

FACULTY OF ARTS

THOMAS AQUINAS' INTERPRETATION OF ARISTOTLE'S *DE MEMORIA ET REMINISCENTIA:* WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON AQUINAS' OBJECT OF MEMORY

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Abstract

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Theories of memory that were developed in Antiquity attracted western Latin philosophers and the philosophers coming from the Arabic tradition. As one of the first philosophical theories, Aristotle's theory of memory, which he developed in his treatise *De Memoria et Reminiscentia,* became a highly debated one. In this paper I will analyse Thomas Aquinas' (1224/1225-1274) approach to memory, which is based on his interpretation of Aristotle and on the historical development of medieval theories of memory, especially within the Arabic tradition, in particular Avicenna and Averroes. A brief inference on "object of memory" from Aquinas' views will be the outcome of this analysis.

Foreword

As in the first part of my thesis, members of Representation and Reality Research Program (Works on Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Aristotelian Tradition) at University of Gothenburg helped me to write my thesis. Here, I would like to thank my supervisor, Juhana Toivanen. I have highly benefitted from his time and expertise. His guidance and knowledge on his fields of study are the real motivators to me.

The aim of this paper is to constitute the second part of my thesis studies at "Ancient and Medieval Philosophy and Classical Philology" program at Gothenburg University. In the first phase, I have attempted to interpret Aristotle's theory of memory as it is found in his short treatise *"De Memoria et Reminiscentia* (herein after referred to as *"De Memoria"*). My studies for the first part of this thesis were mainly based on translations from original Greek texts and contemporary commentaries of Aristotle's works. In this second part, I focused on the western Latin tradition in an attempt to understand the approaches of the philosophers from the early Latin and the Arabic traditions. After a diligent preliminary study and by the encouragement of my supervisor Juhana, I decided to focus on Thomas Aquinas and attempt to analyse his interpretation of Aristotle's theory of memory.

I believe my short analysis will shed a light on Aquinas' contribution to the theory of memory in particular to his object of memory where he had highly benefitted from the theories of Aristotle and his medieval predecessors.

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Introduction

Philosophy of mind is a topic that has much interested philosophers since antiquity. As a consequence of the debates continued for centuries, medieval discussions on philosophy of mind were influenced by many former ideas. On the other hand, Aristotle became popular and the primary source of the discussions, while other philosophers like St. Augustine, Boethius, and even Neo-Platonists were also influential on the medieval thought on the subject.[1] In particular, ideas from the early western Latin and the Arabic tradition had significant influence on the medieval Latin philosophers' interpretation of Aristotle.[2]

Philosophical fields in the middle ages were distinguished by the texts of Aristotle.[3] Despite his highly technical Latin language, Aquinas has a lean and fluent style. Thus, a non-philosopher who has familiarity with Aquinas' technical vocabulary, may grasp his meaning more easily than Aristotle's complex texts.[4] The works of Aquinas were the first ones to be converted into "machine-readable form", which means that we know that he wrote 8.686.577 words in his less than fifty years of life.[5] Therefore one can say that it is not only his style that made Aquinas popular, but his proven productivity in writing put him in a special place in the history of philosophy.[6] Aquinas' productivity reflected also to his interest in Aristotle, and he wrote twelve commentaries on the works of Aristotle, half of which remained unfinished.[7] His commentaries on *De Anima* and *Sentencia Libri Sensu et Sensato* are two important works that have links to other works of Aquinas. *Sentencia Libri Sensu et Sensato* covers two of Aristotle's treatises: (i) *De Sensu et Sensato* and (ii) *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, and thus it combines Aquinas' comments in one book. Aquinas initiated writing commentaries on Aristotle with his commentary on *De Anima* and followed his project with *Sentencia Libri Sensu et Sensato*, which is also the order of Aristotle's writings.[8]

[1] Coleman, 1995, p. 422.
[2] Bloch, 2007, p. 143.
[3] Bloch, 2007, pp. 137–140.
[4] Kenny, 1994, pp. 9-10.
[5] Kenny,1994, pp. 9-10.
[6] Indeed, Aquinas was a productive one among others, *viz.* Albert the Great, John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.
[7] Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, p. 461. For the full list of the commentaries see Annex 1.
[8] In his analysis John O'Callaghan states that *Sentencia Libri De Sensu et Sensato* was written after Aquinas' commentary on *De Anima.* Moreover, Aquinas was most likely writing the question 78 in the first part his *Summa*

In the middle ages, a particular interest within the philosophy of mind was the soul. When analysing the soul, medieval philosophers came across the notion of memory. Following the philosophical discussions started by Aristotle, they tried to seek answers to the questions: "What is memory?", "How do we remember?", "How is memory linked to the soul?", "What part of the soul does the memory belong to?", which their predecessors had dealt with for over a thousand years. Indeed, their only inspiration was not Aristotle, but the ideas of many others *viz.* Cicero, St. Augustine, Avicenna influenced their views.[9] When it comes to Aquinas, considering the amount of references in his works, memory also seems to be an important topic for him. His ideas on memory are not only limited to his interpretation of *Sentencia Libri Sensu et Sensato* but they figure also in his other works, as we will see, such as *Commentary on Aristotle's* De Anima, *Commentary on Aristotle's* Metaphysics, *Summa Theologiae* (herein after referred as *"ST"*), *Summa Contra Gentiles, Disputed Questions On the Soul*, as well.[10]

While many studies have been carried out on Aquinas' theory of memory, no studies have been found which would treat his interpretation of the "object of memory". Therefore, the main objective of this study is to present Aquinas' definition of the "object of memory". In order to elucidate the "object of memory", I will primarily focus on "memory" and discuss "recollection" haphazardly. To achieve this goal, I will examine, in addition to his interpretation of Aristotle, Aquinas' ideas concerning so-called internal senses and intentions. The overall structure of this study takes the form of six sections including this introductory chapter. The first section gives a brief overview of the background of Aquinas' concept of memory. In the second section, I will examine how Aquinas understood Aristotle's theory of memory. This section will also cover a concise analysis of his commentary on *De Memoria*. I will not follow the text line by line; instead I will concentrate on those paragraphs that will help us to understand his interpretation of the "object of memory". Third section, which presents Aquinas' approach to the memory based on his *Summa Theologiae*, clarifies further how Aquinas understood the notion of memory. This section also deals with the ideas of Aquinas' influential predecessors namely, St. Augustine, Avicenna and Averroes.

