



**Moral Proof of the Existence of God in Selected Authors
of Second Scholasticism:**

**Melchior Cano, Domingo Báñez, Gabriel Vázquez,
Jacob Casimir Guerinois, Matthias Baričič**

PETER VOLEK

Catholic University in Ružomberok
Faculty of Arts and Letters
Department of philosophy

Abstract

Less common proofs of God's existence include moral proofs of God's existence. They are based on a certain experience of moral order or conscience and the need to justify its binding nature. Some authors follow Thomas Aquinas, especially his fourth way to God from the *Summa Theologica*. In this article, I will present an analysis of moral proofs of God's existence from the selected authors from the period of second scholasticism (Melchior Cano OP, Domingo Báñez OP, Gabriel Vázquez SJ, Jacob Casimir Guerinois OP, Matthias Baričič SchP). The aim of the article is to examine their assumptions, contributions, and arguments through analysis and formalisation. Finally, these moral proofs of God's existence will also be compared with each other. The contribution of this article lies in formalizing these arguments and revealing their assumptions.

Keywords: moral proofs of the existence of God, second scholasticism, formalisation, completeness of arguments, implicit premise

Introduction

Proofs of God's existence were already being developed in ancient times. It took many forms and shapes. Some were more common, others less so. Among the more common are historical, sometimes referred to as ethnological, physical, and metaphysical. Among the best known and most frequently analysed are the proofs of God's existence by Thomas Aquinas and Anselm of Canterbury. Among the less common is the moral proof of God's existence. It is based on a certain experience of moral order and the need to justify its binding nature. Some authors follow Thomas Aquinas, especially his fourth way to God from the *Summa Theologica*. In this article, I will present an analysis of moral proofs of God's existence from the period of second scholasticism. Several of them were written in a commentary on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. The aim of the article is to examine their assumptions, contributions, and arguments using formalization. I will present the arguments that I have been able to find, without claiming to be exhaustive. Thus, the evidence for the existence of God presented by the following authors from the Second Scholastic period will be analyzed: Melchior Cano OP, Domingo Báñez OP, Gabriel Vázquez SJ, Jacob Casimir Guerinois OP, Matthias Baričič SchP. Finally, these arguments will be compared with each other.

1. Moral proof of the existence of God of Melchior Cano

Brief thoughts on the formulation of moral proof of God's existence were already presented by Melchior Cano OP (1509–1560),¹ who brings them at the end of his interpretation of Thomas Aquinas' third way to God.

“... he who takes away God, takes away the human mind... because no one is moved except for the sake of an end. The end is given to the ultimate, therefore here is the supreme good, which must be God, therefore.”²

¹ Melchior Cano was born in Spain, joined the Dominicans, studied in Salamanca, where he later also lectured. He participated in the Council of Trent and was twice provincial. Among his most famous works is *De locis theologicis* (1563), in which he lists ten sources of theology. He also wrote commentaries on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, some of which remain in manuscript form. Enrique MARTÍNEZ, “Cano, Melchior,” in *Thomistenlexikon*, eds. David Berger, Jürgen Vijgen, Bonn: Verlag nova et vetera, 2006, pp. 79–83.

² “... qui tollit Deum, tollit mentem humanam ... quia nemo movetur nisi propter finem. Datur ultimis finis, ergo hic est summum bonum, quod oportet Deum esse, ergo ...”, Melchior CANO, “An Deus sit. Manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. Lat. 286, q. 3, ff. 122r–123v”, cited in: Mauro MANTOVANI, “The Proofs of God's Existence: The Discussion of the Value of the ‘Five Ways’ in the 16th-Century Iberian Commentaries on the ‘Summa Theologiae’”, in *Summistae. The Commentary Tradition on Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae from the 15th to the 17th Centuries*, eds. Lidia Lanza, Marco Toste, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2021, p. 217. This proof of God's existence is also taken up by Pedro de Sotomayor OP (1511–1564) in a very similar formulation. *Ibid.*, 220. The literal text of Pedro de Sotomayor cf. Pedro de SOTOMAYOR, “Ms. 111. Bibliothèque des Quatre Piliers de Bourges (France) (BQP, ff. 35r–41r),” in: Mauro MANTOVANI, *La discussione sull'esistenza di Dio nei teologi domenicani a Salamanca dal 1561 al 1669. Studio su testi di Sotomayor, Mancio, Medina, Astorga, Báñez e Godoy*, Roma: LAS – Angelicum Press; Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 2011, p. 51.

This proof can be reformulated to reflect its logical structure.

1. If God does not exist, then the human soul does not exist.
2. Everything is moving toward the goal.
- C God exists as the highest good.

Proof:

3. When a man acts, they are focused on the ultimate end – the highest good.
4. Man acts.
5. Man is focused on the ultimate end – the highest good. MP 3, 4
6. When a man is focused on the ultimate end – the highest good –
the ultimate end exists. MP 3, 5
- C God as the highest good exists.

Explanation of symbols:

MP ... Modus Ponens

C ... conclusion

Premises 3 and 4 are implicit premises. Premise 4 is a common belief among people. Premise 3 is a particular expression of the general premise 2. Premise 2 expresses Thomas Aquinas' view on the finality of all agents (Thomas AQUINAS 1926, cap. 2). The conclusion is a reformulation of premise 6. Melchior Cano's argument is incomplete; it assumes implicit rules.³

2. The moral proof of the existence of God of Domingo Báñez

Domingo Báñez OP (1528–1604)⁴ offers a slight elaboration of Thomas Aquinas' ideas in his commentary on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. He mentions one objection to Thomas Aquinas' fourth way to God and, in his response, emphasizes the transition from physics to metaphysics.

