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8 (2019)

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e-mail: [redakcja@roczniktomistyczny.pl](mailto:redakcja@roczniktomistyczny.pl)

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WYDAWNICTWO von borowiecky

05-250 Radzymin

ul. Korczaka 9E

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# The Aquinas's paths of thinking about predestination in the *Summa Theologiae*

**Key words:** predestination, reprobation, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, paths of thinking, reasoning, *Summa Theologiae*

## I. Introduction

This paper is devoted to Saint Thomas Aquinas's considerations on predestination. However this is not meant to be another work presenting his teaching on the subject.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this article is to reconstruct and analyse "paths of think-

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Dr Marcin Trepczyński, adiunkt w Zakładzie Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej Instytutu Filozofii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, redaktor naczelny Edukacji Filozoficznej.

<sup>1</sup> Besides many other works let us mention few recent publications: J. Salza, *The Mystery of Predestination: According to Scripture, the Church and St. Thomas Aquinas*, Charlotte (North Caroline) 2010; M. Levering, *Predestination: Biblical and Theological Paths*, Oxford – New York 2011; B. Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: A Guide and Commentary*, New York 2014; F.T. Harkins, *The Early Aquinas on the Question of Universal Salvation, or How a Knight May Choose Not to Ride His Horse*, "New Blackfrairs" 2014, vol. 95, issue 1056, pp. 208–217; F.T. Harkins, *Contingency and Causality in Predestination: 1 Tim. 1:2 in the Sentences Commentaries of Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus*, "Archa Verbi" 2014, vol. 11, pp. 35–72; J.G. Trabbic, *Can Aquinas Hope 'That All Men Be Saved'?*, "The Heythrop Journal" 2016, vol. 57, issue 2, pp. 337–358; F.B. Cavalli, *Aquinas and Calvin on Predestination: Is There Any Common Ground?*, "Reformed Faith and Practice" 2016, vol. 1, no. 1, URL: <https://journal.rts.edu/article/aquinas-and-calvin-on-predestination-is-there-any-common-ground/>; S.A. Long, R.W. Nutt, T.J. White (eds.), *Thomism and Predestination: Principles and Disputations*, Ave Maria 2016; G. Stucco, *The Doctrine of Predestination in Catholic Scholasticism: Views and Perspectives from the Twelfth Century to the Renaissance*, U.S. 2017; A. Stefańczyk, *Will, Knowledge, Action – God's Grace: Thomas Aquinas on Divine Predestination and Divine Causality*, in: *If God exists. Human freedom and theistic hypothesis. Studies and essays*, eds. A.P. Stefańczyk, R. Majeran, Lublin 2019, pp. 151–187.

ing” which Doctor Angelicus designed when discussed the topic of predestination. In this paper I would like to refer to the approach sketched in the book *The paths of thinking of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas*,<sup>2</sup> according to which a path of thinking is a way a thought of certain thinker runs. The crucial thing in reconstruction of such a path is a model (a scheme or a form) of a reasoning (or of a set of combined reasonings) in which at least following elements are specified:

- 1) a final point: a conclusion to which a reasoning proceeds,
- 2) starting points for reasoning, hence: premises themselves and their types (e.g. so called self-evident premises or premises from authority or premises which are conclusions of former reasoning or analysis),
- 3) an idea of a reasoning (e.g. is it a demonstration or an explanation of some alleged contradiction or a searching for a reason), its logical structure (types of reasoning used), and sometimes even what logic is used by an author, if we admit a possibility of using non-classical logics,
- 4) a status of a reasoning (whether an author agrees with it or just reconstructs it as some possibility or even presents it as

a wrong way etc., as well as their correctness and reliability).

The second important mark of a path of thinking is its place in the composition of the whole work and a historical context which influenced an author and had an impact on a shape of a path, as well as on selection of problems and arguments.

This analysis and reconstruction of Aquinas’s paths of thinking about predestination will be based on the q. 23 of the first part of Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* (hereinafter also *ST*) devoted exactly to the topic of predestination, however I will refer also to other texts of this author as an important background. The first part will be a kind of brief context presentation and the second one will be a content based analysis.

The method of investigation of paths of thinking will enable us to show not only what Aquinas finally stated in the theme of predestination, but before all: 1) how he came to his conclusions within one of the most difficult problems of the Christian theology and 2) how he designed proper paths of thinking about it, taking into account that *ST* was intended to be a textbook, by which he could shape his readers’ thinking.

## 2. The context

### 2.2. The doctrinal background

In order to examine paths of thinking it is necessary to trace back influences on author’s thought which often indicate direction or are impulses which cause

that he/she chooses his/her own original route. It is obvious that main inspiration for Aquinas was the Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Church

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. Trepczyński, *Ścieżki myślenia Alberta Wielkiego i Tomasza z Akwinu*, Warszawa 2013, pp. 5, 9, 55–56, 109.

Fathers, and that this theological problem, so difficult, was present in medieval theology before Aquinas and often discussed by his predecessors.

The key passages from the Bible for all medieval theologians who discussed this topic come from the letters of St. Paul the Apostle: "All those who from the first were known to him, he has destined from the first to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brethren. So predestined, he called them; so called, he justified them; so justified, he glorified them" (Rom. 8, 29–30), "He has chosen us out, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saints, to be blameless in his sight, for love of him" (Eph. 1, 40). They provided a general message concerning this problem: there are some who are predestined and people belonging to God are elected by Him even before they started to exist. These main passages were supplemented by

those showing that predestination depends only on God's free decision and is not conditioned by our merits (e.g. Rom. 9, 11–15; Mal. 1, 2–3; Rom. 11, 4–8; Tit. 3, 5).<sup>3</sup> There is also an important passage which seems to go against the theory of predestination presupposing election, or rather to exclude reprobation of some, namely 1Tim. 2, 4: "it is his will that all men should be saved, and be led to recognize the truth," however Aquinas, referring to John Damascene's distinction between antecedent and consequent will, shows in *ST* (a. 4, ad 3) that this passage is compliant with the theory of predestination which assumes election, as St. Paul speaks here about antecedent will of God and not about his consequent (simple) will.<sup>4</sup>

As regards the Fathers and other early Christian writers, after first utterances concerning this problem (provided e.g. by Marcion of Synope and Origen<sup>5</sup>) the definition of predestination<sup>6</sup> and the

<sup>3</sup> See an overall view of Biblical roots of teaching on predestination: J. Salza, *The Mystery of Predestination...*, pp. 11–14. A wider context, including Judaic perspective: M. Levering, *Predestination: Biblical...*, pp. 14–34; and about Old Testament roots see: M.Z. Brettler, *Predestination in Deuteronomy 30:1-10*, in: *Those Elusive Deuteronomists; the Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism*, eds. L.S. Schearing, S.L. McKenzie, Sheffield 1999, pp. 171–188.

<sup>4</sup> More about his interpretation of this passage in the commentary to the *Sentences*: F.T. Harkins, *Contingency and Causality in Predestination...*, pp. 38–39, 41–44, 66–69. Referring to the concept of antecedent will, Steven A. Long remarks: "the antecedent will that all men be saved is not something antecedent in God, but is rather the willing by God of something that is an antecedent. And the antecedent may be willed without that to which it is an antecedent being willed. Thus something antecedent to salvation and genuinely ordered toward it – real grace – is willed for all men. But owing to created defect, which God permits, the consequent grace of salvation is not bestowed" (S.A. Long, *St. Thomas Aquinas, divine causality, and the mystery of predestination*, in: *Thomism and Predestination...*, p. 74).