Theologiae, which deals with the "special powers of the soul" and is linked to the faculty of memory, at the same time. For further reading, Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, pp. 461-462.

[9] Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, p. 461.

[10] Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, p. 461.

In order to clarify Aquinas' object of memory I have primarily benefitted from two of his works *Sentencia Libri Sensu et Sensato* and *Summa Theologiae.* Throughout this paper the English quotations from *Sentencia Libri Sensu et Sensato* are taken from Edward M. Macierowski's translation. I have benefitted from Robert Pasnau's translation in my discussion of the respective subjects from *Summa Theologiae.* A considerable amount of literature has been published on medieval theories of memory, and Aquinas' conception of memory has been studied throughout these works. I have benefitted especially from the studies by Anthony Kenny, Janet Coleman and David Bloch as secondary literature. These studies are valuable for understanding Aquinas' theory of memory, but none of them investigates in detail what Aquinas' take on the object of memory.

Apparently, Aquinas did not provide a comprehensive analysis of the object of memory. Instead he spent much of his efforts on other critical topics, such as internal senses[11] *(interior sensus)*, so-called intentions (*intentio*) and pastness (*praeteritas*), which are crucial for understanding Aquinas' conception of the object of memory. Hence, in the fourth part, I will conceptualize Aquinas' "object of memory" as a synthesis of the first three parts. Finally, the conclusion gives a brief summary and critical findings.

[11] In this paper I will use the terms "internal sense" and "external sense". Various sources use alternative terminology, "inner sense" and "outer sense".

Background of Aquinas' Concept of Memory

For a significant period of time during the middle ages, the western Latin world was not familiar with most of the philosophical tradition of ancient Greece. Important works of Aristotle i.e. *De Anima, Physics, Nicomachean Ethics* became public and available by mid-thirteenth century. Therefore, it is quite important to understand from which sources Aquinas read Aristotle's works. As a young Dominican, Aquinas started studying at the University of Paris in 1245, at the same time when Aristotle's works began to be included in the university curriculum. Thus, if Aquinas had arrived at the university earlier than 1240, he would not have been introduced to Aristotle's works, due to a series of prohibitions concerning Aristotle's works on the natural philosophy. By 1240 these restrictions had been lifted and Aristotle's works took the attention of the western Latin tradition scholars.[12] Like most scholars in the western Latin tradition in his time, Aquinas did not know Greek and as a result he only had access to Aristotelian works in Latin translations. Before writing his commentaries, Aquinas heard lectures on Aristotle by members of the Arts Faculty at the University of Paris. It seems that it took twenty years for Aquinas to start his own commentaries.[13]

Medieval Latin work on Aristotle's *De Memoria* is mainly based on two translations. The Greek version of the treatise is first translated into Latin by James of Venice in the 12th century (*translatio vetus*) followed by the second translation (*translatio nova*) by William of Moerbeke (c. 1215-1286) in the 13th century. Like most of the philosophers of the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas used William of Moerbeke's translation.[14] Aquinas' commentaries can be classified as "literal commentaries". By way of a literal commentary, Aquinas focused on the original text and proposed further explanations on the ambiguous parts of the texts. Aquinas divides Aristotle's treatise in eight chapters, which form two main parts, chapters 1-3 for memory and chapters 4-8 for recollection. Aquinas starts each chapter with the restatement of Aristotle's text as a short outline. Then he puts the text aside and continues to make his comments trying to clarify words or phrases with emphasis on the obscure and controversial points. When doing

[12] The restrictions on Aristotelian Works started circa 1210 and continued intermittently through-out the thirteenth century. For more information see Shields & Pasnau, 2016, pp. 1-21.
[13] Robert Pasnau provides an evidence on *Commentary of Aristotle's De Anima* III.17.118, where Aquinas discusses a view that seems to have been proposed by a member of the Arts Faculty. Pasnau, 1999. p. xii.
[14] Bloch, 2007, p. 195.

this he expands the ideas offered by Aristotle and inserts his own views in his own words, even though he may have believed that he was just making Aristotle's ideas clear for the readers.

In literal commentaries, there exists an ambiguity of whose views are offered; does the text represent the views from the original text, or are the views additional contributions by the commentator? Robert Pasnau states that Aquinas relies on Aristotle's views, but he presents his own ideas when commenting on Aristotle's texts.[15] Another question to be raised about his commentaries could be: "Does Aquinas use his theological ideas to persuade his readers?" Pasnau answers this question by writing that: "he is bracketing the theology as much as possible, in order to pursue an understanding of Aristotle's philosophy."[16] For claims that are obviously in tension with Christian doctrine, *viz.* issues like immortality of the soul after death, Aquinas offers a careful elaboration in order to find a middle way and not to take the side of theology or philosophy. [17]

Latin philosophers' understanding of memory involved a two-fold approach, which was based on the Augustinian and Arabic traditions. In the Augustinian tradition, memory is a part of the theory of mind where the philosophers use remembering intelligibles in the Augustinian sense. For St. Augustine, the memory which stores the images of objects are sensible objects, and the memory which stores the objects themselves are of intellectual objects. By this distinction St. Augustine concludes that memory does not belong to sensory faculties but to the mind.[18] As for the Arabic view they claim that memory is an internal sense that stores so-called intentions as claimed by Avicenna (I will come back to this below).[19] At this point, Aquinas also accepts this two-fold approach and distinguishes memory into two main parts; sensory and intellectual memory. The former is one of the Avicennian internal senses, a power that stores intentions, while the latter stems from the notion of 'an intelligible' that can be found, e.g., in St. Augustine's works. Unlike his teacher Albert, Thomas Aquinas attempts to harmonize Aristotle, Avicenna and Averroes in his theory of memory.[20]

