

# De peccato originali

NOTE: While I do not agree entirely with each of the arguments given by Billuart (I prefer John of St. Thomas and Norberto del Prado's readings), this does provide additional notes that are of interest to anyone researching this topic, going deeper into the extrinsic reasons for the traditional reading of St. Thomas on the Immaculate Conception.

## Article IV. Whether St. Thomas denied that the Blessed Virgin Mother of God was free from original sin?

**Conclusion.** It cannot be affirmed that St. Thomas ever denied the great privilege of the Mother of God.

### Indirect Proof.

*First Proof.* The Angelic Doctor, with remarkable reasoning, demonstrated the fittingness of the Incarnation of the Word of God (ST.III.Q1.A1). Furthermore, as was demonstrated in the preceding article, it was supremely fitting for the divine Incarnation that the Mother of God should be entirely free from the stain of original sin in her conception. It would therefore be astonishing if so great a Doctor had not only failed to perceive this fittingness but had even opposed it, as adversaries have claimed.

*Second Proof.* Even before the time of St. Thomas, the Feast of the Conception was celebrated in the East almost from the beginning of the Church, and in many Western churches for two hundred years, with the knowledge and non-opposition of the Apostolic See, as we have previously proven. Moreover, our Doctor reasons thus about the Nativity of the Mother of God:

The Church celebrates the feast of our Lady's Nativity. Now the Church does not celebrate feasts except of those who are holy. Therefore even in her birth the Blessed Virgin was holy.(ST.III.Q27.A1)

How, then, can it be supposed that he admitted, even implicitly, that the Roman Church tolerated the celebration of a feast whose sole foundation would have been an error so grave?

*Third Proof.* The doctrine that holds the Mother of God to have been immaculate in her conception belonged to the tradition of the Dominican family. St. Dominic, the founder of this Order, openly professed it in his book written against the Albigensians. When the heretics demanded a miracle to confirm all that the book contained as divinely revealed, it was thrown into fire in their presence and remained unharmed. Moreover, this book contained the testimony of St. Andrew the Apostle, extracted from the account of his martyrdom, which we have already mentioned above:

"Because He would be born as the perfect Man from an immaculate Virgin."

This remarkable event, which was inscribed on an ancient panel long preserved in the city of Barcelona, was recorded in the *Armamentarium Seraphicum* for defending the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Recently, it was affirmed and proven by Cardinal Lambruschini in his polemical dissertation published in favor of this truth.

After St. Dominic, who died in 1221, no writer among his spiritual sons is cited as having denied the privilege of the Mother of God before the year 1387, when John of Montesono published several propositions contrary to this glorious immunity. The audacity of this author so gravely offended pious ears that the University of Paris passed judgment against him. In obedience to a royal mandate, the Dominicans of Paris publicly rejected and condemned the aforementioned propositions and solemnly celebrated the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary [1]. Furthermore, as is evident from the statute of the Faculty of Theology of Paris dated March 3, 1496, the University of the same city professed belief in Mary's immunity from original sin before John of Montesono opposed it. It is certain that this was also the belief of the University during the time St. Thomas, the most eminent of its doctors, interpreted the *Sentences of the Master* with the highest praise.

Moreover, it is incredible that the Angelic Doctor would have rejected the doctrine of his Father Dominic, which the renowned University, where he first earned his doctorate and later taught, regarded as an eminent part of its patrimony. Indeed, he held and taught this doctrine, as will soon be demonstrated from his commentary on the *Sentences*.

### Direct Proof.

The adversaries of the Immaculate Conception boasted that St. Thomas supported their position and pointed to certain texts of this Doctor which, in their view, seemed to support their opinion. However, it can easily be demonstrated that these texts are not genuine but spurious.

The adversaries of the Immaculate Conception boasted that St. Thomas supported their position and pointed to certain texts of this Doctor which, in their view, seemed to support their opinion. However, it can easily be demonstrated that these texts are not genuine but spurious.