<sup>5</sup> See a deeper analysis of teaching on predestination of Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Ambrose and Augustine in the thesis: M.G. Bilby, *A Disappearing People: The Doctrine of Election and Predestination from Irenaeus to Augustine*, Kansas City 2002.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. the definition quoted by Aquinas in *ST*, q. 23, a. 2 arg. 3 and s.c.: "praedestinatio est gratiae praeparatio, gratia vero iam ipsa donatio" (Augustine, *De praedestinatione Sanctorum liber unus*, 10, *PL* 44) and a similar one together with a supplementary remark on "massa perditionis": "Haec est praedestinatio sanctorum, nihil aliud: praescientia scilicet, et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus

main solutions had been established by St. Augustine of Hippo.<sup>7</sup> According to a common opinion generally Aquinas goes in line with his teaching,<sup>8</sup> similarly as majority of other medieval theologians.<sup>9</sup> However, though it looks that, “traversing Whitehead’s saying, all the effort of all philosophers and theologians to analyse the problem of predestination are just footnotes to Augustine,”<sup>10</sup> some of his followers delivered both important and interesting explanations and arguments supporting positions of the bishop of Hippo and resigned from some elements of this teaching. One of them is Aquinas himself, who for instance did not refer to the concepts of original sin and *massa damnata* or *massa perditionis* which were crucial to the theory of the bishop of Hippo who wanted to show that default state of human beings after the fall was being condemned. According to St. Thomas the reason for not being saved is not the original sin, but human’s impossibility to reach salvation by his own powers. As Francis B. Cavalli claims, “whereas the fall and the depravity of man governs Augustine’s discussion of predestination, Thomas works

out his doctrine by way of causality from the nature and will of God.”<sup>11</sup> Let us also add a remark of Brian Davies who states: “Aquinas takes predestination to be the predestination of people to eternal life with God. He does not speak of God predestining people to hell.”<sup>12</sup> To conclude let us quote Cavalli again: “They arrive at similar conclusions but adopt different emphases and methodologies.”<sup>13</sup> This is one of reasons for which it seems worth examining not only Aquinas’s final positions, but his paths of thinking as well, or even: before all. However (leaving aside important thinkers who took part in the medieval debate on predestination like Gottschalk of Orbais, who advocated the theory of double predestination, John Scotus Eriugena or Anselm of Canterbury) we should also mention at least three theologians who before St. Thomas refined the theory of predestination, namely Peter Lombard, Stephen Langton and William of Auxerre. First of them in his famous *Sentences*, which were commented on both by Aquinas and many other 13th-century theologians, offered a definition of reprobation, basing on August-

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certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur. Ceteri autem ubi nisi in massa perditionis iusto divino iudicio relinquuntur?” (Augustine, *De dono perseverantiae*, 14, PL 45). Other important Augustine’s utterances on predestination can be found before all in: *Contra duas epistolas pelagianorum*, II, 9-10 (PL 44); *De diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, I, 2 (PL 40).

<sup>7</sup> About Augustine’s teaching on predestination see: J. Wetzel, *Predestination, Pelagianism, and foreknowledge*, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. E. Stump, N. Kretzmann, Cambridge 2001, pp. 49–57.

<sup>8</sup> F.B. Cavalli, *Aquinas and Calvin on Predestination...*

<sup>9</sup> Cf. M. Olszewski, *Komentarz do kwestii 23 O predestynacji*, in: Tomasz z Akwinu, *Traktat o Bogu. Summa theologii, kwestie 1–26*, Kraków 1999, p. 823 and remarks included in the footnote 52.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> F.B. Cavalli, *Aquinas and Calvin on Predestination...*

<sup>12</sup> B. Davies, *Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae...*, p. 89.

<sup>13</sup> F.B. Cavalli, *Aquinas and Calvin on Predestination...*

tine's definition of predestination.<sup>14</sup> Langton, who was not read by Aquinas, but to some extent shaped intellectual environment in Paris at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, in his *Quaestiones Theologiae* before all precisely pointed out causal relationships between: predestination, grace and glory, and between: reprobation, nequity and eternal penalty,<sup>15</sup> made an attempt to establish an ontological status of predestination and reprobation<sup>16</sup> and in many fragments of his questions on problems connected with predestination he – what is often in his works – conducted sophisticated logical and grammatical analyses.<sup>17</sup> Finally, William of Auxerre in his *Summa aurea*, one of most popular textbooks of the 13th century, took the exact definition from Lombard and developed Langton's remarks on causal relationships by discerning three aspects to compare concepts predestination and reprobation, namely: *antecessio*, *exemplaritas* and *causalitas*,<sup>18</sup> and four kinds of caus-

es: *materialis*, *formalis*, *finalis* and *efficiens*,<sup>19</sup> in further analyses using sometimes grammatical concepts in Langton's manner.

Finally, we should briefly mention the sources explicitly used by Aquinas in his q. 23, as they reveal both the possible triggers which could push him to certain reflections (and in this way co-shape his paths of thinking) and materials which he appreciated and found appropriate to use in a work dedicated to students (and in this way he himself used these sources to shape paths of thinking of his readers). Apart from St. Augustine, to whom he refers 9 times (often pointing out his opusculum *De praedestinatione sanctorum*), he addresses: John of Damascus, Origen, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, St. Ambrose and *Glossa ordinaria*. The first mentioned author occurs only once: a quotation from his work *De fide orthodoxa*, according to which God “knows beforehand those things that are in our power, but He does not predetermine them,”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See P. Lombard, *Sententiae*, I, d. 40, c. 2, Grottaferrata 1971 (hereinafter: *Sent.*), p. 287: “Sicut ergo praedestinatio Dei proprie «est praescientia et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur quicumque liberantur»; ita reprobatio Dei est praescientia malitiae in quibusdam non finiendae et praeparatio poenae non terminandae”.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Stephen Langton, *Quaestiones theologiae*, q. 13c, ed. R. Quinto and M. Bieniak, Oxford 2014, p. 327: “(...) in prima descriptione attendendus est rectus ordo quantum ad causas et effectus: est enim primum causa medii et medium causa extremi – est enim praedestinatio causa gratiae et gratia causa gloriae. In secunda autem descriptione non est ita: primum enim et medium sunt causa postremi, quia reprobatio est causa interminabilis pene, similiter et nequitia. Primum autem nequaquam est causa medii: reprobatio enim nunquam est causa nequitiae, neque nequitia est causa reprobationis, sicut nec bonitas causa praedestinationis”.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, q. 15a, pp. 340–344.

<sup>17</sup> See a study on Langton's accounts about predestination: M. Bieniak, *Étienne Langton sur la foi, la prédestination et la réprobation. Étude et édition critique de Postille super epistulas Pauli (Ro. 9, 9–24)*, “Recherches de Philosophie et Théologie Médiévales” 2019, vol. 86, no. 1, pp. 49–123.

<sup>18</sup> See: William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, I, tr. 9, c. 3, q. 1, ed. J. Riballier, Paris–Grottaferrata 1980, p. 182.

<sup>19</sup> See: *ibidem*, q. 2, p. 185.

<sup>20</sup> John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*, II, 30. English translation: John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. In: *Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. P. Schaff and. H. Wallace, Volume IX, Series II,



opens the whole question as a basis for the first argument against predestination. The reference to this Byzantine monk should not be surprising, as he is often quoted by Doctor Angelicus in *ST*, what shows that St. Thomas appreciate this author very much. Origen is addressed twice: Aquinas quotes his comment on Rom. 1, 4 in an argument in the article 2 (“Predestination is of one who is not; destination, of one who is”) and then in the main answer of the article 5 he refers to Origen’s opinion about preexistence of souls. What is significant, he says nothing about the concept of *apokathastasis*, for which this early Christian thinker was so famous. It seems St. Thomas does not want to deal with this issue at all, perhaps not to judge whether a hope for salvation of the all mankind is right or not.<sup>21</sup> Aquinas mentions Pseudo-Dionysius only once, to present his typically neoplatonic analogy between sun sending rays upon all without selection and God communicating goodness from *De divinis nominibus* (IV, 1). Finally, he recalls once St. Ambrose explaining the passage

Rom. 9, 15 and twice explanations taken from *Glossa ordinaria*. Also these last three sources appear often in the first part of *Summa*.