[15] This analysis is presented by Pasnau in his Introduction to Aquinas' Commentary on *De Anima.* See Pasnau, 1999, pp. xi-xxi.
[16] Pasnau, 1999, p. xiii.
[17] For further details see Pasnau, 1999, p. xiii.
[18] Bloch, 2007, pp. 168-169
[19] Arabic view can also be linked to the Galenic view; however, I will not discuss the Galenic perspective in this paper. For details, see Jörn Muller, 2015pp. 92-124.
[20] Bloch, 2007, p. 179.

In his *Summa Theologiae*,[21] Thomas Aquinas treats memory with special focus on the intellect among the human and animal capacities. *Summa Theologiae* is a book addressed to Christians and it sometimes uses Bible statements as a support for its arguments. *Summa Theologiae* also contains in-depth philosophical discussions, despite its name referring to theology. Thomas Aquinas treats matters related to the philosophy of mind from questions seventy-five to eighty-nine. I focus here on the questions, which are directly related to the topic of memory:

ST I.78.3 The External Senses

ST I.78.4 The Internal Senses

ST I.79.6 Is memory in the intellect?

ST I.79.7 Is memory a different capacity than intellect?

In his commentary, Aquinas attempts to analyse and explain Aristotle's ideas, and he develops his own approach on memory in his *Summa Theologiae* as an independent work. These two works are based on the two-folded approach (mentioned above in this section), but in different ways. This creates conflicts between his commentary and *Summa Theologiae* which are caused by different aims that Aquinas sets for himself in these works.

In my analysis I will attempt to reconcile these tensions and discrepancies to reach a unified solution. To begin with, we should, first take a closer look at Aquinas' Commentary on *De Memoria*.

[21] Every article in *ST* follows this pattern: (1) First reasons are given for taking the view which is opposed to that which Aquinas is going to defend, (2) Second, there follows a *sed contra*, a reason for taking the view which Aquinas thinks correct, (3) Third, there is the body of the article, introduced by the phrase *respondeo dicendum*, which commonly states in detail the main justifications for Aquinas' position, (4) finally comes the answers to the objections initially stated. Kenny, 1994, pp. 21-22.

Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on *De Memoria*

In general, Aquinas seems to agree with Aristotle's theory of memory. However, when one goes in details, it is easy to see that he deviates from the original theory at some points. As I briefly mentioned in previous section, ideas such like "internal senses" do not exist in Aristotle's original theory, so we are faced with new questions such as "Has Aquinas misinterpreted Aristotle's theory?" and "How has Aquinas ended up proposing such an interpretation?" A response to these questions lies in the sources that Aquinas used, and in the circumstances under which he read Aristotle. As mentioned, Aquinas did not know Greek and he had to rely on the Latin sources that were available in his time, thus, he did not have the chance to read Aristotle from the original Greek texts. Moreover, in his time, the western Latin tradition was strongly influenced by the Arabic tradition, when it comes to the interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy. The combination of these two facts explains why Aquinas did not walk in Aristotle's footsteps.

Leaving the language barrier aside, I would like to focus on the influence of Arabic philosophers, in particular Avicenna and Averroes, on Aquinas' understanding of memory. As we shall see in detail in the analysis below, Aquinas' interpretation of *De Memoria* has a broader perspective than the original theory of Aristotle. This is purely based on the fact that Arabic philosophers had a broader theory of memory, which affected Aquinas when he was commenting on Aristotle's original theory, which has a narrower scope. [22]

In the first chapter of his commentary, Aquinas uses the concept of prudence *(prudentia)* with reference to Aristotle, Cicero and St. Augustine to distinguish memory and recollection. In Cicero's *De Inventione*, memory is a part of prudence. A prudent man must sense and recognise the present, but he also has to be guided by his past experiences, and this part of prudence requires memory.[23] Aquinas says that animals have imperfect prudence, since they do not have intelligence. This idea is not coming from the Aristotelian concept of prudence, but from the ideas of Cicero and St. Augustine.[24] Basing his view on this idea, Aquinas claims that since

[22] For detailed information on how Aristotle's original theory was narrower than the ones in the Arabic commentaries see Bloch, 2007, p. 142.
[23] Aquinas, 2005, p. 184.
[24] Bloch, 2007, p. 197.

animals have imperfect prudence, likewise they must have imperfect memory. Thus, animals can only remember, while humans can both remember and recollect.[25]

Aquinas starts his analysis with the two notions that are related to memory, namely, the "object of memory" and "pastness", which Aristotle also sees as obscure points to be discussed. The object of memory discussed at (*De Memoria* 449b9) shall be settled with reference to *De Anima* and links the powers of the soul with the object of memory.

