



## The medieval university and the *ethos* of knowledge: Franciscan friars, patristic tradition, and scholastic ‘instruments’

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**ABSTRACT.** The encounter between the Christian *ethos* of knowledge – synthesized by Saint Augustine and largely adopted by medieval Fathers – and Aristotle’s “scientific” method – based on logics and on the sensitive knowledge of Scholasticism –, is among the main accomplishments of the Latin Western world, and took place, mainly, within the University. Epistemological discussions joined institutional debates – intensified by disputes between secular groups, and mendicants, with highlight to the work of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274), minister general of the Franciscan Order and a master at the University of Paris. In his formulations on the knowledge and the statute of the Franciscan institution, Bonaventure placed himself inside the university debate, settling the bases to the Franciscan thought and to the work of his Order – both in the Church and in the University.

**Keywords:** Saint Augustine, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, Aristotle, discourse, mendicants.

### A universidade medieval e o *ethos* do conhecimento: os frades Franciscanos, a tradição patrística e o ‘instrumental’ da escolástica

**RESUMO.** A associação entre o *ethos* cristão do conhecimento – sintetizado por Agostinho e amplamente adotado pelos Padres medievais – e o método “científico” aristotélico – baseado na lógica e no conhecimento sensível e associado à Escolástica –, foi uma das realizações mais marcantes do Ocidente latino, e teve lugar, sobretudo, no ambiente da Universidade. À discussão epistemológica, associou-se o debate institucional, acirrado pelas disputas entre seculares e mendicantes, com destaque para a atuação de Boaventura de Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274), ministro-geral da Ordem Franciscana e mestre da Universidade de Paris. Em suas formulações acerca do conhecimento e do estatuto da Ordem Franciscana, Boaventura inseriu-se no debate universitário, tendo estabelecido as bases para o pensamento franciscano e para a atuação da Ordem – na Igreja e na Universidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Agostinho de Hipona, Boaventura de Bagnoregio, Aristóteles, discurso, mendicantes.

### La universidad medieval y el *ethos* del conocimiento: los frailes Franciscanos, la tradición patrística y el ‘instrumental’ de la escolástica

**RESUMEN.** La asociación entre el *ethos* cristiano del conocimiento – sintetizado por Agustín y ampliamente adoptado por los Padres medievales – y el método “científico” aristotélico – basado en la lógica y en el conocimiento sensible y asociado a la Escolástica –, fue una de las realizaciones más destacadas del Occidente latino, y tuvo lugar, especialmente, en el ambiente de la Universidad. A la discusión epistemológica, se asoció el debate institucional, estimulado por las disputas entre seculares y mendicantes, con destaque para la actuación de Buenaventura de Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274), ministro-general de la Orden Franciscana y maestro de la Universidad de Paris. En sus formulaciones acerca del conocimiento y del estatuto de la Orden Franciscana, Buenaventura se insertó en el debate universitario, estableciendo las bases para el pensamiento franciscano y para la actuación de la Orden – en la Iglesia y en la Universidad.

**Palabras clave:** Agustín de Hipona, Buenaventura de Bagnoregio, Aristóteles, discurso, mendicantes.

#### Introduction

Between the patristic tradition of search for and appreciation of knowledge – largely represented in the Augustinian epistemological doctrine – and the subsidizes of new elements that enable new questions

and new answers – from the rediscovery of Aristotle, in a broad manner, by the Latin Western world –, a fundamental aspect of convergence stands out, which can be understood as a synthesis of the thought and of the practice of Christian fathers in the Middle Ages: the University.

The lenses of contrasts through which, at a glance, we see the medieval university is actually the expression of a relative consensus between tradition and modernity, between sacredness and heresy, between institutionalization and freedom – conflicting and converging elements that marked the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The 1200s are shared by Christ's absolute poverty doctrine and the creation of the Tribunal of the Holy Office; the holy Franciscan mendacity and the Waldensian heretic mendacity; the characters of Francisco's nativity scene – humanized – and the Church's *plenitudo potestatis* theory – heavenly city on earth.

Identical contradiction would mark the relationship of medieval fathers with the University. At the same time that it intended to establish the continuation of doctrines of Christian-origins knowledge, the University was, by excellence, the place for exercising the Aristotelian method, to which it was natural to oppose the most diverse powers. On the other hand, the medieval University was institutionalizing itself, acquiring privileges and becoming the preferred field for the dissemination of teachings by the masters of faith; but this very same institutionalization was primarily based on freedom, which would result in norms relatively distant from those of the *regnum* and of the *sacerdotium*.

