

Publications of Tobias Hoffmann

hoffmann@cua.edu

<http://philosophy.cua.edu/faculty/hoffmann/>

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In Progress

Free Will and the Rebel Angels in Medieval Philosophy. Monograph under contract with Cambridge University Press; state of completion: 80%. Deadline September 2019.

This book discusses medieval theories of free will and rational agency, focusing on 1220–1325 in the Latin West. It contains three parts: Part I presents in broad strokes theories of free will from Anselm of Canterbury to Peter Lombard and then offers a concise account of the free will debate from William of Auxerre to William of Ockham. Part II studies the metaphysical problem of how evil could be first caused by good creatures, from Augustine until Duns Scotus. Part III investigates how medieval thinkers explain the possibility of “ideal agents” – persons in optimal psychological conditions – doing evil. They discuss this in order to explain the Christian doctrine of the sin of the angels (i.e., a freely made transgression of the divine law). These discussions of free will occasioned by the attempt to explain difficult, seemingly contradictory aspects of the evil angels’ sin are full of philosophical treasures largely ignored by scholars.

John of Pouilly’s Quodlibetal Questions on Intellect and Will. Critical edition with doctrinal and historical study, co-authored with Chris Schabel.

A critical edition of John of Pouilly’s *Quodlibet* II, qq. 11–14 and *Quodlibet* IV, qq. 6–7, in which John discusses key issues of moral psychology from a decidedly intellectualist point of view. Throughout, John is deeply influenced by his master Godfrey of Fontaines, while Henry of Ghent is his favorite target of critique. The book will contain a historical study of the entire corpus of John’s quodlibetal questions (by Chris Schabel) and a doctrinal study (by myself).

Monographs

Creatura intellecta: Die Ideen und Possibilia bei Duns Scotus mit Ausblick auf Franz von Mayronis, Poncius und Mastrius [Ideas and Possibles in Duns Scotus and Its Fortune in Francis of Meyronnes, Poncius and Mastrius]. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters – Neue Folge 60. Münster: Aschendorff, 2002.

The most controversial aspect of the interpretation of Scotus’s modal theory concerns the question of whether things are possible because God knows them to be possible, or whether they are possible independently from God. I argue that Scotus thought that the possibles are possibles because of God’s knowledge of them. I adduce a number of relevant texts that previous 20th century discussions of this interpretational problem have not taken into account. In addition, I discuss the modal theory of Francis of Meyronnes (14th century) as well as the reception of Scotus’s modal theory by two Scotists of the 17th century, i.e., John Punch and Bartholomew Mastrius.

Reviewed in:

- *Antonianum* 76 (2003): 721–3. (Gennaro Auletta)
- *Archives de Philosophie* 69 (2006): 507–8. (Jacob Schmutz)
- *Collectanea Franciscana* 73 (2003): 386–7. (Bernardino de Armellada)
- *The Modern Schoolman* 81 (2004): 151–4. (John P. Doyle)
- *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 110/1 (2003): 152–5. (Matthias Perkams)

- *Religious Studies* 39 (2003): 489–91. (Richard Cross)
- *The Review of Metaphysics* 57/3 (2004): 622–5. (Steven P. Marrone)
- *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 87 (2003): 788–9. (Édouard-H. Wéber)
- *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 102 (2004): 524–7. (Gérard Sondag)
- *Speculum* 79 (2004): 206–8. (Thomas Williams)
- *Theologie und Philosophie* 78 (2003): 105–8. (Axel Schmidt)
- *The Thomist* 66/4 (2002): 643–7. (Ansgar Santogrossi)

Edited Collections

Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics. Co-edited with Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams. Cambridge University Press, 2013. Paperback edition: 2015.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is the text which had the single greatest influence on Aquinas's ethical writings. The historical and philosophical value of Aquinas's appropriation of the *NE* is debated. Each chapter of this book covers a major topic of the *NE*. The contributors were invited to provide (1) a summary of Aristotle's position, corroborated by contemporary Aristotelian scholarship; (2) a treatment of the relevant issue(s) in Aquinas's *Ethics* commentary and in his systematic treatments (esp. *In Sent.* / *ST*); (3) an assessment of the philosophical significance of his interpretation or transformation of Aristotle. The essays show Aquinas to be a highly perceptive interpreter, but also one who brings certain presuppositions to the *NE* and alters key Aristotelian notions for his own purposes.

Reviewed in:

- *Claremont Review of Books* 15/1 (Winter 2014/15): 77–8. (C. J. Wolfe)
- *The Heythrop Journal* 56/4 (2015): 692–3 (Sr. A. M. Surmanski O.P.)
- *International Philosophical Quarterly* 54/3 (2014): 359–61. (Tina Baceski)
- *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 52 (2014): 376–7. (Anthony Celano)
- *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 14 (2017): 773–6 (W. Scott Cleveland)
- *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2014.06.19: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/48842> (Andrew Pinsent)
- *The Thomist* 81 (2017): 306–9 (Christopher Kaczor)

A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 35. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012.

All scholastic theology masters pronounced themselves on angelology. The questions concerning angelic cognition, speech, free decision, movement, etc. are springboards for profound philosophical discussions that have to do with anthropology and metaphysics no less than with angelology. The chapters of this book cover the history of philosophical discussions of angels from Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius until the late middle ages. Instead of an author-by-author approach, the focus is rather on seminal ideas.