> As to the first of these points, he says that to explain memory one must, to begin with, grasp *what sort of things are remembered*[26], because objects are prior to acts, and acts prior to powers, as has been observed in the second book of "*On the Soul*". It is necessary to settle this matter since it is *frequently* deceiving some to think that there is memory of things about which actually there is not. (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 186.)[27]

He rephrases Aristotle's words that memory is of past things and not of future or present things. Although he seems to agree with this view, he goes on to raise an off-the-chart point of his analysis:

> From this it is obvious that it is not the Philosopher's intention to say that there can be no memory of those things that exist in the present but only of those that existed in the past. For one can remember not only men who have died but also those who are living now, just as one is said to recollect oneself, according to the dictum of Vergil:
>
> *Neither was Ulysses unmindful of such things nor in such a pass did the Ithacan forget himself.*[28]
>
> By this he meant it to be understood that Ulysses remembered himself. So the Philosopher's intention is to say that memory is of things that are in the past as far as our apprehension of them goes, i.e. that we have sensed or known certain things before,

[25] Aquinas, 2005, p. 184.
[26] In his commentary Aquinas writes the quotations from Aristotle in italics, thus I also followed the same rule in this paper.
[27] Dicit ergo primo quod ad determinandum de memoria primo oportet accipere *qualia sunt memorabilia*, quia obiecta sunt preuia actibus et actus potenciis, ut dictum est in II De anima; necessarium autem est hoc determinare, quia *multociens* accidit deceptio circa hoc, dum aliqui putant quorundam esse memoriam quorum non est.
[28] Aquinas cites from a Vergilian text trying to show that there is a memory of the present. Aquinas, 2005, p. 187.

> regardless of whether or not those things, considered in themselves, exist in the present. (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, pp. 186-187.)[29]

This obviously leads us to a controversial point regarding the object of memory, where Aquinas raises the question: Is it the object itself or the act of perception that needs to be in the past? A similar question is raised in contemporary discussions by Richard Sorabji. In his analysis, Sorabji tries to list things that one can remember and, interestingly, he questions if one can say that "tomorrow's appointment or meeting" could be an object of memory.[30] I believe Aquinas sees the notion of "pastness (*praeteritas*)" not by limiting himself to an object that was in the past but also deploying his understanding to the act of perception that was in the past. When we seem to remember our future meetings, we actually remember the past acts by which we came to know about the meetings or the occasions where we agreed to have them, and so forth.

We also see the same idea in the first definition that Aquinas makes towards the end of the chapter;

> Then, when he says, *therefore there is*, he draws a conclusion from the premises on the nature of memory.
>
> It is *neither sense*, because this is only of things present, *nor* is it *opinion*, which can also deal with things future. *But* it must pertain to something belonging to both *of these*—either as a habit, if there is a permanent power, or as an affection, if there is a transient impression. Memory pertains to sense or opinion in this way *when* some *time* shall have intervened between the prior apprehension of the sense or of the intellectual opinion and the subsequent memory, in such a way that there can be a memory of a past apprehension, since right now there is no memory of what is being apprehended right now, *as has been said*. But *sense-apprehension is of the present*, *expectation of the future*, and *memory* of

[29] Ex quoto patet quod non est intentio Philosophi dicere quod memoria non possit esse ipsarum rerum que in presenti sunt, set solum eorum que in preterito fuerunt. Potest enim aliquis memorari non solum hominum qui mortui sunt, set etiam qui nunc uiuunt, sicut et sui ipsius aliquis dicitur reminisci, secumdum illud virgilii:*nec talia passus Vlixes Oblitusue sui est Ytacus discrimine tanto* per quod intelligi uoluit quod meminit sui. Set intentio Philosophi est dicere quod memoria est preteritorum quantum ad nostram apprehensionem, id est quod prius sensimus uel intelleximus aliqua, indifferenter siue ille res secundum se considerate sint in presenti siue non.
[30] Sorabji, 2012, pp. 13-14.

> the past. Therefore *every memory* must exist *with* some *time* intervening between it and the prior apprehension.
>
> From this he concludes that only those animals that can sense *time remember*, and they remember by means of that very part of the soul by which they also *sense* time. (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 188.)[31]

Aquinas continues the second chapter by trying to explain which part of the soul is responsible of the function of memory. However, before doing this, he tries to clarify the point Aristotle mentioned with reference to *De Anima,* that thinking is not possible without images at *De Memoria* 450a. Aquinas introduces his two-folded approach and mentions about universals as the object of intellectual memory. By doing this, Aquinas links memory also to "universals", which is one of the important concepts of medieval philosophy. This is one of Aquinas' personal ideas that was not originally mentioned by Aristotle.

When commenting on which part of the soul he further emphasizes Aristotle's point that only certain animals have memory:

> He says that it is clear that memory belongs by itself to the sensitive part of the soul, because even *as the case stands*, while we suppose that man alone among the animals has an intellect, memory is not found in all animals, but only those that sense time have memory. For there are some animals that perceive nothing except in the presence of sensible things; e.g. certain immobile animals, which have an undetermined imagination, as is said in the third book of *On the Soul*, and hence cannot recognize the before and the after, and consequently cannot recognize time either. This is why they do not have memory. *For when* the soul acts through the memory, as was said *before*, the soul *always*

[31] Deiende cum dicit: Est *quidem igitur* etc., concludit ex premissis quid sit memoria, quia *neque est sensus,* qui est solum presencium, *neque* est *opinio*, que potest etiam esse futurorum, *set* oportet quod ad aliquid *horum* pertineat uel per modum habitus, puta si sit aliqua uis permanens, uel per modum passionis, puta si sit aliqua impressio transiens; sic autem memoria pertinent ad sensum uel opinionem *cum* interuenerit aliquod *tempus* medium inter priorem apprehensionem sensus uel intellectualis opinionis et memoriam subsequentem, ut sic memoria possit esse preterite apprehensionis, quia eius quod *nunc* apprehenditur, *in ipso nunc non est memoria,* ut *dictum est, set sensus quidem est presentis, spes uero futuri, memoria* uero preteriti; et ideo oportet quod *omnis memoria sit* cum ailquo *tempore* intermedio inter ipsam et priorem apprehensionem. Et ex hoc concludit quod *sola* animalia *memorantur* que possunt sentire *tempus,* et illa parte anime memorantur qua et tempus *senciunt.*

> *at the same time senses that it saw or heard or learned this before; and the before and the after* pertain to time. (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 195.)[32]

Aquinas makes a clarification with respect to the sensible and intelligible objects of memory and tries to clarify the notion of memory by appealing to the powers of the soul. In Chapter 3 Aquinas quotes from Aristotle's text at 450b18:

> *How then does he remember what is not present? For he would be able both to see and hear what is not present.* (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 196.)[33]

When Aquinas comments on this part (see below) he adds the notion of an "internal sense" on top of Aristotle's original thoughts. He uses the notion of the internal senses developed by the Arabic thinkers, namely, Avicenna and Averroes. I will give insight about the role and the importance of internal senses when analysing the "object of memory" in the coming sections of this paper. Let us first see how Aquinas comments on Aristotle's text by inserting his contribution "internal senses" as in the quotation below.