First among these is what St. Thomas is said to have written in

Purity is intensified through a withdrawal from its contrary. And therefore something created can be found than which nothing purer can exist in created realities, if it is not stained by any contagion of sin. And such a purity was there of the Blessed Virgin, who was unmarked by original and actual sin. (Sent.I.D44.Q1.A3.Rep3)

It is worth noting that St. Thomas, when writing these words, was teaching as a master at the University of Paris, and in these words, he was expressing its doctrine. This text is found in ancient editions, notably the Lyon edition of 1520, revised by Lambert of Cambrai, and the Roman edition of 1570, published by order of St. Pius V and collated with the most reliable manuscripts, as the title notes.

In 1388, about fifty years before the invention of printing, Pierre d'Ailly invoked this testimony against John of Montesono in a letter presented in the name of the University of Paris to Clement VII, the Pope of Avignon. No editor dared to corrupt or interpolate this text, but because it could be used against the adversaries of the Immaculate Conception, Cosmas Morellus removed it from his Antwerp edition. This suppression was noted and severely criticized by Catharinus and Theophilus Raynaudus.

Therefore, this passage is considered undoubtedly authentic.

There is another significant passage in *De dilectione Christi et proximi*. [2] At the end of this treatise, the Holy Doctor, following St. Bernard, explains the ten degrees of the love of God. In the ninth degree, he places the Seraphim, who hold the highest rank in the celestial hierarchy:

These, namely those sweetly burning, are in this ninth degree, the Seraphim, who pertain to the closest degree of kinship. Of them, Dionysius says: *Seraphim is hot, fervent, and exceedingly fervent. This is a great vision, a burning without pain, sweet, not burdensome, so that Moses marveled that the bush burned and was not consumed.*

Since there is a tenth degree, it must involve a creature surpassing the Seraphim, that is, one superior to any other creature. This is the Blessed Mother of God. Thus, he says:

The tenth degree, in which love makes one wholly assimilated beyond the Seraphim, is that which excels so greatly, as fittingly agrees with the definition of an angel given by Dionysius: *An angel is the image of God, the manifestation of hidden light, a clear, exceedingly clear, immaculate, unstained, uncontaminated mirror, receiving in itself, if it can be so said, the beauty of every form of divine likeness, making pure goodness shine forth in itself.*

The supreme craftsman, to display His art more fully, made one mirror clearer than the clearest, more polished and purer than the Seraphim, and of such purity that no greater could be conceived except God. This is the person of the most glorious Virgin. St. Anselm says of her:

It was fitting that the conception of that Man should be of a most pure Mother, with a purity greater than which none under God can be conceived.

How could it be more clearly affirmed that the Mother of God was entirely free from original sin? If the angel is described as a "clear, exceedingly clear, immaculate, unstained, uncontaminated mirror," then the Blessed Virgin is "a mirror clearer than the clearest," surpassing the Seraphim in her sanctity, "so pure that a greater purity cannot be conceived except in God Himself." Certainly, such an affirmation could not stand if she had been tainted, even for an instant, by the common stain of original sin at her origin.

No edition is cited where this text was corrupted. Therefore, it must be accepted by all as authentic.

In modern editions of the works of St. Thomas, there are other texts contrary to the ones mentioned above. Those who cited these texts to undermine the doctrine—which is now held as revealed and to be believed with faith—claimed that the Angelic Doctor either contradicted himself or abandoned his earlier position, ultimately recognizing that it was insufficiently founded.

It would indeed be astonishing for so great a Doctor to have unknowingly fallen into such an evident contradiction. However, although it would not have been unbecoming for him to abandon a prior opinion due to strong reasons that he had not initially perceived, this

explanation collapses if it can be proven that the passages invoked against the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception were deliberately falsified to undermine St. Thomas's affirmation of Mary's most pure origin.