### The monastic tradition, and schools

Between the so called Patristics and Scholasticism – crystalized as such by the literature from a terminology that did not designate, for medieval people, two philosophical schools or two excluding categories –, we find an element of aggregation and synthesis of knowledge that have built over the years of the Late Antiquity and Middle Ages a fundamental curriculum, a teaching method and a tradition of studies: it refers to monastic schools, important for operating the traffic between the knowledge of monasteries and that of the *saeculum* (as they constituted an essential aspect to the formation of lay and ecclesiastic aristocracies), and for the continuous creation and preservation of a Christian *ethos* of appreciation and preservation of knowledge (it is worth mentioning the maintenance of monastic libraries, the maximum expression of the 'bookish culture' of the Christian Middle Ages). The advent of the University throughout the decennia of the 13<sup>th</sup> century would mark the transformation of that space of knowledge once geographically and ideologically limited into a way towards knowledge – open, autonomous and marked by constant exchanges.

Concerning the cathedral-like tradition of the Medieval University – propelled as of around year 1000 (QUEIROZ, 1999), with the urban dynamics and the schools of the cathedrals<sup>1</sup>–, the monastic school would originate the material and ideological bases to the economics of knowledge. The monastery, as the guardian of the classic culture and of the work of Fathers, was creating, by itself, an adequate environment for studying and erudition. One of the most remarkable reports of the period can be found in *Didascalicon (On the Study of Reading)*, by Hugh of Saint Victor (1096-1141) – abbot umbilically linked to the patristic tradition, who was the head of the school of Paris' Augustinian monastery.

Heir and master of the patristic tradition, Hugh of Saint Victor would follow Augustine in his epistemology, enunciating knowledge as possible, desirable and conducive to the union with God. Thus, the first chapter of the first book states that the *Sapientia* is the root of all arts, as it shelters the form of the perfect good (*in qua perfecti boni forma consistit*). The man, therefore, from the light of Wisdom (*Sapientia illuminat hominem*), knows himself (*seipsum agnoscat*) (HUGO DE SÃO-VÍTOR, *Didascalicon*, §1) and draws himself close to God. Wisdom is identified as the Second Person of the Trinity, namely, the Divine Word – *logos* (reason, thinking) of God. Based on human self-knowledge, it is, therefore, a way towards the knowledge of God himself. That is how Augustine thinks, identifying the divine *logos* of Incarnation:

Just as when we speak, in order that what we have in our minds may enter through the ear into the mind of the hearer, the word which we have in our hearts becomes an outward sound and is called speech; and yet our thought does not lose itself in the sound, but remains complete in itself, and takes the form of speech without being modified in its own nature by the change: so the Divine Word, though suffering no change of nature, yet became flesh, that He might dwell among us (SAINT AUGUSTINE, 2002, *A doutrina cristã*, c. 13, §12b).

As preached by the Augustinian teaching, the man, created to the image (*imago*) of God and decayed in sin for the absence of the first fathers, preserved from the divine being only the possibility of similitude (*similitudo*), as he had drawn himself distant from the Creating principle. However, the

<sup>1</sup> The cathedral, where the bishop's cathedra stood, originated the terminology employed to pontifical chairs. The urban schools of the Central Middle Ages were headed by bishops, just as teaching itself and the school curriculum, and an episcopal license was required for one to teach outside the walls of cathedral-like schools. The association of masters and students in the cities would result in the creation and formalization of Universities, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, independent of the episcopate.

return to Him was possible and desirable through knowledge – which granted the human being the comprehension of himself and, based on it, the (relative) understanding of God – factor of re-union with the Creator. ‘as we know God, we are like him’ (SAINT AUGUSTINE, *A Trindade*, c. 11, §16). To the same extent that it drew him close to God, knowledge paved, therefore, the way of the man towards his native land – the first home of Humankind, created in the condition of heavenly angels:

Wherefore, since it is our duty fully to enjoy the truth which lives unchangeably, and since the triune God takes counsel in this truth for the things which He has made, the soul must be purified that it may have power to perceive that light, and to rest in it when it is perceived. And let us look upon this purification as a kind of journey or voyage to our native land (SAINT AUGUSTINE, *A doutrina cristã*, c. 10, §9; c. 11, §11a)<sup>2</sup>.