> He asks *how* one might remember through an internal sense that which is *not present*. For since the external sense "*con*-forms" to the internal sense, it would follow that even the external sense would be of a thing not present, in such wise that it might *see* and *hear* a thing not present, which would seem awkward. (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 201.)[34]

He quotes from Aristotle at 450b20 as in the below text. Bloch interprets below passage as Aquinas considers an animal – the fundamental object - in two ways: (i) animal in a painting

[32] Et dicit inde esse manifestum quod memoria pertinet per se ad partem sensitiuam, quia etiam *nunc* cum supponimus solum hominem inter morales habere intellectum, memoria non inest omnibüs animalibus, set solum illa habent memoriam que senciunt tempus: quedam enim animalia nichil percipiunt nisi apud presenciam sensibilium, sicut quedam animalia inmobilia, que proter hoc habent indeterminatam fantasiam, ut dicitur in III De anima, et propter hoc non possunt cognoscere prius et posterius et per consequens nec tempus; unde non habent memoriam. *Semper enim cum* anima agit per memoriam, ut *prius* dictum est, *simul sentit* anima quod *hoc prius uidit aut audiuit aut didicit; prius autem et posterius* pertinent ad tempus.

[33] Quomodo igitur non presens memoratur? Erit enim utique et uidere non presens et audire.

[34] Et querit *quomodo* aliquis possit per sensum interiorem memorari illud quod *non* est *presens?* Cum enim sensus exterior esset rei non presentis, ita scilicet quod contingeret *uidere et audire* rem non presentem, quod uidetur inconueniens.

and (ii) animal itself.[35] This justifies the concept of remembering of a non-existing object in the above quotation. This also fits with Aquinas' understanding of sensible and intelligible objects.

> Or is it the case *that this happens and occurs? For just as an animal inscribed on a tablet is both an animal and also a likeness, and one and the same thing is both, although the being is not the same for both, it is possible to consider it both as an animal and as a likeness. So too one must take the image that exists in us to be both itself something existing in its own right and also as an image of another. In its own right it is an object of speculation or an image, but inasmuch as it is of another, it exists as a likeness and an object that can be remembered. Hence, too, when the motion of that thing acts, there is a corresponding two-fold result. On the one hand, with regard to the motion taken in its own right, the soul will have sensed it in such a way that something intelligible or an image would seem to be present to it. On the other hand, insofar as it is of another and exists as in a picture, it considers it as a likeness, and he who does not see Coriscus considers it as Coriscus's likeness; here it is another affection of this speculation. When one considers what has been drawn as an animal, then, on the one hand, in the soul this picture becomes an intelligible object only, and, on the other hand, as there, because it is a likeness, it becomes a memorable object.* (Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 197.)[36]

Here Aquinas accepts that likeness of a thing that we have sensed or understood before can also belong to memory. This is important, because it seems to be in tension with the view that he presents in *Summa Theologiae*, as we will see below. He continues his analysis on an image as a likeness of something we have cognized before. At 451a2-12 Aquinas analyses three different cases of human memory (or false memory) based on viewing of an internal image (likeness) at present time.

[35] Bloch, 2007, pp. 197-198.

[36] Aut est ut contingit et accidit hoc? Vt enim intabula scriptum animal, et animal est et ymago, et idem et unum ipsum est ambo, esse tamen non idem amborum, et est considerare et sicut animal et sicut ymaginem, sic et quod in nobis fantasma oportet suscipere et ipsum aliquid secundum se esse et alterius fantasma. Secundum quidem se ipsum, speculamen aut fantasma est, in quantum uero alterius, ut ymago et memorabile. Quare et cum agat motus ipsius, si quidem in quantum secundum se, sic senserit anima ipsum, ut intelligibile aliquid aut fantasma uidetur adesse. Si autem in quantum alterius et sicut in pictura, tanquam ymaginem considerat et, qui non uidet Coriscum, ut Corisci ymaginem, hic alia passio huius speculationis. Et quando sicut animal pictum considerat, in anima hoc quidem fit intelligibile solum, hoc autem ut ibi quia ymago, memorabile.

(i) Sometimes the images (likenesses) of earlier cognitions are brought to mind without being aware of the previous acts of perception.

(ii) In a similar way, sometimes one may not be aware of the passage of time, which means that one will not be aware of the concept of before and after.

(iii) One (in Aristotle's words "Antipheron of Oreos or other unstable man"[37]) may be deceived by the initial cognition of a thing as if he is remembering it.

The first two cases lead one to have doubts whether he is experiencing the act of memory or not, where the third case leads one to false memory. Combining above analysis with his comments on 450a32 Aquinas clearly establishes a connection between perception and memory. At this point, he thinks that object of memory is a perceptual image (likeness). However, as three cases above show, memory proper is not only of the image itself, but it is the cognition of the image with certain aspects, namely being conscious of the act of perception and the awareness of time passing. Thus, one can say that the object of memory is the thing we have perceived earlier.

