THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

Is it possible to see, hear, touch, smell and taste God? How do we understand the biblical promise that the ‘pure in heart’ will ‘see God’? Christian thinkers as diverse as Origen of Alexandria, Bonaventure, Jonathan Edwards and Hans Urs von Balthasar have all approached these questions in distinctive ways by appealing to the concept of the ‘spiritual senses’. In focusing on the Christian tradition of the spiritual senses, this book discusses how these senses relate to the physical senses and the body, and analyses their relationship to mind, heart, emotions, will, desire and judgement. The contributors illuminate the different ways in which classic Christian authors have treated this topic, and indicate the epistemological and spiritual import of these understandings. The concept of the spiritual senses is thereby recovered for contemporary theological anthropology and philosophy of religion.

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THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

Perceiving God in Western Christianity

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and

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To the Eternal Memory of John
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Foreword

This project began in a conversation between the editors of the present volume at an Italian restaurant in Leuven, Belgium, in November 2005. At the time both of us had developed an interest in the topic of spiritual perception: Sarah Coakley was exploring the importance of the patristic teaching on the spiritual senses for systematic theology and philosophy of religion, whereas Paul Gavrilyuk had discovered how little the topic had recently been explored in patristic scholarship in general. In spring 2007, Coakley, who was then teaching at Harvard Divinity School, gathered a reading group of scholars from the Boston area interested in the topic at her house in Watertown, Massachusetts, for a series of informal meetings on Friday afternoons. Besides the two editors, the initial Spiritual Senses Group included Boyd Taylor Coolman, Garth Green, Paul Kolbet, Mark McInroy and Cameron Partridge. We looked at the theme of spiritual perception in the writings of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Macarius, Pseudo-Dionysius, Symeon the New Theologian, Thomas Gallus, Bonaventure, Immanuel Kant and Michel Henry. We also identified the central role that the work of Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar had had in the rediscovery of the topic of the spiritual senses in twentieth-century theology. Towards the end of our spring meetings, we decided to produce a jointly written volume, with mutual understanding that most editorial responsibilities would be carried out by Gavrilyuk.

In order to discuss the individual chapters and to forge a coherent vision of the future volume, Gavrilyuk organized three consultations. The first consultation was hosted at Boston College in May 2008. At this meeting the original group was joined by Frederick Aquino and Richard Cross. The second consultation was held in Chicago in November 2008, and the third and final consultation took place in Montreal in November 2009. The original group kept growing, as William Abraham, George Demacopoulos, Gregory LaNave, Matthew Lootens, Bernard McGinn, Mark Mealey and William Wainwright joined in the endeavour. During
each of the three consultations, about a third of all essays that would make up the volume were discussed. Thus the volume grew as a cooperative endeavour, as the authors read and commented on each other’s work and contributed constructively to the Introduction. Derek Michaud and Garth Green offered important bibliographic suggestions. The editorial work on the volume was conducted with the help of Gavrilyuk’s graduate students Stephani Atkins, Kyle Sellnow and Ry Siggelkow. Gavrilyuk also wishes to thank his colleagues at the University of St Thomas – Philip Rolnick, Terence Nichols, Peter Feldmeier and David Penchansky – for their valuable comments on the Introduction and other parts of the book. The editors would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Brian Daley, Scot Bontrager, Philip Endean and Derek Neve to the consultation discussions. Mark McInroy, who contributed two chapters to the volume, is also principally responsible for the production of the indexes. Translations are by the contributors unless otherwise stated.

We are also profoundly grateful for the help that the editors at Cambridge University Press – Kate Brett, Laura Morris, Joanna Garbutt and Anna Lowe, as well as freelance copy-editor Fiona Little – have expertly offered at different stages of the volume’s preparation.

Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley
Abbreviations

Bibliographic information regarding less well-known primary sources is included in the footnotes.

Alexander of Hales, Qu. disp.  Alexander of Hales, *Questiones disputatae*

Aristotle, *De an.*  Aristotle, *De anima*

DMR  *De memoria et reminiscencia*

Met.  *Metaphysics*

NE  *Nichomachean Ethics*

Augustine, *Civ. Dei*  Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei* (CCL 47–8)

*Conf.*  *Confessiones* (CCL 27)

*De Gn. litt.*  *De Genesi ad litteram* (CSEL 28.1)

*De lib. arbit.*  *De libero arbitrio* (CCL 29)

*De q. an.*  *De quantitate animae* (CSEL 89)

*De trin.*  *De trinitate* (CCL 50–50A)

