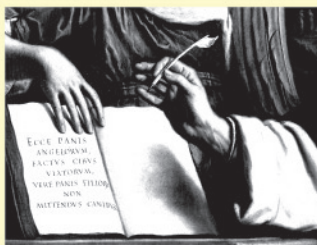


# DIVUS THOMAS



Anno 118° - 2015 - gennaio/aprile

## San Tommaso d'Aquino Commentatore

**Contributi di** Fabrizio Amerini      Gaetano Iaia  
Alberto Cevolini      Katia Krause  
Giacchino Curiello      Mario Micheletti  
Luca Gili (ed.)      Jörn Müller  
Paul Hellmeier





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# DIVUS THOMAS

ISSN 0012-4257

Periodico quadrimestrale dello Studio Filosofico Domenicano,  
della Provincia San Domenico in Italia

Via dell'Osservanza, 72

40136 Bologna BO

Tel. ++39 051582034 - Fax ++39 051331583

acquisti@esd-domenicani.it

www.edizionistudiodomenicano.it

Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Firenze del 19 aprile 1948 n. 13

*Direttore:* MARCO SALVIOLI - [divusthomasdirettore@esd-domenicani.it](mailto:divusthomasdirettore@esd-domenicani.it)

*Comitato editoriale:* Alberto Ambrosio, Giuseppe Barzagli (direttore responsabile),  
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Alberto Cevolini, Marianna Rascente, Claudio Testi.

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Grafica di copertina: Domenico Gamarro

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**DIVUS THOMAS**  
Rivista quadrimestrale

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numero singolo € 30,00

*I singoli quaderni si possono acquistare anche presso l'Editore.*

**PAGAMENTI**

**Bonifico bancario**

c/c numero	12971404
tenuto presso	Poste Italiane SpA
intestato a	Edizioni Studio Domenicano
IBAN	IT 49 W 07601 02400 000012971404
BIC	B P P I I T R R X X X

**Bollettino postale**

ccp	12971404
intestato a	Edizioni Studio Domenicano

Non si accettano assegni.

Il contratto di abbonamento ha durata annuale e si intende cessato con l'invio dell'ultimo numero di annata. Il rinnovo utile ad assicurare la continuità degli invii deve essere effettuato con versamento della quota entro il 31 gennaio del nuovo anno.

Si prega, ad ogni versamento, di indicare sempre il codice di abbonamento assegnato e l'anno di riferimento del canone.



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## INTRODUZIONE

THOMAS AQUINAS  
AS A COMMENTATOR. PHILOSOPHY  
AND THEOLOGY IN AQUINAS'S  
COMMENTARIES ON ARISTOTLE,  
ON THE PETER LOMBARD,  
AND ON PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS

LUCA GILI\*

Thomas Aquinas wrote many commentaries, and it is safe to say that the literary genre of the commentary was the most frequently practiced by the Dominican Master. He commented on the Bible, on Aristotle, on Boethius, on Pseudo-Dionysius, and, of course, on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. In Aquinas's time it was customary among theologians to comment on the *Sentences*. The commentaries on important biblical texts may also have been written in order to fulfill his teaching duties. It is unclear, why Aquinas wrote commentaries on philosophical texts – we do know that he was not asked to do so, because he was not a *magister artium*. Father Gauthier suggested that Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle were meant to nourish Aquinas's own *theological* inquiry. Aquinas never deemed himself a philosopher, Gauthier claimed, but merely as a

---

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theologian. Many scholars, including some of the contributors to this volume, have challenged this view. The question, however, remains open, because the textual evidence does not unequivocally support either interpretation.

Furthermore, when reading Aquinas's commentaries, one might wonder whether Aquinas is endorsing the view he attributes to the author of the text he is commenting upon, or whether his intention is merely exegetical. In this case too, the textual evidence does not offer a univocal solution. The study of a commentary is further complicated, because this literary genre seems to conceal the real intentions of the commentator, instead of make them explicit – or at least this is what a contemporary reader is accustomed to expect, when reading a commentary. One is no longer looking for a commentator's opinion, when one reads, say, Oxford commentaries on Aristotle. One rather expects to better understand the text commented upon, and if a commentator's notes happen to be discussed or criticized, they are judged on the basis of the commentator's ability (or inability) to render the author's mind. Despite this habit, it has become increasingly acknowledged among scholars that the literary genre of the commentary was one of the privileged genres to do *original* philosophy and to do *original* theology in the Late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. In order to detect the original doctrines that are scattered in Late Antique and in medieval commentaries, some preliminary methodological considerations need to be made.