In Chapter 6, Aquinas discusses the method of recollection and mainly follows Aristotle's footsteps, except for his comment on 452a17. In relation to Aristotle's suggestion that a starting point should be assigned in order to begin the process of recollection, Aquinas makes additional comments. He quotes from Aristotle "he says a *universal, moreover, seems to be the starting point*".[38] This may either be considered as a misunderstanding of Aristotle or stemming from problems in Aquinas' sources, or as a deliberate addition to his theory, as Aristotle does not mention universals in the original text. At *De Memoria* 452a12-452b20, Aristotle sees recollection similar to a syllogism and he provides alternative ways to recall things. He uses general examples *viz.* series of letters from the Greek alphabet, places, colours or things from daily life such as milk, presumably to help his readers to grasp his suggestions easily. Therefore, I assume that Aquinas provided his own ideas on this issue, based on the general examples given by Aristotle. And he used the concept of "universals" in his analysis.

In the rest of his analysis, Aquinas continues to comment on the act of recollection and his ideas are almost fitting with Aristotle on the basis of (i) one must know the time and understand the

[37] *De Memoria* 451a8-12.
[38] Aquinas, trans. Macierowski, 2005, p. 216.

passage of time, (ii) recollection is an activity similar to a syllogism, thus, (iii) only humans can recollect, other animals cannot recollect.

In summary, Aquinas' concept of memory in his literal commentary is closely related to Aristotle's ideas. Yet, although he follows Aristotle line by line, he also occasionally indicates some of his additional ideas *viz.* intentions, internal senses, and the role of universals in memory. He makes these contributions under the influence of early Latin and Arabic thinkers, who put forth ideas which are not found in Aristotle's original theory. In order to see the whole picture of how Aquinas conceptualizes the memory, I will now proceed to analyse the relevant parts of his *Summa Theologiae*. As we will see, it is not obvious how the *Commentary on De Memoria* fits the theory that we find in the *ST*.

Aquinas' Concept of Memory in *Summa Theologiae*

In what follows, I summarize how Aquinas conceptualizes the notion of memory and highlight some important features of his concept in his *Summa Theologiae* that puts Aquinas in a special place in philosophical discussions. Aquinas' analysis of memory in his commentary on *De Memoria* does not fully reflect his whole theory of memory. It is therefore essential to have a brief look on the relevant passages in *Summa Theologiae* to better understand his view.

Let us begin with Aquinas' general account of soul. For Aristotle, the human soul is the form of the human body. According to Aquinas, however, the human soul can exist without the body.[39] He believed that the human soul is the form of the human being, who is a composite of matter and form. He also claims that the human soul is a bridge between the corporeal and incorporeal worlds.[40] Thomas Aquinas clarifies that the senses are one of the powers of the human soul (*ST* I.78). According to him, there are three distinct kinds of souls:

- "The vegetative soul" which is found in plants,
- "The sensitive soul" for animals,
- "The rational soul" which is peculiar to human beings,

He puts the human soul to a special place and thinks that there exists only one soul in human beings, which is the rational soul.[41] This rational soul has both the sensitive and vegetative parts corresponding to vegetative and sensitive souls found in plants and animals, respectively.[42] The main difference (besides immortality and the possibility for a separate existence) between these types of souls is that more complex soul provides a wider scope of powers or potencies to the being. According to Aristotle (*De Anima*, Book II, 414a29-32.), there exist five different types of powers to be linked to the human soul. These are vegetative powers, sensory powers, intellectual powers, appetitive powers, and locomotive powers. Aquinas investigates these in the question 78 of the first book of *ST*.

[39] Kenny, 1994, p. 25.
[40] Nikulin, 2015, 92-124.
[41] In this paper the terms, "soul", "human soul", "intellectual soul" or "rational soul" are interchangeably used. This terminology in Aquinas can be associated to the Aristotelian notion of "rational soul".
[42] Kenny, 1994, pp. 31-32.

Already this brief look at his theory of the soul helps us to understand what Aquinas' general account of cognition is. For him, cognition starts with sense perception; and in *ST* I.84, he claims that when one perceives sensible properties of things around him, he forms sensory images, which Aristotle calls *phantasms*. Aquinas continues by arguing that such sensory capacities must have bodily organs. These organs are responsible for the act of sensing which belongs both to human beings and animals. However, for him, humans have an additional intellectual capacity which cannot be found in animals, that allows them to create abstract concepts.

In the development of theories of memory in the middle ages, the Arabic tradition played an important role, in particular the account of memory introduced by Avicenna.[43] It is in many ways different from Aristotle's approach. Avicenna's theory is based on two major concepts that Aristotle did not mention in his works: internal senses (*sensus interioris*) and intentions (*intentio*). According to him, memory is one of the internal senses. Its main task is to store intentions. Intentions are the features that one cannot sense directly with external senses. These are sensed with internal senses, particularly with the sense of estimation. Imagine yourself watching a coffee commercial on television and seeing a cup of coffee pouring from a coffee machine. You will immediately perceive the coffee by one of your external senses, namely sight. Without being in the same room with that cup of coffee, you will also sense that the coffee is something pleasurable, which is an intention. In *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas states that, human beings apprehend intentions through a cogitative faculty, but for the animals, intentions are apprehended by natural instinct. Thus, one can say that the original theory offered by Aristotle is different than the ones we see in the Arabic tradition.