**The Franciscan order between tradition and innovation: the moral sense of knowledge and the possibility of knowing**

Product of the scholastic impulse within the knowledge sphere, at the same it was an exponent of a fresh patristic tradition – attesting an optimism that postulated the belief in the possibility of perfection, characteristic of the *homo capax*, by Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (c.1217-1274) –, the Franciscan Order incorporated and translated spaces in which the Christian society reorganized itself from the fragmentation of feudal ties. The city, the University, the new hermitage models, the routes of merchants, guilds and confraternities – these were the aspects of the new social order consolidated as of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the new *loci* of faith, friars minor would crystalize a type of religious sensibility – consigned in images and dramatizations endowed with emotional appeal and in the exercise of an explicit piety – and, in a parallel manner, of intellectual production. The latter, enabled through the scholastic method in its pinnacle, was largely founded on the Augustinian ideal, which resulted, among other factors, in an ageist conception of the History in which the trajectory of humankind was identified in relation to that Church; a Christocentrism, as it established the centrality of Incarnation; the belief in the possibility of a search for the knowledge of God, to which the Franciscan poverty and studying provided the means; the fundamental role of knowledge in the *via perfectionis*, basis and justification to the practice of universities.

The Franciscan Order is inserted into the University sphere and into the set of academic production by means, above all, of its Minister General Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, who headed the Order between the years of 1257 and 1274, as a disciple of Alexander de Hales (first Franciscan to occupy a pontifical chair) and Theology master at the University of Paris. Bonaventure sought to conciliate the bookish knowledge with the Franciscan poverty ideal. The penetration into the University contributed to reinforce the institutional character and the material bases of the Order; before this picture, the minister general would make an effort in order to regulate studying and possession of books among friars:

If, on one hand, Francis had manifested himself contrary to the construction of large buildings to shelter libraries, Bonaventure, on the other hand, would combat sumptuousness in contrast and would guarantee the presence of books and the habit of studying (MAGALHÃES, 2010, p. 41).

The primary justification for it was presented as the need to provide friars with knowledge about the teaching they professed in their calling as preachers. Bonaventure also sought to overcome the knowing *versus* contemplating dichotomy when enunciating the equivalence between both in the way towards perfection – the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, namely, the way of the soul towards God, which would be materialized through the illuminative path, being God present in all that is felt or known (BONAVENTURE OF BAGNOREGIO, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, 26).

The light theme, recurring in Bonaventure’s thought, contributes, to a large extent, to clarify the accommodation of his philosophy of reason in the University. Saint Victor’s school prioritized the appealing to the divine *logos* (the Second Person) to found human knowledge. Similarly, to Bonaventure, the rational philosophy had as object the truth of the discourse (CRESTA, 2010). The latter, identified in relation to the Word and to reason by excellence, is, to the Seraphic Doctor, the place for the expression of light. Not by chance, the rational philosophy occupies, in the Bonaventurian matrix, a hierarchical position that is superior to that of its sisters, namely, natural philosophy and moral philosophy. It identifies with the disciplines of the *trivium* as they directly relate to the concepts and to the communication of that which has been conceived (CRESTA, 2010). According to Bougerol, the discourse theme appears 48 times in the minister general’s work, which evidences its centrality in the Bonaventurian economics: from the original arises the ‘division’,

[...] among all sciences and all arts, thus conferring its nobility status to all movement of the human

<sup>2</sup> Supressão não apresentada pelo autor (nota do Editor).

intellect and technique. The inverse movement is that of the *reductio* from sciences to theology, and from theology to Scripture, whose ternary structure of spiritual sense lights the set of human theology regarding theology (BOUGEROL, 1988, p. 220, free translation)<sup>3</sup>.

Knowledge, foundation of a Christian *ethos* that seeks for an encounter with the Creator, is also the expression of a human being's maximum possibility of discovering, comprehending and teaching the Truth. Following, in its turn, Augustine's epistemology, the Bonaventure's knowledge doctrine counts self-knowledge as a way to God, at the same time that it exalts, in an optimistic manner, the human potential (o *homo capax*) to reach the Truth. The latter should be reached by the operating reason in the Philosophy field, which, differently from the modern idealist position, "[...] does not consist of the elaboration of truth, but of its discovery, clarification and exposition" (CRESTA, 2009, p. 6, free translation)<sup>4</sup>. The transcendental Good commands the illumination of the will, acting as a condition of possibility of the individual moral<sup>5</sup> (CRESTA, 2009,). The apprehension of Truth, the purpose of knowledge, is encompassed, in turn, by the condition of a 'moral exemplarism'. Understood in a neo-Platonic way, the *influence* of light – fundamental aspect of Bonaventure's doctrine, in association with the Augustinian's thought – irradiates exemplars of all things and conforms them metaphysically to their original substance:

[...] influence significantly denotes the ascension or return of all creation to its original Principle. That is: Bonaventure conceives the nature of each entity not as something ontologically distant from its origin, but as the continuation of the first transcending Principle, instead of reduction to it. It is from the good purpose (transcendental Good) that God creates not only the world that is external to him, but also his own intra-trinitary life. He creates *ad intra* the metaphysical principles through which the nature of the universe will be constituted ontologically (transcendental Truth-*Logos-rationes aeternae*), and creates, definitively, a nature that cannot lack the mark of the original similarity through which every entity aspires the formal plenitude of its existence; and in this aspiration it

finds it desirable to ascend or return to the absolute (transcendental Good) (CRESTA, 2009, p. 10, free translation)<sup>6</sup>.

