

## John Pecham's dispute with Thomas Aquinas at the University of Paris – Causes and Effects

**Key words:** John Pecham, Thomas Aquinas, unity of substantial form, plurality of substantial forms, University of Paris

In the literature on the subject there is a medieval dispute regarding the plurality of substantial forms in human being<sup>1</sup>. The dispute is interesting at least for two reasons. At first, this is probably the only dispute in which Thomas Aquinas – then already as a recognized master – had to defend personally in front of the gathering of scholars of the University of Paris, one of his fundamental views in the field of metaphysics. The second

reason is that the problem of the unity and plurality of forms was one of the most important and heating debate that arose in philosophy – and furthermore, because of the question of Christ's body also in theology – in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that by the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, every self-respecting theologian or philosopher felt somewhat obliged to speak on the problem of the plurality of the forms in man.

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<sup>1</sup> The issue is mentioned in most textbooks on either the 13<sup>th</sup> century philosophy or the views of Thomas Aquinas. A cross-cutting theme is taken by Robert Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des forms. Éditions de l'institut supérieur de philosophie*, in *Philosophes Médiévaux*, vol. 2, Louvain 1951). From recent publications on a directly taken up topic: Dawid Lipski, *Jan Peckham i Tomasz z Akwinu. Spór o jedność formy substancjalnej w człowieku*, in *Opera Philosophorum Medii Aevi*, t. 15, Warszawa 2015 (The following article refers to the conclusions of this monograph).

The dispute, which was actually started by John Pecham<sup>2</sup> in 1270 with the “debate” with Thomas Aquinas, is significant for its two-dimensionality. The dispute itself begins with the theological question on the status of the body of Christ between death and resurrection. As a consequence, it also covers the issue of the relics of saints. The first dimension of the issue of the plurality of forms is a purely philosophical aspect, represented by an accepted set of metaphysical arguments. The second dimension, which is undoubtedly closely related to the first, consists of arguments

which – we may call “extra-substantive” – such as specific historical events, the fact of belonging to different ecclesiastical environments, and also personal prejudices and temperaments.

The following article focuses on the second dimension of the dispute, minimizing the presentation and analysis of its first aspect. The main goal is an attempt to revise the state of research on these issues within the framework set by the topic. We are trying to indicate the causes, probable stages and effects of the aforementioned event which took place at the University of Paris.

## I. The Causes

William of Tocco recalls the story when Thomas Aquinas, during the promotion of one of the new masters of the University of Paris, refrained from public criticism of the erroneous view advocated by the newly promoted, as not to ruin the celebration of the event. Thomas outspoken his criticism only the next day. Then the young master had to withdraw

his view previously proclaimed<sup>3</sup>. Ignatius Brady suspects that John Pecham might have been the newly promoted master, who came from England to the University of Paris in 1269/1270. Issues that were effectively criticized by Aquinas would relate to the problem of the eternity of the world<sup>4</sup>. Probably Thomas was indulgent to Pecham in *vesperia*

<sup>2</sup> The surname probably comes from the name of Patcham near Brighton, County Sussex, where around 1230 John Pecham was born. From 1270 he was a regent in Paris. Around 1271 he returned to England and was designated the eleventh Franciscan master of theology regent at Oxford. In 1274 he was elected the ninth Franciscan Provincial in England, and in 1277 a teacher in the papal curia. On January 27, 1279 he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. He died on December 8, 1292 (G. Etzkorn, *Franciscan Quodlibeta 1270-1285. John Pecham, Matthew of Aquasparta, and Roger Marston*, in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages. The Thirteenth Century*, ed. C. Schabel, Leiden-Boston 2006, p. 135).

<sup>3</sup> *Fontes vitae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. D. Prümmer, „Revue Thomiste”, Saint Maximin 1931, p. 100; a similar version is presented by Peter Calo and Bernard Gui in the above work; See also: *The life of saint Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents*, ed. K. Foster, Helicon 1959, p. 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> A similar suggestion is given by the publisher *Fontes vitae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*: „Iste Religiosus videtur esse Johannes Peckham [...] opinatur hanc disputationem habuisse locum, quando Thomas secundo Parisiis legit, i.e. an. 1269-1271” (William of Tocco, *Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis*, in *Fontes vitae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, p. 99 n. 1). Whereas Kenelm Foster, the publisher of *The life of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, still distances himself from such far-reaching conclusions.

and *aulica* parts to react only during the *resumptio*.