“Sixth, it is argued against that process, which in each degree of perfection necessarily leads to one first. On the other hand, in the genus of hot things one does not reach one singular hot thing which is the cause of others, but to one in species, to fire, but that argument does not conclude that there is

³ An incomplete argument with an implicit premise is called an enthymematic argument. Cf. Irving M. COPI, Carl COHEN, *Introduction to Logic*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994, 9th ed., First edition 1953, p. 294.

⁴ Dominic Báñez was born in Valladolid, Spain. After studying philosophy in Salamanca, he joined the Dominicans, where he also studied theology. His teachers included Melchior Cano and Pedro de Sotomayor. He lectured on philosophy at the monastery of San Esteban and then on theology in Salamanca. His works include commentaries on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* and work on divine grace, which brought him into conflict with the Jesuit Luis de Molin. Pope Clement VIII allowed both doctrines to be upheld. Enrique MARTÍNEZ, “Báñez, Domingo”, in *Thomistenlexikon*, eds. David Berger, Jürgen Vijgen, Bonn: Verlag nova et vetera, 2006, pp. 30-37.

a singular first good. ... To the sixth, it is answered that it is sufficient for the present purpose to reach one most perfect thing in one genus, whether it be one in species or singular, but later this argument is completed by showing that there can be only one substance simply which is the supreme good.”⁵

In his response, Domingo Báñez emphasizes that the objection remains at the level of physics in its search for causes. This must be supplemented and transcended by a metaphysical search for the ultimate cause, thereby complementing Thomas Aquinas’ argument.⁶ Several authors have reconstructed Thomas Aquinas’ fourth way to God using formal logic. In a recent version, Paul Weingartner mentions that Thomas Aquinas lacks a bridging principle from this world to the world beyond,⁷ i.e., to the metaphysical world, which he formulates as an additional premise. Thomas Aquinas does not mention this principle here, but he does mention it elsewhere (e.g. Thomas AQUINAS 1888, I, q. 13, a. 2). Báñez recalls this principle, but very briefly and descriptively. Báñez does not formulate it as a need to transition from a physical to a metaphysical explanation, but his statement can be understood in this sense. Nor does he clearly explain here that this first good is the only one. He refers to a reason that justifies this, but it is not clear what that reason is supposed to be. It can be this reason. In the third note following the presentation of the objections, he states that the arguments of Thomas Aquinas, used in the five ways to God to which he refers in the second note, can prove the existence of a single unmoved mover.⁸ Báñez’s moral proof of the existence of God is valid, but very brief and not clearly formulated.

⁵ „Arguitur, sexto, contra processum illum, qui in unoquoque gradu perfectionis necesse est pervenire ad unum primum. Contra, in genere calidorum non pervenitur ad unum calidum singulare quod sit aliorum causa, sed ad unum in specie, ad ignem, at illa ratio non concludit esse singulare primum bonum. ... Ad sextum respondetur quod sufficit ad praesens institutum pervenire ad unum perfectissimum in uno genere sive sit unum specie sive singulare postea vero perficitur ista ratio ostendendo quod non potest esse nisi unica simpliciter substantia quae sit summum bonum.“ Domingo BÁÑEZ, “Sequitur tractatus circa Primam Partem D. Thomae a Magistro D. Bañes explicando, Prologus, 1584, Ms 4951 della Biblioteca Nacional di Lisbona, (LT, ff. 28v – 32r)”, in Mauro MANTOVANI, *La discussione sull’esistenza di Dio nei teologi domenicani a Salamanca dal 1561 al 1669. Studio su testi di Sotomayor, Mancio, Medina, Astorga, Báñez e Godoy*, Roma, LAS – Angelicum Press; Salamanca, Editorial San Esteban, 2011, p. 236, 239.

⁶ „Quod autem dicitur maxime tale in aliquo genere, est causa omnium quae sunt illius generis: sicut ignis, qui est maxime calidus, est causa omnium calidorum ... Ergo est aliquid quod omnibus entibus est causa esse, et bonitatis, et cuiuslibet perfectionis: et hoc dicimus Deum.“ (Thomas AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, Romae: Ex Typographia Polyglotta S. C. De Propaganda Fide, 1888, q. 2, a. 3)

⁷ Cf. Paul WEINGARTNER, *God’s Existence: Can it be Proven? A Logical Commentary on the Five Ways of Thomas Aquinas*, Frankfurt am Main: Ontos Verlag, 2010, pp. 87 – 94. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110324624>

⁸ „Notandum, secundo, est quod ex cognitione creaturarum ... tria sunt quae divus Thomas hic demonstrat de Deo, essentiam quidem eius in quartam rationem removendo ab illo omnem limitem perfectionis quae reperitur in creaturis; virtutem autem efficiendi demonstrat in prima et secunda ratione, et sempiternitatem in tertia; denique in quinta ostendit divinitatem per viam excellentiae ipsius finis et boni. Tertio, notandum quod hae rationes ad duas res possunt afferri. Primo, ad probandum esse quidquid ens omnino immateriale et infinitum quod dicimus esse Deum. Secundo, ad concludendum inveniri in rerum natura

3. Moral proof of the existence of God of Gabriel Vázquez

A more independent moral proof of God's existence was formulated in the second scholasticism by Gabriel Vázquez SJ (1549–1604)⁹ in his *Commentary on the First Part of Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica*. In addition, Vázquez used the proof from the efficient cause, which he took in a modified form from Thomas Aquinas's second way to God, and the ontological proof of God's existence, which he took from Anselm of Canterbury.¹⁰

