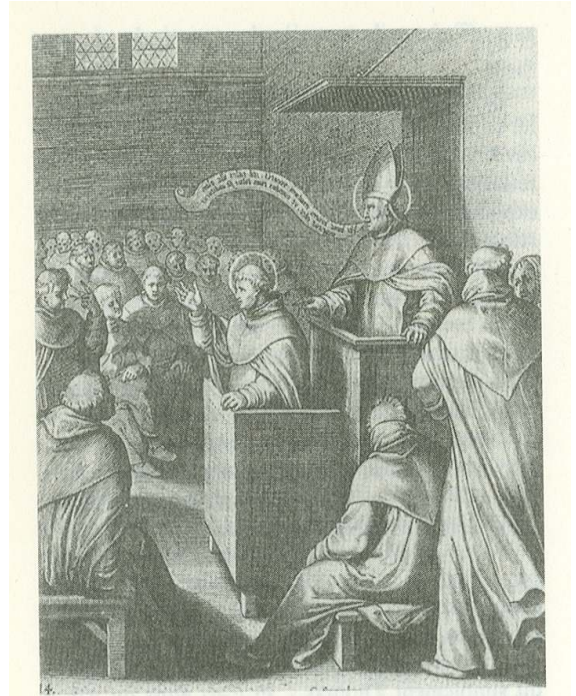


## Thomas d'Aquino

### A. *Curriculum vitae*

- Most influential philosopher of Mediaeval age
- born, 1225, of noble family, near town of Aquino, Italy; called d'Aquino or Aquinas
- Oblate, Benedictine Abbey, Monte Cassino, 1230-39 (from 5 years of age)
- University of Naples 1239-44
- At age 19 enters Dominicans
- University of Paris, 1245-48
- Dominican House of Studies, Cologne, 1248-52
- University of Paris, 1252-56
- Licentiate, Theology, Univ. of Paris, 1256
- teaches as Master, at Univ. of Paris, 1256-59, 1268-72
- Lecturer, papal curia 1259-68
- founds Dominican House of Studies, Naples, 1272
- opposes Averroists
- advisor to Popes and kings
- dies 1274
- works: *Summa contra gentiles* (SCG), *Summa Theologiae* (ST), commentaries on Aristotle and sacred scripture, and many more
- work condemned by Bishop of Paris, 1277; decision reversed 46 years later.
- canonized 1323



**Thomas speaking in Cologne.**

- interested in metaphysics, philosophy of God, philosophy of human nature and ethics

### B. *Passages*

1. Ibn Sina on the separation of existence and 'essence'. What exists necessarily through another exists possibly through itself...Thus, everything existing possibly in itself—if indeed its existence has occurred--exists necessarily through another...If its existence is not necessary, and so it is still possible existence, then its existence is not distinguished from its nonexistence, and there is no difference in it between this state [actual existence] and the first state [possible existence], because before existing it was possible existence, and its present state is the same as it was. If one posits that a new state comes to be, then concerning that state the question stands, does it exist possibly or necessarily (*Metaphysics, The Salvation* ii.3).
2. The proper character [of possible beings] is that they necessarily require some other thing to make them actual (*Al Shifa Ilâhiyyât*, i.8).
3. In the thing there are both the whatness of the thing and its being. So in the intellect there is a double activity corresponding to those two. One activity, which is called

- ‘formation’ by the philosophers, is that by which the intellect apprehends the whatness of things... But the other activity comprehends the thing’s being, by compounding an affirmation (Thomas, *In sent* I.38.i.3, cited in Kretzmann, p. 58).
4. It belongs to the same kind of thinking to show what a *genos* is and that it is (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* vi.1).
  5. ‘One man’ and ‘man’ are the same thing, and so are ‘existent man’ and ‘man’, and the doubling of the words in ‘one man and one existent man’ does not express anything different (it is clear that the two things are not separated either in coming to be or in ceasing to be); and similarly ‘one existent man’ adds nothing to ‘existent man’, and that it is obvious that the addition in these cases means the same thing, and unity is nothing apart from being (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* iv.2). Aristotle calls “being and unity” “one nature” (ibid).
  6. A city-state is composed of people who differ in *eidos*, for a city-state cannot be composed of people who are like one another (*Pol.* ii.2.1261a23-24).
  7. There exists a twofold truth concerning the divine being (*SCG* i.4, CVSP reading p. 3). The investigation of the reason is competent to reach one kind of divine truth, whereas the other surpasses every effort of the reason (*SCG* i. CVSP reading)
  8. There is a two-fold operation of the intellect: one of which...consists in apprehension of the simple whatness, which also is called by the other name form; the other is that which they call faith...the first operation regards the whatness of a thing; the second regards its being (Thomas, *In sent* I.19.5.1, trans. from the Latin printed in Owens, 1980, p. 118).
  9. We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.52).
  10. Ibn Sina on nature of ordered series.  
 Things existing possibly terminate in a cause existing necessarily in which case not every thing which exists as something possible will have simultaneously with it a cause that exists as something possible (*Metaphysics, The Salvation* ii.12).
  11. There cannot be an infinite number of causes that are "per se" required for a certain effect; for instance, that a stone be moved by a stick, the stick by the hand, and so on to infinity (ST i.46).
  12. In an ordered series of movers and things moved (that is, a series in which one is moved by another according to an order), it is necessary that, when the first mover is removed or ceases to move, no other mover will move [another] or be [itself] moved. For the first mover is the cause of motion for all the others. But, if there are movers and things moved following an order to infinity, there will be no first mover, but all would be as intermediate movers (SCG).