This will become clear from what follows.

*First Text.* It was written in the *Exposition on the Angelic Salutation*

She is purity itself, wholly lacking in every guilt of sin, for she never incurred either original, or mortal, or venial sin.

This text is cited by Salmeron in his *In Epist. ad Romanos, disp. 5*, and by Canisius. It was present in a manuscript from the Premonstratensian monastery and in another manuscript in the royal library of Paris, cataloged under number 690. These words are found in five manuscripts still extant in Paris today: the first in the library of Sainte-Geneviève, no. 676; the second in the National Library, no. 233, formerly in the library of the Abbey of Saint-Victor; the third and fourth also in the National Library, nos. 426 and 66; and the fifth in the Arsenal Library, no. 581. The first three date to the 13th century, and St. Thomas died in 1274.

Therefore, these manuscripts are to be regarded as authentic and entirely credible, as demonstrated by Echard in *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. I, pp. 334 and 340, and by P. de Rubeis in *De Gestis et Scriptis ac Doctrina S. Thomae*, Venice, 1750, p. 82.

In the Paris, Antwerp, Cologne, and even the Venetian edition of 1776 and the Roman edition published by order of St. Pius V, the word *original* is missing in the cited passage. Moreover, just before it, it is affirmed that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin. The purpose and recklessness with which this text of our Doctor was truncated and interpolated become evident upon a serious examination of the modern text, which we will transcribe here, leaving aside unnecessary parts.

In olden times, an angel would not show reverence to a man, but a man would revere an angel. This is because angels are greater than men, and indeed in three ways.

First, they are greater than men in dignity...

Second, an angel is closer to God...

Third, the angels far exceed men in the fullness of the splendor of divine grace. For angels participate in the highest degree in the divine light...

It was, therefore, not fitting for an angel to show reverence to a man until it came to pass that one would be found in human nature who exceeded the angels in these three points, and this was the blessed Virgin. To show that she excelled the angels in these three ways, the angel desired to show her reverence, and so he said: *hail*. Hence, she excelled the angels in three ways.

First, the blessed Virgin was superior to any of the angels in the fullness of grace, and as an indication of this the angel showed reverence to her by calling her: **full of grace**. This is as if he said: I show you reverence because you excel me in the fullness of grace. The blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace in three ways.

The first is that in regard to her soul she was full of grace. The grace of God is given for two chief purposes, namely to do good and to avoid evil. The blessed Virgin, then, received grace in the most perfect degree, because she had avoided every sin more than any other saint apart from Christ. For sin is either original, and from this she was cleansed in the womb, or mortal or venial, and from these she was free. Thus it is said: *you are fair, my beloved, and there is not a spot in you* (Song 4:7).

Augustine says: *if we could bring together all the saints and ask them if they were entirely without sin, all of them, with the exception of the blessed Virgin, would say with one voice: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us' (1 John 1:8). I except, however, this holy Virgin of whom, because of the honor of God, I wish to omit all mention of sin.* For we know that to her was granted grace to overcome every kind of sin by Him whom she merited to conceive and bring forth, and He certainly was wholly without sin.

Christ excelled the Blessed Virgin in this, that He was conceived and born without original sin, while the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, but was not born in it...

Third, the blessed Virgin exceeds the angels in purity. She is not only pure, but she obtains purity for others. She is purity itself, wholly lacking in every guilt of sin, for she never incurred either original, or mortal, or venial sin.

Who could admit that St. Thomas would so openly contradict himself in the same article?

1° He affirms that the Blessed Virgin surpasses the angels in the fullness of grace. Yet the fullness of grace in an angel consists in being entirely immune from all sin, of any kind or name. Therefore, if the Blessed Virgin surpasses the angel in this regard, she must also be immune from any sin, not only actual but also original. If, on the contrary, she contracted original sin and was cleansed of it in the womb—that is, after her animation—while an angel was never touched or tainted by sin, then she would be inferior to the angel in this respect. Hence, it must be concluded that the phrase, "*and she was cleansed of this in the womb*," was added by the hand of a falsifier.

