In Memoriam

IVO THOMAS
(1912-1976)

OTTO BIRD

Logic lost a good friend and devoted follower in the death of Professor Ivo Thomas, February 2, 1976. He had a relatively short illness. The first symptoms of disease appeared during the summer; by November he was worse, and he consulted a doctor, was hospitalized and operated upon, only to learn that he had an inoperable cancer of the stomach; he returned home for Christmas and died a little more than a month later. His funeral was held at Sacred Heart Church, Notre Dame, with a eulogy preached by his old friend, Rev. Philip L. Hanley, O.P. He was buried in Niles, Michigan, where he had made his home since 1972.

Herbert Christopher Thomas was born in Kensington, London, January 17, 1912, of an upper middle class British family. His mother was a Muirhead, of Scots publishing fame, and a descendant of Matthew Boulton, who, with James Watt, established the first steam engine factory in Birmingham. His father's family were Welsh, engaged in the soap and leather business; his father was a barrister-at-law. His parents moved to Cirencester in the west of England when he was two, and he received his early education there at Oakley Hall. At the age of fourteen he entered Shrewsbury School, a "public school" that dated from Tudor times and that was known for its excellence in classical studies. In his final year there he was the head prefect, a position of considerable responsibility as well as honor. Half way through that year he became a convert to Catholicism and, because of that, was encouraged to leave the school. He completed his preparatory education with the Benedictines at their school in Downside. Although he had won a scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, he chose to enter The Queen's College, Oxford, where he studied from 1932-1935, graduating with first class honors in Litterae Humaniores, the "Greats" program. His tutor there was Mr., later Lord, Franks, who served as ambassador to the United States.

Upon graduation, Thomas entered the Order of Preachers and took the name Ivo. He did his philosophical studies with them at Hawkesyard Priory in Rugeley, Staffs, from 1936-1938, and his theology at Blackfriars, Oxford,

from 1938-1942. He made his final profession in 1939, was ordained to the priesthood in 1940, and received his licentiate in theology in 1942. For the next two years he served as chaplain to the Catholic Student Union at Edinburgh University. It was there during the war years that he became acquainted with many Polish and American soldiers and developed a love for the States that never left him. From 1944-1954, he was novice and student master and professor of philosophy at Hawkesyard Priory. He then returned to Oxford, where he was professor of dogmatic theology at Blackfriars from 1954-1958. In 1959, he received the Dominican's highest and most distinguished degree, that of master of sacred theology, for which he wrote a dissertation on the logic of Kilwardby.

Professor Thomas was a man of extremely wide interests. By early training (he began Latin at the age of six), he was a classicist in the old sense, and he never lost his love of Latin and Greek. His professional training was in philosophy and theology, and, as the bibliography indicates, his first publications were in these fields. His interest in logic was a relatively late development, the first work being reviews of Bocheński's Theophrastus and Peter of Spain (Nos. 39-40).[1] His first original contribution was No. 48: "CS(n): An Extension of CS," which introduces negative numbers into the axiomatization of syllogistic. His researches in logic continued to deepen and develop thereafter.

In the 1950's, on the recommendation of Prof. I. M. Bocheński, the University of Notre Dame inaugurated a research program in logic, and invited Thomas to become a visiting professor, from 1958-1960. He collaborated with Prof. B. Sobociński in establishing Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic and was a regular participant in his seminars. From 1959-1963 at Notre Dame and then from 1964-1974, at Ohio State University, Columbus, he taught in the summer school program for teachers and gifted students in mathematics, funded by the National Science Foundation. In 1963, he joined the faculty of the General Program of Liberal Studies at Notre Dame, becoming professor in 1970 and director of the Collegiate Seminar in 1973.

In January of 1972, Prof. Thomas was granted laicization by his ecclesiatical superiors and released from his priestly duties. On December 27, 1972, he was married to Dr. Deirdre La Porte, a colleague at the university. To her we are endebted for the careful and comprehensive bibliography of our friend, colleague, and teacher. R.I.P.

REFERENCE

[1] La Porte, D., "Bibliography of Ivo Thomas," *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, vol. XVIII (1977), pp. 195-207.

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

---

1. *Cf.* [1], p. 197.