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**Review: The Cambridge Companion to
Aquinas. Edited by Norman Kretzman and
Eleonore Stump**

Bos, E.P.

Citation

Bos, E. P. (1996). Review: The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas. Edited by Norman Kretzman and Eleonore Stump. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/10624>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Ockham's works were rather haphazard, in that he refers to Ockham's conclusions in certain "questiones" but cites neither the particular question, nor does he give the Latin. In spite of his justification for this (p. 164, n. 22) it would allow the reader to better judge the author's reading if one had more than the citation of merely the volume of the *Opera Omnia* and the page number (e.g., p. 165-6).

Despite its few shortcomings, Saarinen's work is a very valuable resource for the study of ethics in medieval philosophy, and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the theory of will and action in medieval thought.

Steubenville

KIMBERLY GEORGEDES

The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas. Edited by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump. Cambridge UP, Cambridge 1993, viii + 302 p. ISBN 0 521 43769 5 (*Cambridge Companions*).

This volume contains ten studies on Thomas Aquinas's thought. In the first ("Aquinas's Philosophy in its Historical Setting"), Jan A. Aertsen places Thomas's philosophy in its historical setting. He portrays Thomas as a theologian by profession; e.g. his writings have the form of traditional university proceedings (*lectio, questio* etc.). As theologian Thomas has become one of the outstanding philosophers in history. Language is considered to be important, because of the interest the medievals invested in God's word. The vision of God marks the fulfilment of human activity, as Aertsen says, and this implies that revelation is necessary to satisfy the human desire to know. The intellect should be guided by the light of faith (a double truth is therefore impossible); faith presupposes natural knowledge and grace perfects nature.

The second study ("Aristotle and Aquinas"), by Joseph Owens, is on the relation between the two thinkers. Cultural factors determine different kinds of philosophy: for the Christian Thomas the concept of being was most important, and, contrary to what Aristotle taught, the essence and the existence of a thing are not grasped with the same intellectual act. So the difference between Aristotle and Thomas can be characterized as follows: the first focuses on sensible *natures*, and the second on sensible *existents*. Thomas's philosophy is not just an extrapolation of Aristotle's, Owens concludes.

The third study is by David B. Burrell ("Aquinas and Islamic and Jewish Thinkers"), in which he points to Aquinas's attention—unusual among his contemporaries—for the writings of Maimonides and Avicenna. In Avicenna Thomas finds a guide for distinguishing between existing and essence; Maimonides is his inspiration in developing his project on the interaction of reason and revelation. Thomas seems to be more consistent than Maimonides and leaves matters that have to do with divine liberty (e.g. the eternity of the world) to faith (that is not just an opinion among others). As he has done also elsewhere, Burrell explains how Thomas criticizes Maimonides's view that terms applied to God are purely equivocal. Thomas takes refuge in analogy. The author notes that according to Thomas, man may truly assert that God knows (as far as he *uses* the terms), whereas it is not necessary for man to know the *way* of signification.

In "Metaphysics" (chapter 4), John F. Wippel discusses fundamental topics such as being, the analogy of being, participation, being and essence, subsistence, substance and accidents, matter and form. He points to difficulties in Thomas's thought, e.g. the transition from "esse" as denoting existence to "esse" as expressing an intrinsic act, and problems concerning participation. The composition of essence and being is required to explain the limited and participated presence of *esse* in beings. In agreement with other contributors to the volume, Wippel concludes that there is a close connection between philosophy and theology in Thomas's metaphysics.

One of the editors of the volume, Norman Kretzmann, discusses in "Philosophy of Mind" (chapter 5) the character of the human soul, the intellect and the will in all their relations (this text is accompanied by ten pages of informative notes). Kretzmann points out, *inter alia*, that according to Aquinas the intellect never operates as in an ivory tower, because in its cognition it always examines the corporeal nature in its natural setting. The will is free in different respects with regard to the intellect: it is orientated towards the good and moves the intellect coercively.

Scott MacDonald stresses in "Theory of Knowledge" (chapter 6) the general realist and anti-sceptical orientation of Thomas's theory of knowledge, and points to the notion of immediate propositions ("propositiones per se notae") as the foundations of *scientia*. MacDonald underscores Thomas's epistemological optimism.

In chapter 7, "Ethics," Ralph McNery discusses the theological character of human action. He winds up his contribution with an analysis of natural law: this is, he concludes, the theory that there are certain truths about what we ought and ought not do, and these truths are described as principles known *per se*.

In "Law and Politics" (chapter 8) Paul E. Sigmund places Aquinas's political and legal theory in its historical background and stresses its innovative character. He compares Thomas's conceptions of political order with modern views, to illustrate in how far Thomas can be called a democrat. Thomas's view on women and slaves are sketched. There is also (cf. chapter 7) a discussion of natural law (a fundamental notion for political theory), and, e.g. on the just war which is accepted by Thomas. In the final section Sigmund notes that the modern reader of Thomas, while rejecting many aspects (e.g. the monarchy, his qualified acceptance of slavery, his attitudes towards the Jews etc.) could find relevant Thomas's "belief in the human capacity to identify goals, values, purposes in the structure and functioning of a human person."

