

Great Philosophers: Aquinas



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1. Introduction

- Major philosopher of medieval period
- Divergent Attitudes – Russell/Kenny/Eco
- Religious/Secular Approaches
- Metaphysics, Phil of Religion, Ethics, Action
- Focus on Metaphysics
 2. Biography
 3. Metaphysics
 4. Differences from Aristotle

2. Biography

- Birth at Roccasecca, minor nobility
- Sent to Monte Cassino, ecclesiastical politics
- University of Naples – Peter of Ireland
 - Translations of Aristotle
 - Role of Averroes
 - Attitude to Aristotle

- Begins Dominican Novitiate 1244
 - issues about mendicants
- University of Paris with Albertus Magnus
- Albertus Magnus (1200-1280)
 - Philosophy at Paris. Guilds. Institution.
- Cologne with Albertus Magnus
 - Neoplatonism
 - Aristotelianism

- 1252 Teaching and Theology at Paris
 - Postgraduate studies
 - Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*
- 1256 Inception as Master of Theology at Paris. Magister in Sacra Pagina. Conflict
- ***De Ente et Essentia***
- 1259 Italy (Naples)
- ***Summa Contra Gentiles***

- 1261 Orvieto
- Rome
- ***1265 Summa Theologiae***
 - pedagogical purpose
- ***De Potentia.***
- Connection with William of Moerbeke
 - translations

- 1269 Return to Paris
- ***De Aeternitate Mundi***
- ***De Unitate Intellectus***
- ***Quaestiones Disputates***
- Sequence of Aristotelian Commentaries
- Conflict: Radical Aristotelianism

- 1271 Naples
- Scripture Commentaries – St Paul, Psalms
- 1273 Autumn – cessation of writing
- Council of Lyons, death 7th March at Fossanova

3. Metaphysics

- Investigation of Being. Most general inquiry
- Being as being – not being as x
- Being in general/Most general being

- Distinguish primary/secondary substances
(Socrates/Humanity)
- Problem of universals
(Separated/Immanent/Purely Conceptual)

- Substance – Accident
(Socrates, his height, weight, wisdom)
- Relation of dependence
(Subject, “of a subject/in a subject”)
- Form and Essence
- Substantial form

- Matter – Form
- Hylomorphism
- Matter as problematical
- Matter as element
- Prime Matter as pure potential – mental construct

- Potency – Act
- Theory of change
- Potency requires act
- Act and Existence

- 4 Causes – relation to substance
- Matter/Form/Efficient/Final
- Supposition of purpose - teleology
(Rejection of teleology in early modern – big factor in rejection of Aristotelianism)

4. Differences from Aristotle

- Eternity of World
- No good phil arguments either way
- Accepts beginning on religious grounds
- Allows the possibility of thinking in new way
- Issue of absolute nothingness and coming into existence
- Allows discussion of existence as genuine feature

- Essence and Existence
- Co-principle of being
- Requires different epistemology
- No investigation of essence yields existence.
(Block to Ontological argument)
- Source of contemporary debate (Frege)

- Way of making sense of participation.
- Blending of Neoplatonism with Aristotle
- Real distinction between creatures and creation
- Relation of dependence

Further Reading

- *Summa Theologiae*
<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>
- *Aquinas Selected Philosophical Writings*, T. McDermott (ed.), Oxford UP, 1993
- Davies, B., *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Oxford UP, 1992
- O'Grady, P., *Aquinas's Philosophy of Religion*, Palgrave 2014.

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