It looks then that Aquinas used in q. 23 typical set of references, both as regards the choice of authors and their “distribution” in his text. Having in mind that in *ST* he chooses arguments and opinions of others very carefully to limit himself only to what is most important, in order to create a work suitable for inexperienced readers, especially not to overload it, we can assume that this choice is an element of his general composition strategy adopted for *ST*. However, what may be interesting in this case is, as it was already said, his silence about *apokathastasis* and dealing with Neoplatonic view, what shows he finds it important, perhaps for at least two reasons: 1) he has personal inclination to maintain a Neoplatonic approach in theology, 2) he thinks that his readers should be sure what they can accept from this approach and where and how it should be corrected.

## 2.2. The place in the work

In his *Summa Theologiae* St. Thomas placed q. 23 devoted to predestination in the first part of this work, within the set of questions concerning God as one, along with questions on Divine provi-

dence (q. 22) and on the book of life (q. 24), after the questions connected with God’s knowledge (q. 14–17), life (q. 18) and will (qq. 19–21) and right before the questions on Divine power

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translated by The Rev. S.D.F. Salmond, D.D., F.e.I.s., Aberdeen 1898.

<sup>21</sup> Let us note down that Hans Urs von Balthasar offered an interpretation of Aquinas’s teaching according to which Doctor Angelicus in fact expressed such hope, however argumentation of this reading is rather weak, cf. J.G. Trabbic, *Can Aquinas Hope...*, p. 4: “First, although Balthasar suggests a possibility of hoping for the salvation of all men in Aquinas’s texts, he does not go very far in exploring this possibility. Second, and similarly, he does not take any time to consider in depth the conflict between hoping for all and the doctrine of reprobation.”

(q. 25). We should remember that for Aquinas an order of topics is important and meaningful, what is clear if we study his commentaries where *divisio textus* and reflection about such an order play significant role.<sup>22</sup> This composition means at least that to consider predestination one should first go through the topics about Divine will and providence, and that it is highly probable that the concept of predestination is connected rather with those two topics than with the topic of God's knowledge, and this is what Thomas says stating that predestination presupposes election, so will, and that it is a part of providence.

In this way he had broken the pattern which he had to follow while commenting on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* many years before. Although Lombard connected predestination with providence, he did not combine it with God's will, but with God's knowledge, as he understood *providentia* in a Boethian manner as *praescientia* and generally decided to treat predestination as one of "names" of God's knowledge.<sup>23</sup> This is why predestination in the Book I is discussed in dist. 35 along with general topics concerning God's knowledge and providence and then together with reprobation in the end of dist. 39 and in dist. 40, after specific considerations about God's knowledge, whereas God's will is considered in dist. 45, after God's power (dist. 42–44). As it was already said, in his commentary Aquinas follows this or-

der, however he combines the topics of predestination and reprobation and ascribes them to dist. 40 and 41, and – what is important – within these analyses he poses a question: does predestination pertain to knowledge? (cf. *In Sent.*, I, d. 40, q. 1, a. 2). However at this stage he is very moderate and states that what should be taken into account in the definition of predestination is not only foreknowledge (*praescientia*), but also Divine intention (cf. *In Sent.*, I, d. 40, q. 1, co. and ad 1).

It is interesting that St. Thomas poses explicitly a similar problem: does predestination pertain to God's knowledge or to His will, in *De veritate* (q. 6 a. 1 co., where he takes a step forward and underlines that it presupposes election), whereas later, in *Summa Theologiae* such a question does not occur at all. One explanation for such state of affairs can be that Aquinas did not consider it important enough to include it in this textbook. Another reason is that he answered this question implicitly, so there was no need to discuss it separately. The third one is that he somehow settled it by the composition of questions, mentioned above.

It is also very important to take into account the order of topics in *Summa Contra Gentiles*. In this work Aquinas separates the topic of predestination from the topics connected with providence and places at the end of considerations about God's grace. What is more, both providence and predestination are

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Psalmos*, proem, and other introductions of his Biblical commentaries.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. "Sciendum est igitur quod sapientia vel scientia Dei, cum sit una et simplex, tamen propter varios status rerum et diversos effectus, plura ac diversa sortitur nomina. Dicitur enim non tantum scientia, sed etiam praescientia vel praevidentia, dispositio, praedestinatio et providentia" – Peter Lombard, *Sent.*, I, d. 35, c. 2, p. 254–255.

discussed in the Book III, while God's knowledge and will in the Book I. What is interesting, in this very short chapter about predestination, concluding the Book III, Aquinas states very clearly that it is a part of providence and it is connected with will (*SCG*, III, c. 163). But despite this fact he decided to combine it with God's grace and in this way he underlined that what God gives to predestined is grace.

Finally, we should note down that Aquinas had discussed the problem of predestination in his commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to Romans, while referring directly to the passage 8, 29–30, mentioned before. In this case the place of his considerations is not meaningful, as St. Thomas just follows the text of the epistle. We can only remark that he considers there a difference between foreknowledge and predestination. Hence, on the one hand he juxtaposes here predestination with God's knowledge, but

on the other hand this time it is not because he decided to point out any similitude of these two concepts, as the passage he is commenting on and the method he adopted in the commentary forced him to do so.

To conclude:

- in case of Aquinas's considerations on predestination generally a place of paths of thinking in the whole work is significant;
- the place of the question on predestination from his *Summa Theologiae* is connected with the interpretation of this concept, and it is important that it is preceded by questions on will and (immediately) on providence;
- such order is important, because paths of thinking are often rooted in preceding paths and notions elaborated within this former paths: especially in Aquinas such paths connect together in a longer itinerary.

### 3. Content based analysis

#### 3.1. The main final points

The q. 23 consists of 8 articles. In each article St. Thomas considers one problem; at the same time in each of them we can record a few paths of thinking and among them one which leads to the main conclusion which is Aquinas's exact answer to a problem formulated at the beginning of each article. These conclusions are the final points of his main paths of thinking concerning predestination. Besides them there are other paths of thinking: 1) arguments which support the hypothesis (usually) falsified

by the main conclusion (so called objections), 2) quite often reasonings given within the answers to those arguments, 3) and sometimes arguments which Aquinas records within his main answer. These latter we can find for instance in the article 5, where he quotes opinions of Origen, of Pelagians and of semi-Pelagians, and in the article 8, where he addresses two errors concerning the relation between prayers and predestination.

The main final points<sup>24</sup> are the following:

- (c.1) “God should predestine men” (*Deo conveniens est homines praedestinare*)<sup>25</sup> (a. 1, co.).
- (c.2) “Predestination is not anything in the predestined” (*praedestinatio non est aliquid in praedestinatīs*) (a. 2, co.).
- (c.3) “God does reprobate some” (*Deus aliquos reprobat*) (a. 3, co.).
- (c.4) “Predestination presupposes election in the order of reason; and election presupposes love” (*praedestinatio, secundum rationem, praesupponit electionem; et electio dilectionem*) (a. 4, co.).
- (c.5) “(...) we might say that God pre-ordained to give glory on account of merit, and that He pre-ordained to give grace to merit glory. (...) [But] it is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us” (*dicamus quod Deus praeordinavit se daturum alicui gloriam ex meritis; et quod praeordinavit se daturum alicui gratiam, ut mereretur gloriam. (...) impossibile est quod totus praedestinationis effectus in communi habeat aliquam causam ex parte nostra*) (a. 5, co.).
- (c.6) “Predestination most certainly and infallibly takes effect” (*praedestinatio certissime et infallibiliter consequitur suum effectum*) (a. 6, co.).