It remains open whether the short work of the Angelic Doctor *De aeternitate mundi*, whose creation dates back to 1270, is a direct criticism of the position of Pecham, Bonaventura – or more broadly – of a common position (*communitas Parisiensis*) regarding the eternity of the world. In this work Thomas states his original solutions on understanding eternity and creation in time. Brady and Torrell supports the position that this is a criticism of Pecham's stance, the option that this is a "criticism of Bonaventure" is supported by Bukowski, the third mentioned option – by Weisheipl<sup>5</sup>. Górnjak indicates that these positions are not really mutually exclusive, as they emphasize various aspects of the historical background of this short work<sup>6</sup>.

It can be assumed that at the very beginning of his presence in Paris Pecham might have felt hurt by Thomas Aquinas. Pecham himself in one of his later Parisian speeches (*sermon*) complained

about the students' bad behavior during his inaugural lesson<sup>7</sup>.

It is highly probable that this fact was not without significance for the future actions of then young Parisian master who later became the influential Archbishop of Canterbury. Pecham could have had a resentment to the person of Thomas himself, and consequently to his views. This resulted in the fact that, at every opportunity, Pecham attempted to criticize what, even in the slightest sense – in his opinion – could be opposed to the "spirit" of Saint Augustine, whose heir Pecham felt to be. It should not be forgotten that this last issue was also determinant when it comes to combating the thesis of the unity of the substantial form by the future Archbishop of Canterbury. Maintaining the view about the plurality and hierarchy of forms in the living structure of man, and the common hylemorphism (panhylemorphism), he invokes the authority of St. Augustine, Bonaventure and Alexander of Hales<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> J.-P. Torrell, *Initiation à saint Thomas d'Aquin: Sa personne et son œuvre*, 1993 (polish edition 2008), p. 224; T. Bukowski, *J. Pecham, T. Aquinas et al., on the Eternity of the World*, „Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale” 46 (1979), p. 216-221; J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Work*, New York 1974 (polish edition 1985), p. 467.

<sup>6</sup> A. Górnjak, *Dlaczego murmurantes rozgniewali Tomasza z Akwinu?*, „Studia Antyczne i Mediewistyczne” 7 [42] (2009), p. 174. Pecham and Bonaventure's views on the eternity of the world are very similar. Pecham, on the other hand, uses a more Aristotelian language. It seems that he was the leader of the group at the University of Paris (during the second regent mastership of Thomas), which maintained the view of creation in time as faithful to the orthodox tradition dating back to Augustine, especially *De civitate Dei XII* i *Super Genesis VIII* (*John Pecham: Questions concerning the eternity of the world*, translated by V. Potter, New York 1993, p. XV).

<sup>7</sup> D. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham's Sermons and Collations*, in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke* (reprint ed.), Oxford 1979, p. 277.

<sup>8</sup> *Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham, archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. C. Martin, vol. III, London 1885, p. 901.

## II. The Course

There is no agreement among the medievalists as to the nature and the exact date of the dispute which took place at the University of Paris between Thomas Aquinas and John Pecham. To describe this event Weisheipl uses the term “famous debate” between Thomas Aquinas and Brother John Pecham<sup>9</sup>. Steenberghen also uses a vague term – “academic meeting”<sup>10</sup>.

Mandonnet, on the other hand, specifically mentions the dispute from *Quodlibet* III, article 4<sup>11</sup>, carried out in 1270 during Easter, as the exact time and place of dispute between Thomas and Pecham about the unity of the substantial form<sup>12</sup>. Douie, the author of the cross-sectional monograph on the Archbishop of Canterbury, points out two possibilities: either it was a quodlibetal dispute during Lent in 1270 or a formal meeting at the Faculty of Theology<sup>13</sup>. Weisheipl takes a different view. He indicates the promotion of some new master or gathering of masters of sacred theology, regens and non-regens, gathered to discuss matters presented for condemnation<sup>14</sup>. It seems that the option of promoting the master of theology would be

associated with some name that would appear in the report of Pecham or Bartholomew of Capua. Also, the other variants remain acceptable, especially during the second stay of Thomas in Paris (1269–1272) the theses of Heterodox Aristotelianism were very often discussed, which already on December 10, 1270, led to condemnation of 13 theses of averroist provenance.