Reviewed in:

- *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21 (2013): 201–3. (Isabel Iribarren)
- *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 61 (2014): 250–53. (Gioacchino Curiello)
- *International Philosophical Quarterly* 54 (2014): 110–2. (Joseph W. Koterski)
- *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65/1 (2014): 168–9. (Wayne J. Hankey)
- *Laval théologique et philosophique* 69/3 (2013): 649–50. (Yves Laberge)
- *Religious Studies Review* 39/4 (2013): 277. (John T. Slotemaker)
- *Sixteenth Century Journal* 44 (2013): 825–6. (Byron Nelson)

Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present. Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 49. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008.

Thirteen original essays examine weakness of will (or incontinence), that is, the phenomenon of acting contrary to one's better judgment. The volume covers all major periods of western philosophy, from Antiquity (Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine), through the Middle Ages (Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Dante) and the modern period (Montaigne, Descartes, Kant, Nietzsche) down to the present (with an essay by Alfred Mele and one by Alasdair MacIntyre).

Reviewed in:

- *International Philosophical Quarterly* 50 (2010): 402–4. (Brendan Palla)
- *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47 (2009): 466–7. (Petter Korkman)
- *Metapsychology Online Reviews* 2 Mar 2010, vol. 14/9. (Christian Perring)
http://metapsychology.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=book&id=5418&cn=394
- *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2008-07-03: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23727> (Byron Williston)
- *Quaestio: Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 8 (2008): 627–35. (Anna Arezzo)
- *The Review of Metaphysics* 64 (2010): 148–50. (Brandon Zimmerman)
- *The Thomist* 72 (2008): 673–7. (Mary Beth Ingham)

Das Problem der Willensschwäche in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie / The Problem of Weakness of Will in Medieval Philosophy. Co-edited with Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams. *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales Bibliotheca* 8. Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2006.

This volume contains fourteen contributions to the topic of weakness of will (or *akrasia*, incontinence) in medieval philosophy. It presents Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian medieval accounts of *akrasia*, many of which have not been priorly the object of scholarly writing. Weakness of will is a test case for a wider range of problems in moral psychology and ethical theory. The articles collected in this volume give insight into a variety of accounts of practical rationality that were directly or indirectly influential on modern thinkers. The temporal framework of the volume exceeds the Middle Ages on both ends by including Aristotle and authors from the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Reviewed in:

- *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 32 (2007): 193–8. (Michael Kühler)
- *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 82 (2008): 366–9. (Mary Beth Ingham)
- *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 45 (2007): 494–5. (Anthony Celano)
- *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2007-04-24: <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/25279> (Martin Pickavé)
- *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 114 (2007): 452–5. (Isabelle Mandrella)
- *Quaestio: Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 8 (2008): 635–42. (Giovanna d'Aniello)
- *The Review of Metaphysics* 60 (2007): 865–6. (John M. Connolly)
- *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 107 (2009): 370–2. (Jean-Michel Counet)

Bilingual Text Editions

Johannes Duns Scotus. *Freiheit, Tugenden und Naturgesetz [Freedom, Virtues, and Natural Law]*. Latin/German. Introduction, translation, and explanatory notes by Tobias Hoffmann. *Herders Bibliothek der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 27. Freiburg: Herder, 2012.

Apart from providing the translation, the book's contribution consists in an introduction that reconstructs the historical and doctrinal context of the translated quaestiones. The Latin text offers a few improvements on the critical Vatican edition: some mistaken readings of the manuscripts have been corrected, and occasionally a better choice of variants has been proposed. Also, Scotus's sources have been indicated with greater precision than in the Vatican edition.

Reviewed in:

- *Antonianum* 89 (2014): 213–15. (Witold Salamon)

- *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 106 (2013): 300–1. (Francesco Pica)
- *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 16 (2013): 293–6. (Thomas Zimmer)
- *Forum Katholische Theologie* 29 (2012): 316–18. (Michal Chabada)
- *Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger* 68/1 (2015): 5–11. (Reinhold Breil)
- *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 77 (2014): 282–4. (Johannes Karl Schlageter)

Johannes Duns Scotus. *Die Univozität des Seienden: Texte zur Metaphysik [Univocity of Being: Selected Texts on Metaphysics]*. Latin/German. Introduction, translation, and explanatory notes by Tobias Hoffmann. Sammlung Philosophie 1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002.

This volume contains a translation (facing pages, Latin and German) of Duns Scotus's discussion of *Lectura I* d. 3 p. 1 and d. 8 p. 1 q. 3, where Scotus discusses how God can be known by means of a univocal concept of being, together with Scotus's critique of divine illumination. In addition, it contains a historical-doctrinal introduction and detailed explanatory notes. By construing being as a univocal notion, Scotus finds new answers to two important questions: (1) How can we have knowledge of God? – By means of the univocal notion of being and of the transcendentals that are predicable of God and of creatures. (2) What gives unity to the science of metaphysics? – The notion of being, which is predicable of all beings (God and creatures) in a univocal way.