2° There seems to be no reason for St. Thomas to have introduced Christ Himself into the comparison between the Blessed Virgin and the angel. This comparison was instituted between the one who greeted (the angel) and the one greeted (Mary) to show the excellence of Mary and to explain the veneration shown to her by the heavenly messenger. Since it had just been stated immediately prior that "*more grace was given to her to overcome sin in every respect, as she merited to conceive and bear Him who was without any sin*," it is sufficiently implied by this that she herself had no sin, since she overcame sin entirely in every respect to merit being the Mother of God. Therefore, this contradiction, which cannot be attributed to the Angelic Doctor without injustice, abundantly proves that he did not write the aforementioned words.

3° As we have already seen above, in earlier copies, which were perhaps written while St. Thomas was still alive or at least before the end of the century in which he flourished, it is stated that the Blessed Virgin never incurred original, mortal, or venial sin. If, therefore, the word *original* is absent in later editions, which did not appear until after the followers of John of Montesono began denying the sanctity of Mary's conception, such omission necessarily followed from earlier interpolations.

4° It is entirely unbelievable that St. Thomas, after invoking the authority of Augustine, who said: "*I except, however, this holy Virgin of whom, because of the honor of God, I wish to omit all mention of sin*," would, without being aware of the contradiction, immediately go on to affirm that the Mother of God, without injury to the honor of her future Son, was conceived in original sin. Who would dare to inflict such an insult upon so great a Doctor? Therefore, the aforementioned passage was deliberately and audaciously corrupted so that the testimony of the Angelic Doctor could not be invoked in favor of the perfect purity of the Blessed Virgin.

*Second Text.* In his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, chapter 5, lecture 3, St. Thomas demonstrates from the Apostle that human nature was corrupted in Adam and that original sin spread from him to all his descendants. In more recent editions of this work, the Blessed Virgin is neither explicitly included in the common law nor explicitly exempted from it.

However, under the pontificate of Urban VIII, a Spanish priest, while exploring the Roman libraries, accidentally discovered in the library of Cardinal Sforza an ancient copy which contained the following addition in the aforementioned lecture, after the Apostle's words "*In whom all have sinned*":

"*Except for the most Blessed Virgin, who contracted no stain of original sin.*"

Filled with great joy, Urban VIII did not hesitate to declare that these words, which are not found in later editions, appeared to him to express the true opinion of the Angelic Doctor.

*Third Text.* Four editions of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* were published in Paris in the years 1525, 1529, 1532, and 1541. The same work was later printed in Venice in 1555. In these five editions, there appears the notable passage from chapter 3, lecture 6:

For he alone and exclusively is the one who does not lie under the curse of guilt, in spite of the fact that he deigned to be made a curse for us. Hence it is said, *I am alone until I pass* (Ps 141:10); and again *there is none that does good, no, not one* (Ps 13:3); *one man among a thousand I have found* (namely, Christ, who had been without any sin), *a woman among them all I have not found* (Eccl 7:29), who would be entirely immune from all sin, at least original or venial. Except for the most pure and most praiseworthy Virgin Mary, who was immune from sin, both original and venial.

In 1546, Fr. Jacobus Albertus Castrensis prepared a new edition for the press and removed the latter words, "*Except for the most pure and most praiseworthy Virgin Mary...*" Why he judged this portion of the text to be removed is unclear, except that he was himself an opponent of the immunity of the Immaculate Virgin.

Castrensis noted that he had corrected the commentary of typographical errors; but can an entire proposition, which previous editors had unhesitatingly accepted as authentic—even after correcting the work themselves against the oldest and most reliable manuscripts—be deemed merely a typographical error? Castrensis was followed by Remigius Florentinus in his Antwerp edition of 1590, and thus the truncated text has come down to us [3].