The *ethos* of the Augustinian knowledge – of neo-platonic bases and with its implications on the construction of a Christian society endowed with universal moral values – would complete an important stage in the set of the Christian thought by allying itself to the Aristotelian apparatus – foundation of the investigation and of the belief in the full potential of the human being to acquire knowledge. It referred to Scholasticism as a philosophical conception and teaching method:

[...] the way Thomas Aquinas regarded the being, that is, a person with intelligence and, exactly because of that, capable of learning and knowing. [...] men were not born knowing. Under this aspect, Aquinas would resume the Aristotelian idea presented in Nicomachean Ethics according to which the possibilities of learning are unlimited. (OLIVEIRA, 2009, p. 77).

The Aristotelian assumption on the human potential for knowledge, allied to the Augustinian conception of the man's inclination to knowledge (of himself, of God and of the creation) formed the conceptual, ethical and methodological raw material of the medieval University. In this way, the set that was called Scholasticism, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, should not be mistaken for an epistemological matrix entirely new and completely tributary of the Aristotelian thought. The interactions between the forms and locations of knowledge throughout the Middle Ages prove much more complex, and the elaboration of Scholasticism roots into the deep articulations between, on one side, the patristic tradition and the Aristotelian thought, and, on the other, the urban life and the autonomy of the University. The reception of the Aristotelianism by education institutions and by their masters would not be done, then, in a uniform and homogeneous way. The impact of Greek and Arabic translations on the characters of the Academy would be felt with different intensities, varying accents and in accordance with successive conjunctures. This would not be, however, a criterion to measure the validity of the scholastic thought in these or those

<sup>3</sup> "De la lumière fontale part la *divisio* vers toutes les sciences et tous les arts, donnant ainsi à toute démarche de l'intelligence et de la technique humaine son titre de noblesse. Le mouvement inverse est celui de la *reductio* des sciences vers la théologie et de la théologie à l'Écriture dont la structure ternaire des sens spirituels illumine la remontée du savoir humain vers la théologie."

<sup>4</sup> "La diferencia de la posición idealista moderna, [...] no consiste en la elaboración de la verdad, sino en su descubrimiento, su aclaración y su exposición."

<sup>5</sup> condición de posibilidad de la moral individual.

<sup>6</sup> "[...] influencia denota significativamente el ascenso o retorno de toda la creación a su principio originario. Esto es: Buenaventura concibe la naturaliza de cada ente no como una cosa ontológicamente distante de su origen sino como una continuación del primer Principio transcendente, a la vez que una reducción a él. Es a partir de la finalidad buena (transcendental Bien) que Dios crea no solo el mundo exterior a Él, sino su propia vida intratrinitaria. Crea *ad intra* los principios metafísicos por los cuales habrá de constituirse ontológicamente la naturaleza del universo (transcendental Verdad-*Logos-rationes aeternae*), y crea en definitiva una naturaleza en la cual no puede faltar la impronta de semejanza originaria por la cual todo ente aspira a la plenitud formal de su ser; y en esa aspiración encuentra apetecible, por bueno, el ascenso o retorno a lo absoluto (transcendental Bien)."

ones – Alberto Magno and Bonaventure, just as Thomas Aquinas and Duns Escoto, including William of Ockham and Master Eckhart, should be regarded as legitimate representatives of Scholasticism

To outline the history of philosophy in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, classical age of the medieval philosophy, is to define the diverse attitudes adopted in different philosophical environments in relation to the Aristotelianism (GILSON, 1999, p. 389, free translation)<sup>7</sup>.

While the Franciscan school would remain linked to the tradition of theologians of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, fundamentally connected to Augustine's thought, Thomas Aquinas' Dominican school would be closer to that of Aristotle, whose thought would be the center of his doctrine (GILSON, 1999). We can also cite the averroist and naturalist schools with diverse perspectives represented, respectively, by Siger of Brabant and Roger Bacon.