It can be assumed with high probability that while Aquinas was discussing the issue of the living and dead body of Christ, there was an accusation from John Pecham regarding a purely metaphysical issue, which is the issue of unity or a plurality of forms in the ontic structure of man.

It also seems – as Solère rightly suggests – that three quodlibet issues dated from this period, focusing on the specific case of Christ<sup>15</sup>, have become somewhat a test for the solidity of metaphysics and the anthropology of the Angelic Doctor. According to Pecham – the test was failed. The three issues mentioned above form the totality of the same debate developed in those years, which eventually led to *Correctorium* by Wil-

<sup>9</sup> J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Work...*, p. 322.

<sup>10</sup> F. Steenberghen, *La Philosophie au XIIIe siècle*, 1991 (polish edition 2005), p. 382.

<sup>11</sup> In the Turin edition (1956) *Quodlibet* III, q.2 a 2 *Utrum oculus Christi post mortem dicatur aequivoce oculus, vel univoce* (there is no article 4 in that edition).

<sup>12</sup> P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au XIIIe siècle*, 2e éd, t. I, Louvain 1911, p. 99. Mandonnet mentions *Quodlibet* II a 1; III a 4; IV a 8, In the Turin edition: *Quodlibet* II, q. 1 a 1 *Utrum Christus in triduo mortis fuerit idem homo numero*; III q. 2 a 2 *Utrum oculus Christi post mortem dicatur aequivoce oculus, vel univoce*; IV q. 5 *Utrum sit unum numero corpus Christi affixum cruci et iacens in sepulcro*.

<sup>13</sup> D. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham*, Oxford 1952, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Work...*, p. 323.

<sup>15</sup> Q. II, q. 1, a. 1 (1269); Q. III, q. 2, a. 2 (1270); Q. IV, q. 5, a. 1 (1271).

liam of La Mare and the bans introduced by archbishop Pecham<sup>16</sup>.

Amongst three versions of the events, there is a version of Roger Marston, a student of John Pecham. He reports the following: "I was present in Paris and heard with my own ears when Precen-tor of Peronne, standing at Master Gerard of Abbeville, in the presence of Brother Thomas Aquinas and Brother John Pecham and twenty-four other scholars of theology, when "this opinion" was solemnly condemned as opposed to the claims and teachings of saints, especially Augustine and Anselm, which was clearly shown in opposition"<sup>17</sup>. In the context of this dispute, this report is cited by, among others, Gilson<sup>18</sup>, Zavalloni<sup>19</sup>, Callebaut<sup>20</sup>, or Swieżawski<sup>21</sup>. However, this report is incorrectly related to this event, by putting Thomas Aquinas and John Pecham in one place regarding one particular issue. This fragment, when analysed out of context, after referring to the whole text of the issue indicates that it concerns the problem: *Utrum Verbum in divinis dicatur essentia-liter vel notionaliter*. It was the opinion of those who received the Incarnate Word in God *notionaliter et essentialiter* that was condemned. Moreover,

Nissing indicates that the quoted passage from the Marston questions discussed, originating from the *Quaestiones de emanatione aeterna*, refers to the dispute that took place in the academic year 1271/1272<sup>22</sup>.

The other two versions of this event contradict each other. One is the testimony of Bartholomew of Capua made during the canonization process of Thomas Aquinas in Naples in 1319. This is an indirect report, which was given to him by other Brothers Preachers, who, as Bartholomew points out – were trustworthy.

He testifies that he heard from many Dominican Brothers that one day, when Thomas was conducting a dispute (*disputabat*) in Paris, Brother John Pecham, from the order of Friars Minor, later Archbishop of Canterbury, insulted (*exaseperaret*) Thomas in words that were violent and meaningless. However, Thomas limited himself to humble answer, and always responded with gentleness and kindness (*cum dulcedine et humanitate*). He adds that Aquinas' speeches, regardless sharp and cunning all disputes were, remained gentle and kind<sup>23</sup>. Other people also mention the

<sup>16</sup> J.-L. Solère, *Was the Eye in the Tomb?*, in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages. The Thirteenth Century*, ed. C. Schabel, Leiden-Boston 2006, p. 556-557.