– (c.7) “The number of the predestined is certain” (*numerus praedestinatorum est certus*) (a. 7, co.).

– (c.8) “(...) two things are to be considered – namely, the divine ordination; and its effect. As regards the former, in no possible way can predestination be furthered by the prayers of the saints. (...) As regards the latter, predestination is said to be helped by the prayers of the saints, and by other good works” (*Quantum igitur ad primum, nullo modo praedestinatio iuvatur precibus sanctorum (...). Quantum vero ad secundum, dicitur praedestinatio iuvari precibus sanctorum, et aliis bonis operibus*) (a. 8, co.).

The final points of the paths which are present within the arguments supporting initial hypotheses are of course inconsistent with those main final points, e.g. “and thus man’s predestination is done away” (*Et sic hominum praedestinatio tollitur*, a. 1, arg. 1). And the final points of the answers to these arguments (only sometimes articulated) are conclusions that in fact such arguments do not exclude the main final point, e.g. “Whence predestination is not excluded by Him” (*Unde praedestinatio non excluditur*, a. 1, ad 1).

<sup>24</sup> As they are conclusions of main reasonings I will mark them as „c” and add numbers of articles they are taken from (e.g. c.1, c.2, ...), whereas the starting points, being premises, will be later marked as „p” with numbers of articles and ordering numbers (e.g. p.1.1, p.1.2, ...).

<sup>25</sup> As these conclusions should be mostly clear I add the original quotations together with English translation. Later I will present original citations only in case of crucial passages. They come from *Textum Leoninum* (Rome, 1888). All the quotations in English come from the second revised edition of the *Fathers of the English Dominican Province*, published in 1920 and available at the website: <http://www.newadvent.org>.

### 3.2. The main starting points

The starting points for the main paths we can usually find in the answers of several articles. In the reasoning presented in the article 1 we have the following:

- (p.1.1) “all things are subject to His providence” (proved in q. 22, a. 2, co.);
- (p.1.2) “it belongs to providence to direct things towards their end” (proved in q. 22, a. 1, co.);
- (p.1.3) “The end towards which created things are directed by God is twofold; one which exceeds all proportion and faculty of created nature; and this end is life eternal (...)” (the latter part proved in q. 12, a. 4, co.);
- (p.1.4) “if a thing cannot attain to something by the power of its nature, it must be directed thereto by another” (this one seems to be self-evident).

On such basis Aquinas draws a conclusion that “a rational creature, capable of eternal life, is led towards it, directed, as it were, by God” which is equivalent with the final point of the article 1. However he adds some more statements in order to show: 1) that in fact we talk about some reason of that direction which pre-exists in God, 2) that this is what we call predestination, 3) and that it is a part of the providence.

As we can see, this path of thinking is strongly rooted in some previous considerations or even reasonings. Such examples show that Aquinas’s paths are connected and in fact they create a whole network of paths, where one final point can be a starting one for another path. We should also record that one of the

presented premises (p.1.4) seems to be a self-evident statement based on some experience and theoretical analysis, true for every discipline of science, hence: a kind of axiom (according to the Aristotelian meaning). Let us add that this kind of premise we can find in Aquinas’s “five ways”, like “whatever is in motion is put in motion by another” (*omne quod movetur ab alio movetur* – q. 2 a. 3, co.) which is a basis for “the first way”. Such premises are based on observation (to illustrate p.1.4 Aquinas gives an example of arrow and archer) and then generalised on the basis of incomplete induction and speculative inquiries to reach a conclusion that it is impossible to be the opposite, according to method of obtaining the principles of metaphysics.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, it is very important not to overlook the contents of so called *sed contra*. Very often it is a passage from the Sacred Scripture or from the Fathers which can be understood as a starting point of another kind. It is not a premise for a reasoning, but a fundament for it, which provides certainty of a conclusion which is drawn later or which even defines boundaries for it. In case of a. 1 it is a passage from the Epistle to Romans: “Whom He predestined, them He also called” (8, 30). Such passage leaves no doubt that there must be something like predestination. What is left after quoting this passage is to determine what exactly predestination is and to justify it.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *ST*, Ia, q. 1, a. 8, co.; Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, I, 980b–981a, IV, 1006a.

The next starting points for the paths designed in the answers of subsequent articles are as follows:

Article 2:

- (p.2.1) “providence is not anything in the things provided for; but is a type in the mind of the provider” (proved in q. 22, a. 1, co.);
- (p.2.2) “the execution of providence which is called government, is in a passive way in the thing governed, and in an active way in the governor” (not justified, may be admitted as self-evident);

Article 3:

- (p.3.1) “it was said above that predestination is a part of providence” (proved in a. 1, co.);
- (p.3.2) “to providence, however, it belongs to permit certain defects in those things which are subject to providence, as was said above” (q. 22, a. 2, ad 2);

Article 4:

- (p.4.1) “predestination, as stated above, is a part of providence” (again);
- (p.4.2) “providence, as also prudence, is the plan existing in the intellect directing the ordering of some things towards an end” (proved in q. 22, a. 2, co.);
- (p.4.3) “nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists” (not justified, may be admitted as self-evident);

Article 5:

- (p.5.1) “predestination includes will, as was said above” (proved in a. 4, co.);
- (p.5.2) “we cannot assign any cause of the divine will on the part of the act of willing” (proved in q. 19, a. 5, co.);
- (p.5.3) “a reason can be found on the part of the things willed; inasmuch as God wills one thing on account of some-

thing else” (not justified, but its function is widening the scope of inquiry);

- (p.5.4) “what is of grace is the effect of predestination; and this cannot be considered as the reason of predestination, since it is contained in the notion of predestination” (self-evident statement, what is indicated by the phrase “manifestum est”);

Article 6:

- (p.6.1) “predestination is a part of providence” (again);
- (p.6.2) “some things happening from contingency, according to the nature of the proximate causes, which divine providence has ordained for such effects” (proved in q. 22, a. 4, ad 1, co.);
- (p.6.3) “the order of providence is infallible, as was shown above” (proved in q. 22, a. 4, ad 1);

Article 7:

- (p.7.1) “every agent intends to make something finite” (not found, but Aquinas claims it was proved in q. 7);
- (p.7.2) “whosoever intends some definite measure in his effect thinks out some definite number in the essential parts, which are by their very nature required for the perfection of the whole” (self-evident, Aquinas gives an example of building a house to make it evident);

Article 8:

- (p.8.1) “providence, of which predestination is a part, does not do away with secondary causes but so provides effects, that the order of secondary causes falls also under providence” (explained in q. 22, a. 3, co. and ad 2, not exact paraphrase).

We can see that again many premises are rooted in former considerations as conclusions of reasonings. It looks that

the most important conclusion of the article 1 was that predestination is a part of providence, as it was repeated in the next articles as a fundamental premise four times. Beside, Aquinas again adopts some self-evident statements (axioms) which seem compelling on the grounds of his metaphysics.

Just like in the article 1, the passages used in *sed contra* play the essential role here:

- Augustine (*De Praed. Sanct.*, II, 14): “predestination is the foreknowledge of God’s benefits” (a. 2);
- Malachi 1, 2–3: “I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau” (a. 3);
- Ephesians 1, 4: “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (a. 4);
- Titus 3, 5: “Not by works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (a. 5);
- A gloss (*Glossa ordinaria*) on Romans 8, 29: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated”: “Predestination is the foreknowledge and preparation of the

benefits of God, by which whosoever are freed will most certainly be freed” (a. 6);

– Augustine (*De Corr. et Grat.* 13): “The number of the predestined is certain, and can neither be increased nor diminished” (a. 7);

– Genesis 25, 21: “Isaac besought the Lord for his wife because she was barren; and He heard him and made Rebecca to conceive” to give birth to Jacob who was predestined (a. 8).