The influence of the Aristotelian thought on the West in the Low Middle Ages is often associated also with the cultural maturation of the Latin Christianity, and would lead to consequences of material and formal order. From the material viewpoint, we can easily cite the introduction of Aristotelian writings in the curriculum of Faculties of Theology (MARRONE, 2008); from a formal viewpoint, it is possible to observe the advent of a new paradigm of knowledge, synthesized in the notion of *episteme* (Greek) or *scientia* (Latin) (MARRONE, 2008): for each field of investigation, it was necessary to establish a particular methodology, due to the nature of the matter, of the properties of the studied object and of the hypotheses to be tested. There is also room for a warning regarding the Aristotelian *corpus* that circulated in the West in the Low Middle Ages, called *Aristoteles latinus*. The set is marked by successive translation waves, incorporation of apocrypha and by the fixation of the text as a homogenous whole, disregarding its internal history (LIBERA, 1993). These and other aspects would have compromised in a disturbingly way the reception and the incorporation of the Stagirite by medieval thinkers.

On one hand, the scholastic method provided the apparatus for thoughts grounded on new scientific bases – supported on proofs, on the cause and effect relation and on the systematization of knowledge from its accumulation. On the other hand, the notion of Aristotelianism implicit in the new forms of treating natural and human phenomena and the association of the Stagirite with Arabian and Jewish

translators, would cause suspicions in the masters themselves – the very same exponents, to a greater or lesser extent, of Scholasticism. This was the case of Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, engaged – just as all of the Franciscan Order – with the 'natural philosophy' critique: while the Aristotelian universe, by seeking the reason of things in the things themselves, separated the world from God (GILSON, 1953), Plato's universe, way more accommodative, would better serve, until then, to the principle of faith: it had been thought by Augustine as comprehending, between God and the things, the mediation of ideas (GILSON, 1953).

However, the immersion into the universe of knowledge, as well as the need itself to approach the forms through which things are known, would end up causing the merging of Platonic and proto-Platonic principles with the Aristotelian method. In this way, knowledge took an outstanding place as manifestation in the world, at the same time being an object of study and, therefore, theme of knowledge itself. The epistemology developed by Bonaventure supposes the oneness of the soul and the multiplicity of its faculties; by uplifting the body, the soul acts, performs the sensible functions through the sense organs, and then it makes the judgment on the action it has suffered (GILSON, 1999) – the result of this process would constitute the sensible knowledge, recognizably tributary of the Aristotelian thought. At this point, there is an inflection that is simultaneous to the conciliatory expedient: Bonaventure thus seeks to associate methods and contents that are apparently diverging in two separate actions of the soul: the conception of sensation as a passion of the human being associated with the Augustinian doctrine of sensation as an action of the soul (GILSON, 1999).

#### **The reform in the reform: poverty, holiness and social transformation**

The history of the admission and permanence of Mendicant Orders in the University represents a facet of the history of tensions and accommodations in a new society based on new values and recomposed from new orders. In the post-reformist Western Christianity, the principles of preaching and mendicancy – commonly linked to Dominican and Franciscan Orders – represented an accommodation of religious demands and exposed a new social dynamics.

Franciscan friars and Dominican canons are, in a first moment, products of a reforming impulse rooted into the first sparks of the Great Reform started in the passage from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. From the tradition of the imperial

<sup>7</sup> "Retracer l'histoire de la philosophie au XIIIe. siècle, époque classique de la philosophie médiévale, c'est définir les attitudes diverses qui furent adoptées dans les différents milieux philosophiques à l'égard de l'aristotélisme."

attribute – established from Pepin the Short and Carlos Magno – of reforming the clergy, legislating on it and safeguarding its interests, Henry II (1002-1024) and Henry III (1039-1056) would have marked golden periods of imperial intervention on the clerical body. On the basis of this intervention, there was a convergence principle translated into advantages for both sides: while the clergy occupied itself with the salvation of the souls, the imperial authority was assigned with the management of the material aspects of society, which included the Church itself as an institution of Christianity. The emperor, the first of the Christians, regulated the relations in a military society, accommodated the clergy to social demands and distributed peace – just as war – throughout society.

From the moment when the reforming impetus moves to the hands of the papacy, there is an inflection in the philosophical fields and in the political *praxis*: for the time Henry III's son was a minor, a series of Popes would take on the reforming ideal, based on the notion that the Christianity leadership would be the duty of Peter's successor, in face of the power of the keys granted to this apostle by Christ (Mt 16, 18-19)<sup>8</sup>. Gregory IX (1073-1085), regarded as the synthesis of papal efforts towards the autonomy of the spiritual sphere in face of the temporal one, and the centralization of the power of the Church in Rome, was an emblem of the gradual change in the correlation of forces that started to be drafted. Around the papacy, and often parallel to it, an attraction field was being created, which ended up concentrating the efforts and militancy of a good portion of society, starting by religious individuals – not by chance, we can cite, as products and at the same time foundations of the papal reform the Orders of Cluny (founded in 970) and of Cister (founded in 1098). If the first one was responsible for the project of liturgical unification and of imposition of the Roman ceremonial to Christianity, the second one proved profitable in the formulation of the doctrine, in the production of norms for the clergy and in the teaching to the laity. The new Christian *ethos*, emerging in the twilight of Feudalism and in the dawn of the urban life, resulted, fundamentally, in the previous approximation between clergy, religious people and the community: the interaction of these three elements over the 12<sup>th</sup> century would promote, among believers, the possibility of knowledge and a desire for the practice of the Christian faith. With the redeployment of the matters of faith, the latter

