2010. For a more recent overview on German Thomism between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, see HOENEN 2020. For Thomism in Italy, see AMERINI 2015.

53 EMERY 2001, 65. More on this *quaestio*, see below.

54 DE LIBERA 1998, 101: "la punta estrema della reazione tomistica a Dietrich di Freiberg era stata raggiunta da molto tempo, da Giovanni Picardi di Lichtenberg, le cui questioni disputate a Colonia all'inizio del XIV secolo rappresentavano una vera e propria macchina da guerra contro Dietrich di Freiberg".

55 BECCARISI 2010b, 518-524.

56 EMERY 2001, 64: "Not too subtly, John Picardi implies that Henry's teaching concerning the *abditum mentis* falls beyond the margins of rationality."

57 BECCARISI 2010b, 526: "Die bisher als deutsch definierte Debatte über die imago wurde in Wirklichkeit von den Zeitgenossen als eine internationale wahrgenommen, so sehr, daß einige Theorien bekannter deutscher Dominikaner wie Dietrich in den Kontext einer erweiterten Debatte zurückgeführt werden."

constitutes a substance. There is no trace of this very specific idea in Picardi, there being only traces of Henry of Ghent's in his *Quaestiones*. However, this does not mean that Picardi was afraid to mention Theodoric's specific ideas in his list of the seven incorrect doctrines. Instead, Picardi did not mention Theodoric because, at that time, the latter had not yet written his texts. Beccarisi went on to draw a series of conclusions regarding dating and localising the whole production process of Theodoric's text *De visione beatifica*, which occurred over a number of years.<sup>58</sup>

In summary, the long-distance debate between Picardi and Theodoric of Freiberg must, most probably, have occurred in the following sequence: Picardi would have criticized Henry of Ghent through Thomas Aquinas, and, subsequently, Theodoric would have responded criticizing Picardi and, thus, criticizing Thomas Aquinas. In so doing, Theodoric would have placed himself in Henry of Ghent's camp – but without explicitly defending Henry, since Theodoric differed from Henry on certain aspects of the *abditum mentis*.

## 2) Meister Eckhart:

Picardi does not explicitly refer to Meister Eckhart in his *Quaestiones*. However, Mojsisch recognised Eckhart's doctrine on the 'divine image' in the 'depths of the soul' in a position in debate, against which Picardi listed some criticisms in his *Quaestio* no. 22. This text was also edited by Mojsisch.<sup>59</sup> However, *Quaestio* no. 22 was aimed at discussing Henry of Ghent's theory of image, which was Picardi's main target. From Picardi's perspective, Henry's position was, quite obviously, incorrect and, instead, the correct doctrine on the 'divine image' was to be found in Thomas Aquinas' work.

At the same time, Mojsisch highlighted that Picardi echoed a characteristic Eckhartian position, in claiming that "man is indeed to be thought as an imago in the sense of 'ad imaginem' insofar as he is taken in his created being, but [...] at the same time he has always already surpassed this being merely ad imaginem, that he is himself an imago"<sup>60</sup> and "he should know this since he can

<sup>58</sup> BECCARISI 2010a, 294-295.

<sup>59</sup> Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 859, f. 172ra, q. 22: "Utrum imago Trinitatis sit in anima vel secundum actus vel secundum potentiam." Textual edition is found in MOJSISCH 1983, 147-161.

<sup>60</sup> MOJSISCH 2001, 90.



know this. This is Eckhart's theory."<sup>61</sup> However, Picardi seemed, above all, to be interested in dismantling Eckhart's metaphysics and in criticizing his notion of analogy, as well as his ideas on the relationships between substance and accidents. With respect to the latter topic, in considering Picardi's *Quaestio* no. 6, Beccarisi discussed Picardi's criticism of Meister Eckhart's theory of accidents as being nothing (*Seinslosigkeit der Akzidenzien*).<sup>62</sup> Picardi defined this idea as being 'absurd'. However, Beccarisi explained that Eckhart did not elaborate this doctrine exactly as Picardi had suggested, although it came fairly close in his Commentary on *Exodus*. Eckhart formulated an analogy between the notion of 'health', which could only be spoken of in relation to living beings, and urine or food, which could be defined as being 'healthy' only in relation to health itself. Likewise, the nine predicates found in Eckhart's example are not entities in themselves, but could only be defined in relation to substance. This did not mean that they were properly nothing. For Eckhart, they are a "quale" or "quantum," which is to say that they merely exist in their own dependence on substance.

Furthermore, Beccarisi points out that the expressions used by Picardi to define this position, such as "de se accidens nihil est" do not precisely quote Eckhart's words.<sup>63</sup> However, there is a possible interpretation of Picardi's words that does lead back to Eckhart, according to which they mean that the "accident" is nothing without its dependence on substance. Taken alone (*per se*), the "accident" does not actually exist.<sup>64</sup> Eckhart explained this relationship between "substance" and "accidents" very well when he described the relationship between the creator and creature – even in that case, creatures are nothing but manifestations of the divine and, therefore, taken by themselves, they are "nothing." However, conversely, the creator is also defined by his act of creation and, therefore, thus, manifests his nature by the creatures he creates (and vice versa). This idea is not, for example, found in the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

Finally, it is interesting to point out that Picardi also mentions the Averroist position, according to which the "accident" is a *dispositio* of being, and that

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61 MOJSISCH 2001, 91.

