



## RECLAIMING MORAL AGENCY

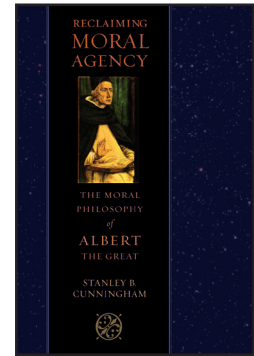
### The Moral Philosophy of Albert the Great

Stanley B. Cunningham

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xii, 294 pages

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## Book News for Immediate Release

The Catholic University of America Press is pleased to announce publication of *Reclaiming Moral Agency: The Moral Philosophy of Albert the Great* by Stanley B. Cunningham.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the moral philosophy Albert the Great (1200-1280)—the first and only such undertaking in English. It lays out what is, with rare exceptions, an unknown, ignored, or poorly-understood aspect of Albert's humanism. It also fills in a major lacuna in both the history of medieval philosophy and the wider history of moral theory.

Prior to Albert, most medieval thinkers refused to acknowledge the very existence of natural moral goodness. They believed that one could not perform good acts without God's infused graces. Albert was the first to establish in a systematic fashion the value of naturally-acquired virtue, natural law, and the virtue-dependent states of friendship and natural happiness, and their importance in a human lifetime. To achieve this, he undertook the elaboration of a rigorous moral philosophy.

These findings stand in contrast to an old cliché that Albert the Great was a scholar of enormous erudition, an impressive assembler of learning and scientific information, but deficient when it came to elaborating a systematic philosophical or theological theory of his own. This book deflates that myth. It demonstrates that Albert was very concerned to produce a rigorously organized philosophy of moral goodness, and for the most part succeeded in that aim.

This book opens with a comprehensive introduction that is unprecedented in Albertinian scholarship. It uncovers certain parallels between the career of modern virtue-theory ethics and Albert's historical situation in such a way as to help the modern reader understand developments in the mid-thirteenth century. This book also makes possible a closer study of Thomas Aquinas's material dependence upon Albert's ethical concepts.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

**Stanley B. Cunningham** is professor emeritus at the University of Windsor where he taught philosophy and communication studies. His previously published works include *The Idea of Propaganda: A Reconstruction*.

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