

affirming that some tools elaborated by economists (such as models and statistical techniques) exist to serve human happiness in at least two ways. First, this teleological setting makes it possible to interpret economic questions not only according to mere economic indicators, such as the GDP, but rather ‘in light of broader measures of human well-being’. Secondly, a Thomistic framework requires that economic analysis take into account that it concerns human beings, and that it ‘plays a role in shaping cultural conversations that can either promote or hinder our ability to translate economic wealth into authentic happiness’ (p. 209). Even if this book does not add much to our knowledge of Aquinas’s economic thought, it is highly recommended because Hirschfeld shows how the Thomistic framework is fully capable of interacting, even today, with modern economics in a critically constructive fashion.

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BONAVENTURE, THE BODY, AND THE AESTHETICS OF SALVATION by Rachel Davies, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2020*, pp. xii + 187, £75.00, hbk

EARLY FRANCISCAN THEOLOGY: BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND INNOVATION by Lydia Schumacher, *Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019*, pp. xi + 311, £75.00, hbk

Cambridge University Press has published two strongly contrasting books on Franciscan thought. Schumacher goes systematically about the exercise she sets herself. She establishes the sources that early Franciscans treated as ‘authority’ as a context in which to ask the question, “What was new by way of an approach to the especially topical doctrinal questions of the age?”

Establishing themselves when they did, the mendicant orders had a difficulty about where to set the boundary between the early Christian writers who eventually came to be considered ‘patristic’ authorities and those who were near or recent contemporaries and whose ‘authoritativeness’ might be questionable. Twelfth-century compilers of florilegia included Anselm of Bec and Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor. But now there were universities and new styles of scholarship and competitive lecturing and much room for dispute about the trust to be placed in conflicting academic opinions.

So Schumacher takes her readers carefully through the influence of Augustine among the early Franciscans and the impact on their thinking of the translations of new works of Aristotle into Latin. There were disagreements as to whether those should be added to the syllabus at all, and if so, in Arts or Theology. Anselm’s ontological argument was still

prompting active controversy and gets its own chapter. Schumacher explores the ‘*summa*’-based approach of a nascent systematic theology covering the divine nature; the Trinity (Thomas Aquinas; John of Damascus; Richard of St. Victor); the doctrine of the Trinity; Christology; Incarnation.

All this is carefully framed in the context of the developing spirituality of the Franciscans and the battle over poverty, but there is only so much which can be covered in a single study. Schumacher sees her book as a stage in the longer analysis which, as she sees it, would be needed in order to ‘allow a more elaborate comparison to be drawn between [Scotus’] positions and those of the Summists’.

Davies’s book is also conceived as a work of ‘historical theology’. She considers Bonaventure’s understanding of ‘structural components’ derived from Augustine and the older tradition he himself was drawing on including, for the metaphysics of light, Ps.Dionysius, Alexander of Hales and Grosseteste. She also uses Hans Urs von Balthasar, describing him as ‘one of the few modern thinkers to have engaged Bonaventure’s account of the beautiful in a sustained, constructive way’. In Davies’s analysis of the texts there is less of the intimate engagement with the Latin which is to be found in Schumacher, but she offers sections on key texts, the ‘Journey of the soul to God’, the *Collations* on the Six Days, ‘The Tree of Life’ (a chapter on Christology) and the *Life* of Francis.

The problem Davies has chosen to tackle she describes as an attempt to resolve the value to be placed on the body in Christian thought and the Christian life, ‘the anxiety so many individuals feel in confrontation with human bodies – both their own and those of others they love’, and ‘how to harness bodily diminishment for redemptive purposes without blindsiding the real suffering it sometimes causes’, for she does not think suffering has ‘intrinsic meaning’. The exploration of this ancient and enormous question takes Davies to the ‘diminishment’ of the body (used to cover all death, fragmentation, disintegration, disease); to ‘emanation and return’, and into a soteriological theology that asks, “How does the body ‘participate in the journey to God’”? ‘Beauty’ (treated as a name for God) has a prominent place in the discussion, with an exploration of ways in which Bonaventure uses the body ‘to collect sense-impressions’.

She tries to take a ‘Franciscan’ approach herself. Her study is therefore also a vehicle for her personal exploration of the mind-body problem, including topics some of which are, she notes, not in the Bonaventure texts on which she has focussed. She makes Bonaventure a partner in the exercise rather than primarily the subject of study.

These are both very good books of their kinds and more complementary than may at first appear. Both have been produced with proper CUP care.

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