

Monica Brînzei and Christopher D. Schabel. Eds. *Philosophical Psychology in Late-Medieval Commentaries on Peter Lombard's Sentences. Acts of the XIVth Annual Colloquium of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, Radboud Universiteit, 28-30 October 2009*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. 467 p. ISBN: 9782503589091. Cloth: € 70,00

Reviewed by ELENA BĂLTUȚĂ  
Babeş-Bolyai University<sup>1</sup>  
elena\_baltuta@yahoo.com

The volume includes, with a few exceptions, the papers presented at *The XVIth Annual Colloquium of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale*, Radboud Universiteit, 28-30 October 2009, carefully curated and edited by Monica Brînzei and Christopher D. Schabel. The aim of the volume is to trace the manner in which the commentaries from the late Middle Ages on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* shaped the field of philosophical psychology (vii). Systematic topics such as hylomorphism, the faculties of the soul and the relationships between them, the limits and the different types of human cognition, beatific vision, and the free will are discussed in relation to lesser studied authors such as Alfonsus Vargas of Toledo, Hugolino of Orvieto, Pierre Ceffons, John of Mirecourt, Peter of Plaoul, Henry Toting of Oyta, Hymericus de Campo, Denys the Carthusian, John Capreolus, Peter of Candia, Guillaume de Vauroullion, Henry of Langenstein, as well as to more known authors such as Aquinas, Ockham, Scotus, Hervaeus Natalis, Henry of Ghent, Albert the Great, Pierre d'Ailly, Gregory of Rimini, or Gabriel Biel. We are thus offered a book focused not only on the conceptions of the major figures of the late Middle Ages, but also on those of minor figures; even more, the book often underlines the connections between minor and major figures, and offers comparative analyses. It is in this way, and many others, that the book enriches considerably the existing literature on the late Middle Ages.

The volume begins with a very helpful introduction by Monica Brînzei, which offers a detailed synopsis of the papers, and a "Note on the Vernacular Name of Richardus de Mediavilla: of 'Menneville', not 'Middleton'" signed by Christopher Schabel. Then the bulk of the book follows a tripartite structure – *Human Cognition*, *Human Soul*, *Theological Issues* – and ends with an epilogue by Monica Brînzei, where she discusses some of the issues still in need to be addressed by scholars interested in the commentaries on the *Sentences* from the last decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. I will proceed by describing the papers from the three main sections of the book. The first section, *Human Cognition*, includes papers on topics such as intuitive knowledge and the cognoscibility of material substances authored by Amos Corbini, Aurélien Robert, and Jeffrey C. Witt. The second section, *The Human Soul*, touches on topics such as the essence and the potencies of the soul, the definition and the operations of the soul, and it contains the papers of Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen, Thomas Jeschke, William

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<sup>1</sup> This review has been financially supported by the project PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2021-1443/TE127.

O. Duba and Oliver Ribordy, and Kent Emery Jr. The last section, *Theological Issues*, includes papers by John T. Slotmaker, Severin Kitanov, and Christopher Schabel, dealing with issues related to the Trinitarian theology, the nature of the freedom of the beatific enjoyment, and the human will and its relation with divine foreknowledge.

Amos Corbini's contribution, opening the section *Human Cognition*, is called "Notitia intuitiva and complexe significabile at Paris in the 1340s: From Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus to Peter Ceffons." It aims to ascertain one of Damasus Trapp's thesis from "A Round-Table Discussion of a Parisian OCist-Team and OESA-Team about AD 1350." Particularly, Corbini criticises Trapp's thesis according to which there are "striking similarities" between the five participants at the round table, the Cistercians John of Mirecourt and Peter Ceffons, and the Augustinians Gregory of Rimini, Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, and Hugolinus of Orvieto. To test the thesis, Corbini compares the views of the five authors on topics such as intuitive and abstractive knowledge or the object of complex knowledge as they stem from their commentaries on the *Sentences*. By the end of the paper Corbini is able to convince the reader that Trapp's thesis is too strong, and in need of serious qualifications before being taken as credible.

In "The Possibility of Cognizing Material Substances. The Evolution of a Philosophical Problem in Late-Medieval Commentaries on the Sentences", Aurélien Robert notices that contemporary historians of philosophy are tempted to treat early modern philosophers such as Descartes and Locke as the fathers of the debate on the knowability of material substances. Robert challenges this line of thinking and offers an alternative approach of the topic. He is guided in his investigation by the following question: To what extent did modern philosophers rely on medieval texts when criticizing the knowability of material substances? To show the extent to which modern philosophers had access to medieval texts, Robert offers a historical analysis of: 1. the views of some late 13<sup>th</sup> century authors, known to modern philosophers through the works of Toletus and Suarez, Rubios and the Conimbricenses; 2. the views present in some 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century doxographies; and 3. the positions on the topic as they stem from 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century commentaries on the *Sentences*. Robert notices that, although the topic of knowability of material substance was continuously discussed from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, its importance seems to diminish in the commentaries on the *Sentences* written after the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. While early modern theologians were probably aware of the commentaries on the *Sentences*, early modern philosophers were most probably more influenced by the epistemologically laden Aristotelian commentaries on *De anima* and *Metaphysics*.