“The second demonstration, taken from moral philosophy, is of this kind. He who takes away God, must also take away first virtue and the punishments for vices after this life: for who can be a judge in that case? Especially since he who denies God must also deny the immortality of the soul. For if these were taken away, virtue, which even the most ruined of men venerate in others, would remain without a worthy reward. For it sometimes happens that the more modest and studious pass this life most miserably. Therefore, if no one were to reward after death the reward of true praise, which virtue by its nature demands, virtue would remain without a reward: but virtue admits that even the wicked deserve a reward. He would also be happier who, having been brought up in vices, would take care of his skin, since no punishments would remain for him. Therefore, he who once denies God, and consequently the immortality of the soul, also takes away worship towards God, the religion of oaths; for in short, he takes away all virtue; for the best would be the comfort of a bodily life, if besides it neither God nor any other immortal thing remained.”¹¹

quaedam praedicata quae sunt propria Dei non curando quomodo illi conveniant, ... potest etiam adduci ad probandum esse unum motorem subsistentem omnino immobilem qualem ponimus esse Deum.“ Báñez 1584, 237.

⁹ Gabriel Vázquez was born in Castile, Spain. He studied at the Jesuit college in Belmonte, law and philosophy in Salamanca, and under Dominik Báñez. He then joined the Jesuits and studied in Alcalá, Toledo, and Sigüenza. He taught in Ocaña, Madrid, Alcalá, and Rome as Suárez's successor and worked at the Congregation for the Index of Prohibited Books. Among his most important works is a commentary on Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*. Thomas MARSCHLER, “Vásquez, Gabriel”, in *Thomistenlexikon*, eds. David Berger, Jürgen Vijgen, Bonn: Verlag nova et vetera, 2006, pp. 690–694.

¹⁰ Cf. Gabriel VÁZQUEZ, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum in Primam Partem Sancti Thomae. Tomus Primus*, Compluti: Ex officina Ioannis Gratiani, apud viduam, 1598, disp. XX, cap. IV. Mauro MANTOVANI, “The Proof of God's Existence: The Discussion of the Value of the ‘Five Ways’ in the 16th Century Iberian Commentaries on the ‘Summa Theologiae’,” in *Summistae. The Commentary Tradition on Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae from the 15th to the 17th Centuries*, in eds. Lidia Lanza, Marco Toste, Leuven: Leuven University Press 2021, pp. 231 – 232. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1595mwk.9> In a systematic review of the proofs for the existence of God, Vázquez's argument is considered a version of the moral argument. REDAKTION, *Gottesbeweis, moralischer*, in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter, Bd. 3: G–H, Basel–Stuttgart: Schwabe 1974, pp. 832–833.

¹¹ VÁZQUEZ, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum in Primam Partem Sancti Thomae*, disp. XX, cap. IV. *Cutem curare* in Horace can also mean taking good care of oneself. A. OTTO, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1890, p. 104.

Vázquez's moral proof of God's existence is based on the moral order in man. It is a deductive argument. In simplified terms, it can be reformulated as follows: Whoever removes God from his life must also remove the rewards for virtues and punishments for vices in this life. Those who deny God must also deny the immortality of the soul. If no one rewarded a person's virtues after death, they would remain unrewarded. It would then be best to live in vice in this life. Virtues, however, admit of reward. This is Vázquez's moral proof of the existence of God. Similar ideas are already presented by Tertullian in his work *De testimonio animae*.¹² Vázquez's formulation of the moral proof of God's existence is quite concise, but logically quite clear. The logical structure of his argument can be expressed as follows:

1. If God does not exist, the soul is not immortal.
2. If the soul is not immortal, there is no afterlife.
3. If virtue exists, there is an afterlife.
4. Virtue exists.
- C Therefore, God exists.

Proof:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| 5. There is retribution after death. | MP 3, 4 |
| 6. The soul is immortal. | MT 5, 2 |
| C God exists. | MT 6, 1 |

Explanation of other symbols:

MT ... modus tonens¹³

Vázquez's argument is incomplete and, by failing to formulate the implicit premises, it is invalid. He does not formulate the fourth premise. Nor does he explicitly formulate a conclusion. Vázquez's moral argument for the existence of God is a specific case of the generally formulated moral proof of God's existence, which can be formulated as follows:

P1.If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist.

P2.Objective moral values exist.

C God exists.¹⁴ MT P1, P2

¹² Cf. TERTULLIANUS, *De testimonio animae*, Leiden: Brill, 1952, II.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004620919>

¹³ I would like to thank Peter Dvořák for his comments on the formulation of premises, conclusions, and formalization of moral proofs of God's existence by Gabriel Vázquez and Matthias Baričič.

¹⁴ Eric LYONS, "Chapter 5. The Moral Argument for the Existence of God", in *Does God Exist?* ed. Dave Miller, Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2017, p. 48.

Vázquez also incorporates the problem of the existence of the immortal soul into this structure of moral proof of God's existence. He also attempts to prove the existence of the immortal human soul. In addition, he works with the concept of virtue in this proof, which he does not define but presupposes. The implicit fourth premise, which assumes the existence of virtue, can be understood as confirmed by common human experience.

