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# Review of "Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe, CSB: Fortresses and Launching Pads" , edd. James R.Ginther and Carl N. Still

R. James Long  
*Fairfield University*, [rjlong@fairfield.edu](mailto:rjlong@fairfield.edu)

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A. Fidora examines the transmission of the Greek ethical compendium, the *Summa Alexandrinorum*, through its Arabic and Latin versions. The problem of incontinence is resolved by appealing to the role of experience in the application of general principles of the moral syllogism. Fidora concludes that the author of the compendium is probably Nicholas of Damascus.

The translation of the entire text of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Grosseteste (c. 1248) began a new era in medieval moral theory. M. Tracey and T. Hoffmann analyze the two most noted expositors of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, who had in common the desire not only to explicate the text of Aristotle, but also to resolve philosophical questions raised by it. But their solutions did not remain unchallenged for long. T. Kobusch argues that Henry of Ghent and Franciscan authors such as Peter John Olivi contributed a notion of the will's self-determination that overcame the psychological determinism of Greek intellectualism. Alexander Brugge then analyzes three of the eight propositions concerning the will from William de la Mare's critique of Thomas Aquinas, the *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, which were in turn defended by Richard Knapwell, John Quidort, and Robert of Orford, who asserted that the human being or soul as a unity makes moral decisions and not the will alone (272).

T. Noone shows that Duns Scotus's discussion arises from a logical consideration of the term 'incontinence', an equivocal term representing either one who exceeds a rational standard regarding touch or taste, or one who exceeds right reason generally (298). Scotus ultimately inverts the Socratic position by viewing incontinence as the will's disposition to mislead the intellect (303). William of Ockham's assertions about the will's absolute freedom to choose are well known, but M. Perkams argues that Ockham's notion of the will's absolute indeterminacy is more a theoretical description of the voluntary power than an explanation of its actual mode of operation. Perkams sees a greater role for the intellect in voluntary decisions than is usually ascribed to Ockham.

R. Saarinen, whose ground-breaking study provides the foundation for the volume, summarizes developments in the Renaissance and Reformation. Despite advancement in classical learning, the Italian commentators provided no original treatment of the problem. Other authors, such as Jacques L  vefre d'  tapes and his student, Josse Clichtove, did discuss new and illuminating examples, especially that of Medea, which subsequently influenced Protestant commentators on Aristotle (341). Even Luther, whose antipathy for Aristotle is well known, cited Medea as an example of sinning knowingly and willingly (350).

The articles in this volume are uniformly well-researched and well-written. The book demands much of the reader, since the articles appear in German, English, and French, but if the reader persists, he will be rewarded with a new awareness of the depth and originality of medieval thought.

ANTHONY CELANO

*Stonehill College*

James R. Ginther and Carl N. Still, editors. *Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe, CSB: Fortresses and Launching Pads*. Aldershot-Burlington: Ashgate, 2005. Pp. ix + 177. Cloth, \$99.95.

Sir Maurice Powicke famously wrote that one must live in the valley before one can appreciate the height of the mountains. Walter Principe spent much of his academic career editing and studying lesser and long-neglected masters of theology before ascending the heights represented by the thought of the Common Doctor. It is fitting, therefore, that this collection of studies to honor his memory—with contributions from colleagues and former students—reflect the full range of his interests: while five of the papers are concerned with Aquinas's thought, others explore less well-known figures, including Gueric of Saint-Quentin, Rupert of Deutz, Hildegard of Bingen, and Capreolus.

This memorial collection, moreover, represents the kind of historical theology to which the honoree was dedicated. The editors note the irony embodied by the *ressourcement* movement, in general, and Principe's work, in particular: namely, that Catholic thought recovered its vitality "not by looking outside itself, but rather by looking to its own past."

Exemplifying this approach is Joanne McWilliams's study of Augustine's first foray into Trinitarian theology, which was shaped by his polemic against the Manichees.

Abigail Ann Young's contribution sketches the visionary and prophetic theologies of Rupert of Deutz and Hildegard of Bingen, emphasizing their similarities as a corrective to received opinion, which, for the most part, underscores their differences.

Basing her study in her doctoral work under Principe's direction, Pamela Reeve explores Aquinas's thinking on what are termed "higher cognitive studies"—in other words, dreams, raptures, and finally, the beatific vision. Faithful to Thomas's conviction that the extraordinary must be grounded in the ordinary, Reeve traces the metaphysical foundations of cognition, incorporating in her study recent work on the epistemology of mystical states.

For a *Festschrift* to honor Jean-Pierre Torrell on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday (*Ordo sapientiae et amoris* [Fribourg, 1993]), Principe had contributed a piece entitled, "Guerric of Saint-Quentin OP on the Question: *Utrum Filius Dei esset incarnatus si homo non peccasset?* [Would the Son of God have been born if man had not sinned?]." It was therefore poetic symmetry that Torrell should return the favor for the book under review and offer a contribution entitled, "Christology in the *Quodlibets* of Guerric of Saint-Quentin: A Precursor of Thomas Aquinas?"

James Ginther, one of the editors, warns his readers of the tendency to portray medieval theology in terms of the neo-scholastic model, overlooking the centrality of the authoritative text for the theologian, the Bible. The latter, he points out, was a text that was dispersed throughout many resources: *summae*, *Sentences* commentaries, disputed questions, even the liturgy.