Reviewed in:

- *Antonianum* 78/1 (2003): 194–7. (Francesco Fiorentino)
- *Collectanea Franciscana* 73 (2003): 384–6. (Bernardino de Armellada)
- *The Review of Metaphysics* 57 (2003): 145–8. (Joe McCoy)
- *Theologie und Glaube* 93 (2003): 427. (Dieter Hattrup)

Journal Articles

“Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus on the First Cause of Moral Evil.” *Quaestio: Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics*, forthcoming.

Augustine denies that something good can be the cause of evil, and he concludes that the first moral evil only has a “deficient cause,” not an efficient cause. This means that moral evil has no cause. In contrast, Aquinas and Scotus hold that the first moral evil has a cause, that the cause is something good, and that it is an efficient cause – albeit a deficient efficient cause: the will. Aquinas and Scotus disagree upon what the deficiency involved in first causing evil consists in; Aquinas insists on a cognitive deficiency, Scotus does not. Yet, I argue, there is surprising agreement: at bottom, Aquinas and Scotus both trace the first moral evil to the will's ability for alternatives and no further. In this sense, they agree with Augustine that at some level, moral evil has no efficient cause: nothing efficiently causes a person to choose evil rather than good.

“Aquinas on Free Will and Intellectual Determinism.” Co-authored with Cyrille Michon. *Philosophers' Imprint* 17/10 (2017): 1–36. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3521354.0017.010>

From the early reception of Thomas Aquinas up to the present, many have interpreted his theory of *liberum arbitrium* (which for Aquinas is free will specifically as the power to choose among alternatives) to imply intellectual determinism: we do not control our choices, because we do not control the practical judgments that cause our choices. In this paper we argue instead that he rejects determinism in general and intellectual determinism in particular, which would effectively destroy *liberum arbitrium* as he conceives of it. We clarify that for Aquinas moral responsibility presupposes *liberum arbitrium* and thus the ability to do otherwise, although the ability to do otherwise applies differently to praise and blame. His argument against intellectual determinism is not straightforward, but we construct it by analogy to his arguments against other deterministic threats (e.g., the one posed by divine foreknowledge). The non-determinism of the intellect's causality with respect to the will results from his claims that practical reasoning is defeasible and that the reasons for actions are not contrastive reasons..

“Peter Auriol on Free Choice and Free Judgment.” *Vivarium* 53 (2015): 65–89.

Some medieval authors defend free choice by arguing that, despite human choices being caused by the practical judgment about what is best to do here and now, one is nevertheless able to freely influence that practical judgment’s formation. This paper examines Peter Auriol’s († 1322) account of free choice, which is an elaborate version of this approach and which brings its theoretical problems into focus. I argue in favor of Auriol’s basic theory, but I also propose an emendation to his theory that responds to some problems he leaves unresolved.

“Freedom Beyond Practical Reason: Duns Scotus on Will-Dependent Relations.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21 (2013): 1071–90.

German translation: “Freiheit jenseits der praktischen Vernunft: Duns Scotus über willensabhängige Relationen.” In *Vernunft und Glauben: Gottessuche heute*, edited by Hansjörg Hofer et al., 78–97. Salzburg: Verlag Anton Pustet, 2016.

Most acts of the will have a complex structure, i.e. wanting A in relation to B (e.g. as a means for an end or as a good for another person or for oneself). Duns Scotus innovatively claims that the will is responsible for the complex structure of choices by virtue of its ability to cause its own will-dependent relations. These relations enable the will to arrange the terms of its will-acts independently of any arrangement proposed by the intellect. I argue that this theory, which scholars have virtually ignored, is fundamental to Scotus’s account of divine, angelic, and human freedom, and that it follows necessarily from his voluntarist understanding of freedom. I also argue that, for Scotus, if the will could not structure its acts independently of the intellect, it would not be free.

“The Pleasure of Life and the Desire for Non-Existence: Some Medieval Theories.” *Res Philosophica* 90 (2013): 323–46.

Are there subjective or objective conditions under which human life is not worth living? Or does human life itself contain the conditions that make it worth living? To find answers to these questions, this paper explores Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Richard of Mediavilla, and Duns Scotus, who discuss whether the damned in hell can, should, and do prefer non-existence over their existence in pain and moral evil. In light of Aristotle’s teaching that there is a certain pleasure inherent to life itself, I argue that even a life that is largely painful and unpleasant is still worth living.

“La teoria anti-naturalistica della libertà in Giovanni Duns Scoto [The Anti-Naturalist Theory of Freedom in John Duns Scotus].” *Antonianum* 87 (2012): 25–39.

This article studies Duns Scotus’s account of freedom in its metaphysical, psychological, and moral dimensions. The metaphysical characteristic of freedom is that it springs from the indeterminate will rather than from a “natural power,” which for Scotus is a power that acts deterministically. The psychological basis of freedom consists in the fact that the act of will is not caused by the desired object, but primarily by the will itself. The moral dimension of freedom lies in the fact that the will is free to act for motives other than the individual’s own happiness. In all three dimensions, freedom transcends nature; hence Scotus’s account of freedom can be called anti-naturalistic.

“Walter Chatton on the Connection of the Virtues.” *Quaestio: Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics* 8 (2008): 57–82.

