Abstract

This dissertation considers the background and systematic development of the notion of *multitudo transcendens* in the thought of Thomas Aquinas. I argue that, according to Aquinas, *multitudo* is a transcendental feature of being, which is to say that all things are relationally constituted by their being ordered to others. In other words, nothing is solitary—at least not insofar as it has being.

The argument proceeds by tracing the perennial philosophical problem of “the one and the many” as it is addressed in the metaphysics of Aristotle and Avicenna, and then in various Latin Scholastic commentaries on Lombard’s *Sentences*. I show that Aquinas’ doctrine of *multitudo transcendens* marks a clear convergence of these two otherwise disparate commentary traditions, thereby indicating an intimate, mutually informing relationship between Aquinas’ metaphysics and Trinitarian theology.

Above all, Aquinas’ doctrine of *multitudo transcendens* is a powerful case study showcasing the creative potential that is present in the integration of philosophy and theology in Aquinas’ thought, and in the remarkable diversity of medieval philosophy as a whole.