In the ninth chapter ("Theology and Philosophy"), Mark J. Jordan discusses Thomas's conception on the relation between his philosophy and theology. Jordan concludes that Thomas sees himself primarily as a theologian (cf. Aertsen); according to Aquinas, theology perfects philosophy, and faith can do much more than reason. All the efforts of philosophers are inadequate, and can only be defined as a *way* towards happiness, not as *providing* happiness. Jordan illustrates Aquinas's general view on the relation by an analysis of two problems, viz. the nature of virtue (pagan virtue is only incomplete virtue, lacking acquaintance with the truth), and the causality of the sacraments (Thomas's analysis leads us to rethink Aristotle's conception of causes, especially that of instrumental causality).

The final contribution (chapter 10) is by the other editor of the Companion, Eleonore Stump: "Biblical Commentary and Philosophy." The author discusses in the light of recent research the date of composition of Thomas's commentaries on the Scriptures. Commenting on Weisheipl's conclusions she analyses the nature of Aquinas's commentaries and points to the fact that Thomas was influential in his distinction between the literal and the spiritual sense. His commentary on Romans is especially rich in philosophical theology, Stump continues. To indicate how useful these commentaries are for philosophical and theological problems, the author discusses some problems from Thomas's commentary on Job, and contrasts his analyses with what the modern reader is likely to conclude.

The *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* is a very interesting, clearly written introduction to Thomas for anybody who wishes to know more than e.g. histories of philosophy or philosophical dictionaries usually offer. All main fields of Thomas' thought are covered; the authors do not discuss details of research on Thomas, and do not aim principally at discussions with other scholars. In their introduction, Kretzmann and Stump write "The works of the medievals in general would probably be more accessible now if their philosophical value had been recognized earlier (...)," and, somewhat below, "And understanding the contribution medieval philosophy makes to modern philosophy, seeing the continuities as well as the rifts between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, will

deepen our understanding of the works of the moderns." These continuities between the Middle Ages and later philosophy are not emphasized in all chapters: they come forward especially in those by Jordan and Stump.

Useful indexes complete the volume, which is beautifully published.

Leiden

E.P. Bos

Leen Spruit, *Species intelligibilis: from Perception to Knowledge*, vol. I: *Classical Roots and Medieval Discussions*; vol. II: *Renaissance Controversies, Later Scholasticism, and the Elimination of the Intelligible Species in Modern Philosophy*. E.J. Brill, Leiden-New York-Köln 1994 and 1995, 452 p. and 590 p. ISBN 90-04-0988-3-6/90-04-10396-1. (*Brill's Studies in Intellectual History*, 48 and 49).

All medieval and early modern philosophers who agreed that knowledge starts with sense perception faced a fundamental problem: how is it possible that we gain an *intellectual* knowledge of material things on the basis of purely *sensory* information? Philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition tried to answer this question by developing a sophisticated epistemological and psychological theory, the so-called "species theory." They claimed that we need special entities that mediate between sensory and intellectual reality. Given the classical distinction between different parts of the soul, they distinguished between two types of such entities. (a) When we perceive a thing, the sensitive part of the soul receives some sensory devices, the "phantasms," that represent the thing as it is given to us in that situation. (b) The active feature of the intellectual part of the soul then produces some other devices, the "intelligible species," that represent nothing but the cognitive content (the "quiddity" or essence) of the thing. Thus, when I look at a horse, I first receive a phantasm that represents this particular horse as it is given to me with a certain shape, a certain colour, etc. On the basis of the phantasm, the agent intellect then abstracts the intelligible species that represents the pure essence of the horse—the horse stripped of all individual qualities and all perceptual circumstances. The intelligible species is that by which (the *medium quo*) the horse is cognized, not that which (the *terminus ad quem*) is cognized.

It is obvious that such an explanation raises a host of questions. How can an intelligible species be abstracted from a phantasm? In what sense does an intelligible species represent a thing? And what ontological status does it have? In his rich, very comprehensive study L. Spruit discusses all these questions. He adduces an impressive number of texts to show that the species theory was one of the most influential theories in the history of cognitive psychology—a theory that was developed in its full-fledged form in the late thirteenth century but had its origin in ancient philosophy and was discussed throughout the late medieval period until the seventeenth century.

Spruit opens the first volume of his study with a long chapter on the Greek and Arabic background of the species theory. He then examines its development in the middle ages, paying particular attention to Thomas Aquinas, who is credited with presenting "the 'canonical' theory of intelligible species" (I, 156). In the following chapters the author discusses the numerous attacks on the species theory launched by late thirteenth and early fourteenth century authors. He convincingly shows that the controversy arose because it was not clear what ontological status and function the species have. Some critics (e.g. Henry of Ghent) took them to be entities that are literally impressed on the intellect, while others (e.g. Ockham) understood them as iconic representations that prevent the intellect from having a direct access to the material things. Spruit correctly points out that Ockham's critique was based on a *misunderstanding* (I, 295). When Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus defined the species as *similitudines* of extramental things, they took them to be not inner pictures but representations that have a structural similarity with the things. Spruit also examines the various medieval defences of the species theory and illustrates with a