

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910823133303321
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Titolo	Anthropologische Differenz und animalische Konvenienz : Tierphilosophie bei Thomas von Aquin // von Tobias Davids
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Leiden ; ; Boston : , : Brill, , [2017] ©2017
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (251 pages)
Collana	Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, , 0169-8028 ; ; Band 120
Disciplina	113/.8
Soggetti	Animals (Philosophy)
Lingua di pubblicazione	Tedesco
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Incipit: Thomas von Aquin und die Tierseele – Thema und Methodologie -- Einleitende Bemerkungen zu Teil 1 -- Seelendivisio -- Parzellierung -- Dependenz und Independenz -- Materialität -- Was ist, wenn ein Tier stirbt? -- Taxonomie -- Einleitende Bemerkungen zu Teil 2 -- Kognitivität -- Das externe Sensorium -- Wahrnehmungsbewusstsein und Wahrnehmungskreativität -- Assoziation – Instinkt – Gedächtnis -- Volitionale Bewegungen -- Emotionen -- Desinit: Thomas von Aquin und die Tierseele – Topographie der Ergebnisse -- Literatur -- Indexes.
Sommario/riassunto	This study examines Thomas Aquinas's contribution to the systematic field of animal philosophy. It applies various models from the current philosophical debate (especially from that concerning the mind of animals) as interpretative aids to tap the potential of the Thomistic approach. Thomas draws a clear line of demarcation between animals and human beings (= anthropological difference). However, he also considers it important to work out the similarities between humans and animals, insofar as they are both so-called animalia , id est, living beings possessing senses (= animal conformance). His philosophical deliberations concerning animals have a methodological function as well, namely to highlight the distinct capacities of human beings. Thus, for Thomas, the reflection on animals is a key instrument in dealing with anthropological questions.