4. Moral proofs of the Existence of God of Jacob Casimir Guerinois

Jacob Casimir Guerinois OP (1640–1703)¹⁵ presents nine moral proofs of God's existence in his metaphysics, which is part of his seven-volume work *Clypeus Philosophiae Thomisticae* as volume 6. Their classification as moral proofs of God's existence depend on his definition of moral proof of God's existence. He understands moral proof of God's existence as that which is accepted by educated scholars, which cannot be questioned, and which is based on evident facts, sensory experience, or morals.¹⁶ This definition is quite broad and therefore includes proof of God's existence that others understand as physical or metaphysical, but he himself distinguishes between physical and metaphysical proof of God's existence. The first is based on the structure of created things. The second is based on the final cause. The third is based on the elements of earth and water. The fourth is based on the movement of celestial bodies. The fifth is based on the size of the sky and its elements. The sixth is based on beauty, order, and governance in the universe. The seventh is based on the conflict of the four elements. The eighth is based on man as a microcosm, on his organism. The ninth is based on wisdom and the ability to pray, which is a manifestation of the rational soul.¹⁷ Of these proofs of God's existence as moral in the narrower sense of the word, i.e., from the moral activity of man, only the last, the ninth, can be understood. It reads as follows:

“The ninth reason can be taken from the rational soul, whose nature, existence, and perfection demonstrate the existence of God. For the rational soul itself is of incomprehensible capacity, whether you consider

¹⁵ Jacob Casimir Guerinois was born in France. He joined the Dominicans. He studied in Bordeaux, where he later also lectured. He wrote the work *Clypeus philosophiae Thomisticae* (*The Shield of Thomistic Philosophy*) in four volumes, in which he opposed Cartesian philosophy. Jacobus QUIETIF, Jacobus ECHARD, “Jacobus Casimirus Guerinois”, in *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Recensiti, Tomus Secundus, Lutetiae Parisiorum: Apud J. P. Christophorum Ballard, et Nicolaum Simart, 1721, p. 762.*

¹⁶ „Morales hoc loco rationes intelligimus, quae a doctis juxta et indoctis percipiuntur : eo quidem validiores, quod in communem sensum magis incurrant, neque ab homine, qui sua utitur ratione, in dubium revocari possint. Quod enim minus acrem postulent attentionem, neque reconditam scientiam exigant, sed omnibus sine obviae, atque oculis pene sine subjectae, non ideo minus certae sunt, aut inconcussae; rationis quippe ex factorum evidentia, ex communi hominum sensu, vel moribus, aut experientia ipsa desumptae, non minus sunt firmæ, quam quae ex intima Philosophia depromuntur.“ Jacobus Casimirus GUERINOIS, *Clypeus Philosophiae Thomisticae contra veteros et novos ejus Impugnatores*, Vol. 6: *Metaphysica*, Venice: Apud Paulum Balleonium, 1710, q. III, a. 1, § 1.

¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, q. III, a. 1, § 1.

the sagacity of the intellect, the breadth and tenacity of the memory, the freedom of the will, or its natural powers for digesting food and distributing and assimilating nourishment. Indeed, in the rational soul, the image of Divinity is alive: for just as God is incorruptible and immortal, so is the rational soul: just as God is whole in the world, and whole in each of its parts, so the rational soul is whole in the whole body, and whole in each of its parts: just as God is intelligent and free, so the rational soul is intellectual and free. Finally, in confirmation of the well-known truth, which is brought forward, that there is God, it can be brought forward that men in sudden dangers look not to the Capitol, (says Tertullian in his book *De Testimonio Animae*) but to Heaven, where they see themselves destitute of human help. Therefore, by natural instinct, they then turn to higher things, namely, to invoke the help of the supreme Deity. From which it is clear, that the knowledge of the supreme Deity, or God, is naturally implanted in us. Hence the same author in the same place calls this method of argument, *the testimony of the soul naturally Christian*.¹⁸

Praying to God can be understood as the synergy of the faculties of reason, memory, and will. The mention of prayer to God can be understood as an auxiliary argument to further confirm the main argument, so I do not mention it separately. The main idea of this argument can be reformulated into the following statements.

1. The rational soul has the capacity for reason, memory, and will.
2. The capacity for reason, memory, and will are images of God.
3. If the rational soul is an image of God, then God exists.
- C Therefore, God exists.

Proof:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 4. The rational soul is the image of God. | MP 1, 2 |
| C God exists. | MP 4, 3 |

¹⁸ „Nona ratio desumi potest ex anima rationali, cujus natura, et existentia, atque perfectio, Dei existentiam demonstrant. Ipsa namque rationalis anima incomprehensibilis capacitatis est, sive sagacitatem intellectus, sive amplitudinem et tenacitatem memoriae, sive voluntatis libertatem, sive naturales ejus vires, ad concoquendos cibos, et ad distribuendum assimilandumque alimentum, consideres. Sane in rationali anima, viva est Divinitas imago: nam sicut Deus incorruptibilis est et immortalis, ita et anima rationalis: sicut Deus totus in mundo est, et totus in singulis ejus partibus, ita anima rationalis tota est in toto corpore, et tota in singulis ejus membris: sicut Deus intelligens et liber est, ita anima rationalis est intellectualis et libera. Denique in confirmationem notissimae veritatis, qua afferitur, Deum esse, adduci potest, quod homines in repentis periculis, non ad Capitolium, (inquit Tertullianus lib. De testimonio animae) sed ad Caelum respiciunt, ubi se humano auxilio conspiciunt destitutos. Idcirco autem sic naturali instinctu ad superiora tunc se convertunt, ut nempe supremi Numinis auxilium invocent. Ex quo liquet, naturaliter nobis inditam esse summi Numinis, sive Dei notitiam. Hinc idem author eodem in loco vocat istum arguendi modum, *testimonium anima naturaliter christianae*.“ Ibid., q. III, a. 1, § 1.