To whom should credibility be granted—the later editors or the earlier ones and the manuscript codices? There is no room for doubt.

**Objection.** St. Thomas poses the following question in ST.I-II.Q81.A3: "Whether the sin of the first parent is transmitted, by the way of origin, to all men?" He answers:

According to the Catholic Faith we must firmly believe that, Christ alone excepted, all men descended from Adam contract original sin from him; else all would not need redemption which is through Christ; and this is erroneous.

The adversaries argued: St. Thomas declares that Christ alone was immune from original sin and that all who are derived from Adam contract it. But the Blessed Virgin was derived from Adam. Therefore, she contracted original sin. They concluded that the Angelic Doctor did not exempt her from the common law, which he certainly would have done if he had believed her to have been preserved from such a stain.

**Response.** St. Thomas establishes the common law here and exempts only Christ because Christ alone is entirely and in every respect exempt from this law. This is both because He is simultaneously God and man and because He is the universal Redeemer. If His human nature had been tainted by original sin, He Himself would have needed to be redeemed by another savior.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, however, was not exempt entirely and in every respect from original sin. As stated in the previous article, because she was seminally propagated from Adam, she had the *debitum* to contract original sin. However, due to her future and most eminent dignity,

by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Savior of the human race, she was preserved immune from all stain of original sin. (*Ineffabilis Deus*)

Thus, she indeed had the *debitum* to contract original sin, but she was redeemed in advance and before all others by Christ in such a way that she did not contract it. Therefore, she could not be excluded in the cited passage from the number of those needing redemption through Christ.

Nothing can be concluded from this omission, which is otherwise necessary, against her perfect sanctity. The Council of Trent (Session V, Canons 2 and 3) decrees that all the children of Adam are stained by his sin, yet it later declares that it was not its intention to include in this decree the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

If St. Thomas does not make a similar exception here, he expresses it in the texts cited above and in others taken from his works.

In the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, q. 27, a. 2, the immunity of the Blessed Virgin from original sin is explicitly denied. Therefore, the value of this article must be examined to determine whether the contradiction it presents with authentic texts can reasonably be attributed to the Angelic Doctor.

The question is posed as follows: "*Was the Blessed Virgin sanctified before animation?*" According to the opinion prevalent at that time [4], it is assumed that "animation did not occur until after conception and the initial formation of the body." The response given in the body of the article is correct: "that since only a rational creature is capable of guilt, prior to the infusion of the rational soul, the conceived offspring is not subject to guilt." Thus, the Blessed Virgin could not have been sanctified in her body alone. The article further adds "since the rational creature alone can be the subject of sin; before the infusion of the rational soul, the offspring conceived is not liable to sin."

The first consequence is to be admitted, under the given hypothesis; "for if the stain of original sin had been entirely removed from the body first, how could it then infect the soul, such that what came from Adam would be pure, and what came from God through creation would be tainted? Thus, after animation, the same creature would be simultaneously holy in body and stained in soul."

However, the second consequence is clearly unworthy of the Angelic Doctor. It cannot reasonably be affirmed that, "if the Blessed Virgin had not incurred the stain of original guilt, she would not have needed the redemption and salvation that is through Christ."

As we have said, and as demonstrated by the dogmatic definition, the Mother of God, by reason of her origin from Adam, had the *debitum* to contract original sin but was preserved from contracting it "*in view of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Savior of the human race.*" Therefore, this very privilege proves that "*she needed the redemption and salvation that is through Christ.*"

Who would dare attribute such an inconsistency to our Doctor?

The theological reasoning is no less impaired in the responses to the objections. We will weigh only the second and third objections carefully.

Obj. 2: Further, as Anselm says (*De Concep. Virg. xviii*), *it was fitting that this Virgin should shine with such a purity that under God none greater can be imagined*: wherefore it is written (Song 4:7): *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee*. But the purity of the Blessed Virgin would have been greater, if she had never been stained by the contagion of original sin. Therefore it was granted to her to be sanctified before her flesh was animated.