<sup>17</sup> Fr. Rogeri Marston, *Quaestiones disputatae*, ed. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Florentia 1932, p. 116-117.

<sup>18</sup> É. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 1987 (polish edition), p. 373-374.

<sup>19</sup> R. Zavalloni, *Richard de Mediavilla et la controverse sur la pluralité des forms...*, p. 215.

<sup>20</sup> A. Callebaut, *Jean Pecham, OFM, et l'augustinisme. Aperçus historiques (1263-1285)*, „Archivum Franciscanum Historicum” XVIII (1925), p. 448.

<sup>21</sup> S. Swieżawski, *Dzieje europejskiej filozofii klasycznej*, Warszawa-Wrocław 2000, p. 725.

<sup>22</sup> H.-G. Nissing, *Sprache als Akt bei Thomas von Aquin*, Netherland 2006, p. 122 note 43.

<sup>23</sup> „Item dixit dictus testis se audivisse a pluribus Fratribus Prædicatoribus, fide dignis, quod quando idem frater Thomas una vice, disputabat Parisius, ubi erat frater Ioannes de Pizano, ordinis fratrum

humility (*humilitatis*) of Thomas Aquinas during public discussions<sup>24</sup>.

Considering the temperament of John Pecham – the issue which will be discussed later – this report seems quite likely. However, it should be remembered that we deal with a heard description, moreover, heard by a person – as noted by Weisheipl – unfamiliar with academic customs, which may be the reason that a relation can be harmful to John Pecham<sup>25</sup>.

John Pecham himself presents the second version of the event from 1270 in his letters from 1284–85. It is extremely different from the one given by Bartholomew of Capua. Pecham denies the false and unfair opinion that he stood up against the unity of form until the death of Thomas, and uses rational arguments and testimonies of saints. He even appears as a defender of Aquinas. It is thought that Thomas was severely accused by the bishop of Paris, masters of theology, as well as by his Brothers

regarding the view that man has only one substantial form, which is his rational soul. Moreover, Pecham maintains that he “stood by him and defended him until truth was kept”. Until he himself, threatened with condemnation, all his views as “a humble scholar submitted to the judgment of the Paris Masters”<sup>26</sup>.

This version, presented in a letter to the ordinary of the diocese of Lincoln, Olivier Sutton, seems quite unbelievable. It is possible that Thomas, attacked, might have then withdrawn from the final resolution of the issue of unity or plurality of forms in a particular case, which was the issue of the body of Christ. However, an analysis of other passages in Pecham’s letters regarding this dispute and Aquinas, indicates that Pecham is manipulating the facts. The archbishop first wants to discredit the view of the unity of the substantial form and connects his authorship with two averroists, not the Dominican order<sup>27</sup>. Then, in another place, he identifies it with Thom-

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Minorum, qui fuit postea archiepiscopus Cantuariensis, quantumque dictus frater Ioannes exasperaret eumdem fratrem Thomam verbis ampullosis et tumidis, numquam tamen ipse frater Thomas restrinxit verbum humilitatis; sed semper cum dulcedine et humanitate respondit. Et idem faciebat dictus frater Thomas in omni disputatione, quantumcumque acuta et solerti” (M.-H. Laurent, *Processus canonizationis sancti Thomae, Neapoli*, „Revue Thomiste” p. 2 (1933), p. 374). Bartholomew gives an incorrect name of the main opponent Thomas Aquinas (Pizano), which he probably inaccurately remembered from the reports of his Brothers. However, the further description of this person leaves no doubt that it is about John Pecham.

<sup>24</sup> William of Tocco (p. 99–100), Peter Calo (p. 33–35), Bernard Gui (p. 196–198) in all three versions there is a discussion between Thomas and a religious in Paris during his masterly *vesperies* (in *Fontes vitae Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*).

<sup>25</sup> J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D’Aquino: His Life, Thought and Work...*, p. 323.

<sup>26</sup> „Dicit nos opinionem de unitate formae rationibus et sanctorum testimoniis persequentes in mortuum impingere, quod est falsum; quin potius ei, de quo loquitur, cum pro hac opinione ab episcopo Parisiensi et magistris theologiae et a fratribus propriis argueretur argute, nos soli eidem astitimus, ipsum prout salva veritate potuimus defensando, donec ipse omnes positiones suas, quibus possit imminere correctio, sicut doctor humilis subiecit moderamini Parisiensium magistrorum (*Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, p. 899).

