

of an electronic document of 143 pages containing an additional 36 textual excerpts unevenly covering the eight parts of the volume.

It is disappointing, however, that in a reader of this nature, the texts are not identical to the critical editions, not in the admirable sense of including the readings from original texts such as the Chester Beatty papyrus for the Pauline corpus (6), but that editorial changes have been made to texts in order to “facilitate rapid reading” (8). It is not clear from M.’s discussion what these editorial changes entail. M. is to be commended, however, for his advocacy of “Hellenistic” pronunciation (8–11), which will indeed enrich and enhance the experience of reading Greek. This phonological shift is a welcome relief to the abrasive nonhistorical traditional “Erasmian” pronunciation(s).

The volume is ideal for intermediate-level students who desire to broaden their exposure to Hellenistic Greek beyond the traditional reading exercises common at this level. More advanced students will likely need to supplement their reading with the *editiones principes* of relevant texts.

Michael P. Theophilus
Australian Catholic University, Melbourne

Henry of Ghent. *Summa of Ordinary Questions: Articles 35, 36, 42, and 45*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Roland J. Teske, S.J. *Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation*. Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2013. Pp. 180. \$20.

This volume is the eighth in a continuing series of English translations of Henry of Ghent (d. 1293), one of the major masters of theology in Paris during the last quarter of the 13th century. It contains four skillfully translated articles from H.’s *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum* regarding God’s active and passive potencies (35), intellect (36), perfection (42), and will (45).

H.’s writing is challenging because of the density of his arguments and the subtlety of his distinctions; it is nevertheless lucid for a persevering reader to follow. H. developed a philosophical theology that had affinities with Augustine and Avicenna, but that was, in effect, a critical revision of Thomas Aquinas. H. seems to solve every problem in Thomas by introducing fresh distinctions.

While H.’s answers to most of the questions raised here are predictable, his manner of approaching them is distinctive. That said, his position on passive potency in God is unusual and counterintuitive. Whereas active potency is the capacity to do an act, H. explains, passive potency is the capacity to receive an act. Since God is entirely actual and impassible, therefore, one might suppose (with Thomas Aquinas) that there is no passive potency in God. H. argues, on the contrary, that there are passive potencies in God, such as the ability to understand and the capacity to be generated (as the Son), but that these are distinct from the corresponding acts only in reason and not really or intentionally. (H. distinguishes between intentional and rational distinction.) Moreover, God’s passive potencies are multiple, for although they are all really identical with God’s essence, which is one, they differ in how their names are imposed and in “respect,” that is, in relation to their outcomes.

The translation series as whole is most welcome and laudable, for H. deserves a wider audience. This volume, however, is not an obvious entry point for anyone new to H.'s work. Moreover, H. is easier to read in Latin than in English translation, for his vocabulary and style are dryly technical and highly refined.

Philip L. Reynolds
Emory University, Atlanta

Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: A Biography. By Bernard McGinn. Lives of Great Religious Books. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2014. Pp. xi + 260. \$24.95.

McGinn's life-story of this seminal text begins with a brief chapter surveying Aquinas's 13th-century Scholastic context, warning us that Scholasticism cannot be reduced to a set of "teachings or to a single system of thought" (11). It is more aptly seen as an Aristotelian science employing both reason and faith, and intimately related to the biblical concept of wisdom, a sacred teaching that derives its first principles from revelation, and arranges them so as to achieve its ultimate goal: a return to the transcendent source of truth and "eternal happiness" (59). As M. eloquently argues in chapter 2, this cyclical pattern informs the overall structure of the *Summa*, one that proceeds from Creator to creation and then traces humanity from the fall to ultimate redemption through the mediation of divine providence. This is the shape not only of the *Summa* but of Aquinas's entire thought-world.

Chapter 3 proves more daunting, since M. has a mere 43 pages to take the reader though a guided tour of the *Summa* itself. He wisely chooses to focus on a few representative topics—the existence and nature of God (79–89); the created order (89–95); virtue and teleological fulfilment (96–106); and the necessity of grace for salvation through Christ (107–16)—rather than trying to give a full outline. Nevertheless, despite M.'s considerable skill at highlighting thematic elements and suggesting how they fit together, this section feels cramped.

Chapter 4 presents a succinct yet incisive overview of the *Summa*'s complex after-life, explaining how, despite rapid intellectual changes, it remained central to many of these eras' most contested theological debates. M. is particularly adept at explaining Meister Eckhart's "creative misreading" (133) of Aquinas—unsurprisingly, since M. is one of the foremost scholars of the German mystic. The final chapter effortlessly guides the reader through neo-Scholasticism's late 19th-century ascendancy, the development of various competing schools of 20th-century Thomism, the rise of pluralism, and the concurrent relative eclipse of the *Summa* in the post-Vatican II years. A brief epilogue assures us, however, that reports of the *Summa*'s demise are premature: it will continue to be discussed and studied. Indeed, "the cycle of wisdom rolls on" (214).

Gregorio Montejo
Boston College