62 BECCARISI 2010b, 530-536.

63 BECCARISI 2010b, 530-531.

64 BECCARISI 2010b, 535.

he considers it to be more appropriate than that of the “accident as nothing.” Nevertheless, for Picardi, the model of the relationship between substance and accident is to be found in Thomas Aquinas.

Hence, Picardi’s position seems to echo Eckhart’s, but it is also possible that Eckhart’s similar ideas had their own independent circulation in the Universities. This, however, shows once again the plurality of opinion within the anti-Thomist movement in Germany. Theodoric’s position was indeed different from both that of Eckhart and that of Picardi. Beccarisi, finally, reiterates that neither Eckhart nor Theodoric were interested in raising the issue of the relationship between “substance” and “accidents” to clarify theological questions such as transubstantiation, but, rather, that both intended to work from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book VII. This kind of theological approach to *Metaphysics*, which was also to be found in Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa theologiae*, was similarly identified in Picardi’ *Quaestio* no. 3 on Christology, which was published by Walter Senner.<sup>65</sup>

### 3) Nicholas of Strasburg:

In 1982, Loris Sturlese published a portrait of Nicholas of Strasburg, raising the authority of his intellectual personality well beyond the labels of ‘plagiarist’ and initiator of the ‘decline of scholasticism after Thomas Aquinas’, to which he had been condemned by nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography.<sup>66</sup> In this framework, Sturlese considered two treatises sourced from Nicholas’ *Summa philosophiae*, in which Theodoric of Freiburg’s and Meister Eckhart’s doctrines were criticized. Surprisingly, in arguing against the latter, Nicholas, in his Book I, treatise 4, q. 9, literally reported some textual extracts from John Picardi’s *Quaestio* no. 7, regarding the ontological status of “substance” and “accident.”

Sturlese explains that Nicholas went back to Picardi, the “most authorita-

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65 SENNER 1998, 409-413 edited the *Quaestio* no. 3. See SENNER 1998, 398: “The more developed third question evinces thematic parallels with Henry of Ghent’s *Quodlibet* IV, question 4 [...], and Godfrey of Fontaines’ *Quodlibet* VII, question 5 [...]. John’s question also seems to echo the controversy between Dietrich of Freiberg and Nicholas of Strassburg over the separability of accidents.”

66 STURLESE 1982, 184-185. Concerning Nicholas of Strasburg’s life and works, see LÖSER 1999. Nicholas’ *Summa philosophiae* was edited in the *Corpus Philosophorum Teutonicorum Medii Aevi*. Recently there has been an interest in Nicholas of Strasbourg, for example in PELLEGRINO 2010 or in a study by SUAREZ-NANI 2021, which the author dedicates to Sturlese.

tive German Thomist of the early fourteenth century” time and time again, in order to resolve the internal dispute in the German Dominican order, between the Thomists and the anti-Thomist current, which had in Theodoric of Freiberg and, later, in Meister Eckhart, its standard-bearers.<sup>67</sup> Nicholas reiterated not only Picardi’s general premises, but also his manner of debate against three different positions on the topic, one of which considered the “accident” as a “modus” of “substance,” which was a typical doctrinal position supported by Meister Eckhart. Then, Nicholas, following Picardi, concluded that *esse essentiae, subsistentiae* and *existentiae* are factually inherent in the same actual being, but that they have different “being” and “essence” one from the other.<sup>68</sup> This solution almost certainly drew its inspiration from Thomas Aquinas’ *Metaphysics*.

Significantly, Nicholas, as Picardi had, took on the positions of Theodoric of Freiberg and Eckhart in supporting their theses according to which substance is the cause of accidents, and thus criticizing a theory of analogy that is unacceptable to the Thomists.

#### 4) Peter of Godin:

Martin Grabmann showed that some textual passages in Peter of Godin’s *Lectura Thomasina* resemble Picardi’s *Quaestiones*, to the point that he supported the hypothesis that Picardi actually used Peter of Godin’s text.<sup>69</sup> In fact, Godin was a politically influential Thomist and was very well-known, even far beyond his circle of direct collaborators. Godin must have written his *Lectura* at some point between 1300 and 1301, and so before Picardi compiled his *Quaestiones* in 1303. Therefore, it would not be surprising if Picardi had used his works.

Giovanni Lasorella has recently overturned this representation of the relationship between Picardi and Godin, in providing some arguments that suggest the opposite and, namely, that Picardi was the source of Peter of Godin’s *Quaestiones*. Lasorella’s research was possible thanks to the knowledge of the *Lectura*

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67 STURLESE 1982, 194 recalls the role of Harvey of Nédellec for the development of Parisian Thomism, which was decisive for the canonization that took place in 1323, and also that, in Germany, the anti-Thomist positions, among which that of Durand of Saint-Pourçain also emerged, were repeatedly limited, obscured, censored.