This article studies Walter Chatton’s theory of the connection of the virtues and its relation to the teaching of Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus. Chatton’s account is shown to follow closely Scotus’s view. Both Franciscans frame this problem in terms of the connection between intellect and will. Out of the concern to safeguard the freedom of the will, they both deny that having prudence implies possessing the moral virtues. They also deny that the correct judgment of prudence presupposes the moral virtues, because they consider it impossible that the will induce the intellect to err.

“Aquinas and Intellectual Determinism: The Test Case of Angelic Sin.” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 89 (2007): 122–56.

This paper intends to show that Aquinas gives a non-determinist account of free decision. Angelic sin is the eminent test case: *ex hypothesi*, angels are supremely intelligent and not subject to ignorance, passions, or negatively disposing habits. Nothing determines their choice except for their free decision. Good and evil angels had a reason for their act, but why certain angels acted for an insufficient reason whereas others for an adequate reason cannot ultimately be explained. His action theory allows Thomas to explain angelic choice as contingent and self-determined. The salient features of this explanation are transferable to human free decision.

“Voluntariness, Choice, and Will in the Ethics Commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 17 (2006): 71–92.

The article studies the reception of Aristotle’s treatments of voluntariness and decision (EN 3.1–5) in the first three Latin commentaries (two by Albert the Great, one by Thomas Aquinas) that are based on the integral text of the Nicomachean Ethics. In particular, my goal is to examine how Albert’s and Thomas’s non-Aristotelian concepts of the will as a faculty distinct from reason influences their explanations of the Aristotelian account. It is argued that the Dominican commentators emphasize the idea of freedom more than Aristotle did.

“Moral Action as Human Action: End and Object in Aquinas in Comparison with Abelard, Lombard, Albert, and Scotus.” *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 73–94.

This article examines different medieval explanations of the causes of moral goodness, principally the end of the agent and the object of the action. Special attention is given to Thomas Aquinas, who considers the end (that which is willed) to be not only the origin of moral goodness, but also its main criterion. Peter Abelard, whose ethics I argue to be non-subjectivist, had developed a similar theory, though the vocabulary he uses is not very refined. By contrast, for Albert and Duns Scotus, the end is accidental to the moral act. The importance of this study is to shed light on the subjective and objective criteria by which to evaluate the morality of actions.

“The Distinction between Nature and Will in Duns Scotus.” *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 66 (1999): 189–224.

In the thought of Duns Scotus, the distinction of active potencies into will and nature takes on a fundamental systematic significance. It distinguishes free and self-determining causality from natural and necessary causality. The purpose of this article is to show to what extent this distinction underlies large parts of Duns Scotus’ moral psychology, ethics, metaphysics and Trinitarian theology.

“Ideen der Individuen und *intentio naturae*: Duns Scotus im Dialog mit Thomas von Aquin und Heinrich von Gent [Ideas of Individuals and the Intention of Nature: Duns Scotus in Dialogue with Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent].” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 46 (1999): 138–52.

Duns Scotus vigorously defends an idea foreign to Greek philosophers, namely that the individual has a higher ontological dignity than the species. He develops this view in two contexts: the problem of the principle of individuation and the discussion of divine ideas of individuals. This article focuses on the latter, in which Scotus critiques Aquinas, whom he mistakenly interprets as denying that there are divine ideas of individuals, as well as Henry of Ghent, who repeatedly rejects this hypothesis. In connection with the claim that God has distinct ideas for each individual, Scotus argues that the *intentio naturae* concerns not merely the species, but also individuals. Contrary to Greek thought, therefore, Scotus holds that the purpose of individuals is not merely to guarantee the eternity of the species; rather, they have an intrinsic value.

“Individuation bei Duns Scotus und bei dem jungen Leibniz [Individuation in Duns Scotus and the Early Leibniz].” *Medioevo* 24 (1998): 31–87.

Leibniz's first essay, his dissertation on the principle of individuality, is mainly dedicated to a critique of Duns Scotus's explanation of individuation. Leibniz's critique of Scotus and the historical antecedents of the German philosopher's position have not been studied before. The paper examines Scotus's and Leibniz's views on individuation and sheds some light on the doctrinal genealogy that leads up to Leibniz's position. I argue that Leibniz's view and his critique of Scotus depend upon William of Ockham and Francis Suárez. Ockham, Suárez, and Leibniz posit that individuals are such by themselves or by their entire entity, rather than by an entity that is only a part of their being (as Scotus's 'haecceity'). Furthermore, all three take issue with Scotus's view for the same reason, i.e. because they reject the formal distinction, a key assumption in Scotus's account of individuation.

Book Chapters

“Theories of Free Choice from Anselm of Canterbury to William of Ockham.” In *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Richard Cross and JT Paasch. London: Routledge, forthcoming.

The article discusses the history of philosophical accounts of free choice in the middle ages by distinguishing three dominant approaches. At first, the concern was to find a definition of free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) which would meet commonly accepted theological requirements. Second, starting from the notion of the will as “rational appetite,” the debate migrated to the relation between intellect and will. Third, the theory of free choice shifted focus to the conception of the will as a cause that has the unique ability of controlling its effects, while all causes other than the will are “natural” causes that do not control their effect.