was no longer perceived by lay people as an unfathomable mystery, but rather as part of the ordinary life. The naturalization of faith, that is, its implication on the simplest acts accessible to everyone, multiplied the possibilities of exercising Christianity and, consequently, democratized the possibility of holiness.

Francis and Dominic appear in this context. The intellectual calling of the order founded by the latter was evident from the beginning, while sensibility and intuition would mark the work of Francis and of his initial restricted group. The conception of absence of property in the life of Christ and of his apostles, basis of the Franciscan program, elevated poverty above the other vows, identifying it as the evangelical perfection. At the same time, it kept the way open for the ordinary human being who from then on could, just as martyrs and doctors of the tradition, intend to ascend to the holiness condition. Le Goff stresses the weakening of a character of great dimension during the High Middle Ages: the bishop, linked to the episcopal power of the ancient cities (LE GOFF, 1999). Thereafter, holiness would disseminate throughout the urban society to the same extent of the variety of its social categories: 'saints, bourgeois, lay saints, mendicant saint friars, or hermitic saints' (LE GOFF, 1999).

To the same extent it inspired lay people and enabled the admission of youths coming from the most varied environments, the mendicant movement, especially the Franciscan Order, was facing a progressive need for institutionalization: the multiplication of friars imposed the creation of material and normative apparatuses relatively foreign to the spirituality of the origins. In addition, the movement of uniformization and control imposed with the Roman Curia would significantly transform those groups, whether in their purpose, whether in their action within society: [...] what are the relations between poverty and science? Is science not a treasure, a source of domination and of inequality? Are books not one of those temporal goods that should be refused? In face of the intellectual impulse, of the university movement that will soon conquer Franciscan leaders, Francis hesitates (LE GOFF, 1999, p. 31)<sup>9</sup>.

Subsequent Franciscan generations would join an Order that was fully institutional, seeking to preserve the principle of poverty and its relations with the understanding of the Gospel. Theoretical formulations followed, which resulted in the

<sup>8</sup> "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

<sup>9</sup> "[...] quels sont les rapports entre la pauvreté et la science? La science n'est-elle pas une richesse, une source de domination et d'inégalité? Les livres ne sont-ils pas un de ces biens temporels qu'il faut refuser? Face à l'esor intellectuel, au mouvement universitaire que bientôt harrera les *leaders* franciscains, François hésite."

reinforcement of the particular character of the Order at the same time they marked its presence inside the conceptual and political debate. The latter had as privileged stage the University, mainly that of Paris, in the course of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

#### The university of paris and the place of mendicants: the conquest of cathedrae

When considering the organicity of its material constitution, according to the modern university, the center of Bologna was the first one to establish, but the University of Paris allied to its physical structure philosophy and theology studies, which would result in its known prestige and its recognized intellectual importance.

Gilson enumerates three orders of causes that would have contributed to the success of the University of Paris: the school environment that was blooming there since the 12<sup>th</sup> century with the teaching by Saint Victor and by masters such as Abelardo, whose reputation attracted students from Italy, Germany and England (GILSON, 1999); the protection by French kings, to whom the intellectual center represented a factor of prestige inside the kingdom and of influence outside it; finally, the effort of the papacy, which would inscribe it in its active intervention policy and in the “[...] clearly defined religious purposes”<sup>10</sup> (GILSON, 1999, p. 132) by the Roman Curia.

As of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, schools and the university would have a major influence on the development of philosophy and theology. They were the space for the production and diffusion of this type of knowledge. A series of works by scholastic masters such as Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio was produced from their journey as professors at the University of Paris and based on questions raised by the academic life.

The admission of mendicant orders to the University of Paris occurred after a long strike of masters, associated with the progressive prestige of Franciscan and Dominican orders in the Western Europe. From 1229, the intervention of the bishop of Paris along with the chancellor of said institution would result in the opening of cathedrae to Dominicans, and then to Franciscans – with highlight, among the latter, to the pioneer Alexander of Hales, and his disciple, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, future minister general of the Order. The first disputes were soon felt, having resulted in formulations that would define the outlines of the mendicant ethics and of its relation with knowledge<sup>11</sup>.