Reply Obj. 2: If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity of Christ, by reason of His being the universal Savior of all. Consequently after Christ, who, as the universal Savior of all, needed not to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds the highest place. For Christ did not contract original sin in any way whatever, but was holy in His very Conception, according to Luke 1:35: *The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*. But the Blessed Virgin did indeed contract original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before her birth from the womb. This is what is signified (Job 3:9) where it is written of the night of original sin: *Let it expect light, i.e., Christ, and not see it*—(because *no defiled thing cometh into her*, as is written Wis. 7:25), *nor the rising of the dawning of the day*, that is of the Blessed Virgin, who in her birth was immune from original sin.

We have already seen how the preservation from original sin granted to the Blessed Virgin “*by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Savior of the human race,*” in no way detracts from the dignity of Christ as the universal Savior. Rather, it proclaims and exalts this dignity, for even before the coming of this Savior, the Virgin, who was to become His Mother, was saved by Him.

How could the Angelic Doctor not have seen that the dignity of Christ, as infinitely holy God, demanded that the woman who had been eternally chosen to be His Mother should be holy in every respect? And how could he have failed to see that it would have been entirely unbecoming for His Mother to have been subject, even for the smallest moment of time, to the dominion of Satan, whose reign Christ came to overthrow?

Obj. 3: Further, as it has been stated above, no feast is celebrated except of some saint. But some keep the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. Therefore it seems that in her very Conception she was holy; and hence that she was sanctified before animation.

Reply Obj. 3: Although the Church of Rome does not celebrate the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, yet it tolerates the custom of certain churches that do keep that feast, wherefore this is not to be entirely reprobated. Nevertheless the celebration of this feast does not give us to understand that she was holy in her conception. But since it is not known when she was sanctified, the feast of her Sanctification, rather than the feast of her Conception, is kept on the day of her conception.

The author of this response acknowledges that the Roman Church tolerates the celebration of the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. From this, he concludes that such a celebration is not to be entirely condemned. But can it be partially or in any respect condemned, if the Roman Church tolerates it—that is, if the Church judges it in no way to be condemnable? For when dealing with disciplinary matters, the Roman Church sometimes tolerates practices it does not fully approve. However, no reasonable person would admit that the Church tolerates practices and customs that imply a doctrine it judges to be not fully in harmony with the truth.

The explanation offered here, namely, “*because the time of the Blessed Virgin’s sanctification is unknown, the feast celebrates her sanctification rather than her conception on the day of her conception,*” cannot be sustained. For if this were the case, why was this feast instituted under the title of her *Conception* rather than her *Sanctification*? Therefore, her very conception is the object of public worship.

This reasoning has already been refuted in the same question, a. 1, in the objection *Sed contra*. Regarding the Nativity of the Mother of God, it is stated there:

The Church celebrates the feast of our Lady’s Nativity. Now the Church does not celebrate feasts except of those who are holy. Therefore even in her birth the Blessed Virgin was holy. Therefore she was sanctified in the womb.

If we set aside the latter conclusion—which, due to the limitation imposed by the preceding statement, is not legitimately deduced—the argument can be applied to the Conception of the Blessed Virgin by simply changing the term. Thus, it rightly transfers to this context and completely subverts the second article.

If St. Thomas himself had written such things, he would not only have abandoned the doctrine he professed in earlier works but also openly contradicted himself in the same place. Therefore, we conclude that this article is either spurious or has been corrupted and interpolated.