In his text, Guerinois elaborates on the idea from Tertullian's work *De testimonio animae* that even pagans do not pray to gods, but to God. Tertullian formulates this in more detail and with greater refinement.¹⁹ Guerinois refers directly to Tertullian in his text. He shows that he drew on other ideas that he mentions. The faculties of reason, memory, and will point to Augustine as the source of this idea.²⁰ This premise has theological origins. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between two rational faculties of the human soul, reason and will (Thomas AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 81, a. 3, c). According to him, memory does not belong to the rational part of the soul, but to the sensory part (*Ibid.*, I, q. 79, a. 6, c). He classifies memory among the internal senses (*Ibid.*, I, q. 78, a. 4, c). Guerinois has a complete argument for the existence of God, and therefore this argument is valid.

5. Moral proof of the existence of God of Matthias Baričič

Further moral proof of God's existence can be found in the writings of Piarist Matthias Baričič SchP. Based on a decision made at their general chapter in 1677, the Piarists were to follow the teachings of Thomas Aquinas.²¹ The manuscript *Metaphysics* by Piarist Matthias Baričič SchP (1728–1767) from 1751 also contains three proofs of God's existence.²² He took two of them from Thomas Aquinas, as he explicitly mentions. Physical proof of God's existence is Thomas Aquinas' first way to God. Metaphysical proof of God's existence is Thomas Aquinas' third way to God (*Ibid.*, I, q. 2, a. 3, c). From Baričič's *Metaphysics*, there is an interesting moral proof of the existence of God, as he himself calls it, which seems to be quite original. First, I will quote the entire text. Then I will present it in a simplified form, i.e., I will extract what is essential for its logical structure. The text of Matthias Baričič's moral proof of the existence of God:

“The existence of God is proven by moral argument as follows: The world has not existed from eternity, but was created at a specific point in time,

¹⁹ Cf. TERTULLIANUS, *De testimonio animae*, Leiden: Brill, 1952, II. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004620919>

²⁰ Cf. AUGUSTINUS, *De Trinitate libri XV, libri I–XII*, ed. W. J. Mountain, François Glorie, Turnhout: Brepols, 1968, X, 11, 17.

²¹ SYNOPSIS CONSTITUTIONUM RELIGIONIS CLERICORUM REGULARIUM PAUPERUM MATRIS DEI SCHOLARUM PIARUM, Cum Notis et Additionibus ex Literis Apostolicis et Decretis Capitulorum Generalium, Romae: Typis D. A. Herculis, 1698, p. 178.

²² Matthias of St. Joseph BARIČIČ, *Institutionum metaphysicae ternio primus*, Archive of the Catholic Parish in Brezno, Slovakia, Ms. J84 1751, p. II, cap. 1, Nr. 31. Matthias of St. Joseph Baričič was born in Viničné, which is located in what is now Slovakia. He joined the Piarists in 1747 in Prievidza. He studied philosophy in Kecske-mét and theology in Nitra. Baričič wrote this manuscript in Kecske-mét, where he was studying philosophy at the time. He taught Latin and Hungarian in Tokaj, Kecske-mét, Szeged, Sighetu Marmatiei, Nagy Karoly, and Sibiu. He died in Brezno, where his manuscripts on metaphysics and dialectics have been preserved. Cf. Stephanus LÉH, Andreas KOLTAI, *Catalogus religiosorum provinciae Hungariae ordinis Scholarum Piarum 1666–1997*, Budapest: Curia Provincialis Hungariae Scholaris Piarum, Societas pro Encyclopaedia Historiae Ecclesiasticae in Hungaria, 1998, p. 48.

as evidenced by the arts and inventions that were previously unknown to humankind, and this is the reason: If the world had existed since eternity, there would not have been so many technologies and machines necessary for general use observed throughout eternity, such as maritime navigation technology and mills, whether water or wind powered, or means of moving things by force, which are to be driven, and countless others, perfect for human use, which would never be forgotten and would have been known earlier, but it is clear that all of these were recently discovered, for the nautical [magnetic] needle was discovered by the Italians at the beginning of the 14th century, around the year 1402. Or certainly not much earlier if the art of printing is mentioned as having been brought from the Chinese region by Paul of Venice around the year 1400, For it is not now in existence, except in wooden tablets or carved surfaces, but in separate forms or characters, except when received by fibres and is to be referred to. First, indeed, it was John Gutenberg, silver engraver, who was among the citizens of Mainz, and then more specifically John, and his successor, also among the citizens of Mainz, around the middle of the 14th century, as Trithemius testifies in the *Chronicon Hirsaugiensis*, and to Adalricus Gerim, Hermanus from Constance, with two companions, where he was immediately accepted by Parisian professors, especially by Johannes Heynlin de Lapide. The first printed books, produced in France, appeared in 1470 at the Sorbonne, where the departments of philosophy and rhetoric, not sacred theology, were headed by William Fichet, rector of the ancient university. There are at least more ancient [inventions], which are mills driven by the rush of water, as Pliny mentions in his book *Historia Naturalium* lib. 18, cap. 18, who reports that in his own time, however, many mills were built in Italy which, although few in some places, were not powered by natural wind, but only by water, and were not completely independent in all parts. Procopius is the author of a story that says that Belisarius, Justinian's general, when besieged by the Goths in Rome, discovered the power and method of reducing whole grain by mixing millstones with water. But besides all this, since at a certain time the vast majority of the earth's regions began to be inhabited, it is commonly known from the colonies that had been established in those lands—regarding which historians speak—that the world did not exist from eternity but was created in time by omnipotent God. Therefore, it is necessary that omnipotent God exists.”²³