<sup>27</sup> In a letter of November 10, 1284.



as Aquinas<sup>28</sup>. Pecham describes himself as a zealous defender of Thomas, who was attacked even by his Brothers<sup>29</sup>. However, we know that this view was fiercely defended by the Dominican order. Anyway, Pecham himself did not fail to mention in one of the letters that the Dominicans adopted Thomas' teaching as their own<sup>30</sup>.

In his monograph on John Pecham, Douie maintains that the versions presented by Pecham and Bartholomew regarding the famous debate can be reconciled. Pecham could have started the meeting with an attack on Thomas, but disarmed by his kindness and patience – and aware that he himself was the leader of this attack – gave up<sup>31</sup>.

### III. Profile of John Pecham

The unbelievable version of John Pecham regarding the debate with Thomas Aquinas can be inferred from what we know about the archbishop himself and his activities. It is not the question of determination to combat the thesis about the unity of the substantial form, but his so-called "personal profile". He himself seems to be a self-contradictory personality. On the one hand, he is strongly involved in both the archbishopric and spiritual matters of his order. He was a traditionalist who respected authorities, especially those that lay the foundation of Franciscan teaching. On the other hand, he was impulsive, explosive, envious and did not mince his words. He was not able to separate official or doctrinal matters from his own prejudices.

It seems that specific events in Pecham's career can indirectly confirm that

it was him who initiated this dispute. Mandonnet indicates the words which Pecham, not yet an archbishop, directed to his predecessor Robert Kilwardby: "O son of a lion who hid you in its mouth (the darkness of his guts) and blurs his cunning tail with traces of a set order. You wasted everything that was in you as if you were throwing heavenly stars down the drain". The conclusion for Mandonnet is obvious. Someone who appeals to the provincial-in-office of the Dominican order would certainly not care for the sophisticated and restrained criticism during the dispute with Thomas<sup>32</sup>.

The rough language of John Pecham can also be seen towards his confreres in one of his letters to the Chancellor of Oxford University. He wrote there that for "ulcerated scabies", i.e. a group of

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<sup>28</sup> In a letter of January 1, 1285.

<sup>29</sup> In a letter of June 1, 1285.

<sup>30</sup> Letter of December 7, 1284: „Causam vero opinionem bonae memoriae fratris Thomae de Aquino, quas fratris ipsi opiniones sui ordinis esse dicunt” (*Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, p. 866).

<sup>31</sup> D. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham...*, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> P. Mandonnet, [review] *Jean Pecham, O.F.M., et l'augustinisme Aperçus historiques (1263-1285)*, by André Callebaut, „Bulletin thomiste” 3 (1926), p. 105.

Franciscans who were influenced by Thomistic “intellectual novelties” (such as Richard of Middleton, for example), “a medicine in the form of an Episcopal office” should be used<sup>33</sup>.

Pecham, as Archbishop of Canterbury, was persistent in achieving his goals, especially with regard to persons under his jurisdiction. The victims of such a policy were, among others, Thomas of Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford and Richard Knapwell, English Dominican. The first of them, with a temperament different from Pecham’s, as a result of the conflict had to leave the country and – with excommunication imposed – give an explanation to the Pope. He was kindly received by Pope Martin IV and his court in Orvieto. Unfortunately, suffering from fever he died on August 25, 1282<sup>34</sup>. When commissioner William Durand was sent to investigate the basis of excommunication issued by John Pecham, he stated that excommunication had no grounds. Finally, on April 17, 1320, John XXII canonized Thomas of Cantilupe.

Richard Knapwell, on the other hand, was one of the first defenders of the thesis of the unity of the substantial form at Oxford. He proposed an original approach to this issue, assuming that the view expressed by Thomas should be primarily analyzed on a philosophical level. Then it was – along with the view of the plurality of forms – acceptable to the-

ology. A number of arguments presented by Knapwell indicate that this thesis does not pose a threat to the dogmas of faith. Zeal in defense of this doctrine caught Pecham’s attention as early as in 1284 and led to the condemnation and excommunication of the Dominican in spring 1286<sup>35</sup>. Interestingly, the list of condemned theses was taken from the work of Knapwell himself. Unfortunately for him, Pope Honorius IV died, and his successor, a former Franciscan general and old friend of Pecham, Nicholas IV, ordered Richard to refrain from discussing the problem of the unity of form. Knapwell moved to Bologna. He did not comply with the pope’s ban, apparently falling over time into madness. In Oxford, however, there were news of Knapwell’s “miserable death”<sup>36</sup>.