Again, they in fact directly indicate solutions. However in some cases Aquinas needs to identify some metaphors. For instance, when addressing the passage from Malachi, he explains that God can “hate” someone in a way that he can reprobate someone, but he still loves every being, as he wishes good to all men (a. 3, ad 1). This example shows that such passage is not sufficient and some precise and ordered paths of thinking are needed to solve the problem in a satisfactory way.

### 3.3. The reasonings: logical structure, correctness and status

It may seem that in all the main answers of the eight articles Aquinas tries to provide a reason for the thesis he agrees with. His general idea is to explain why it is like this and not like that. This approach could entail using reductive reasonings, which are not reliable, according to the scheme:  $(p \rightarrow q, q) \vdash p$ . However, let us notice that St. Thomas in almost every case tries to formulate deductive reasonings. Let us examine main reasonings in subsequent articles.

#### *Article 1*

When we consider four premises from the answer of the article 1, given above, we can see that the premises p.1.1 and p.1.2 can create a syllogism and give a conclusion: all things are directed by God towards their end (after some simple reformulation we obtain a pure *Barbara* syllogism); whereas p.1.3 and p.1.4 together give a conclusion: one able to gain eternal life must be directed by some another (again, after some simple reformulation we have a syllogism, this

time hypothetical, namely *modus ponens*). If we combine them we deduce that one able to gain it needs to be directed by God. Of course, we could insist that there lacks one premise, namely that only God is capable to lead towards eternal life. This shows that this reasoning without that premise is a kind of enthymeme. Anyway, it tends to be a deductive, not a reductive one, as the conclusion c.1 may be syllogistically drawn from the premises.

*Article 2*

As far as the article 2 is concerned it is sufficient to combine the first part of p.2.1 with one of the crucial conclusions from the article 1: predestination is a part of the providence, and – with an assumption that in this case a part has a feature of the whole – to syllogistically conclude c.2: predestination is not anything in the predestined. Hence, we have a pure deductive reasoning here.

*Article 3*

There is an interesting situation when we compare the premises from the main answer of the article 2 with the premises from the main answer of the article 3. We should be ready to say that there is an analogy between these cases. We should then do what we have done before and conclude syllogistically that it belongs to predestination to permit certain defects in some predestined. This would mean that there is also some negative predestination. What is more there is a crucial difference. It was true that providence is not anything in predestined. But it is not said here that to every act of providence belongs to permit a defect like lacking of grace. There is rath-

er a possibility that within providence such situation may happen, so it is possible that one is not predestined, and this is reprobation. But this time it is not a deductive reasoning. The conclusion cannot be necessarily drawn from the premises. In fact, St. Thomas only postulates that “it likewise is part of that providence to permit some to fall away from that end [eternal life]”.

*Article 4*

As regards the main reasoning of the article 4, it is a clear *modus ponens*. The main premise is an implication “nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists” (p.4.3; if we put “p” for the first part and “q” for the latter, we have:  $\neg q \rightarrow \neg p$ , so after transposition:  $p \rightarrow q$ ), and from other premises (maybe even from p.4.2) we can get that something is directed to the end (p), hence q is true: there exists a will for such directing; this means that predestination presupposes election. Let us just notice that it is then followed by another similar reasoning concerning love, which precedes such election. And a conjunction of these two subsequent conclusions is c4.

*Article 5*

In case of the main answer of the article 5 we can see that the main conclusion (c.5) can be drawn directly and independently from at least two premises pointed above as starting points (cf. p.5.2 and p.5.4). Therefore the reasoning is very simple here. However, in order to make it clear Aquinas discusses other opinions and tries to explain his own positions, showing before all that human's free will does not exclude predestination



and that it is a cause of human's merits, not conversely. However those merits are real merits; he explains that this is a case of using secondary causes by providence of God (but reserving their freedom).

*Article 6*

The main reasoning of the article 6 is a simple syllogism *Barbara*. After some reformulation we have that: providence is infallible (p.6.3), predestination is a part of providence (p.6.1), hence: predestination is infallible, so it certainly takes effect (cf. c.6).

*Article 7*

The same kind of syllogism (*Barbara*) we can find in the solution of the article 7, where it is based on p.7.2 as a major premise and p.7.1 as a minor one, taken together. We receive a conclusion: every agent thinks out some definite number in the essential parts, which are by their very nature required for the perfection of the whole; Aquinas correctly puts God for "every agent" and explains that in this case "the whole" is a universe. He also underlines that it is not just a knowledge, but a reason; God knows this number, as He have chosen certain persons; so this number is certain (c.7).

*Article 8*

The main conclusion of the answer of the article 8 is twofold: negative and positive. It seems that the positive part is based on the premise p.8.1. However it is difficult to identify a deductive reasoning which could combine them. We could consider a modus ponens where the lacking premise would be an implication like: "If providence provides effects, that the order of secondary causes falls also under providence, then

predestination – as regards its effect – is helped by the prayers of the saints, and by other good works". But Aquinas does not formulates such a rule, as it is hardly possible to admit it. We could rather accept an implication where we reverse the arrow (the direction of implication) and say that if prayers help effects of predestination, then it means that the order of secondary causes falls under the providence. This shows that we can rather speak about a reductive reasoning here. And as far as the negative part of the conclusion is concerned it is not drawn from any premise here, so it seems to be stated authoritatively, as a postulate. However, we could insist that in fact it is a consequence of p.5.2, because if God's will cannot have any cause, then predestination cannot be preceded by any prayers; on this basis we could form a correct deductive reasoning. Aquinas could have pointed out this premise (and then we would mark it as p.8.2), but he did not. We may guess that it was too evident for him after former considerations to evoke it and to construct a reasoning which would lead step by step to the conclusion.

*Main reasonings summing up*

To sum up, as regards the reasonings of the main answers in the q. 23, we observe that:

- generally we find deductive reasonings there (in the articles: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6);
- sometimes some premises are lacking, then we have an enthymematic inference, of course unless we complement them (in the articles 1 and 8);

- we can record reductive (hence: unreliable) argument (in the article 8) or just postulates (in the articles 3 and 8);
- all reasonings analysed seem to be formulated within the classical logic.

*Main reasonings' status and other reasonings*

The reasonings presented above are provided by Aquinas to prove his final answers, so we can assume that Aquinas believed they were correct and leading to true conclusions. Besides them we can record 26 reasonings presented as objections (so arguments supporting hypotheses which finally turned to be false). Each of them constitutes a separate path of thinking, as well as the answers to these arguments/objections, in which Aquinas explains why they fail. An analysis of all of them would exceed the scope of this study. So I will confine it only to a few significant examples presented below.

*Objection 1.1.*

First, let us consider the arg. 1 of the article 1 which seems to be one of the strongest arguments against predestination. The first starting point here is a quotation from Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* (II, 30): "It must be borne in mind that God foreknows but does not predetermine everything, since He foreknows all that is in us, but does not predetermine it all."<sup>27</sup> The second one is an observation that "human merit and demerit are in us" (Aquinas points out that this is a consequence of the assumption that we have free will). The conclusion

is: "to merit or demerit is not predestined by God; and thus man's predestination is done away." In this form it is not a clear reasoning, so we could judge that it is not correctly formed or that there simply occurred an error called *non sequitur*. However we can try to reconstruct it as an example of *modus tollens* (so a deductive reasoning) in the following way: "If there is predestination, then human merit or demerit is predestined by God. Human merit or demerit is not predestined by God. Hence: There is no predestination." Such inference is formally correct.

