



## REVIEWS

The New Cambridge Companion to Aquinas edited by Eleonore Stump and Thomas Joseph White, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2022, pp. xvii + 408, £26.99, pbk

Cultural critics have noted that the recent decades have been, at least in the world of television, the cinema, and now streaming media, a period of the *reboot*. Generally speaking, a reboot is the revisiting or representation of an already-existing story or franchise in a way simultaneously altered and familiar. We might be forgiven, then, to regard *The New Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (2022), edited by Eleonore Stump and Thomas Joseph White OP, as a reboot of a publication in the same series from nearly thirty years prior, namely *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (1993), edited by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump.

As part of the *Cambridge Companion* series, both the new release and the original share much in common. They aim to be, in the words of Cambridge University Press, an ‘authoritative guide, written by leading experts’, in this case on the life and thought of St Thomas Aquinas. As with all *Cambridge Companions*, both the new and the old *Companion to Aquinas* strive for a kind of breadth, covering key aspects of the philosophy and theology of the Angelic Doctor, considering not only historical and exegetical questions but also those generated by the concerns and presuppositions of the modern reader. In this way, the *New Companion*, like the old, is suitable as an introduction to the thought of Aquinas to those unfamiliar with his work, while also being of use to Thomists, providing access to the perspectives and questions of leading scholars of Aquinas as well as the debates and questions that are, at present, of particular interest. In addition to sharing a common editor, Eleonore Stump, joined in the old by (the late) Norman Kretzmann and in the new by Thomas Joseph White OP, works of all of the contributors of the old save three (Ralph McInerny, Mark D. Jordan, and Paul E. Sigmund) appear in the general bibliography of the new. Moreover, as one would expect from a work meant to introduce the reader to Aquinas’s thought, the old and new share several similar topics: an overview of the life and historical setting of Thomas Aquinas, his metaphysics, his epistemology, and his ethics.

That said, of the sixteen essays in the *New Companion*, only one (chapter 6 by Eleonore Stump) is written by a contributor to the old edition. The other contributors, some new scholars, others in their prime, are nonetheless all representative of Thomistic scholarship of the new millennium.

The *New Companion*, in contrast to the old, has a more explicit organisation of themes. After an introduction to the work by the two editors, and following Part I (‘Life and Works’), a biographical essay by Dominic Legge OP, itself heavily but not exclusively indebted to the 2015 revision of the work of Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, the work is divided into four more parts. Part II, ‘Metaphysics and the Ultimate Foundation of


Reality', is the longest of these, with five essays: 'First Principles: Hylomorphism and Causation' (Jeffrey E. Brower), 'Essence and Existence, God's Simplicity and Trinity' (Thomas Joseph White OP), 'Goodness and Being, Transcendentals, Participation' (Gaven Kerr), 'The Metaphysics of Creation: Secondary Causality, Modern Science' (James Dominic Rooney OP), and 'The Nature of Human Beings' (Eleonore Stump). Parts III ('Epistemology') and IV ('Ethics') have three essays each. In the former, one finds 'The Nature of Cognition and Knowledge' (Therese Scarpelli Cory), 'Intellectual Virtues: Acquiring Understanding' (Angela Knobel), and 'Intellect and Will: Free Will and Free Choice' (Michael Gorman); in the latter, 'Grace and Free Will' (Tobias Hoffmann), 'From Metaethics to Normative Ethics' (Colleen McClusky), and 'Infused Virtues, Gifts, and Fruits' (Andrew Pinsent). Part V, 'Philosophical Theology', rounds out the work with 'Original Sin' (Brian Leftow), 'The Incarnation' (Timothy Pawl), 'Evil, Sin, and Redemption' (Thomas Williams), and 'Resurrection and Eschatology' (Simon Gainé OP). While, as is clear from this overview of the contents, there is a generally more philosophical than theological orientation to the *New Companion*, it is also the case that this edition is more explicitly theological than the older edition. Five of the essays (the entirety of Part V as well as the final essay of Part IV) are all explicitly theological in topic and perspective, even if sensitive to the philosophical questions adjacent to these theological concerns. Furthermore, other essays, such as the essays by White and Kerr, while initially philosophical in orientation, both move from the handmaid to the queen, the former to a consideration of the Trinity and its implications for divine simplicity, the latter connecting the participation of creatures in *esse* to Christian doctrine about God's love for sinful, wayward creatures.