68 On this topic, see also IMBACH 1986.

69 GRABMANN 1948, 364-365.

*Thomasina* provided by recent studies.<sup>70</sup> Lasorella has identified new parallel passages, in which the same text was copied *verbatim*, especially in the *quaestio* “Utrum theologia sit scientia,” which is a ‘locus classicus’ of *Sentences* Commentary, Book I – Grabmann had already recognised some of these. It seems that Godin worked on Picardi’s text, “discarding some of its redundant parts,”<sup>71</sup> and removing “those sections that seemed unnecessary to support Aquinas’s main thesis and would have made his handbook less accessible to unexperienced readers.”<sup>72</sup>

Although textual evidence suggests that Peter of Godin drew inspiration from Picardi’s work, Lasorella admits some difficulties in chronologically ordering his findings. In fact, if these results were to be confirmed, the date of composition of Picardi’s *Quaestiones* would have to be brought forward. In that case, Picardi must have been the *Lector* in Cologne before 1300, when Godin was working on his *Lectura*.<sup>73</sup> This new dating, however, presents some inconsistencies, not only for Picardi’s biography, but also because it contradicts the chronology of the readers of the Dominican *Studium* in Cologne, as it was published by Löhr.<sup>74</sup> In this regard, Lasorella tries to extricate himself by pointing out the possibility that there may have been more than one reader in Cologne at the same time. However, Lasorella cannot support this hypothesis with historical evidence, but rather he merely stated that it “was not unusual to have two lectors teaching at a single convent before the 1305.”<sup>75</sup>

In this regard, I would like to formulate some critical remarks. On the hypothesis of a double reader, it seems to me that it would also be important to understand for what hypothetical reasons the *Studium* could have chosen to hire two readers at the same time – the *cursor Sententiarium* mentioned by Lasorella had a separate office from the *lector principalis* and it seems curious that Picardi as a cursor would have constructed such an independent textual system as his *Quaestiones*. Furthermore, there remains an additional possibility, which Lasorella does not even consider, that is, that both Picardi and Godin were copying

70 COLLI 2017; SPEER, COLLI, BONINI 2020;

71 LASORELLA 2023, 101.

72 *Ibidem*, 99.

73 BONINI 2020, 16.

74 LÖHR 1945, 57-84; SENNER 1995, 128-130.

75 LASORELLA 2023, 106.

from a third source as a *textual patchwork* – but also this is a mere suggestion, still lacking historical foundation.

## Epilogue

For about a century, John Picardi of Lichtenberg's thought has been the subject of research. Initially, interest on Picardi arose as he was considered to be as an exponent of Thomism. Scholars, such as Landgraff and Grabmann, and, later, also Sénko, have filtered Picardi's thought, especially through the categorisation of 'Neo-Thomism' of the early twentieth century. It should be noted that most of these studies merely concerned the Cologne *Quaestiones*, without considering his commentaries on the *Sentences*. In fact, there has been no debate about the internal coherence of these writings. Methodologically, both Landgraf and Grabmann considered Picardi's textual *corpus* as a whole, without distinguishing his writings by any chronological criteria, and so, without evaluating any hypotheses of possible changes in doctrinal position over time. The scarcity of available texts written by Picardi could justify this approach, as could the fact that the date of some of Picardi's works is still a matter of debate.<sup>76</sup> This facilitated its use to support the idea of Thomism as a unitary and 'systematic' school of thought. However, it is not entirely obvious that Picardi maintained the same doctrinal position over time, from when he was a *Lector Coloniensis* to when he commented on the *Sentences* in Paris, or in later life. No trace of the evolution of his philosophical thought seems to have been handed down, nor is it apparent in texts or *Quaestiones*, and the exact date of his death is unknown.<sup>77</sup>

Grabmann, however, had already judged Picardi's limited usefulness for the purposes of Thomistic historiography, so his *Quaestiones* were left untouched for several decades. Later, Picardi drew interest in the context of the reconstruction of the *Corpus philosophorum Teutonicorum medii aevi*, which was promoted by Loris Sturlese in the mid-1970s. More recent research has had the merit

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<sup>76</sup> BECCARISI 2010b; LASORELLA 2023.

<sup>77</sup> Toulouse, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 489, f. 13v: "hic obit in Lombardia in conventu [...] anno Domini MCCCXII mense augusti." However, the date of death 1312 is not possible, since there is evidence of his appointment as bishop in Regensburg as early as 1313.



of contextualising Picardi in the Thomist school of his time, highlighting his long-distance debate with Henry of Ghent, and has given further insight into the sources he used and his relationships with the German Dominicans of his time, including Theodoric of Freiberg and Meister Eckhart.

However, much remains to be understood about Picardi's work. The critical edition of his *Quaestiones*, currently underway, will be able to shed light on further aspects that have been poorly considered or overlooked up to now, on his primary and intermediate sources and his influence as a Thomist, not only in Germany, but also elsewhere. Topics such as intellection still need to be studied properly, together with more clarity on his relationship with Albert the Great. There are no studies comparing Picardi with Franciscan thought, for example. Mauriège's recent discoveries also suggest that other codices with Picardi's work are still waiting to be identified and studied.

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