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio would compose, based on accusations by master Geraldo, the *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*, around the year of 1269. Taking as a basis the French high priest’s opusculum, *Contra adversarium perfectionis christianae et praelatorum et facultatum Ecclesiae*, the friar supports himself, from a methodological standpoint, on the Augustinian rhetoric. For this reason, he starts by presenting his opponent’s argumentation, through its appropriation and adjustment to the objectives of his own discourse – Bonaventure identifies and summarizes the content of the work as follows: in the first book, he exalts the escape to fasts and mortifications; in the second one, he establishes wealth as a highly worthy state; in the third one, he attacks the poverty of the Mendicants (BONAVENTURE OF BAGNOREGIO, 1949, *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*).

It refers to the application of the first of the rhetorical resources recommended by the Latin oratory and employed by Augustine in order to found his viewpoints: the establishment of two opposing fields, fixing the opponent in that which proves fundamentally contrary to the defended *ethos*; and, beyond the formal opposition, the creation of a values-based opposition, inside which the opponent’s discourse immediately takes on the characteristics of the misunderstanding, of the error, of the apostasy.

Throughout the second chapter of *Apologia*, still closely following the Augustinian method, Bonaventure dedicates himself to refuting Geraldo’s arguments, and as he opposes them, he also attributes to them a negative value from the point-of-view of the Christian *ethos*. As a result of this system, by identifying an argumentation with that which opposes to the quality and to the characteristics of a Christian, Bonaventure ends up isolating the author of the argumentation in an interdiction state in relation to Christian values: Geraldo would thus represent the opposite of the set of values that defined faith and the Christian orthodoxy, as his discourse necessarily converged with his ethics.

Finally, the Seraphic Doctor defends fasts and mortifications, undervalues the state of wealth and exposes that which he defines as evangelical poverty, defended as a state of complete perfection (the apology of the poor). With this, he ratifies the convenience of the permanence of the reader beside the orator, who attracts to his discourse the values of the Christian *ethos*: the peak of the evangelical perfection is endowed, similar to the tower of David, with spiritual defenses with which, on the outside, the

<sup>10</sup> desseins religieux nettement définis de la papauté.

<sup>11</sup> The quarrel that opposed secular masters to mendicants had political, economic and social motivations. It was marked by William of Saint-Amour and

Geraldo de Abbéville’s attacks against the orthodoxy and to the lifestyle of both orders, and resulted in Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure de Bagnoregio’s reaction, who justified the right to education and, ultimately, the existence of their Orders (MAGALHÃES, 2003)

enemy hostility is resisted, and, on the inside, a tranquility that cannot be disturbed is kept safe.

[...] let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hb, 12,1ss.) (BONAVENTURE OF BAGNOREGIO, 1949, *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*, c. 4, §1, free translation)<sup>12</sup>.

The rhetorical formulation of the Christian *ethos* in accordance with the Augustinian resource follows along the discourse of *Apologia*, creating pairs of suggestive opposites: thus, greed, identified with rich, opposed to charity, fundamental value of Christianity; while wealth was the ‘root of all evil’ (*radix omnium malorum*), charity was the instrument through which faith operated, being the latter the ‘root of Christianity’ “[...] christianae religionis fundamentum et radix est fides” (BOAVENTURA OF BAGNOREGIO, 1949, *Apologia pauperum contra calumniatorem*, c. 7, §1).

The defense of the Christian *ethos* through the Augustinian rhetorical practice was a common method among Franciscan masters and in the set of the intellectual production of the Order. It associated itself with the dialogical method constructed from the simulacrum of the interaction between master and disciple – consequence of the patristic methodology, but also tributary of the new dynamics of the university life, which was largely based on the so-called *quaestio et disputatio*. Thus, Bonaventure would compose his ‘*Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica*’ – a work exempt from the controversy of *Apologia*, but of equal relevance to the construction of the Franciscan *ethos* and to his practice in the University.

The academic production that would then evidence the Franciscan thought in the Middle Ages was essentially composed in close connection with the University and its policy on cathedrae, and in a dialogical relation with them: the cathedrae enabled the formation of friars and the significant written production, at the same time that the literature was produced, to a large extent, aiming at reinforcing the Franciscan presence in the very same cathedrae. Simultaneously, the Franciscan thought was not constituted despite Aristotle or in absolute confrontation with him. Although identified with

the group of conservative theologians, which reluctantly received Aristotle translations in the Latin West, Bonaventure would not remain immune to the influence of the Stagirite.