*En. Ps.*  *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (CCL 38–40)

*Ep.*  *Epistulae* (CSEL 34, 44, 57)

*Jo. ev. tr.*  *In Johannis evangelium tractatus* (CCL 36)

*Serm.*  *Sermones* (PL 38–9)

*Solil.*  *Soliloquia* (CSEL 89)


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A. Louth, B. McNeil et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982–9)

Bernard, De div. Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo de diversis

SSCC

Bonaventure, I Sent. Commentarius in primum librum Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi

II Sent. Commentarius in secundum librum Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi

III Sent. Commentarius in tertium librum Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi

Brev. Breviloquium

Comm. in Ioan. Commentarius in evangelium Ioannis

De donis Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti

De red. De reductione artium ad theologiam

De sc. Chr. Quaestiones disputatae De scientia Christi

Hex. Collationes in Hexaëmeron

Itin. Itinerarium mentis in Deum

Sermo 2 in Dom. 12 post Pentec. Sermo 2 in Dominicam duodecimam post Pentecosten

Sermo 6 in Circumc. Sermo 6 in Circumcisionem Domini

Sermo 9 in Epiph. Sermo 9 in Epiphaniam

Sermo 14 in Epiph. Sermo 14 in Epiphaniam

CCL Corpus christianorum. Series latina (Turnhout and Paris: Brepols)

CSEL Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum (Vindobonae, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1800–)


FC Fathers of the Church (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press)

GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller (Leipzig)
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<td>De anima</td>
<td><em>De anima et resurrectione</em></td>
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<td>In Cant.</td>
<td><em>In Canticum Canticorum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cat. Or.</td>
<td><em>Oratio catechetica magna</em></td>
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<td>Hom. Ez.</td>
<td><em>Homiliae in Ezechielem</em> (PL 76)</td>
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<td>Mor.</td>
<td><em>Moralia in Iob</em> (CCL 143, 143A, 143B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td><em>Liber regulae pastoralis</em> (SC 381–2)</td>
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<td>HTR</td>
<td><em>Harvard Theological Review</em> (1908–)</td>
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<td>Maximus, Ad Thal.</td>
<td>Maximus the Confessor, <em>Quaestiones ad Thalassium</em></td>
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<td>Amb.</td>
<td><em>Ambigua</em></td>
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<td>Myst.</td>
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<td>Mechthild, FL</td>
<td>Mechthild von Magdeburg, <em>Das fliessende Licht der Gottheit</em></td>
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<td>Nicholas of Cusa, <em>Apologia doctae ignorantiae</em></td>
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<td>DB</td>
<td><em>De Beryllo</em></td>
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<td>DC</td>
<td><em>De coniecturis</em></td>
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DFD  De filiatione Dei
DQD  De quaerendo Deum
DVD  De visione Dei
DVS  De venatione sapientiae


Origen, Dial. Heraclides
  In Cant. Origen, Dialogus cum Heraclide
  In John Commentarii in evangelium Joannis
  In Lament. Fragmenta in Lamentationes
  In Psalm Fragmenta in Psalms

Peter Lombard, Sent.
  Peter Lombard, Sententiae in IV libris distinctae


Plato, Parm.
  Resp. Republica
  Resp. Plotinus, Enn.
  Resp. Plotinus, Enneads

Pseudo-Dionysius, CH
  Resp. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, The Celestial Hierarchy
  Resp. The Divine Names
  Resp. The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy
  Resp. Epistles
  Resp. The Mystical Theology


RAM Revue d’ascétique et de mystique
RSR Revue de sciences religieuses
S Sermon (for numbered sermons by John Wesley)

SC Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1941–)

Thomas Aquinas, ST
  Catena in Luc. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae Catena aurea, super Lucam
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<td>Ep.</td>
<td>Epistula</td>
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<td>In Sent.</td>
<td>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum</td>
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<td>Super I Cor.</td>
<td>Super primam epistolam ad Corinthios lectura</td>
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<tr>
<td>Super II Cor.</td>
<td>Super secundam epistolam ad Corinthios lectura</td>
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<td>Thomas Gallus, Comm. II</td>
<td>Thomas Gallus, Second Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles</td>
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<td>Comm. III</td>
<td>Third Commentary on the Canticle of Canticles</td>
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<td>Explanatio DN</td>
<td>Explanatio in librum De divinis nominibus</td>
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<td>Explanatio in librum De ecclesiastica hierarchia</td>
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<td>Glose AH</td>
<td>Glose super Angelica Hierarchia</td>
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<td>TLG</td>
<td>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</td>
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