Jeffrey Witt writes the very engaging paper "Peter Plaoul and Intuitive Knowledge." As someone who is not familiar with the works of Plaoul, I would have appreciated if Witt would have gone into a bit more detail when explaining the way in which the concept represents the external object as the intersection between "the mode of the dispositions of the proximate causes concurring for its production" and "the mode of the motivity of the potency from the object and into the object." (96-97) For example, it would have been interesting to find out whether the dispositions of the proximate causes are offering

something like a perspectival aspect to the concept, if they are responsible for individuating my concept from the concept of another, or if they are just as objective as the actualized potencies of the object. Nonetheless, given that there is not much literature available on Plaoul and that the paper is not only very well written but it also includes a lot of in-depth textual analyses, the points I raised do not take away from the value of the paper.

The second section of the volume, *Human Soul*, begins with Maarten Hoenen's paper "Hymericus de Campo Reads Peter Lombard: Late Medieval Abbreviations of the *Libri Sententiarum*." The paper discusses a recently discovered manuscript attributed to Hymericus de Campo. The manuscript has two main parts, a commentary on the *Apocalypse*, deeply influenced by pseudo-Albert the Great's *In Apocalypsum luculenta expositio* (107), and a prologue consisting of a *Recommendatio sacrae scripturae* and summaries of the writings of Iunilius Africanus, Alaine of Lille, and Nicholas of Amiens, aimed at making clear the manner in which philosophy can aid theology. At the end of the prologue there is an abbreviation of the Lombard's *Sentences*. After discussing the manner in which the *Sentences* were abbreviated from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and how this changed according to the specific needs of students, Hoenen turns his attention to Hymericus' own abbreviation of the *Sentences*. The paper concludes with two appendixes, an edition of the Hymericus de Campo's *Super Sententias* lib. III, distinctions 5, 21, and 22, and a short note where Hoenen discusses the exceptional character of Hymericus' treatise.

Thomas Jeschke approaches the issue of whether the essence of the soul is different from its potencies in the paper "*Unum antiquum problema: Denys the Carthusian and John Capreolus on the Question of Whether the Soul's Essence is Distinct from Its Potencies. A Late-Medieval Starting Point.*" His paper is probably the most polemic one of the entire volume. It starts with an overview of the secondary literature on the issue of the soul and its faculties in the Middle Ages, focusing on three texts by Peter King, Dominik Perler, and Sander de Boer, which allegedly are in need of corrections. Jeschke's goal is to fulfil such a need. He aims "to correct the limitations of the existing approaches by avoiding the modern prejudices and interests, and to use medieval texts as hermeneutical instruments." (158) Discussing King's text he points convincingly to some interpretative errors. However, Perler's text is discussed only in passing and described as "not attempting to give a history of the sources", and de Boer's is mainly criticised for choosing his sources in a curious way which fails to offer a representative image of his topic. At the end of his paper, after discussing Denys the Carthusian and Capreolus' conceptions of the soul and its potencies, Jeschke presents his own view on how the research on medieval philosophy should be conducted. He is advocating for a historical approach and considers it to have advantages over the more systematic approaches. Such an "account prevents one from generalizing before investigating more thoroughly the medieval sources." He then continues: "This does not mean that my medieval approach should replace other narratives [...]. Some modern narratives are valid and valuable, yet they must be supplemented and corrected so that we achieve a historical picture of the debate that is as precise and multifaceted as possible. Other narratives are only superficially historical, and should be replaced by truly historical approaches, or otherwise presented as systematic surveys, whatever purpose such surveys

might serve in the study of *medieval* philosophy.” (195) It seems that what Jeschke wants to say is that de Boer’s narrative must be supplemented with more references to primary sources, King’s must be corrected, and Perler’s should be replaced by a truly historical approach. If my reading is correct, I think his criticism of the superficially historical approach falls short for two reasons: he seems to be targeting only Perler’s position, which is not necessarily the standard systematic survey, and he does not substantiate the claim that such an account serves no real purpose in the study of medieval philosophy. I take no issue with advocating for the historical method, but I also believe one should not dismiss alternative methods too easily.