Pecham died on December 8, 1292, apparently in a state of light madness – as Mandonnet suggests – some interpreted this as a punishment for his actions against Saint Thomas Cantilupe. This is confirmed by the witness’ statement from Thomas’ canonization process<sup>37</sup>.

It should be remembered, however, that John Pecham as an archbishop was an efficient politician and diplomat, which his position undoubtedly required. As a religious, he was as strict and demanding from himself as well as from other Brothers.

<sup>33</sup> *Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, p. 853.

<sup>34</sup> *St. Thomas Cantilupe Bishop of Hereford: Essays in his honour*, ed. M. Jancey, 1982, p. 18-19.

<sup>35</sup> F. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School*, Iowa 1964, p. 35.

<sup>36</sup> D. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham...*, p. 298-9.

<sup>37</sup> P. Mandonnet, [review] *Jean Pecham...*, p. 106.



## IV. The Effects

The works of Richard Knapwell, and especially the conflict with Pecham, on the one hand motivated other Dominican Brothers to defend the thesis about the unity of forms, on the other hand however, clearly transferred the dispute from the viewpoint level to the dispute between the two orders, Franciscan and Dominican. Regarding the views of Thomas' first successors – Roensch points out – that although they sometimes deviated from his doctrine, they were nevertheless confident and consistent in maintaining the letter and spirit of the Thomistic synthesis in the issue of unity of substantial form<sup>38</sup>.

Undoubtedly, the key issue for escalating the entire dispute were the so-called Oxford condemnations. In the Paris condemnations of 1270 and 1277 there is no thesis about the unity of the substantial form. Medievalists point out various reasons. Roensch explains that this view already had many supporters in Paris. It is also possible that thanks to Albert the Great who came to Paris, defending the doctrine of Aquinas, the thesis about unity was not included in the Paris condemnation of 1277<sup>39</sup>. Swieżawski suggests that there was a certain risk of adding this view to the condemnation of thirteen theses of the

averroist provenance of 1270, that is, during the lifetime of Thomas. It should be remembered that there were two averroists that John Pecham accused in one of his letters as the creators of the view of the unity of form. If this thesis had been condemned as early as 1270, then the history of Thomism might have been completely different<sup>40</sup>.

However, the first of Oxford's condemnations, which took place several days after the famous Paris condemnations of 1277, already included to the index the thesis about the unity (uniqueness) of the substantial form in man. The then – Archbishop of Canterbury, Dominican, Robert Kilwardby decided for that movement. Consequently, this led to a conflict between Kilwardby and his order. Putting aside Kilwardby's arguments for rejecting this view of the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, he undoubtedly did a favor to his successor, John Pecham<sup>41</sup>. By issuing further condemnations, John emphasized that he was only repeating what his predecessor had banned before.

For the first time, Pecham renewed its prohibitions on October 29, 1284 during a metropolitan visit to Oxford University. Documents indicate that he did it with some haste and carelessness. He

<sup>38</sup> F. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School...*, p. 316.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. F. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School...*, p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> S. Swieżawski, *Dzieje europejskiej filozofii klasycznej...*, p. 725. Knowles points out that this threat particularly concerned the thesis about the unity of the substantial form and the simplicity of spiritual substances (D. Knowles, *Some Aspects of the Career of Archbishop Pecham*, „The English Historical Review” vol. 57 No. 225 (January 1942), p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> On January 28, 1279, Pecham was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by Pope Nicholas III. His predecessor, Robert Kilwardby, was appointed bishop of Porto with residency in the Roman curia a year earlier.

probably did not know the exact content of Kilwardby's condemnations, nor the list of those who advocated this view or those who called to revoke it. The rush itself could have been due to the fact that a week earlier, the English Dominican Provincial, William of Hothum, during the consecration of one of the English bishops, asked to consider the removal of the prohibitions issued by Kilwardby regarding the views of Thomas Aquinas<sup>42</sup>.