***Ibn Sina***

13. Since the Necessary Existent cannot know this or that, it is aware of particular things insofar as they are universal—I mean inasmuch as they have attributes (*Metaphysics, The Salvation* ii.19).
14. The human intellect is not able to reach a comprehension of the divine substance through its own power. For according to its manner of knowing in the present life, the intellect depends on the senses for the origin of knowledge; and so those things that do not fall under the senses cannot be grasped by the human intellect except in so far as the knowledge of them is gathered from sensible things. Now sensible things cannot lead the human intellect to the point of seeing in them the nature of the divine substance, for sensible things are effects that fall short of the power of their cause. Yet, beginning with sensible things our intellect is led to the point of knowing about God that He exists and other such characteristics of the First Principle (SCG i.4, CVSP reading, p. 2-3).
15. Even first principles, which are such that we do not know when we intended their sensation, arise undoubtedly from sense, even if we do not know when they arose for us from [sense]. Therefore, even though these principles are not imaginative, they do not reach us other than with images. (*Averroes, Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De anima*, A. Ivry, ed. & trans., Provo, 2002, p. 123).
16. Thus it is clear that we must get to know the first principles by induction, for the method by which even sense perception implants the universal is inductive (*Aristotle. Posterior Analytics* ii.19)
17. Whatever arguments are brought forward against the doctrines of faith are conclusions incorrectly derived from the first and self-evident principles imbedded in nature. Such conclusions do not have the force of demonstrations; they are arguments that are either probable or sophistical (SCG i.vii: CVSP reading, p. 6).
18. Everything I have written seems to me as straw in comparison with what I have seen (*Processus canonizationis S. Thomae, Neapoli*, ed., M.-H. Laurent, 79, 376-7).

### ***B. Example of a demonstrative argument***

Premise 1: “God is interested in individual human beings.”

Argument

- i. God is a perfect & complete being & does not change.
- ii. If at one time God intellected a human as existing, and at another time as not existing, then God would himself be subject to change, since his intellecting would change in response to changes in humans.
- iii. Therefore, God cannot intellect individuals.
- iv. Therefore God does not know particulars.
- v. “iv” contradicts Premise 1.
- vi. In accordance with the law of non-contradiction, we must reject “iv” or Premise 1.
- vii. “iv” is derived from primary beliefs about God.
- viii. Therefore we must reject Premise 1.

### **C. *Are Demonstrative Systems universally valid?***

1. Demonstrative systems are based on the principle of non-contradiction (Aristotle, Ibn Rushd, Thomas).
2. The principle of non-contradiction is derived from sense experience (Aristotle, Ibn Rushd, Thomas).
3. There is falsehood present in all sense experience (view of all philosophers).
4. Therefore, an element of falsehood is inherent in demonstrative systems (Thomas).
  - a. Kurt Gödel showed that a demonstrative system of elementary arithmetic that is complete produces contradictions in violation of principle of non-contradiction.
  - b. If we limit that demonstrative system so it does not produce contradictions, it cannot prove all the theorems that we know are true.
  - c. Therefore, mathematics transcends logical reasoning
5. The notion that demonstrative systems are superior to other systems or modes of thought is false and possibly ideological.

### **D. *Propositions & Questions***

#### ***(Q1) How do we know God?***

***(P1)*** There exists a twofold truth concerning the divine being.

- Does this mean that Thomas believes that God has two natures, one knowable through human reason, and the other not?
- Does this mean that Thomas is liable to the charge of teaching a ‘double truth’ as was Averroes?

#### ***(Q2) How come any world at all?***

***(P2)*** The sense of the world must lie outside it (Wittgenstein, *Tract.* 6.41)

#### ***(Q3) What is God?***

***(P3)*** Sensible things are effects that fall short of the power of their cause.

***(P4)*** The existence of God is his essence and this is true of nothing else.

### **Propositions from the Five Ways**

***(P5)*** From every effect the existence of a cause can be clearly demonstrated (p 10).

***(P6)*** To move something (*movere*) is nothing other than to draw out (*educere*) something from potentiality to actuality (p. 11).

***(P7)*** Nothing can be brought (*reducere*) from potentiality to actuality except by some being in a state of actuality (p. 11).

***(P8)*** Actuality is prior to potentiality (Aris. *Metaphysics* L.6).

### **E. *Additional Bibliography***

Patterson Brown, “St. Thomas’ Doctrine of Necessary Being,” *Phil. Rev.* 73 (1964) 76-90.

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J. Owens, “Diversity and community of being in St. Thomas Aquinas,” in *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God*, Albany NY, 1980.

J. Owens, “Aquinas and Aristotle,” in N. Kretzmann & E. Stump, eds., *Cambridge companion to Aquinas*, 1993, p. 113ff.