²³ „Existentia Dei probatur argumento morali hoc modo: Mundus ab aeterno non existit, sed in tempore conditus est, quod probant artes et inventa apud homines non pridem nota, ratio est; qua si mundus ab aeterno extitisset, tot artes tot machinae ad universae usum necessariae per totam aeternitatem non latuissent, ut sunt ars navigandi et moletrinae sive aquarum sive ventorum, aut procedendum vi agitari ad impelli consuetudo, aliaeque innumerae ad genus usui hominum perfectum et memoria ipsorum nunquam fuissent elapsa, et prius fuissent nota, atqui ea omnia recenter fuisse detecta constat nam acus nautica initio saeculi XIV circa

It is a deductive argument. It begins with the premise that the world has not existed since eternity, because it came into being at a specific point in time, as evidenced by technology and human inventions. If the world were eternal, then all human machines and inventions would not exist. He illustrates this with several examples. He mentions the art of navigating ships on water or in the wind, for example, the approach of ships was invented by the Italians in 1462. Similarly, he points out that the art of typography was adopted from the Chinese sometime before 1400 by Paul of Venice OESA (1369–1429), the invention of the printing press by Johannes Guttenberg (c. 1400–1468), the beginning of book printing in Mainz in the 15th century and then at the University of Paris by Johannes Heynlin de Lapide (1430–1496) and William Fichet (1433–1480) in 1470. Baričič adopted the idea of human inventions as proof of the existence of God against the eternity of the world from Augustine's work *The City of God* but placed them in a different context and used them in a moral proof of God's existence.²⁴ In addition, even in the colonies, people are convinced that the world is not eternal but was created by God in time. This is the general belief of a certain group of people. In this text,

anno 1402 ab Italis inventa; aut certe non multo ante si circa anno 1400 a Paulo Veneto e sinensi regione allata memoratur ars typographica, qua enim nunc in non est, nisi in tabulis ligneis vel areis incisis, sed formis aut characteribus separatis nisi filibusque accepta, referenda est. Primum quidem Ioanni Gutenberg equiti argentinensi, inter Moguntinos cives sgrafito deinde et specialius Ioanni fuit et successor itidem civibus Moguntinis circa medium XIV saeculi testis est Trithemius in Chronicon Hirsaugiensi, eamque artem Adalricus Gerim, Constantiensis Herrmanus cum duobus sociis in Universitatem studiorum, parisiensem continuo in tulit a professoribus academicis praecipue a Ioanne de Lapide Germano acceptus, primaque, quas in Gallia fici contigit librorum impressiones ad Annum 1470 prodierunt in Collegio Sorbonae, ubi non sententiae theologiae sacrae, sed in philosophiae ac rhetoricae sectiones a Guilelmo Ficheti Antique Universitatis rhetore habebantur; antiquiora sunt ad minus, qua aquarum impetu aguntur molendina nam Plinius in *Historia naturalium* lib. 18. c. 18 qui refert sua aetate tamen Italia multa molendina excitata fuisse, quae ad homine eorum paucis in locis erant in non, naturale vento sed solum aqua impellebantur, nonnisi omnibus suis partibus absoluta erant; quari Procopius author est, Belizarium Iustiniani ducem in Urbe Roma a Gothis obsessum invenisse virem et rationem ut molae aqua agitare in integrum frumentum diminuant; sed praeter haec omnia, quo tempore plurimae terrarum regiones inhabitari caperunt, vulgo notum est ex coloniis, quae in eas terras fuerat deductae, de quibus historicis loquitur, quo mundus ab aeterno non extiterit, sed in tempore a Deo omnipotente fuit conditus, Deum ergo omnipotentem existere est necesse.“ BARIČIČ, *Institutionum metaphysicae* ternio primus, p. II, cap. 1, Nr. 31.

²⁴ AUGUSTINUS, *De Civitate Dei*, Pars I, libri I–XIII, ed. Emanuel Hoffmann, Pragae-Vindobonae-Lipsiae: Tempsky-Freytag, 1899, XII, 10. The inspiration for this source was provided by Eugen Zelenák. Augustine uses this view to argue against a cyclical understanding of the world. Its proponents countered that at the end of one cycle, a few people would remain, and they would start a new cycle of humanity. Augustine understands history based on a literal interpretation of the Bible as lasting almost six thousand years. In his moral argument, Baričič does not argue theologically like Augustine, but philosophically. According to Baričič, if the world were eternal, there would not be so many inventions. The argument proves that humanity has not existed for very long. This can be reconciled with the claim that the world is eternal, and humanity was created recently. In order to block this possibility, there is an unspoken assumption that humans did not come into existence later. This statement conceals certain unspoken assumptions, or premises. Thomas Aquinas also accepted by faith the view that the world was created and had a beginning: “Supposito secundum fidem catholicam quod mundus durationis initium habuit ...” (Thomas AQUINAS, *De aeternitate mundi*, Roma: Editori di san Tommaso, 1976 (Opera omnia, editio Leoninae, XLIII), 1-2) He then examines the possibility of an eternal world. This is a logical possibility. And he accepts this possibility because there is no contradiction between the concepts of “world” and “eternal” (Thomas AQUINAS, *De aeternitate mundi*, pp. 81-210).

the logical structure is quite hidden, with a different order of sentences than in the logical reconstruction of the main ideas of this text. Therefore, it is appropriate to reveal its logical structure. We could reformulate this argument as follows:

1. If technology and inventions have existed for a certain period of time, then people have not lived forever.
2. If people have not lived forever, then the world has a temporal beginning.
3. If the world has a temporal beginning, then it was created by God.
4. If the world was created by God, then God exists.
5. Technology and inventions have existed for a certain period of time.
- C God exists.