Apart from the fact that we could discuss whether the terms "predestination" and "predetermination" are synonymous here, we should note that according to Aquinas's reply to this argument (a. 1 ad 1) the first premise is false, what entails falsity of the conclusion. St. Thomas points out that in Damascene God's predestination is predetermination towards an end, but it has nothing in common with a will of wickedness or malice nor choosing to compel virtue. Although this is a refutation of an argument built on the authority of Damascene, in the light of Aquinas's main answer we can see that his idea of predestination is similar to what he refers as Damascene's position, so it is a general defence of the coherence between predestination and human free will which is continued in the further articles (esp. a. 5).

<sup>27</sup> In English translation of *De fide orthodoxa* in Schaff's edition: "We ought to understand that while God knows all things beforehand, yet He does not predetermine all things. For He knows beforehand those things that are in our power, but He does not predetermine them." (John of Damascus, *Exposition...*).

*Objection 1.3*

The argument 3 from the same article is worth to be analysed because we can record there an interesting reasoning based on analogy. The premises are: “the angels are capable of beatitude, as well as men” and “predestination is not suitable to angels” (a reason for that is: “in them there never was any unhappiness (*nunquam fuerit miseria*)” and according to St. Augustine predestination is *propositum miserendi*); the conclusion is: “men are not predestined.” In his reply to this argument (art. 1 ad 3) St. Thomas does not refer directly to Augustine, but generally refutes the second premise and explains that “predestination applies to angels.” He then decides to show that there is a material error. This choice is understandable, especially as it creates an occasion to say something more about the true nature of predestination.

However, we should notice that before all this reasoning is formally erroneous: it is an example of reasoning using analogy based on some similarity, which is from its nature unreliable, as it assumes that if some  $x$  and some  $y$  are similar in respect of some feature  $P$  (both  $P(x)$  and  $P(y)$  are true), then for some feature  $Q$  if  $Q(x)$  then  $Q(y)$ . Such reasoning is based on some suggestion that there is some connection between  $P$  and  $Q$ . Let us notice that if this relationship between  $P$  and  $Q$  were a necessary connection, then we could just conclude: “For every  $x$  if  $P(x)$ , then  $Q(x)$ . There is at least one  $x$ :  $P(x)$ . Hence: for this  $x$   $Q(x)$ ” (it is based on *Barbara* syllogistic mode), we would not need any analogy then. But when there is no such a nec-

essary connection between features, but only some blurred connection or similarity, we cannot conclude in a reliable way just basing on such an analogy. In the analysed case similarity concerns being capable of beatitude. It is related to predestination, which is aimed to provide beatitude. The question is: is this relationship just a “blurred similarity” or a necessary connection? For sure it is not a relationship according to which if one is capable of beatitude, one is not predestined, as there is no reason for such a statement. Nevertheless we should remark that Aquinas’s reply, in which he argues that predestination applies to angels for it concerns the goal which can be achieved (eternal life), leaves open doors for a hypothesis that there is a necessary connection, namely: if one is capable of beatitude, one may be predestined. But St. Thomas had not discussed this topic, because he concentrated on refutation of the second premise.

*Objection 5.3*

Finally let us skip to the argument 3 of the article 5. At first glance Aquinas gives here a correct reasoning, as the first two steps are based on *modus tollendo tollens* and *modus ponens*.

Step 1: “There is no injustice in God” ( $\neg q$ ); next, after reformulation: if God gives unequal things to equals, it is unjust (there is injustice in God) ( $p \rightarrow q$ , after transposition:  $\neg q \rightarrow \neg p$ ); so the conclusion is: it is not true that God gives unequal things to equals ( $\neg p$ ).

Step 2: this conclusion can be presented as: if some objects are equal, it is not true that they get unequal things ( $p \rightarrow \neg q$ ); next: “all men are equal as re-

gards both nature and original sin" (what, after replacing "some things/objects" with "all men" and "equal" with relational equality "equal as regards both nature and original sin", tends to be placed as antecedent, so: p); hence: it is not true that all men get unequal things ( $\neg q$ ).

Here comes the step 3 which concludes on this basis that "God does not prepare unequal things for men by predestinating and reprobating," but also shows that we can talk about some inequality in men, which "arises from the merits or demerits of their actions," so this conclusion has an exception: "unless through the foreknowledge of their merits and demerits." It means that the conclusion is not necessary, as it is based on the relational equality referring to human nature and original sin, whereas we can still talk about inequality in men. Therefore, in the step 2 we could replace the second premise with  $\neg p$  and the conclusion could not be drawn. That exception means that if there is predestination (and this was proved before), it must be caused by men's merits.

The step 3 is incorrect, as it tacitly assumes here that merits and demerits are the only sources of inequality in men which can be taken into account when considering predestination, whereas it was not proved and perhaps could not be true.

However, when replying to this argument (a. 5 ad 3) Aquinas does not refute that final conclusion on this basis, but simply attacks the implication from the step 1, explaining in a long passage full of illustrations that predestination is not a matter of justice, but of God's good-

ness. St. Thomas underlines that God is just when reprobates, which is a just punishment, but an effect of predestination is given gratuitously; in such case it would be unjust to grant an effect as a debt; what is more, giving gratuitously "a person can give more or less, just as he pleases." By negating this premise Aquinas destroys the whole reasoning. We should remark that doing so he chose a far more difficult way than showing incorrectness of the step 3.

*Summing up the additional examples*

The examples presented above, although they are only a little sample, enable us to formulate at least four important remarks:

- Aquinas presents objections as logical arguments designed as demonstrations and uses various forms of argumentation, what cause that at first glance those arguments seem correct;
- it happens that some of those arguments occur to be formally incorrect;
- however, St. Thomas often does not reveal formal incorrectness, but attacks premises pointing out material errors; the most probable reason for this strategy is that his objective was solving serious theological or philosophical problems rather than easily destroying arguments (what would reveal only his dialectical proficiency);
- although those objections are often refuted by Aquinas, they are very important; they seem to be possible paths of thinking of those who have many doubts concerning discussed topics and in this way they help to identify the most difficult problems.

## 4. Conclusion

The method of analysis applied in this short study helped to see the main paths of thinking present in q. 23 and connections between them, which revealed that they create a well-designed network of statements. It also enabled to ponder their status both by focusing on their starting points to examine their content and justifications, and by analysing their logical correctness and assessing their reliability. In majority of cases it occurred that Aquinas designed those paths as formally correct deductive reasonings. In case of the paths embodied in the main answers this logical solicitude is an additional basis to state that he was deeply convinced to the content he presented. As far as other paths are concerned, although he did not agree with them (as he put them in objections which were later refuted), it seems that he had respect for them, as he chose those which he found important to be discussed. Finally, the context analysis revealed that in *ST* Aquinas designed different paths than in his previous works and that he also “illuminated”

them differently, as he for the first time underlined so clearly the connection between predestination and God’s will and providence, and not with his foreknowledge. It also showed that, although these paths were strongly influenced by St. Augustine’s teaching, the moments of this influence are the main conclusions and some starting points only, whereas many of such starting points were chosen by St. Thomas according to his own plan; furthermore, the shapes of these paths and the whole itinerary which consists of them are original and freely designed. And as regards other sources, it seems that they inspired some of Aquinas’s reflections, but at the same time he chose and used them very consciously and carefully, having before his eyes the educational aim of his work.

Finally, I hope that this paper was also an illustration showing that investigation of paths of thinking can be a fruitful method of analysis, worth applying in other cases of philosophical or theological considerations.