Two years later, on April 30, 1286<sup>43</sup>, Pecham and three suffragans chose eight theses and condemned them as heretical. They were not identical with those condemned previously. They had been expanded to include an article about the relics of the saints, i.e. what has always been the apple of the archbishop's eye. According to him, it was the concept of the unity of the substantial form that could lead to the break of identity between the living and the dead body. Which might be dangerous to the purity of the worship of saints. In condemnations, however, the name of Richard Knapwell did not appear, though it would be expected. Probably it was omitted to avoid accusing Dominicans who were not under his jurisdiction. Moreover, Pecham abandoned the formula that Kilwardby used in his condemnations. It seems that the archbishop was trying to eliminate all ambiguities associated with

the thesis about the unity of the substantial form. In his bans he was more emphatic than Kilwardby<sup>44</sup>. He stated in one of his letters that all the supporters and preachers of the thesis of the unity of the substantial form in man would be excommunicated<sup>45</sup>.

Such attitude was probably also due to the fact that, according to him, the averroist crisis was already well recognized, but Thomism must have seemed much more threatening, because its "unorthodoxy" was less obvious<sup>46</sup>. Therefore, the polarization of "tradition", i.e. a rather incoherent whole, which was the legacy of Augustine against "novelty" was a deliberate act for which Pecham largely bears responsibility.

Pecham fought Thomas and Thomism largely with the help of his students, such as Roger Marston and William of La Mare. The latter inherited from Pecham a deep dislike of the theory of the unity of forms. It is also interesting that the eight condemned theses contained in Pecham's letter are given literally in William's *Correctorium* as theses of Thomistic provenance. Roensch supposes that William learned a lot from Pecham. Perhaps later the archbishop himself used the work of his student in formulating a decree condemning Knapwell, who "corrected" the Franciscan *Correctorium*<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> D. Callus, *The problem of the unity of form and Richard Knapwell O.P.*, in *Mélanges Offerts A Étienne Gilson*, Toronto-Paris 1959, p. 130 and 137.

<sup>43</sup> *Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, p. 921.

<sup>44</sup> F. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School...*, p. 179.

<sup>45</sup> *Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, p. 922-923.

<sup>46</sup> D. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham...*, p. 300.

<sup>47</sup> F. Roensch, *Early Thomistic School...*, p. 182-185.

After repeated condemnations, there was a very strong polarization of positions both regarding the dispute over the unity of the substantial form and between the orders themselves. Some also openly contested Pecham's actions towards the depreciation of Thomism<sup>48</sup>.

Finally, contrary to the archbishop's expectations, Rome never approved the condemnation of the unity of the substantial form. However, the condemnation of 1277 is not only the triumph of neo-Augustinianism over Averroism, but also over the theology and philosophy of Thomas Aquinas for a long time.

We may conclude that the last significant accent of the dispute was the participation of Franciscan Peter John Olivi. Referring to the entire doctrinal tradition of his order, he developed an

extreme view of the plurality of forms in man. He thus denied that the human soul is a form of body<sup>49</sup>. Finally, Olivi's view was condemned by the council of Vienne.

It seems that Peter Olivi, like Pecham and other supporters of the theory of plurality of forms, including Robert Kilwardby, saw in Thomas' view of the unity (uniqueness) of form, a threat by its resemblance to the form of extreme nominalism. They were afraid that such a thesis could – in their opinion – lead to understanding which would undermine the ontic structure of the human body, especially the body of Christ. It would also result in a wrong approach to the issue of independence and self-sufficiency of the soul.

\* \* \*

Of the three reports – present in medievalists' elaborations – of the famous debate between John Pecham and Thomas Aquinas, one (Roger Marston) is incorrectly referred to the event. The other two, however, are in conflict with each other. The testimony of Bartholomew of Capua is, in addition, an indirect report that other Brothers, the Preachers gave him. The Pecham version, considering the situation at the University of Paris, seems rather unbelievable. Moreover, the analysis of the letters of

Pecham and his personality, indirectly undermines the credibility of his version of the debate. An analysis of his actions as Archbishop of Canterbury indicates that a man of such stubbornness, rough language and hostility, outspoken even towards his Brothers and subordinates, could have attacked Thomas openly, and live with this antagonism for many years.