When it comes to the cognitive powers of the sensitive soul, Thomas Aquinas defines two different sensory powers: external and internal senses. The external senses are the five traditional senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. He claims that senses shall be differentiated due to functions rather than the respective organs of the body, and further, that the functions can be differentiated by kinds of object—sensible qualities of external objects vs intentions. Moreover, he says, the sense is a passive power that undergoes a change that is

[43] Bloch, 2007, pp. 143-144.

caused by an external sensible object. Aquinas describes internal senses in the fourth article of question 78 of the first book of *ST* as the additional senses that humans share with higher animals. Here Aquinas is influenced by Avicenna and his account of memory, and he defines four internal senses: the common sense, the memory, the imagination and the estimative faculty.[44] Aquinas thought the internal senses, like external senses, are associated with bodily organs. Unlike external senses having bodily organs at the surface of the body, internal senses have bodily organs inside the body.[45] In his analysis, Jörn Müller defines internal senses as "postsensationary faculties of the soul" that work on the impressions of the bodily sensations.[46]

To understand the role of memory in this scheme, we need to notice an important difference between two different types of objects that the internal senses deal with. Objects of internal senses are essentially derived from the external senses. Internal senses have two kinds of objects: sensible species and intentions. The sensible species are the impressions processed by the external senses. Intentions, for Aquinas, are the apprehensions of the soul about the sensible species.[47] Avicenna's analysis of the internal senses is generally linked to his famous sheep-wolf example. When a sheep meets a wolf for the first time, it runs away because of fear. In this case the external senses of the sheep only perceive the shape and the form of the wolf. But the harmfulness conveyed by the wolf is not perceived by the external senses but the internal ones. Avicenna's idea is to posit intentions, which are grasped by the estimative faculty.[48] By using this example, Avicenna does not only show us that the sheep cognizes the wolf as its enemy, but also that animals do not only move by the things that are pleasurable and painful to the senses but also by the useful and harmful. Avicenna tries to solve the problems with human cognition by using this sheep-wolf simile. This theory was later adopted by Averroes. Despite the fact that some of his ideas on the subject of cognition are in conflict with Avicenna, Averroes uses internal senses as a tool to elucidate his account of human cognition.[49]

[44] It is generally accepted by scholars that Aquinas was influenced by Avicenna's account of internal senses. However, he used the four internal senses as offered by Averroes instead of the five internal senses offered by Avicenna. Bloch, 2007, p. 205.
[45] Kenny, 1994, pp. 38-39.
[46] Müller provides a comprehensive analysis of memory as an internal sense in the Arabic tradition. See Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, pp. 101-109.
[47] Bloch, 2007, pp. 148-151.
[48] Coleman, 1995, p. 430.
[49] Coleman, 1995, p. 430.

In article four of question 78, Aquinas says that the common sense perceives the sensible forms and transfers these forms to imagination or fantasy. Then one of the other internal senses, estimation, takes the lead and apprehends intentions which are not strictly speaking corporeal and thus basic senses cannot perceive them. Intention is something that the soul grasps from the sensed object but that cannot be perceived by the external senses. Sometimes this happens even when the object has not been previously perceived, just as the sheep perceives the intention[50] of harm in the wolf, which causes it to fear the wolf and flee from it, without being perceived by the external senses.

All this is relevant for Aquinas' conception of memory, because memory collects and preserves these intentions, so that an animal may remember useful or harmful. Following Avicenna, Aquinas calls memory the treasure house (*thesaurus*) of intentions.[51] However, Aquinas does not fully agree with Avicenna on limiting memory to a storage room of intentions. Aquinas criticizes Avicenna for this as he believes intellectual objects shall also be stored in memory.[52]

Finally, Aquinas adds 'pastness' as one of the features of cognition, where one can be aware of the time passing. In question *ST* I.79, he asks whether the memory is a part of the intellect. He argues against this claim by appealing to the definition that "memory is of past things". Aquinas accepts the notion of "past" with reference to a definite time, which is a subject of the senses and not the intellect. Memory is not the act of the intellect, as the intellect deals with universal and therefore timeless things. Thus, he says that memory is not found in the intellectual part of the soul but in the sensory part. Aquinas apprehends pastness in two ways: (i) in relation to the object known or (ii) in relation to the act of knowledge. These two ways are valid in the case of sense-perception, not related with the acts of intellect.

In his *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas mainly focuses on memory and does not discuss recollection in detail. Furthermore, he does not explicitly distinguish these two notions as Aristotle does. A reason for Aquinas not doing so can be clarified by a disagreement between Bloch and Coleman

[50] The word "intention" shall not be considered in the modern sense. The wolf does not have to "intend" to kill the sheep, it is the potentiality of wolf to be harmful to the sheep.
[51] *ST* I.78.
[52] Here Aquinas' concern is mainly a theological one. Aquinas discusses the question of whether the intelligible contents can still be known by the separated soul after death. For further analysis see Müller, 2015; Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, p. 114.

on the interpretation of Averroes. In the Latin translation of *Epitome of De Memoria*, which Aquinas also read, Averroes uses the terms *memoria* (memory) and *rememoratio* (remembrance) interchangeably. Coleman claims that Averroes uses *rememoratio* as recollection, which Bloch disagrees.[53] Even though *rememoratio* (remembrance) is a synonym of *reminiscentia* (recollection) in English, in my reading *reminiscentia* is the operation of recalling objects to memory, rather than *rememoratio* being the noun form of remembering that is closer to the word *memoria.* In this case I agree with Bloch that instead of *rememoratio* the word *reminiscentia* shall be used for recollection. The first article of question 49 of the second book of *ST* defines memory as a part of prudence, just like we have seen Aquinas doing in the beginning of his commentary on *De Memoria*. With reference to Cicero, Aquinas creates a link between prudence and memory and reaches a conclusion that men have "perfect" memory and animals have "imperfect" memory without the recollective faculty.

[53] For further details Bloch, 2007, pp. 156-166. and Coleman, 1995, pp. 401-415.