William Duba and Olivier Ribordy co-author a detailed survey of some 14<sup>th</sup> century stances on the definition of the human soul. Their paper “The Human Soul: Definitions and *Differentiae* in Late-Medieval Commentaries on the *Sentences*” offers invaluable parallel textual analyses of 14<sup>th</sup> century authors and their sources: Pierre d’Ailly and John Buridan, Gabriel Biel and William Ockham, Peter of Candia and Averroes, Guillaume de Vaurouillon and Alexander Halensis, Aquinas and Averroes and Denys the Carthusian.

Kent Emery Jr. ends this section of the book with the paper “Denys the Carthusian’s Sentential Teachings on the Nature and the Operations of the Soul.” It begins with some historical information regarding the life and works of Denys and proceeds to offer an analysis of his conception of the soul by focusing on the *II Sentences* d.17, q.2. After identifying Albert the Great, Aquinas, Richard of Menneville, and Henry of Ghent as Denys’ sources, Emery Jr. presents his conception of the soul and interprets it as a mixture of Aristotelian metaphysics and experimental sciences. The idea that the matter of the body has an incomplete form which is educed from it once the intellectual soul is infused, and that this incomplete form contains the accidental dispositions which remain present even after the death of the person, thus accounting for the subject’s further accidental changes (244-245), is representative of the attempt to combine metaphysical tenets with the observations of experimental sciences. This point of Kent’s reading is convincing. However, the claim that the metaphysics Denys adopts is Aristotelian needs qualifications, for at least pure Aristotelian theories did not speak of incomplete forms being educed from matter. This was a primarily Augustinian metaphysical tenet. Nonetheless, apart from this little point, Kent’s paper does not seem to suffer from other limitations.

The last section, *Theological Issues*, begins with John T. Slotemaker’s paper “Pierre d’Ailly and the *Imago Trinitatis*: The Sources of His Trinitarian Theology”, which offers a historical analysis of Pierre’s sources, going from Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas to William of Ockham and Gregory of Rimini. All of the sources are analysed according to the same dual structure: on the one hand, an investigation of where in the *Sentences* is the psychological analogy of the image of the Trinity in man discussed; on the other hand, what were their stances on the Augustinian triad of memory, intellect, and will, and if this triad bears or not any analogy with the Trinity. The conclusion reached by Slotemaker is that, among all of the historical sources available to Pierre, Ockham seems to have been the most important and influential for his position on Trinitarian theology.

Severin Kitanov signs the paper “Freedom in Heaven: Peter of Candia’s Treatment of the Necessity or Contingency of Beatific Enjoyment.” After discussing the origins of the necessity or contingency of beatific enjoyment and the relevance of Peter’s position, Kitanov goes on to investigate three of Peter’s opponents, Thomas Aquinas, Peter Auriol, and John of Ripa. As they champion arguments for the necessity thesis, this is a great way of finding out how and what exactly motivates Peter to take the opposite road. A careful analysis of Peter’s arguments for the contingency thesis is offered in the paper, supplemented with lots of notes to primary texts. One very interesting aspect of Peter’s position presented in Kitanov’s paper is, in addition to the stance on the contingency of beatific enjoyment, the distinction between three types of necessity which shape his point of view.

The section ends with Christopher Schabel’s paper “Henry of Langenstein, Henry Totting of Oyta, Nicholas Dinkelsbühl and the Vienna Group on Reconciling Human Free Will with Divine Foreknowledge”. The paper traces the historical sources of the members of the Vienna Group to the writings of Scotus, Auriol, Rimini, Ockham, Woodeham, Kilvington, and Bradwardine, and shows that they tend to favour the position that there is no necessity involved in the workings of the human will. The paper ends with an invaluable critical edition of the Vienna Group’s question on God’s foreknowledge of future contingents from the commentary on the *Sentences*.

All in all, the collected volume is a treasure trove of information on the late Middle Ages commentaries on the *Sentences*, presented mostly in a historical manner, but also with a few more systematic essays, imbued with references to primary sources and solid textual analyses. Any scholar of medieval philosophy interested in how the commentaries on the *Sentences* developed in the late medieval period will benefit from reading it. Even for scholars interested in medieval philosophy in general the book can be very useful, as many of the texts approach their topics from a historical perspective that often looks back at the sources of the ideas. The massive editorial work of Monica Bînzei and Christopher Schabel has to be congratulated. The only issue one can take with this volume, is the fact that it was published eleven years after the initial conference, which led to the unfortunate but understandable decision of leaving aside some of the papers because their material lost its relevance or was published somewhere else in the meantime.