In the result of the conducted analyzes, we may say that the act of forcing John Pecham by Thomas Aquinas to withdraw his view the issue of eternity

<sup>48</sup> In a letter from March 1287 to Archdeacon Ely, Pecham orders him to investigate the alleged slander. Apparently someone (maybe Dominican) was openly praying against him. Pecham wants the name and content of this speech / prayer (*Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, p. 943-944; see also D. Douie, *Archbishop Pecham...*, p. 296).

<sup>49</sup> R. Pasnau, *Olivi on the Metaphysics of Soul*, „Medieval Philosophy and Theology” 6 (1997), p. 109-132.

of the world during his master promotion at the University of Paris, was crucial. This event may have led to personal aversion towards Aquinas, and hence, to a closer look at his views.

As for the time and place of the debate, it can be assumed that it took place during one of the three quodlibetal disputes led by Thomas Aquinas in 1269-1271, and with a high degree of probability in 1270 (Q.III, q.2, a. 2). John Pecham could attack Aquinas when discussing the question of the body of Christ, the question connected to the issues of substantial form.

The importance of Pecham for the development of the issue of the plurality of

forms, apart from the impact of his Oxford condemnations, becomes apparent in the views of his student – Roger Marston. It can be assumed that it was Marston's works that constituted a certain intermediate link between Pecham and John Duns Scotus. However, this remains a subject for a separate analysis.

It seems that the dispute about the unity and plurality of forms – when we consider the Middle Ages – ends with condemnations of the mistakes of Peter John Olivi at the Council of Vienne. These condemnations contributed to the fall of the doctrine of the plurality of forms, at least in its 13th century form.

## Spór Jana Pechama z Tomaszem z Akwinu na Uniwersytecie Paryskim – przyczyny i skutki

**Słowa kluczowe:** Jan Pecham (Peckham), Tomasz z Akwinu, jedność formy substancjalnej, wielość form substancjalnych, Uniwersytet Paryski

Celem artykułu jest analiza XIII-wiecznego sporu, jaki zaistniał między Janem Pechamem a Tomaszem z Akwinu, dotyczącego problematyki jedności formy substancjalnej. Prawdopodobnie był to jedyny spór, w którym Tomasz z Akwinu musiał osobiście bronić jednego ze swoich fundamentalnych poglądów z zakresu metafizyki przed zgromadzeniem uczonych Uniwersytetu Paryskiego. Choć jest to zagadnienie ściśle metafizyczne, rozpatrywane było przede wszystkim w kontekście ontycznego statusu ciała Chrystusa między śmiercią a zmartwychwstaniem. Teologiczną kwestią było również zagadnienie relikwii ciał świętych. Artykuł będzie próbą zrewidowania stanu badań dotyczących możliwych przyczyn, przebiegu i skutków średniowiecznego sporu rozpoczętego w roku 1270 na Uniwersytecie Paryskim. Sama zaś problematyka jedności i wielości form w człowieku pozostawała do początku XIV jedną z najbardziej dominujących w sporach średniowiecznych.

Zaprezentowane badania pomijają rozległą problematykę argumentacji fi-

lozoficznej na rzecz analizy historycznych zależności (m.in. przynależności do dwóch różnych zakonów) oraz charakterystyki poszczególnych postaci tego sporu. Przede wszystkim przybliżenie sylwetki Jana Pechama, czyli tego, co wiemy o samym arcybiskupie i jego działalności, może być pomocne w ustaleniu przebiegu samego sporu. Niemniej analizowane kwestie nadal pozostają tematem dyskusji mediewistów.

Źródeł i świadectw dotyczących samego przebiegu słynnego wydarzenia na Uniwersytecie Paryskim jest niewiele. Co więcej, przedstawiają one sprzeczne wersje. Dysponujemy dwoma przekazami (wersja Pechama i Bartłomieja z Kapiui), oraz relacją Rogera Marstona, która błędnie była odnoszona do tego zdarzenia. Pozostaje kilka faktów, nie dotyczących bezpośrednio interesującego nas wydarzenia, ale mogących przybliżyć prawdopodobny jego przebieg. Przypuszczalnie inicjatorem tego sporu był Jan Pecham. Kwestią sporną wśród mediewistów pozostaje jedynie jego zaangażowanie w całą sprawę, jak również charakter formalny tego wydarzenia.

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