The study of a commentary as such may be carried out according to two perspectives<sup>1</sup>: a) one may investigate the cultural institutions involved in the production of that commentary, the readership for which it was designed, and the context in which it was written, and may ask why the author decided to begin such a commentary, in order to understand the request it was taken to answer. A commentary may be written in order to defend a traditional way of interpreting a given text or in order to criticize its contemporary understanding. Further, it could be written in the context of a philosophical school or of a

---

<sup>1</sup> These guidelines for the study of commentaries have been clearly outlined by G. W. Most in his *Vorwort to Commentaries – Kommentare*, hrsg. von G. W. Most, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999, pp. vii-viii.

medieval university. In these cases the philosophical orientation of the school or a faculty in which the commentary was conceived of and composed may have influenced the author. In sum, on the one hand scholars may deal with the external context in which the commentary was written; on the other hand, b) it is possible to examine a commentary's formal structure, its relationship with the text commented upon, its literary form (which may be lemmatic, *per quaestiones*, etc.)<sup>2</sup>, and its sources. If one is faced with a commentary on a philosophical text, one may consider also the philosophical problems surrounding either the text commented upon or the commentary itself. In other words, one may examine the inner structure of a commentary.

Both of the abovementioned approaches are useful in detecting the original contribution of a commentator. And both approaches have been practiced by the contributors to this volume.

This issue of *Divus Thomas* is devoted to Thomas Aquinas's commentaries. Katja Krause focuses on Aquinas's commentary on the *Sentences*, Gioacchino Curiello concentrates on the commentary on pseudo-Dionysius's *De Divinis Nominibus*, while Fabrizio Amerini, Jörn Müller, and Paul Hellmeier OP have contributed papers on Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's works: Fabrizio Amerini on the commentary on *De Interpretatione*, Jörn Müller on the commentary on the *Ethics*, and father Hellmaier on *De Anima*. I contribute a paper on Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: I do not dwell on the philosophical claims made by Aquinas, but I rather present some preliminary remarks for the study of the text.

The aim of this issue is to contribute to a better understanding of Aquinas's thought. In order to do so, we decided to look at Aquinas as a commentator. The commentaries constitute a section of Aquinas's

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<sup>2</sup> The literary forms of the texts which presented Aristotle's philosophy in the Latin West to medieval readers is the object of the paper by O. Weijers, *The Literary Forms of the Reception of Aristotle: Between Exposition and Philosophical Treatise*, in L. Honnefelder, R. Wood, M. Dreyer, M.-A. Aris, *Albertus Magnus und die Anfänge der Aristoteles-Rezeption im lateinischen Mittelalter*, Münster, Aschendorff Verlag (Subsidia Albertina I), 2005, pp. 555-584; cf. also O. Weijers, *Les genres littéraires à la Faculté des arts*, in *Revue de science philosophique et théologique*, 82/4, 1998, pp. 631-641.

vast production that has not received much attention by scholars in the past. In recent years, however, we have been witnessing a growing interest in Aquinas's commentaries and are hoping to make a valuable addition to this stream of studies. I thank the contributors for their excellent papers and trust that this special issue will shed a new light on Aquinas's fascinating thought.

Nell'ambito del rinato interesse per il genere letterario del commento filosofico e teologico, si è sostenuto, con buoni argomenti, che nella tarda antichità e nel medioevo i commenti erano veicoli di trasmissione di un contenuto filosofico e teologico originale. Il commento non aveva quindi una esclusiva ragione esegetica, ma veicolava spesso le opinioni autonome del commentatore. Questo elemento di originalità è a lungo sfuggito agli interpreti contemporanei, ma è divenuto più chiaro alla luce di nuovi studi sul genere letterario del commento. In questo ambito di studi manca ad oggi un'indagine complessiva su Tommaso d'Aquino come commentatore. Tommaso scrisse numerosi commenti a testi biblici, ad Aristotele, a Boezio, allo pseudo-Dionigi e alle Sentenze di Pietro Lombardo. I saggi raccolti in questo fascicolo monografico intendono mostrare alcune delle dottrine originali che Tommaso avanza nei suoi commenti; al tempo stesso, i saggi si soffermano sull'acume esegetico dimostrato dall'Aquinate. Questo fascicolo si propone quindi di far nascere una rinnovata attenzione ai commenti di Tommaso, per mostrarne la profondità e l'acume filosofico e teologico - paragonabile a quello delle opere maggiori del Dottore Angelico.

## **DIVUS THOMAS**

Rivista quadrimestrale  
Via dell'Osservanza, 72  
40136 Bologna  
tel. +39-051-582034  
[www.esd-domenicani.it](http://www.esd-domenicani.it)

Spediz. in abb. postale  
D.L. 353/2003 (conv. in  
L. 27/02/2004 n. 46 art. 1  
c. 2) e aut. CMP Bologna  
n. 070094 del 27/11/2007

**€ 30,00**

ISBN 978887094-910-0



9 788870 949100