“The First Sin in the Early Fourteenth Century Free Will Debate: Alexander of Alessandria and John of Pouilly.” In *La liberté au Moyen Age*, edited by Kristell Trego. Publications de l'Institut d'Études Médiévales de l'Institut Catholique de Paris. Paris: Vrin, forthcoming.

This article discusses three passages, edited in the appendix, from quodlibetal questions in which the positions of Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines are brought into dialogue from the particular perspective of the Christian doctrine of the first sin of the rebel angels and of the progenitors Adam and Eve. The problem of the first sin raises the problems of the connection between cognition and volition and between error and evil in a particularly forceful way. In *Quodlibet* q. 15 (1307–1308), the Franciscan Alexander of Alessandria argues that the view of Godfrey and his followers, according to which the will's act is caused by the cognized object, cannot explain why some angels sinned but others did not. In *Quodlibet* II, q. 11 (1307–1308), John of Pouilly, a student of Godfrey of Fontaines', defends Godfrey's position that the rebel angels could not have sinned by acting against their better judgment and claims that their sin was caused by a cognitive error; finally, in *Quodlibet* IV, q. 6 (1309–1310), John argues that although the sinful volition of the rebel angels was caused by the cognized object, this volition was in the angels' control.

“Free Will without Choice: Medieval Theories of the Essence of Freedom.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics*, edited by Thomas Williams, 194–216. Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Medieval authors generally agreed that we have the freedom to choose among alternative possibilities. But most medieval authors also thought that there are situations in which one cannot do otherwise, not even will otherwise. They also thought when willing necessarily, the will remains free. The questions, then, are what grounds the necessity or contingency of the will's acts, and – since freedom is not defined by the ability to choose – what belongs to the essential character of freedom, the *ratio libertatis*. This article studies medieval theories of freedom without choice from William of Auxerre to William of Ockham and their background in Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury, and Bernard of Clairvaux.

“Aquinas on Moral Progress.” In *Aquinas's Summa theologiae: A Critical Guide*, edited by Jeffrey Hause, 131–49. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

The article picks up a theme I had studied before: The question of how, for Aquinas, moral progress is possible. In an article of 2006 I had investigated how, according to Aquinas, moral progress is possible for the morally weak, for whom ethical instruction seems useless because they act against their better knowledge. In this article, I study how Aquinas considers moral progress to be possible for the wicked, for whom ethical instruction is useless because they will not listen to it and will not understand it. The emphasis is on Aquinas's teaching of how one can overcome the existential difficulties in achieving moral progress.

“Freiheit ohne Wahl? Thomas von Aquin, Duns Scotus und Wilhelm von Ockham im Vergleich [Freedom without Choice? The Theories of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham].” In *Libertà e determinismo: Riflessioni medievali*, edited by Marialucrezia Leone and Luisa Valente, 235–57. Rome: Aracne Editrice, 2017.

Later medieval thinkers inherited from Augustine two distinct concepts of freedom: the freedom to choose among alternatives and freedom in a broader sense, which is not about choice and hence compatible with necessity. This essay studies the views of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham concerning freedom without choice by investigating their responses to four questions: Which are the situations in which there is willing without choice? What explains the lack of choice in these situations? Is the will free in these circumstances? What are the implications for the concept of free will?

“Christian Aristotelianism? Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas on Moral Philosophy.” Co-authored with Jörn Müller. In *Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy*, edited by Sacha Golob and Jens Timmermann, 168–80. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

This article emphasizes Albert's and Aquinas's theological concerns in appropriating Aristotle's ethics. The article discusses three key respects in which their ethics go beyond Aristotle's: authentic happiness as attainable only in the next life, the existence of infused moral virtues, and the normative foundation of moral precepts as theocentric rather than anthropocentric.

“Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.” *Ibid.*, 181–91.

This article presents Scotus's and Ockham's theories of the will, of virtue, and of normativity. It shows how their virtue theories depend on how they conceive of the human will, while their normative theories depend on how they conceive of the divine will. The article emphasizes the “modern” character of their ethics: like Kant, Scotus and Ockham abandon eudaimonism in favor of deontology; like Kant, they hold that human nature is ultimately not a source of moral norms; like for Kant, for them the moral virtues lose their centrality and prudence becomes merely a practical skill or cleverness.

“Free Choice.” Co-authored with Peter Furlong. In *Aquinas's Disputed Questions on Evil: A Critical Guide*, edited by Michael V. Dougherty, 56–74. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

This article examines Aquinas's theory of free choice and moral responsibility throughout his *De malo* and provides a careful analysis of question 6 “on human choice.” We argue that Aquinas here proposes an account of free choice as incompatible with determinism. We also show briefly that Aquinas's account of the fall of the angels in the *De malo* confirms our interpretation.

“Will (Middle Ages).” In *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, edited by Karla Pollmann, Willemien Otten, et al., 1898–1901. Oxford University Press, 2013.

This article provides a concise account of Augustine's theory of the will and its reception from the Carolingian period until the late fourteenth century.

“Free Choices.” In *Philosophical Virtues and Psychological Strengths*, edited by Romanus Cessario, O.P., Craig Steven Titus, and Paul C. Vitz, 117–37. Manchester, N.H.: Sophia Institute Press, 2013.