Aquinas' Object of Memory

Having gone through two of Aquinas' works one can now his approach to the concept of memory. So far, we have seen that he is highly influenced by the Arabic tradition, and therefore in both of his works we see that his conception is based on "internal senses" and "intentions". As we saw above, Aquinas wrote his commentary on *De memoria* and the respective part of *Summa Theologiae* (question 78 of part one) simultaneously, and thus it is most likely that Aquinas was connecting the ideas in both of his works. In his commentary, he tries to stay in line with Aristotle's ideas, and thus does not go into details of the internal senses and intentions. In a way he tries to reconcile Aristotelian theory with the ideas of St. Augustine, Avicenna and Averroes. By contrast, in *Summa Theologiae* he provides ideas on these issues, thereby allowing us to grasp his concept of memory in depth. What he says is a combination of the ideas from his sources, primarily the works of Aristotle, St. Augustine, Avicenna and Averroes. However, Aquinas concept does not fully match with the theories of these philosophers. Thus, his theory is a combination of his ideas mixed with his predecessors' theories. To understand his "object of memory", let us begin with a brief recap of Aristotle's approach.

In his *De Memoria*, Aristotle states the object of memory as obscure and deceiving for most of the people.[54] This makes the subject interesting and worth to further discuss. He discussed different aspects specifically time and perception related issues, however he did not explicitly provide the real definition of the object of memory. When it comes to Aquinas, memory as an internal sense called "a treasure house", where the intentions are stored. Despite many scholars' discussions on Aquinas' theory of memory, his object of memory was not commonly discussed in detail. Based on his definition of memory, scholars make a clear-cut conclusion that the objects of memory for Aquinas are the intentions.[55]

[54] *De Memoria*, 449b9.
[55] Berneckler & Kourken, 2017, p. 103.

Herbert McCabe has clarified Aquinas' concept of memory as follows:[56]

	Received In	Retained In
Sensual account of world	common sense	imagination
Sensual evaluation of world (for me)	estimation	memory

However, for Aquinas there is not only one memory, as he divides it into two, sensory memory and intellectual memory. For Aquinas one can remember and store something having been earlier cognized. Even though intelligibles (i.e. triangularity as discussed in *De Memoria*) are indifferent to lapse of time, that can be objects of intellectual memory insofar as they are apprehended as objects of earlier act of cognition. So, it is not a distinct power but a special way of using the sensory power. Aquinas associates these memories to the other internal senses. The act of memory becomes possible, according to Aquinas, as the consequence of the following steps;

- The external senses perceive a thing,
- Common sense receives the form, shape, motion of that thing,
- Common sense sends the image of that thing to imagination,
- The intentions of that image are sensed by estimation,
- Estimation sends the intentions to the memory,
- Memory preserves these intentions as the "treasure house of intentions".

Above listed steps show that memory is the outcome of the process and memory cannot exist without the functions of the other internal senses. Thus, I argue that the common definition based on intentions does not really conceptualize the object of memory for Aquinas. If we discuss the object of memory as the object of the internal sense "memory", then this is obviously the intentions. But if we talk about memory in a broader sense, as Aquinas discusses in his commentary on *De Memoria*, then the object of such psychological cognitive process must have a compound structure.

[56] McCabe, 2010, p. 136.

Now I will try to illustrate how one remembers in light of the above analysis. When one remembers something (i.e. a cat), it involves imagining that cat through a likeness of that cat preserved in imagination. This image is derived from an earlier cognition of that cat he has experienced through his external senses. By the help of common sense, it is possible to apprehend the form of the cat *viz.* her colour, shape of her tail etc. These features are all passed to imagination by the image produced by the common sense. Then the estimative power provides the intentions - as a supplement to the image stored in the imagination - that the cat was friendly and not harmful. Another intention that the estimative power provides is the pastness which links the image (likeness) stored in our imagination is derived from an earlier cognition. Hence, memory is a combination of one or more other internal senses that several powers of the soul act simultaneously. The result is a cognitive act we call "remembering".

Conclusion

This paper has discussed Aquinas' approach to memory. It is mainly based on two of his works, *Sentencia Libri De Sensu et Sensato* and *Summa Theologiae.* We have seen that in his commentary, Aquinas tries to reconcile the Aristotelian theory with the early Latin and Arabic theories, namely ideas of St. Augustine and the theories of internal senses and intentions developed by Avicenna and Averroes. Thus, Aquinas' concept of memory covers the ideas of Aristotle, St. Augustine, Avicenna and Averroes, and it is blended with his theological views.

Such concept of mixed ideas makes Aquinas' understanding of memory a unique and complex one. In my reading of Aquinas, this complexity is also reflected in his analysis of the object of memory. In his words, intentions are the objects of memory—not sense-impressions. Nevertheless, I have claimed that his object of memory needs to be understood in a broad sense: one must consider his philosophy of mind as a whole without limiting the study only to the memory as one of the internal senses. This leads us to an interpretation that the object of memory has a composite structure.

This paper has raised many additional questions that are in need of further investigation and suggest that a re-evaluation of Aquinas' conception of internal senses and their relations in cognitive operations would be fruitful. This study was limited by two of Aquinas' works. Thus, a number of possible future studies investigating more of Aquinas' works would examine Aquinas' general understanding of philosophy of mind. I imagine Aquinas' object of memory as a jigsaw puzzle; comprised of many pieces that do not look like each other. In Aquinas' case the pieces are the ideas of former philosophers viz. internal senses, intentions. Further studies may shed light on the concept whether the "object of memory", understood as a compound thing and help readers to solve the puzzle.

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Annex: List of Aquinas' Commentaries on Aristotle's Works[57]

1. *Sentencia Libri De Anima*
2. *Sentencia Libri De Sensu et Sensato*
3. *Sententia Super Physicam*
4. *Sententia Super Meteora (*unfinished)
5. *Expositio Libri Peryermenias* (unfinished)
6. *Expositio Libri Posteriorum*
7. *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*
8. *Tabula Libri Ethicorum* (unfinished)
9. *Sententia Libri Politicorum* (unfinished)
10. *Sententia Super Metaphysicam*
11. *Sententia Super Librum De Caelo Et Mundo* (unfinished)
12. *Sententia Super Libros De Generatione Et Corruptione* (unfinished)

[57] Torrel, 1996, pp. 330–345