

ANGELIC SIN. THE SCHOLASTICS DEBATES BETWEEN THE END OF 13th AND THE BEGINNING OF 14th CENTURY

In the broad setting of the medioeval Scholasticism, between the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries, few theologians put the focus on one question: the angelic sin.

That is: how is it possible that, according to Aristotle, a perfectly intellectual creature can make an error of judgement and so to fall in sin? This is the most relevant aspect for the authors we have picked in exam, wich, rather than investigate the role and the participation of Lucyfer in human matters, they have an obsession with the possibility itself in the angelic sin. They consider the matter a real enigma to be solved.

In fact, Lucyfer is a real exception (almost impossible to be demonstrated) in a universe where the relationship between the reitional and the good seems to be undeniable. Furthermore, the fact the an intellectually perfect creature can make a mistake and chose the evil come to be impossible.

Ultimately, the question is: how is it possible to an angel to turn into a demon? That is, how is it possible for the Devil to rise?

This is the thorny question that the scholastic theologians are trying to answer and in this work we tried to reconstruct the debate upon the matter by a historycal-phylosophical view.

The question is particularly intersting in relation with the "Psychology of action" of aristothelic mould and it is linked with the debate between "intellectualists" and "voluntarists", which found it outburst between the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries.

This work is based particularly on the analysis of three doctrinal opinions: on one hand the Thomas of Aquinas' one, on the other hand Richard of Middleton and Peter John Olivi's ones. Nevertheless, there are many reasons for this choise, but there is one of them particularly worth of notice: in the play of the three mentioned authors we can retrace three threaties or, it would be better to say three sections of vaster plays, which seem to be the only ones that could be defined as "threaties of demonology" in the period between the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries.

In these texts the question of the angelic sin is directly faced: we are referring to q. 16 of the Quaestiones disputatae de malo of Thomas of Aquinas, to qq. 23-31 of the Quaestiones disputatae of Richard of Middleton (1290-1330) and to qq. 40-48 of the Summa of Peter John Olivi (1288-1295). The attempt was to analyse in detail, starting from a careful study of the texts, the theories of these authors, opportunely comparing them with the theories of the other interlocutors of the debate upon the angelic sin and placing them in their very intellectual context.

KEY WORDS: angelic sin, Lucifer, Lucifer's fall, angelic regret, the moment of the angelic fall, intellectualist, voluntarist, Thomas of Aquinas, Richard of Middleton, Peter John Olivi, scholastic demonology, demonology, scholastic philosophy