“The *Quaestiones De anima* and the Genesis of Duns Scotus’ Doctrine of Univocity of Being.” In *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle’s De anima*, edited by Jean-Michel Counet and Russell Friedman, 101–20. *Philosophes médiévaux* 58. Leuven: Peeters, 2013.

Duns Scotus wrote the *Quaestiones super secundum et tertium De anima* at least half a decade before his *Sentences* commentaries. Though less systematic and less complete, it is already quite similar to the definitive discussions of univocity in the *Sentences* commentaries. In this work, Scotus finds for the first time a solution to the principal obstacle to construing being as a univocal notion, namely the problem of how the general notion of being can be further differentiated if being is predicated univocally throughout the categories. The article provides the missing link for reconstructing the genesis of Scotus’s thought on the univocity of being.

“Prudence and Practical Principles.” In *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller, and Matthias Perkams, 165–83. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

For Aristotle, moral virtues make the ends, i.e., the principles of the moral life, right, but how they do so remains unclear. This chapter shows how Aquinas further develops this idea and goes beyond what Aristotle explicitly states. Like Aristotle, Aquinas understands by “particular practical principles” the ends we do in fact pursue. Moral virtues rectify these by making the knowledge of the right ends connatural to us. But for Aquinas, the moral virtues alone cannot provide this knowledge, for this knowledge presupposes also “universal practical principles,” i.e., self-evident statements or demonstrative conclusions from these, telling us which general ends we should pursue. Aquinas argues that since prudence requires correct knowledge of the ends, it presupposes particular *and* universal practical principles.

“Theories of Angelic Sin from Aquinas to Ockham.” In *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, 283–316. *Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition* 35. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012.

The main goal of this chapter is to examine how – given the ideal psychological conditions of angels – a single theory of intellect and will can accommodate these two opposite demands: explaining alternative possibilities in the angelic choice, and explaining the lack of alternative possibilities after the angels had made their first choice. A further, more general goal is to show that the subtlety of scholastic theories of moral psychology and ethics cannot be fully appreciated apart from their explanations of angelic sin. Among the ideas that are either originally developed or further deepened in the medieval accounts of angelic sin are clear-eyed akrasia (that is, acting contrary to one’s better judgment with full knowledge), voluntarist explanations of error, synchronic contingency (that is, alternative possibilities at the very moment one chooses an alternative), compatibilism of determinism and freedom, abandonment of eudaimonism, and God’s causality with respect to evil acts.

“Peter Auriol on Practical Judgment and Angelic Sin.” In *Contingenza e libertà: Teorie francescane del primo Trecento*, edited by Guido Alliney, Marina Fedeli, and Alessandro Pertosa, 45–75. Macerata: Edizioni Università di Macerata, 2012. [Contains an edition of Peter Auriol, *In Sent.* II, d. 4, q. 3.]

A central idea in Auriol’s theory of practical rationality is that there are two kinds of practical judgments, one purely cognitive, the other involving both intellect and will. This theory is pivotal in his treatment of the two topics discussed in this paper: (1) What accounts for the possibility of angelic sin? (2) Did Lucifer desire equality with God, that is, did he want something impossible? These questions give Auriol the occasion to examine the connection between cognitive and volitional failures and the scope of intellect and will. I argue that Auriol’s theory fails, but nevertheless offers some valuable insights that a successful theory of practical rationality can build upon. The article contains an edition of Peter Auriol, *In Sent.* II, d. 4, q. 3.

“Duns Scotus’s Intellectualist Account of Practical Knowledge.” In *John Duns Scotus 1308–2008: The Opera Theologica of Scotus. Proceedings of “The Quadruple Congress” on John Duns Scotus, part 2*, edited by Richard Cross, 35–52. Münster: Aschendorff, 2012.

Scotus defends the unusual view that practical knowledge cannot be corrupted by evil habits. He opposes himself to Henry of Ghent, for whom practical knowledge is corrupted by an evil will. Scotus's position is partly due to his advocating a strict separation between the intellect as a deterministic power and the will as a free power, and is partly due to a misunderstanding of Aristotle's view that evil habits corrupt the principles of action. For Aristotle, these principles are the ends of action, while Scotus takes them to be the first, self-evident principles of practical reason. The article contributes to the historical understanding of the transformation of prudence, which was reduced to a practical skill.

“Conscience and *Synderesis*.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 255–64. Oxford University Press, 2012.

This article gives a basic account of Aquinas's theory of *synderesis* and conscience. Aquinas understands *synderesis* as an infallible moral awareness and conscience as the fallible judgment that applies a general moral conviction to a concrete case. The article also compares Aquinas's and his contemporaries' theories of whether erring conscience is morally binding, that is, whether to act in accord with erring conscience or against erring conscience is sinful.

“The Intellectual Virtues.” *Ibid.*, 327–36.

The article presents Aquinas's general conception of intellectual virtue and considers his account of the individual intellectual virtues, with a special focus on prudence.

“*Eutrapelia*: The Right Attitude toward Amusement.” In *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, edited by Iñigo Atucha, Dragos Calma, Catherine König-Pralong, and Irene Zavattero, 267–77. F.I.D.E.M. Textes et études du moyen âge. Porto: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 2011.