## Tomasza z Akwinu ścieżki myślenia o predestynacji w *Summie teologii*

**Słowa kluczowe:** predestynacja, potępienie, św. Tomasz z Akwinu, św. Augustyn, ścieżki myślenia, rozumowanie, *Summa teologii*

W artykule tym zastosowano metodę badania ścieżek myślenia w celu przeanalizowania kwestii 23 o predestynacji z *Summy teologii* Tomasza z Akwinu, by pokazać, w jaki sposób autor ten dochodził do swoich wniosków, co wpływało na bieg jego myśli oraz jaki jest status poszczególnych jego twierdzeń. Analiza ta ujawnia przede wszystkim, że po-

mimo podążania za św. Augustynem (co dotyczy jego głównych wniosków), wyznaczył on oryginalne ścieżki myślenia, bardzo często oparte na logicznie poprawnych rozumowaniach dedukcyjnych, które rozpoczynają się od starannie dobranych twierdzeń (czasem aksjomatów) i wspólnie tworzą powiązaną logicznie sieć.

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## Nota o Autorach

**Artur Andrzejuk** – prof. dr hab., prof. zwyczaj. Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego (UKSW), na którego Wydziale Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej kieruje Katedrą Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej oraz Sekcją Historii Filozofii. Autor szeregu publikacji z zakresu filozofii i teologii średniowiecznej, tomizmu, etyki i klasycznej filozofii człowieka. Interesuje się problematyką uczuć, sprawności i cnót moralnych, relacji osobowych. Jest uczniem Profesora Mieczysława Gogacza. Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7926-4070>

**Izabella Andrzejuk** – dr, do roku 2017 wykładowca w Wyższej Szkole Stosunków Międzynarodowych i Amerykanistyki oraz Wyższej Szkole Komunikowania, Politologii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych w Warszawie. Jest autorką ponad sześćdziesięciu artykułów o tematyce filozoficznej. Zainteresowania naukowe: historia filozofii (arystotelizm, tomizm, filozofia polska); filozofia, etyka, klasyczna teoria człowieka, filozoficzne podstawy mistyki. Napisała książkę pt. *Filozofia przyjaźni. Tomasz z Akwinu* (Warszawa 2007). Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4961-2580>

**Tomasz Ćwiertniak** – mgr filozofii i politologii, absolwent Wydziału Nauk Społecznych Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach. Magisterium z politologii uzyskał w 2011 r. na podstawie pracy „Człowiek, społeczeństwo, państwo w myśli o. M.A. Krąpca” (promotor: prof. dr hab. Wojciech Kaute), zaś magisterium z filozofii w 2018 r. na podstawie pracy „Tomizm konsekwentny Mieczysława Gogacza na tle dziejów tomizmu” (promotor: prof. zw. dr hab. Andrzej Noras). Obecnie doktorant w Instytucie Filozofii Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, gdzie przygotowuje rozprawę poświęconą analizie porównawczej tomizmu egzystencjalnego M.A. Krąpca i tomizmu konsekwentnego M. Gogacza. Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9515-6168>

**Richard Fafara** – dyplom magistra i doktora filozofii zrobił na Uniwersytecie w Toronto (Kanada). Studiował również na Sorbonie w Paryżu oraz Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Warszawie. Jest autorem, m.in., monografii *The*



*Malebranche Moment: Selections from the Letters of Étienne Gilson & Henri Gouhier (1920-1936).*

**Mieczysław Gogacz** – prof. zw. dr hab., emerytowany profesor Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego (dawnej Akademii Teologii Katolickiej). Stworzył konsekwentną odmianę tomizmu egzystencjalnego. W jego ramach broni teorii aktu istnienia i zasady niesprzeczności, tezy o odrębności i wewnętrznej jedności jednostkowych bytów oraz wynikającego z tych twierdzeń realizmu i pluralizmu bytowego. Zaproponował szereg doprecyzowań w dyscyplinach filozoficznych, takich jak filozofia bytu, antropologia filozoficzna, etyka i pedagogika. Formułował podstawy etyki zawodowej lekarza, żołnierza, funkcjonariusza Straży Granicznej; wykładał te etyki na AM, WAT i UW. Uczestniczył w debatach publicznych na temat ochrony życia, etyki zawodowej, racji stanu, polityki kulturalnej i naukowej państwa. Wykaz publikacji M.Gogacza obejmuje prawie 1000 pozycji.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0517-0781>

**Natalia Herold** – mgr, absolwentka prawa i administracji na Uniwersytecie Gdańskim (lic.) i Uniwersytecie Warszawskim (mgr). Jest sekretarzem Zarządu Naukowego Towarzystwa Tomistycznego. Interesuje się filozofią klasyczną, a w niej szczególnie etyką i pedagogiką. Publikuje w „Roczniku Tomistycznym”.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4761-9495>

**Stanisław Janeczek** – ks. prof. dr hab. Profesor Wydziału Filozofii Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego. Swoje badania koncentruje przede wszystkim na historii filozofii nowożytnej, zwłaszcza wieku XVII i XVIII, historii filozofii polskiej XVIII i XX w. i historii oświaty. Zajmuje się też dziejami filozofii w środowisku KUL oraz redaguje monumentalną serię wydawniczą pt. *Dydaktyka Filozofii*.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3458-8634>

**Krzysztof Kalka** – dr hab. prof. nadzwyczajny Państwowej Uczelni Stanisława Staszica w Pile. Zajmuje się badaniami dotyczącymi wzajemnych relacji wykształcenia i wychowania. Autor wielu publikacji z zakresu filozofii średniowiecznej, teologii, antropologii, etyki, etyki zawodowej. Interesuje się problematyką sprawności moralnych, etyką zawodową, relacjami. Jest uczniem Profesora Mieczysława Gogacza.

**Marcin Karas** – prof. dr hab., historyk filozofii - pracuje w Zakładzie Filozofii Polskiej Instytutu Filozofii UJ. Prowadzi badania z historii idei i z filozofii średniowiecznej, jest autorem ponad 180 publikacji. Ostatnio zajmuje się głównie kosmologią wczesnonowożytną i filozofią dziejów. Opublikował m.in. książki: *Koncepcja czasu w pismach Williama Ockhama* (Kraków 2003), *Natura i struktura wszechświata w kosmologii św. Tomasza z Akwinu* (Kraków 2007), a także prace: *Z dziejów Kościoła. Ciągłość i zmiana w Kościele rzymskokatolickim w XIX i XX wieku* (Sandomierz 2008), *Integryzm Bractwa Kapłańskiego św. Piusa X* (Kraków 2008), czy też *Historiozofia Teilharda de Chardin wobec tradycyjnej myśli chrześcijańskiej* (Kraków 2012), liczne artykuły (45) oraz przekłady (43).

Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2288-9512>

**Marian Kowalski** – absolwent germanistyki w Instytucie Germanistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Tam również kontynuuje studia jako doktorant. W kręgu jego zainteresowań badawczych są zagadnienia z pogranicza lingwistyki i filozofii, zwłaszcza z filozofii św. Tomasza z Akwinu. Podejmował studia porównawcze metafizyki Tomasza z fenomenologią Edyty Stein.

Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3783-256X>

**Marian Kryk** – absolwent Wydziału Prawa i Administracji UMCS oraz Wydziału Filozofii KUL Jana Pawła II na kierunku Retoryka Stosowana. Doktorant na Wydziale Filozofii w Katedrze Filozofii Kultury i Sztuki KUL Jana Pawła II. Przygotowuje rozprawę pod kierunkiem prof. dra. hab. Piotra Jaroszyńskiego dotyczącą personalistycznej koncepcji kultury w ujęciu o. Jacka Woronieckiego. Interesuje się myślą o. J. Woronieckiego, metafizyką i antropologią filozoficzną.

