

La réception de Duns Scot = Die Rezeption des Duns Scotus = Scotism through the Centuries: Proceedings of "The Quadruple Congress" on John Duns Scotus. Edited by Mechthild Dreyer, Édouard Mehl, and Matthias Vollet. Archa Verbi 6. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute. Pp. 344. \$100.

The 700th anniversary of the death of John Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308) was celebrated by a monumental “Quadruple Congress”—four major conferences in different North American and European cities. The present volume publishes 18 papers in English, French, and German, most of which were presented at the fourth conference (Strasbourg 2009), dedicated to Duns Scotus’s legacy. Some later medieval thinkers are discussed (e.g., Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, William of Alnwick, Walter of Chatton, John Buridan, Peter of Candia), but the weight of the book lies more in the postmedieval period.

My review focuses on the book’s treatment of the early modern period, where Scotus’s influence was mostly indirect or unacknowledged and therefore difficult to assess. Volker Leppin examines Scotus’s influence on Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. Luther, who had only indirect knowledge of Scotus, rejected his teaching on free will (*liberum arbitrium*), according to which a sinner does not need grace to abandon his sinful path (94). Scotus’s impact on Zwingli (by way of fourteenth–fifteenth-century Scotism) is much stronger: God is infinite being, and hence there is an infinite distance between him and creatures. (But does not Scotus also teach that “being” is univocal, thus bridging this distance? We do not learn about Zwingli’s take on this.) The emphasis on God as infinite being and as infinitely remote from creatures has three important implications for Zwingli: (1) divine providence leaves no place for human freedom; (2) the eucharistic bread cannot contain God himself but can only signify God; and (3) the Chalcedonian formula of the unity of Christ’s human and divine nature is only figurative speech, which implies a Nestorian tendency in Zwingli (95–99). Zwingli in turn is behind Calvin’s idea that “*finitum non est capax infiniti*,” which leads Calvin to deny, as Zwingli did, God’s real presence in the Eucharist (99–100).

Two papers discuss Scotus’s or Scotists’ influence on Descartes. Francesco Marrone convincingly traces Descartes’s distinction between *realitas formalis* and *realitas obiectiva* to John the Canon (Ioannes Canonicus), a fourteenth-century Scotist, who had received it from Scotus himself. *Realitas formalis* (or *subiectiva* for John) refers to a thing’s real existence, whereas *realitas obiectiva* is a thing’s “being” as the object of thought. Recall that Descartes uses this distinction in the Third Meditation to prove God’s existence: he argues that the objective reality of one’s idea of God—the infinite being it represents—could only have been caused by an infinite formal reality, that is, by God himself. As Marrone shows, John the Canon uses the distinction to show that the concept of “being,” as to its *realitas obiectiva* (the representational content of “being”), can be univocal, that is, common to God and creatures, without implying that God and creatures have anything common in reality (i.e., without a common *realitas subiectiva*) (110–16).

The theme of Mehl’s investigation is Descartes’s reaction against a Scotist tradition that Descartes might have found in Mersenne. For Scotus, the possibles are formally

independent of God; in other words, even if God did not exist, a triangle would still be a triangle. Descartes famously rejects this idea and holds that mathematical truths depend on God. M. nicely shows how, precisely for this reason, Descartes needs God as a warrant for the certitude of human knowledge, whereas for Scotus the certitude is based on the intrinsic natures of the things known (119–33).

Hubertus Busche discusses Leibniz's well-known relation to Scotus and Scotism in his theory of individuation (159–68), where Leibniz rejects Scotus, and in his theory of possible worlds, which is based on Scotus's innovations (168–70).

An intriguing paper by Yves-Jean Harder concerns Kant's metaphysics vs. Scotus's. While continuity is often stressed between Scotus and Kant, because Scotus developed the conception of metaphysics as a science of the transcendentals, Harder argues for discontinuity. For Scotus, metaphysics as a transcendental science comprises both creatures and God. It is ontotheology, because knowledge of God presupposes knowledge of being qua being. Since Kant's critique of reason eliminates God from the domain of the knowable, for him metaphysics is no longer ontotheology. According to Harder, it is not even ontology, because his metaphysics does not proceed from "being" to its special parts (psychology, cosmology, theology), but rather each special part has a transcendent idea of its own, independently from "being" (175–93).

My selective summaries do not do justice to the book as a whole, which I found very informative and engaging. In addition to the essays mentioned, the volume contains papers on Bergson, Heidegger, Blumenberg, Arendt, on some nineteenth- and twentieth-century Scotists, and on analytic philosophy, as well as on specific arguments (e.g., concerning indivisibles in mathematics and incompatibilism in the contemporary free-will debate). The book documents, albeit selectively, Scotus's huge impact on later thinkers, especially concerning his theory of the univocity of being (and its implications for metaphysics) and his account of what the possibles are.

Tobias Hoffmann
The Catholic University of America, Washington DC

Leibniz, God, and Necessity. By Michael V. Griffin. New York: Cambridge University, 2013. Pp. xi + 195. \$90.

Leibniz once claimed that human reason continuously finds itself lost within two great labyrinths: one is the problem of the *composition of the continuum* (how certain events or states of affairs relate to past events or states of affairs), which vexes only philosophers; the second is the problem of the relation between *freedom and necessity*, which vexes everyone. Griffin's book examines certain problems in Leibniz that relate to his discussions of the second "labyrinth," specifically issues of God's freedom. Leibniz argues that God both does what he does *necessarily* and is *free* to do what he does. As is expected, such a thesis would lead to numerous tensions, and G. notes them while offering an interpretation of Leibniz that dissolves them.