According to Aristotle, *eutrapelia* is the virtue that disposes us rightly with regard to relaxing amusements, in particular by means of witty conversation. This article examines the reception of *eutrapelia* by Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and Gerald Odo. Philosophically, the main issue is to clarify in which sense *eutrapelia* is a virtue, indeed a moral virtue. Historically, the examination of *eutrapelia* allows us to offer a case study of how a specific Aristotelian topic is approached differently in works of various medieval authors and in diverse works by the same author.

“Henry of Ghent's Influence on John Duns Scotus's Metaphysics.” In *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, edited by Gordon A. Wilson, 339–67. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 23. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

This chapter highlights Scotus's indebtedness to Henry of Ghent with respect to the major themes of his metaphysics: his univocal notion of being, his view of being qua being as the subject of metaphysics, his metaphysical proof of God's existence, and his notion of being as a quidditative rather than existential notion.

“Duns Scotus's Action Theory in the Context of His Angelology.” In *Johannes Duns Scotus 1308–2008: Die philosophischen Perspektiven seines Werkes / Investigations into his Philosophy. Proceedings of “The Quadruple Congress” on John Duns Scotus, part 3*, edited by Ludger Honnefelder et al., 403–20. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: Franciscan Institute Publications; Münster: Aschendorff, 2010.

Angelology gives Duns Scotus the occasion to test his action theory or to expand on it in order to accommodate the special case of angelic sin. This article shows how Scotus's angelology is central for these four theories of his: freedom and determinism; synchronic contingency, that is, the idea that while willing “A” the will is able to will “non-A”; the will as a *vis collativa*, that is, as a power that can relate things to another, making mind-dependent relations; the distinction between two fundamental motivations for willing (*affectio commodi* and *iustitiae*).

“Intellectualism and Voluntarism.” In *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Robert Pasnau, 414–27. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

This chapter reviews major accounts of free decision of the second half of the thirteenth century, from St. Bonaventure to Duns Scotus. A clear divide between intellectualists and voluntarists is observable beginning in the early 1270s, when the question of whether free decision is founded upon reason or will becomes central. Intellectualists stress the causality of the object apprehended as good at the expense of the will's self-determination, whereas the reverse emphasis can be observed among voluntarists.

“Liberté de qualité’ et ‘liberté d’indifférence’ chez Thomas d’Aquin [Freedom for Excellence and Freedom of Indifference in Thomas Aquinas].” In *Renouveler toutes choses en Christ: Vers un renouveau thomiste de la théologie morale. Hommage au P. Servais Pinckaers OP*, edited by Michael Sherwin OP and Craig Titus, 57–76. Études d’éthique chrétienne NS 5. Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2009.

In this article I pick up a distinction dear to Servais Pinckaers, between “liberté de qualité” (freedom for excellence) and “liberté d’indifférence” (freedom of indifference). I intend to show that Aquinas admits that there is freedom of indifference in a certain sense, but that contrary to William of Ockham’s position, Aquinas bases this freedom on the freedom for excellence. To this goal, I analyze Aquinas’s account of God’s freedom to create or not as well as his account of human freedom.

“Duns Scotus on the Origin of the Possibles in the Divine Intellect.” In *Philosophical Debates at Paris in the Early Fourteenth Century*, edited by Stephen F. Brown, Thomas Dewender, and Theo Kobusch, 359–79. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 102. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Would there be possibles if God did not exist? The interpretative impasse on this point has been mainly due to the failure to recognize an ambiguity in Scotus’s terminology. “Possibilia” are (1) the eidetic natures of things or (2) the possibility for a creature to exist. In this paper I argue that Scotus denies that God is responsible for giving things the possibility of existence. In this sense, possibles do not depend on God. Yet I also argue that according to Scotus, only God can originate the eidetic natures of creatures, i.e., the natures of which possibility is predicated. If God did not exist, there would be no possibles, because there would be no eidetic natures and thus no subjects of which possibility could be affirmed. What leads Scotus to this view are not so much considerations pertaining to modal logic but rather epistemological concerns.

“Henry of Ghent’s Voluntarist Account of Weakness of Will.” In *Weakness of Will from Plato to the Present*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, 115–37. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008.

According to Henry of Ghent, akrasia (incontinence or weakness of will) does not presuppose, but rather produces a cognitive defect. By tracing akratic actions and other evil actions to a corruption in the will rather than to a cognitive defect, Henry wants to safeguard their freedom. Though the will is able to reject what the intellect judges as best here and now, strength and freedom of the will increase to the degree that one adheres more firmly to the good. What strengthens the will are the moral virtues, which are essentially virtues of the will.

“Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas on Magnanimity.” In *Virtue Ethics in the Middle Ages: Commentaries on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, 1200–1500*, edited by István Bejczy, 101–29. Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History 160. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.

Certain traits of the magnanimous man of the Nicomachean Ethics seem incompatible with gratitude and humility. Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas are the first commentators of the Latin West who had access to the integral portrayal of magnanimity in the Nicomachean Ethics. Surprisingly, they welcomed the Aristotelian ideal of magnanimity without reservations. The paper summarizes Aristotle’s account of magnanimity, discusses briefly the transformation of this notion in Stoicism and early scholasticism, and analyzes Albert’s and Thomas’s interpretation of Aristotle. Thomas is found to be a more faithful and ingenious interpreter than

Albert. He addresses and solves a number of philosophical problems of Aristotle's account that still puzzle contemporary interpreters.