Proof:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 6. People did not live forever. | MP 1, 5 |
| 7. The world has a beginning in time. | MP 2, 6 |
| 8. The world was created by God. | MP 3, 7 |
| C God exists. | MP 4, 8 |

Premise 2 is implicit. In addition, it uses certain non-obvious assumptions. It excludes the possibility that the world is eternal and that humans appeared later. Premise 3 is also problematic. In the Middle Ages, there were discussions about whether it was possible to accept an eternal world that was also created. Thomas Aquinas believed that we must accept by faith that the world was created and that the world had a beginning, but we can accept by reason that the world was created by God and, at the same time, that the world is eternal.²⁵ Baričič's moral argument itself is not complete because it assumes an implicit premise.

6. Comparison of analyses of moral proofs of God's existence

The first impulses in second scholasticism towards a moral proof of God's existence were given by Melchior Cano. Some of his premises are implicit, so this proof of God's existence is neither complete nor valid. Another moral proof of God's existence was provided by Dominik Báñez. Báñez supplemented the missing assumption in Thomas Aquinas' fourth way, the transition from the physical to the metaphysical plane. But it also fails to articulate this clearly, nor does it provide clearly justification for the uniqueness of the highest good. Both Baričič and Vázquez formulated moral proofs of God's existence among their proofs of God's existence, which are more detailed than other moral proofs of God's existence in second scholasticism. Vázquez formulated it earlier than Baričič, but

²⁵ For a discussion of the eternity of the world in the Middle Ages and details of the argument, see Richard C. DALES, *Medieval Discussion of the Eternity of the World*, Leiden: Brill, 1990. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004246676>

Baričič was apparently unaware of it. A comparison of the arguments of Baričič and Vázquez shows that both are incomplete.²⁶ They are based on implicit premises. However, their starting points and formulations are different. Vázquez starts from the need to reward good deeds and punish bad deeds. This also presupposes the existence of an immortal human soul. Vázquez does not explicitly formulate his conclusion, which is a shortcoming of his proof of God's existence. Baričič started from the idea that the world is not eternal, because many technologies and human inventions have been created. This proves that the world came into being at a certain point in time. The world could not have come into being on its own. Therefore, God is behind its creation. Ultimately, he comes to the conclusion that God exists. It can be assumed that morality is manifested in technological works and inventions that are intended to serve the good of humanity. Jacob Casimir Guerinois formulates nine moral proofs of God's existence, but his understanding of moral proofs of God's existence is very broad. In a narrower sense, as understood by other authors of the Second Scholasticism, only one of them is a moral proof of God's existence. He draws on Tertullian, whom he explicitly mentions, and Augustine. This argument is complete.

Conclusion

This article compares moral proofs of God's existence from the period of Second Scholasticism: Melchior Cano, Dominic Báñez, Gabriel Vázquez, Jacob Guerinois, and Matthias Baričič. With the exceptions of Báñez's argument, I have reformulated and formalized the arguments. Báñez's argument points to a missing premise in Thomas Aquinas' fourth way to God. Its recent formalization was provided by Paul Weingartner. I compared their assumptions. All the arguments mentioned here, except for Guerinois's, rely on implicit premises. Therefore, they are incomplete. Vázquez does not have an explicitly formulated conclusion. Baričič's moral proof of God's existence is quite original. Although he draws on some of Augustine's ideas, he uses them in a new context. Baričič uses many examples of human technical inventions and many historical figures. Despite the imperfection of many of the arguments mentioned here, it is worth noting the development of moral thinking in relation to the existence of God. These arguments are understood as philosophical arguments, not mathematical proofs.

Funded by the EU NextGenerationEU through the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovakia under the project No. 09I03-03-V04-00637.

²⁶ For an earlier informal comparison of moral proofs of God's existence by Vázquez and Baričič, see Peter VOLEK, *Piaristická scholastická filozofia v Uhorsku. Nové rukopisy z archívu v Brezne a ich vzťah k osvietenstvu* [Piarist Scholastic Philosophy in Hungary. New Manuscripts from the Brezno Archives and their Relation to Enlightenment], in *Kultúrne dejiny* 16, č. 2 (2025): 222-249. <https://doi.org/10.54937/kd.2025.16.2.222-249>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Handwritten sources

BARIČIČ Matthias of St. Joseph, *Institutionum metaphysicae ternio primus*, Archive of the Catholic Parish in Brezno, Slovakia, Ms. J84 1751.

Other sources

AUGUSTINUS, *De Civitate Dei*, Pars I, libri I-XIII, ed. Emanuel Hoffmann, Praegae-Vindobonae-Lipsiae: Tempsky-Freytag, 1899.

AUGUSTINUS, *De Trinitate libri XV*, libri I-XII, ed. W. J. Mountain, François Glorie, Turnholti: Brepols, 1968.

BÁÑEZ Domingo, "Sequitur tractatus circa Primam Partem D. Thomae a Magistro D. Bañes explicando, Prologus, 1584, Ms 4951 della Biblioteca Nacional di Lisbona, (LT, ff. 28v – 32r)", in Mauro MANTOVANI, *La discussione sull'esistenza di Dio nei teologi domenicani a Salamanca dal 1561 al 1669. Studio su testi di Sotomayor, Mancio, Medina, Astorga, Báñez e Godoy*, Roma, LAS – Angelicum Press; Salamanca, Editorial San Esteban, 2011, pp. 232 – 239.