For the most part, this work commendably presents the thought of Thomas Aquinas in an approachable way, one that does not shy away from presenting Thomistic thought on its own terms with its own distinctions (e.g., Gorman's admirable refusal to frame Aquinas's account of the will in terms of libertarianism or compatibilism), while nonetheless being attentive to making what might seem arcane in scholastic terminology perfectly clear to a modern reader (e.g., Cory's essay on cognition and knowledge being a model for this kind of work). Furthermore, the work is almost in its entirety free from contentious readings, some authors (such as Gorman just noted on the libertarian-compatibilism debate or Kerr on the status of beauty as a transcendental) either explicitly avoid what is contentious or briefly advert to it so as to move on to what might be broadly accepted across readers of Thomas Aquinas.

The unhappy exception to this approach is Stump's essay on human nature (chapter 6). The initial part of the chapter is a good example of directing the reader, especially if unfamiliar with Aquinas, to the properly material, bodily character of human nature, putting Thomistic thought into more contemporary language to forestall the unwary reader's presumption that Thomas or Christian thinkers in general must necessarily hold to some kind of Platonic or Cartesian dualism. The problem is that Stump claims that the corruptionist, and perhaps also incompletenessist, reading of Aquinas re: the separated soul (viz. that the soul is not a [complete] person) entails 'theological positions that are bizarre or even heretical' (p. 138), and are not only 'theological gibberish' but also 'contradicted by Aquinas's explicit claims' (p. 140). Why? Stump claims that 'Christ' is what she calls a 'composite', 'fully human and fully divine',

but in such a way that if ‘only the second person of the Trinity in his divine nature’ descended into Hell, this would entail that Christ did not (p. 139). This view is intolerable for Thomas specifically but for Chalcedonian Christology in general. Indeed, treating ‘Christ’ as a subject other than the eternal Word is materially adjacent to Nestorianism. On Thomas’s, and indeed orthodox, Christology, there is no subject or *suppositum* ‘Christ’ other than the uncreated, eternal Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Indeed, the ‘smoking gun’ she cites from *ST III q. 52 a. 3* (incorrectly cited in n. 48 as article 2) actually establishes the exact opposite claim to her own. In this article, Thomas notes that *totus Christus*, the whole Christ, refers to the *persona increata*, such that the whole Christ is said during the *triduum mortis* to have been in the tomb (because his body was there, which was united to the Word), in Hell (because his soul was there, which was united to the Word), and everywhere (by reason of the divine nature). In addition, Stump maintains that, according to Aquinas, the resurrected body ‘is not a reassembly of bodily bits that had previously composed the body’ (p. 126). The problem for Stump is that she rejects the view that Aquinas explicitly endorses, namely that numerically the same matter will be the matter for the resurrected body (e.g. *ScG IV.81, Compendium I.153, Quodlibet XI.6, in Iob c. 19*).

Despite this flaw, the work as a whole is an outstanding study in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. It is highly recommended for anyone beginning to explore the work of the Aquinas as well as for those long familiar with his work but seeking to know what contemporary scholarship has to add to the centuries-old, continuous engagement with Thomas’s thought. Not every reboot is merely a rereading of old ground, and in *The New Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, the reader will certainly be brought to new and helpful insights in the thought of the Angelic Doctor.

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In his allocution to the Roman Rota in 2022, Pope Francis made the following comment:

Although synodal work is not strictly procedural in nature, it should be placed in dialogue with judicial activity, in order to foster a more general rethinking of the importance that the experience of the canonical process has for the lives of the faithful who have experienced a marriage failure and, at the same time, for the harmony of relationships within the ecclesial community. Let us then ask ourselves, in what sense does the administration of justice need a synodal spirit?