“Der mittelalterliche Beitrag zum Problem der Willensschwäche [The Medieval Contribution to the Problem of Weakness of Will].” Co-authored with Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams. In *Das Problem der Willensschwäche im mittelalterlichen Denken / The Problem of Weakness of Will in Medieval Thought*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller, and Matthias Perkams, 5–37. *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales Bibliotheca* 8. Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2006.

This chapter surveys the contemporary discussion and the history of the problem of weakness of will and argues that the contributions of medieval authors have been widely neglected. Many prominent medieval thinkers provide extensive discussions of weakness of will in its own right. Others examine related problems in contexts such as free will, the unity of virtue, sin from passion, conscience, original sin, and angelic sin. The medieval accounts of weakness of will offered refined analyses of the relation between passions, intellectual failure, corruption of the will, and moral responsibility.

“Aquinas on the Moral Progress of the Weak Willed.” *Ibid.*, 221–47.

French translation: “Incontinence et progrès moral chez Thomas d’Aquin.” In *Le jugement pratique: Autour de la notion de Phronèsis*, edited by Danielle Lories and Laura Rizzerio, 233–61. *Bibliothèque d’Histoire de la Philosophie*. Paris: Vrin, 2008.

The paper investigates Aquinas’s explanation of how the incontinent can make moral progress. The incontinent cannot be healed by moral instruction, because they already know what is best, but fail to act accordingly. Their moral knowledge has to be internalized. Thus by attaining prudence and the moral virtues, moral knowledge becomes practically effective knowledge. Yet these virtues are no remedy for the incontinent, who are still struggling to attain them. By reason and will they can resist individual acts of incontinence, but in order to resist incontinence consistently, they need the assistance of grace.

“L’akrasia selon Duns Scot [Weakness of Will according to Duns Scotus].” In *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302–2002: Actes du colloque de Paris, 2–4 septembre 2002*, edited by Olivier Boulnois, Elizabeth Karger, Jean-Luc Solère, and Gérard Sondag, 487–516. *Textes et Études du Moyen Âge* 26. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.

What characterizes Duns Scotus’s and other voluntarist explanations of free decision is that they attribute to the will the power to be inclined contrary to what the practical intellect judges best to do here and now. The question of how one can act against one’s better judgment thus seems to be unproblematic: without any cognitive defect, the will can cause incontinent behavior. Yet according to Scotus, the discrepancy between the practical judgment and the inclination of the will, though possible, is atypical. Normally, when one acts incontinently, the will makes the practical intellect turn away from the consideration of right reason

“Henri de Gand: Idées divines et essences [Henry of Ghent: Essences and Divine Ideas].” In *Sur la science divine*, edited by Jean-Christophe Bardout and Olivier Boulnois, 226–44. Épiméthée. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002. [Contains a French translation of Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet* IX, q. 2]

This chapter consists in a partial translation into French of Henry of Ghent’s *Quodlibet* 9.2, his most detailed and mature treatment of divine ideas. In the introductory essay I emphasize the novelty of Henry’s account of divine ideas. Through the knowledge which God has of non-existent possible creatures, the possibles receive a “being of essence” that is devoid of real existence.

“Les idées comme essences créables chez François de Meyronnes [Ideas as Possible Essences according to Francis of Meyronnes].” In *Le Contemplateur et les idées. Modèles de la science divine*

du néoplatonisme au XVIII^e siècle, edited by Olivier Boulnois, Jacob Schmutz, and Jean-Luc Solère, 129–47. Bibliothèque d’Histoire de la Philosophie. Paris: Vrin, 2002.

If one defines essentialism as the view that essences have proper being, apart from existence, then Francis of Meyronnes is perhaps the most extreme essentialist of high scholasticism. In fact, Francis holds that creaturely essences are essences independently of God’s knowledge and power: they do not receive their “being of essence”—which Francis construes as being simply (*ens simpliciter*)—from God. Yet he denies that, qua essences, they are eternal, necessary, and real. Inspired partly by Avicenna, partly by Duns Scotus, Francis inquires what characterizes essences as such, i.e., prescinding from their existence and from any other of their “intrinsic modes,” such as individuality/universality, contingency/necessity. Creaturely essences likewise prescind from any relations, including the relation to God. What grounds their nature is their definition alone.

“Duns Scotus: Die Unbefleckte Empfängnis Mariens [Duns Scotus on the Immaculate Conception of Mary].” In *Im Ringen um die Wahrheit*, edited by Remigius Bäumer et al., 711–33. Weilheim, 1997. [Contains a German translation of Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d. 3, q. 1]

A translation into German with historical-doctrinal introduction and explanatory notes of Duns Scotus’s text of *Ordinatio* 3.3.1, in which he defends the possibility that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin. The introduction summarizes the theological obstacles to the doctrine of the immaculate conception and the theological debates from the 12th to the 14th century. The main obstacle was the dogma that all human beings are saved by Christ, including Our Lady. Hence the objection to the immaculate conception is that if she had been conceived without original sin, she would not have needed the saving grace of Christ. Scotus famously argues that it was possible for God to exempt Our Lady from original sin by foreknowing the merits of Christ.

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