**Andrzej T. Kubanowski** – doktor nauk teologicznych, specjalista z zakresu teologii moralnej i bioetyki, nauczyciel akademicki na Wydziale Teologicznym UMK w Toruniu, zawodowy copywriter. Członek Stowarzyszenia Teologów Moralistów, Polskiego Towarzystwa Teologicznego, Naukowego Towarzystwa Tomistycznego, Dobrzyńskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego i Pracowni Tomizmu Biblijnego UMK. Autor kilkunastu artykułów z zakresu teologii moralnej Tomasza z Akwinu i chrystianologii moralnej. Do jego zainteresowań badawczych należą tomizm biblijny, średniowieczna etyka i teologia moralna, antropologia teologiczna i filozoficzna, antropologiczne podstawy bioetyki.

**Dawid Lipski** – dr, stopień doktora nauk humanistycznych uzyskał w 2014 r. na podstawie rozprawy *Spór między Tomaszem z Akwinu i Janem Peckhamem o jedność formy substancjalnej w człowieku. Źródła i konsekwencje*. Stypendysta Funduszu Stypendialnego i Szkoleniowego (Liechtenstein), Fundacji Lanckorońskich z Brzezia (Londyn) oraz Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (Kolonja). Redaktor w czasopiśmie „Pro Fide, Rege et Lege”, oraz w „Roczniku Tomistycznym”. Adiunkt w Wyższej Szkole Kryminologii i Penitencjarystyki w Warszawie.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2136-0622>

**Maciej Nowak** – urodzony 24 kwietnia 1997 roku, ukończył II Liceum Ogólnokształcące imienia Stefana Żeromskiego w Tomaszowie Mazowieckim. W 2016 roku rozpoczął studia na Politechnice Warszawskiej na kierunku Elektrotechnika. Później postanowił zrealizować swoje zainteresowania i został studentem filozofii na Wydziale Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej UKSW. Interesuje się filozofią analityczną, historią filozofii i muzyką.

**Ewa Agnieszka Pichola** – mgr, absolwentka Wydziału Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej UKSW. Obecnie doktorantka, kontynuuje badania w Instytucie Filozofii Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Przygotowuje rozprawę, w której analizuje dorobek Dietricha von Hildebranda z perspektywy obecności wątków modernistycznych w pismach niemieckiego fenomenologa. Interesuje się zagadnieniami z pogranicza metafizyki i psychologii, a dokładnie filozoficznych podstaw koncepcji psychologicznych i antropologicznych aspektów prawdy. Publikuje, uczestniczy w konferencjach, tłumaczy w j. angielskim.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6078-7384>

**Magdalena Płotka** – dr hab, prof. Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie. Kierownik (p/o) Katedry Historii Filozofii Polskiej. Z-ca redaktora naczelnego Rocznika Tomistycznego. Zainteresowania naukowe skupiają się wokół średniowiecznej filozofii praktycznej, historii filozofii polskiej w XV i XVI wieku, paleografii łacińskiej oraz filozofii współczesnej. Jest autorką książki *Metafizyka i semantyka. Filozofia Jana Wersora* (Warszawa, 2013) oraz *Filozofia jako praktyka. Myśl krakowskiego praktycyzmu w XV i XVI* (Warszawa 2016). Publikuje w „Rocznikach Filozoficznych”, „Edukacji filozoficznej”, „Filo-sofiji”, „Roczniku Tomistycznym” i in.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6993-2178>

**Marek Prokop** – dr, historyk filozofii, bibliotekoznawca, arabista. Studiował historię filozofii w Akademii Teologii Katolickiej w Warszawie w latach 1969-1974, zakończone magisterium u prof. M. Gogacza. Doktoryzował się ze średniowiecznej filozofii arabskiej u prof. M.-T. d'Alverny na Uniwersytecie w Poitiers w 1978 roku. Po doktoracie kierował działem rękopisów Biblioteki Polskiej w Paryżu (do 1991). Od 1995 r. jest pracownikiem naukowym Zakładu Biografistyki Polonijnej PUNO. W 2009 r. opublikował zbeletryzowaną opowieść o filozofii, zbudowaną na kanwie podróży do różnych krajów, kultur i środowisk, zatytułowaną *Podróże z Awicenną*.

**Peter Redpath** – jest rektorem Adler-Aquinas Institute; jest również dyrektorem Aquinas School of Leadership, kierownikiem studiów tomistycznych w Holy Apostles College and Seminary (USA); a także aktywnym badaczem na Uniwersytecie Abat Oliba w Barcelonie (Hiszpanii).

**Kacper K. Sakowicz** – doktorant na Wydziale Filozofii Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego (KUL). Stypendysta Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego (2015/2016), Laureat Złotej Nagrody im. Prof. Mieczysława Gogacza za pracę magisterską oraz laureat programu stypendialnego im. Prof. Stefana Swieżawskiego. Jego zainteresowania filozoficzne ogniskują się wokół metafizyki i filozofii społecznej. Jest uczniem księdza Profesora Andrzeja Maryniarczyka.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4721-3762>

**Marcin Sieńkowski** – kapłan diecezji ełckiej, doktor nauk humanistycznych w zakresie filozofii, prefekt i wykładowca przedmiotów filozoficznych w Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym Diecezji Ełckiej, interesuje się metafizyką, filozofią religii, relacją wiara-rozum i problematyką powołania, jest uczniem prof. dra hab. Piotra Jaroszyńskiego i absolwentem Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II.  
Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0679-5006>

**Marcin Trepczyński** – dr, adiunkt w Zakładzie Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej Instytutu Filozofii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, członek zespołu dr Magdaleny Bieniak przygotowującego edycje krytyczne *Quaestiones Theologiae* Stefana Langtona i studia dot. twórczości tego myśliciela (<http://langton.uw.edu.pl>). Autor publikacji m.in. z zakresu XII- i XIII-wiecznej filozofii, logiki i teologii, w tym książki *Ścieżki myślenia Alberta Wielkiego i Tomasza z Akwinu*, a także edukacji filozoficznej. Od 2019 r.

redaktor naczelny Edukacji Filozoficznej. Uczeń prof. Mieczysława Boczara i dr. Adama Górniaka.

Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0612-2597>

**Jerzy Tupikowski** – ks. dr hab., profesor Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu. Badania naukowe koncentruje na metafizyce, zwłaszcza w jej nurcie klasycznym (realistycznym) oraz na teologii naturalnej. Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1086-5000>

**Marcin Worek** – absolwent studiów filozoficznych Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego. Współpracownik katolickiego czasopisma dla młodych „Adeste”, autor artykułów dotyczących problematyki filozoficznej, antropologicznej i teologicznej. Reprezentant lubelskiego oddziału fundacji „Deo et Patriae” im. o. prof. Mieczysława A. Krąpca. Swoje zainteresowania naukowe skupia wokół realizmu filozoficznego, tomizmu, zagadnień metafizycznych i metaprzmiotowych.

**Michał Zembrzuski** – dr, asystent w Katedrze Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej Wydziału Filozofii Chrześcijańskiej UKSW. Pracę doktorską poświęcił tematyce zmysłów wewnętrznych w koncepcji św. Tomasza z Akwinu. Interesuje się problematyką epistemologiczną w starożytności i średniowieczu, a szczególnie problematyką pamięci i teorią intelektu możliwościowego i czynnego. Jest współredaktorem książek w serii „Opera Philosophorum Medii Aevii”. W jej ramach w 2012 opublikował autorską monografię zatytułowaną: *Tomasz z Akwinu. Komentarz „O pamięci i przypominaniu”*. Najnowsza jego publikacja to: *Filozofia intelektu. Tomasz z Akwinu koncepcja intelektu możliwościowego i czynnego*, „Liberi libri”, Warszawa 2019, stron 404.

Nr ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4647-479X>