CANO Melchior, "An Deus sit. Manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. Lat. 286, q. 3, ff. 122r-123v", cited in: Mauro MANTOVANI, "The Proofs of God's Existence: The Discussion of the Value of the 'Five Ways' in the 16th-Century Iberian Commentaries on the 'Summa Theologiae'", in *Summistae. The Commentary Tradition on Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae from the 15th to the 17th Centuries*, eds. Lidia Lanza, Marco Toste, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2021, pp. 231 – 232.

COPI Irving M., COHEN Carl, *Introduction to Logic*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994, 9th ed., First edition 1953.

DALES Richard C., *Medieval Discussion of the Eternity of the World*, Leiden: Brill, 1990. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004246676>

GUERINOIS Jacobus Casimirus, *Clypeus Philosophiae Thomisticae contra veteros et novos ejus Impugnatores*, Vol. 6: *Metaphysica*, Venice: Apud Paulum Balleonium, 1710.

LÉH Stephanus, KOLTAI Andreas, *Catalogus religiosorum provinciae Hungariae ordinis Scholarum Piarum 1666-1997*, Budapest: Curia Provincialis Hungariae Scholaris Piarum, Societas pro Encyclopaedia Historiae Ecclesiasticae in Hungaria, 1998.

LYONS Eric, "Chapter 5. The Moral Argument for the Existence of God", in *Does God Exist?* ed. Dave Miller, Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2017, pp. 44-61.

MANTOVANI Mauro, *La discussione sull'esistenza di Dio nei teologi domenicani a Salamanca dal 1561 al 1669. Studio su testi di Sotomayor, Mancio, Medina, Astorga, Báñez e Godoy*, Roma: LAS – Angelicum Press; Salamanca: Editorial San Esteban, 2011.

MANTOVANI Mauro, „The Proof of God’s Existence: The Discussion of the Value of the ‘Five Ways’ in the 16-th Century Iberian Commentaries on the ‘Summa Theologiae’,” in *Summistae. The Commentary Tradition on Thomas Aquinas’ Summa Theologiae from the 15th to the 17th Centuries*, eds. Lidia Lanza, Marco Toste, Leuven: Leuven University Press 2021, pp. 211-237.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1595mwk.9>

MARSCHLER Thomas, “Vásquez, Gabriel,” in *Thomistenlexikon*, eds. David Berger, Jörgen Vijgen, Bonn: Verlag nova et vetera, 2006, pp. 690-694.

MARTÍNEZ Enrique, “Báñez, Domingo,” in *Thomistenlexikon*, eds. David Berger, Jörgen Vijgen, Bonn: Verlag nova et vetera, 2006, pp. 30-37.

MARTÍNEZ Enrique, “Cano, Melchior,” in *Thomistenlexikon*, eds. David Berger, Jörgen Vijgen, Bonn: Verlag nova et vetera, 2006, pp. 79-83.

OTTO Augustus, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1890.

SOTOMAYOR Pedro de, Ms. 111. *Bibliothèque des Quatre Piliers di Bourges (France) (BQP, ff. 35r-41r)*, in MANTOVANI Mauro, *La discussione sull’esistenza di Dio nei teologi domenicani a Salamanca dal 1561 al 1669. Studio su testi di Sotomayor, Mancio, Medina, Astorga, Báñez e Godoy*, Roma: LAS – Angelicum Press; Salamanca, Editorial San Esteban, 2011, pp. 42 – 51.

QUIETIF Jacobus, ECHARD Jacobus, “Jacobus Casimirus Guerinois,” in *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Recensiti, Tomus Secundus, Lutetiae Parisiorum: Apud J. P. Christophorum Ballard, et Nicolaum Simart, 1721*, p. 762.

REDAKTION, *Gottesbeweis, moralischer*, in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter, Bd. 3: G-H, Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe 1974, pp. 832-833.

SYNOPSIS CONSTITUTIONUM RELIGIONIS CLERICORUM REGULARIUM PAUPERUM MATRIS DEI SCHOLARUM PIARUM, *Cum Notis et Additionibus ex Literis Apostolicis et Decretis Capitulorum Generalium*, Romae: Typis D. A. Herculis, 1698.

TERTULLIANUS, *De testimonio animae*, Leiden: Brill, 1952. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004620919>

THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, Romae: Ex Typographia Polyglotta S. C. De Propaganda Fide, 1888 (Opera omnia, editio Leoninae, IV).

THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra gentiles*, III, Romae: Typis Riccardi Garroni, 1926 (Opera omnia, editio Leoninae, XIV).

THOMAS AQUINAS, *De aeternitate mundi*, Roma: Editori di san Tommaso, 1976 (Opera omnia, editio Leoninae, XLIII).

VÁZQUEZ Gabriel, *Commentariorum ac Disputationum in Primam Partem Sancti Thomae. Tomus Primus*, Compluti: Ex officina Ioannis Gratiani, apud viduam, 1598.

VOLEK Peter, Piaristická scholastická filozofia v Uhorsku. Nové rukopisy z archívu v Brezne a ich vzťah k osvietenstvu [Piarist Scholastic Philosophy in Hungary. New Manuscripts from the Brezno Archives and their Relation to Enlightenment], in Kultúrne dejiny 16, č. 2 (2025): 222 – 249.

<https://doi.org/10.54937/kd.2025.16.2.222-249>

WEINGARTNER Paul, God's Existence: Can it be Proven? A Logical Commentary on the Five Ways of Thomas Aquinas, Frankfurt am Main: Ontos Verlag, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110324624>

prof. Dr. phil. fac. theol. Peter Volek

Department of philosophy

Faculty of Arts and Letters

Catholic University in Ružomberku

Hrabovská 1B

034 01 Ružomberok

peter.volek@ku.sk