If you object that no other examples of manuscripts or printed editions are provided which express a contrary doctrine, I reply: the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa* does not deserve the same level of trust in every respect as the *Prima Pars* and the *Secunda Pars*, which are undoubtedly genuine. In the booklet *Certum quid*, currently preserved in the National Library in Paris, it is stated on page 201 that St. Thomas undoubtedly did not complete the *Summa Theologiae* himself, but that the first ninety questions of the *Tertia Pars* were written by Albert of Brescia, one of his disciples, and that Henry of Gorrick added the Supplement. It is also recorded in the process of the canonization of St. Thomas, no. 79, in the Bollandist collection:

Brother Thomas laid the groundwork for writing the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*.

Hence, it must be concluded that, if the Angelic Doctor dictated this part to scribes, as some critics maintain, he at least did not polish it himself but merely provided the material for the first ninety questions. Furthermore, as noted by the author of the cited booklet (following Martanellus and Perrucinus), adversaries of the Immaculate Conception, who turned spurious or corrupted texts from various works into arguments, never used the second article of the *Tertia Pars* against its defenders. This was because it was widely known that this part was not entirely the genuine work of the Prince of Theologians.

Therefore, a new article could have been introduced in this question to support a new doctrine under St. Thomas's name, or the original text, as with others mentioned above, may have been interpolated for this purpose.

If anyone marvels that such manipulation could have been inflicted upon the Angelic Doctor, let them know that it is well established that many did not hesitate to abuse the authority of such a great Doctor, even with falsehoods of this kind, to promote their own opinions and spread them more easily.

These frauds had to be suppressed almost immediately after his death. In 1290, Ægidius, one of his disciples, wrote the *Castigatorium in Corruptorem Librorum Thomæ Aquinatis*. Following him, Richard Klapoël, Hervaeus Natalis, William Messelech, John of Paris, and William of Bullion, all members of the Order of Preachers, indignantly denounced the numerous interpolations and falsifications they discovered in the works of their Master.

Therefore,

1° Since St. Thomas, in multiple places where no doubt has been raised, clearly and explicitly attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary immunity from original sin itself;

2° Since the contradictions found in later writings cannot be attributed to him without injustice;

3° Since it has been proven, through the comparison of earlier manuscripts with printed editions—many of which agree with the manuscripts—that those which appear to dissent in the present question have been corrupted, truncated, or interpolated:

We conclude, as we stated in the proposition, that it cannot be affirmed that the Angelic Doctor ever denied the great privilege of the Mother of God.

Indeed, going further, from the critical arguments set forth above, we hold that he must undoubtedly be counted among the principal defenders of this truth.

[1]: "In the year 1387, when John of Montesono, a doctor of theology from the Order of Preachers, defended in public lectures fourteen propositions (which may be seen in the appendix to volume I of the latest edition of the works of Gerson, pages 693 and 694), one of which asserted that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, the University issued a judgment against them. This judgment was also confirmed by Peter of Ordeomonte, Bishop of Paris and the ordinary judge in this matter. John of Montesono appealed to Clement VII, who, along with certain cardinals during the schism, was supported by some provinces and by Avignon, where he resided and was obeyed as the true Pope. Montesono went to Avignon to defend his propositions. However, seeing that his case was likely to fail, he preferred to avoid judgment and escaped from Avignon. This led to him being considered guilty of contumacy, and he was abandoned by all who had followed his position, who publicly retracted their support." (*Benedict XIV, On the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Chapter 15, On the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, n. 6.*)

[2]: This work is not authentic

[3]: The words "*Except for the most pure and most praiseworthy Virgin Mary*" are absent in the Liège edition of 1857, as in other more recent editions. However, in a footnote on the same page, the following is noted: "*In some editions printed in Venice, the following note was added: 'Except for the most pure and most praiseworthy Virgin Mary.'*" The editors, suspecting that the text had been mutilated but not daring to fully restore this exception to the main text, at least included a portion of it in the margin to prevent it from being lost entirely.

[4]: We have demonstrated above that this opinion cannot be sustained and that the animation takes place at the very moment of conception. (*Tractatus de Deo Creatore, Dissertatio IV, Articulus 5.*)