

Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution

Is original sin compatible with evolution? Many today believe the answer is “No.” Engaging Aquinas’s revolutionary account of the doctrine, Daniel W. Houck argues that there is not necessarily a conflict between this Christian teaching and mainstream biology. He draws on neglected texts outside the *Summa Theologiae* to show that Aquinas focused on humanity’s loss of friendship with God – not the corruption of nature (or personal guilt). Aquinas’s account is theologically attractive in its own right. Houck proposes, moreover, a new Thomist view of original sin that is consonant with evolution. This account is developed in dialogue with biblical scholarship on Jewish hamartiology and salient modern thinkers (including Kant, Schleiermacher, Barth, and Schoonenberg), and it is systematically connected to debates over nature, grace, the desire for God, and justification. In addition, the book canvasses a number of neglected premodern approaches to original sin, including those of Anselm, Abelard, and Lombard.

Daniel W. Houck is senior pastor of Calvary Hill Baptist Church (Fairfax) and adjunct professor of theology at the John Leland Center for Theological Studies. A research fellow at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2017–18, his publications have appeared in journals such as *Archa Verbi* and *Nova et Vetera*.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49369-7 — Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution
Daniel W. Houck
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49369-7 — Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution
Daniel W. Houck
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution

DANIEL W. HOUCK

John Leland Center for Theological Studies



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-49369-7 — Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution
 Daniel W. Houck
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
 New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108493697

DOI: 10.1017/9781108642927

© Cambridge University Press 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Houck, Daniel W., 1987– author.

TITLE: Aquinas, original sin, and the challenge of evolution / Daniel W. Houck,
 John Leland Center for Theological Studies.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY, USA : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2019042219 (print) | LCCN 2019042220 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781108493697 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108725439 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781108642927 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Thomas, Aquinas, Saint, 1225?-1274. | Sin, Original–History of doctrines. | Evolution (Biology)–Religious aspects–Christianity.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC B765.T54 H649 2020 (print) | LCC B765.T54 (ebook) |

DDC 233/.14–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019042219>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019042220>

ISBN 978-1-108-49369-7 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49369-7 — Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution
Daniel W. Houck
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To James and Susan

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49369-7 — Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution
Daniel W. Houck
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> ix
Introduction	I
Original Sin in Scholarship	5
Overview	II
1 Augustine and the Long Twelfth Century	15
Augustine	16
Anselm of Canterbury	30
Peter Abelard	38
Peter Lombard	46
2 Aquinas on Original Justice	55
Scholarship on Aquinas's View of Original Justice	57
The Formal Cause of Original Justice	59
The Transmission of Original Justice	74
A Dilemma for Disease Theory	80
3 Aquinas on the Effects of Original Sin	88
Original Sin and Human Nature in the <i>Scriptum</i>	90
Original Sin and Human Nature in the Later Works	97
Grace and Original Sin	108
4 Aquinas on Original Guilt	118
Guilt and Original Sin	119
The Analogy of Sin	124
Analogies of Original Sin	127
The Problem with Partial Voluntareity	133

5	Original Sin and Some Modern Theologians	138
	Immanuel Kant	141
	Karl Barth	149
	Friedrich Schleiermacher	156
	Piet Schoonenberg	165
	Ian McFarland	169
	Sin and the Will of God	174
6	Original Sin and the Challenge of Evolution	179
	Continuous Origins	181
	Complex Origins	185
	Communal Origins	189
7	Original Sin	200
	Original Sin and Evolution	203
	Original Sin and Holy Scripture	209
8	A Response to Some Objections	221
	The Individual Distinction	222
	The Communal Distinction	228
	Sanctifying Grace	236
	Original Sin and Justification	242
	Pelagianism	244
	The Orientation to God	247
	Conclusion	255
	<i>Select Bibliography</i>	258
	<i>Index</i>	273

Acknowledgments

I completed this book at the Henry Center at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School during a fellowship generously funded by the Templeton Religion Trust (TRT). The atmosphere was ideal for interdisciplinary theological research. I am deeply grateful to the TRT, Trinity, and Professor Thomas McCall for affording me this opportunity. Of course, the views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of any other person or institution, including the Henry Center or TRT. Significant parts of this project originated in my doctoral thesis at Southern Methodist University. Bruce Marshall, my advisor, offered invaluable feedback, encouragement, and counsel at every stage. Billy Abraham, Jim Lee, and Oliver Crisp read the dissertation and made a number of helpful suggestions.

Other colleagues and friends commented on the manuscript at various stages of its development, including Daniel Simmons, Thomas Joseph White, Ralph Stearley, Jitse M. van der Meer, Clay Carlson, Gavin Ortlund, Joel Chopp, Matthew Vanderpoel, and David Mahfood. I have benefited from discussion of the book's contents with Matthew Levering, Marc Cortez, Stephen Williams, Geoff Fulkerson, Nathan Chambers, Justus Hunter, Adam Van Wart, William Glass, and Dallas Gingles. My sincere thanks also go to Beatrice Rehl and the team at Cambridge University Press for their assistance.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to thank my wife, Katie, for her inexhaustible support during this process. This book is dedicated to my parents, James and Susan Houck.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-49369-7 — Aquinas, Original Sin, and the Challenge of Evolution
Daniel W. Houck
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)