William of Auxerre, in charge of purging the *Libri naturales* by Aristotle, showed in his *Summa aurea* that the relation between the indemonstrable premises and the scientific conclusion is identical to the relation between the articles of faith and the theological conclusion: “[...] a theological science, according to Aristotelian criteria of scientificity, so is the ideal that subsidizes [...] the *Summa aurea*” (LIBERA, 1993, p. 377, free translation)<sup>13</sup>. Bonaventure would not cease to use the Aristotelian apparatus, in spite of the resistance. Along his work, he proposes a dialectical doctrine that is necessarily tributary of the Aristotelian logics: it is the case of the synthesis present in the ‘*Commentary on the Sentences*’, which turns to Theology using elements of the Aristotelian philosophical structure:

Logics attempts, judging inside the truth, to achieve the adequacy of understanding of its expression, and thus grants consistency to human speculation, as it constitutes a real light to the development of said speculation (CRESTA, 2010, p. 146, free translation)<sup>14</sup>.

Likewise, Bonaventure’s philosophy of nature admits peripatetic elements, since it values the sensible experience as a way to obtain knowledge. Thus, the senses of the body would allow one to come into contact with the reality of the objects, at the same time that the memory preserved the many sensations acquired in the sensible perception (CRESTA, 2010). Such aspects synthesize the master’s journey, who also attended the Faculty of Arts of Paris, where he certainly would have received training in the field of the Aristotelian logics.

### Final considerations

The origins of the Christian *ethos* of knowledge coincide with the Christian *ethos* itself: as it is rooted in the ancient city, superposing itself to its institutional apparatuses, Christianity consolidated its epistemological bases, equally tributary of the classical model. Augustine of Hippo would represent a synthesis of this process in the Late Antiquity, in the same way as the monastic schools in the Central Middle Ages. The 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the emergence of

<sup>12</sup> “[...] perfectionis evangelicae cumen instar davidicae turris spiritualibus propugnaculis esse munitum, quibus et foris hostilitas infestar repellitur et intus tranquillitas imperturbata servatur. – Horum autem praecipuum tenere locum desiderium passionis pro nomine Christi Iesu [...] apostolus Paulus evidenter ostendit, cum ad Hebraeos dicit: Curramus per patientiam ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in auctorem fidei et consummatorem, Iesum, qui propositum sibi gaudio, crucem sustinuit confusione contempta.”

<sup>13</sup> “Une science théologique conforme aux critères aristotéliens de la scientificité, tel est l’idéal qu’instrumente [...] la *Summa aurea*.”

<sup>14</sup> “La lógica intenta, juzgando en la verdad, alcanzar la adecuación del entendimiento y de su expresión, y otorga por tanto consistencia a la especulación humana, en la medida que constituye una verdadera luz para el desarrollo de la misma.”

the University and of the university debate, associated with the work of Mendicants, would have provided the means to a revolutionary transformation.

The traditional contents of the schools and of the Christian reflection aimed for the Neo-Platonism derived from the Augustinian thought, which resulted in the emphasis on an eminently philosophical discussion favored by idealism. This matrix resulted in historical and medieval hierarchical conceptions grounded on the Christocentrism. Moreover, the predominance of the Augustinian predominance, linked to the classical curriculum, influenced the organization of knowledge of the institutions in charge of transmitting it. This academic practice, allied to intellectual production, was reproduced within parochial and monastic contexts until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, having had a major impact on the formation of the Mendicants, notably the Franciscans.

Making use of a neo-Platonizing Augustinianism, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio would confer the fundamental lines of the Franciscan thought, whose content, predominantly patristic, would tend to prolong inside the Order. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with Aristotle being rediscovered by the Latin West, the 'scientific' method started to attach to the philosophical discourse without, however, excluding it: Scholasticism was crystalizing itself, fundamentally, as a method – preconizing the resources of the logics and of the sensitive knowledge –, to which the patristic content often opposed.

Fundamentally linked to the Augustinian *ethos*, the Franciscan epistemological experience ended up sheltering, between assimilation and resistance, the Aristotelian method. While secular masters of the University remained tied to old privileges and practices, the Mendicants, with their lifestyle and ideology, met the new demands of the environment. The knowledge field was decisive in this 'tour de force': endowed with intellectual malleability associated with an urban sensibility, the new orders would obtain the reaffirmation of their university cathedrae, associated to the reaffirmation of their lifestyle. The 13<sup>th</sup> century outlined the elaboration of a Franciscan *ethos* absolutely converging with the Christian *ethos* itself. This turning, in which the University and knowledge would play a central role, would result, in an irreversible manner, the affirmation of the position of Franciscans in the world and in the Church.

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