Drawing on his own extensive project of explicating theological issues from the vantage of natural philosophy and medicine, Philip Reynolds here explores the problem of the kind of causality exerted by the sacraments. How can a material cause (the matter of the sacrament—water, bread, oil, and so forth) produce an effect that is spiritual (grace)? It would seem, on the face of it, a violation of the principle of causality. Rejecting the view that the sacraments were merely occasional causes, Aquinas attempts to resolve the difficulty by inventing a new distinction, namely, "instrumental efficient causality"; this term entails the claim that the instrument contributes *in some way* to the efficient causing of grace in the soul by God. Reynolds carefully weighs Thomas's solution, comparing it both with earlier scholastic sacramentalologies and with the analysis ventured by Bonaventure.

Mark Johnson looks at the structure of Aquinas's ethical teaching in the *Secunda pars* of the *Summa theologiae*. He quite properly acknowledges his debt to Leonard Boyle's magisterial book on the setting of the *Summa*, but contributes further context with respect to Dominican pastoral literature of the mid-thirteenth century. Johnson's documentation is formidable, but his often tortured syntax makes for a less than easy read.

A co-editor, Carl Still studies the epistemology of faith, taking as his foil the recent claim of John Jenkins that emphasized the role of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the assent of faith. Focusing on the text in the *Summa theologiae*, Still attempts to resolve the paradox that, though the assent of faith be certain, the things of faith (the Trinity, for example, or the Incarnation) remain beyond the believer's grasp.

From his recent work on the history of Thomism, Romanus Cessario offers a brief sketch of Capreolus, the *princeps Thomistarum*, on the same subject. Opposing the infamous Durandus (*durus Durandus* according to his epitaph), Capreolus anchors the certainty of faith not only in God's speaking through his Church but also in the living of the "theological life."

Lawrence Dewan's contribution is ostensibly aimed at refuting Swinburne's provocative claim that "if there is one God, then there are three and only three Gods," but it is, in truth, a corollary of a wider project, expounded in several studies, of Thomas Aquinas's position on the late-Platonic doctrine concerning the necessary self-diffusiveness of the good. With his accustomed lucidity, Dewan argues that God necessarily wills only God, and that the

being of creatures adds nothing to the divine goodness. To be God, in other words, God does not need to produce creatures, but is free so to produce.

In an inspired move, the editors invited Charles Principe C.S.B., who knew the honoree as brother, teacher, and confrere, to write an appreciation. This reviewer would like to add a personal anecdote, which displays the same kind of wry and subtle wit so appreciated by his younger brother, and indeed by all who knew him. In 1987, when St. Petersburg was still Leningrad, several of us conferees were being conveyed around the city by bus and shown the sites by a Party member. Coming to a magnificent, multi-colored, onion-domed church, the guide intoned that it was now the Ministry of Something-or-Other, but that it had been the church of the Most Holy Trinity. Walter Principe turned to me and whispered, "That's what they call process theology."

R. JAMES LONG

*Fairfield University*

Richard Cross. *Duns Scotus on God*. Ashgate Studies in the History of Philosophical Theology. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005. Pp. xi + 289. Paper, \$34.95.

In this volume, Richard Cross gives us an excellent treatment of Duns Scotus's teaching on God, admirable for both its comprehensiveness and philosophical rigor. Scotus's positions on God's existence and nature, and on the Trinity, are reconstructed and evaluated with close attention to their argumentative soundness. Cross's method is particularly well-suited to his subject. As he notices, Scotus is, among theologians, "the least likely to appeal to mystery, and most likely to try to solve a problem by intellectual gymnastics" (8). For this reason, Cross felicitously calls him "*par excellence* the philosopher's theologian" (*ibid.*). Readers should not expect to find here an easy introduction to Scotus's theological achievement. The content of this book is "theology unashamedly at its most complex and specialized, in perhaps its most technically proficient philosophical practitioner" (3). Instead of proposing just another overview of Scotus's doctrine of God, Cross follows Scotus and his contemporaries in their passion for "sorting out micro-problems with particular issues in what we would call systematic theology" (9). Not surprisingly, this choice sometimes results in passages of exacting technicality. But the philosophical reward is assured.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to Scotus's demonstration of God's existence, and a discussion of his nature and attributes. The second and larger part is a study of Scotus's Trinitarian doctrine. In the first part, Cross painstakingly reconstructs each element of Scotus's cosmological argument for the existence of God. His analysis is particularly commendable for making clear that, although Scotus's demonstration is based on necessarily true premises, the notion of modality relevant here requires reference to a causal power, not to logical possibility. This is in contrast with what Scotus does elsewhere. Concerning divine attributes, Cross duly stresses the privileged role of infinity over simplicity and unicity. The second part is perhaps even more interesting. This is largely due to Scotus's opinion—not unique, but not common among scholastic theologians—that it is possible to provide rational arguments in favor of there being a Trinity of persons. As Cross notices, Scotus admits that these arguments are not demonstrative, since they are grounded on premises that do not have the degree of evidence required for a demonstration (128). These premises (which Scotus takes from Augustine) concern some positions in the philosophy of mind about the role of memory as a principle of production of a thought-act. Cross does a wonderful job of illuminating Scotus's rigorous application of the Augustinian insight.

The book ends with an appendix devoted to religious language and divine ineffability. Here Cross straightens out a common misunderstanding of the notion of univocity, often interpreted as a doctrine concerning things instead of concepts.

Apart from Scotus's passion for arguments, Cross's analysis allows the reader to discern some general trends in his theological output. These issues, while not unique to Scotus,