

INTRODUCTION TO MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY

SECOND EDITION

This classic book, now in a second, expanded edition, is an invitation to think along with major theologians and spiritual authors, men and women from the time of St. Augustine to the end of the 14th century, who profoundly challenge our (post)modern assumptions. Medieval theology was radically theocentric, Trinitarian, scriptural and sacramental, yet it also operated with a rich notion of human understanding. In a postmodern setting, when modern views on “autonomous reason” are increasingly questioned, it is fruitful to reengage with premodern thinkers who did not share our modern and postmodern presuppositions. Their different perspective does not antiquate their thought, as some of the “cultured despisers” of medieval thought might imagine. On the contrary, rather than rendering their views obsolete, it makes them profoundly challenging and enriching for theology today.

RIK VAN NIEUWENHOVE is an associate professor of medieval theology at Durham University. He has authored many articles and books on medieval theology and spirituality, including *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation* (Oxford University Press, 2021) and *Jan van Ruusbroec: Mystical Theologian of the Trinity* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), and he has coedited *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005) and *Late Medieval Mysticism of the Low Countries* (Paulist Press, 2008).

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Second Edition

RIK VAN NIEUWENHOVE

University of Durham



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-83955-6 — Introduction to Medieval Theology
 Rik Van Nieuwenhove
 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
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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/highereducation/9781108839556

DOI: 10.1017/9781108884426

First edition © Rik Van Nieuwenhove 2012

Second edition © Cambridge University Press 2022

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First published 2012

Reprinted 2014

Second edition 2022

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow Cornwall

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

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Van Nieuwenhove, Rik, 1967– author.

TITLE: Introduction to medieval theology / Rik Van Nieuwenhove.

DESCRIPTION: Second edition. | Cambridge, United Kingdom : New York, NY, USA : Cambridge University Press, [2022] | Series: Introduction to religion | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2021034466 (print) | LCCN 2021034467 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108839556 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108884426 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Theology, Doctrinal – History – Middle Ages, 600–1500. | BISAC: RELIGION / Theology.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC BT26 .v36 2021 (print) | LCC BT26 (ebook) | DDC 230.09–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021034466>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021034467>

ISBN 978-1-108-83955-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-81334-1 Paperback

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83955-6 — Introduction to Medieval Theology
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To my daughters, Anna and Muireann

Intelligere enim est simpliciter veritatem intelligibilem apprehendere. Ratiocinari autem est procedere de uno intellecto ad aliud, ad veritatem intelligibilem cognoscendam . . . ratiocinari comparatur ad intelligere sicut moveri ad quiescere, vel acquirere ad habere, quorum unum est perfecti, aliud autem imperfecti.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a q. 79, a. 8

Contents

<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
1 Introduction	1
PART I THE LEGACY OF THE FATHERS	
2 Augustine of Hippo	7
3 Monks and Scholars in the 5th and 6th Centuries: John Cassian, Boethius and Pseudo-Dionysius	27
PART II EARLY MEDIEVAL THEOLOGIANS	
4 Gregory the Great	39
5 John Scottus Eriugena and the Carolingian Renaissance	56
PART III THE 11TH AND 12TH CENTURIES	
6 Introduction: Renewal in the 11th and 12th Centuries	77
7 Anselm of Canterbury	83
8 Monks and Scholars in the 12th Century: Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry	99
9 Hugh of St. Victor	121
10 Richard of St. Victor	138
11 Hildegard of Bingen	148
12 Peter Lombard and the Systematization of Theology	158

PART IV THE 13TH CENTURY

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 13 | Introduction: Mendicant Orders, Universities and Islamic Scholarship | 181 |
| 14 | Two Beguines: Mechthild of Magdeburg and Hadewijch | 187 |
| 15 | Early Franciscan Theology: Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon and the <i>Summa Halensis</i> | 199 |
| 16 | Bonaventure | 232 |
| 17 | Albert the Great | 247 |
| 18 | Thomas Aquinas | 264 |
| 19 | The Condemnations of 1277 | 306 |
| 20 | John Duns Scotus | 310 |

PART V THE 14TH CENTURY AND BEYOND

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 21 | Introduction: Upheavals and Pluralism in the 14th Century | 331 |
| 22 | William of Ockham | 335 |
| 23 | Meister Eckhart | 347 |
| 24 | Jan van Ruusbroec and the Modern Devotion | 359 |
| 25 | Epilogue | 367 |
| | <i>Bibliography</i> | 368 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 377 |

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of this book was published ten years ago. It filled an obvious gap in the market, and it is fair to say that it was well received by both scholars and general readers interested in medieval thought. I was especially delighted to see it appear on reading lists in a variety of subjects that cover not just medieval theology but also medieval literature (English, French, . . .), philosophy and art.

This second edition has been expanded by more than one quarter, and the text of the first edition has been slightly revised in a number of places. Errors and infelicities throughout the text have been rectified and bibliographies updated.

The first edition operated with the assumption that today's scholarly categories are often less than helpful when outlining medieval thought. Hence, besides mainstream theologians I included authors whom some would characterize today as mystical or spiritual writers. Similarly, while I included mostly authors writing in Latin, some writing in the vernacular also found a home in the book. Given this approach, it had been an oversight on my part not to include any women authors. In this revised edition, two chapters are therefore dedicated to female theologians: one features Hildegard of Bingen, who wrote in Latin, while the other considers the contribution of two beguines, Mechthild of Magdeburg and Hadewijch of Antwerp, who wrote in the vernacular (originally in Middle Low German and Middle Dutch, respectively). Few in the medieval period spoke so movingly as Hadewijch about the desire for God (a key theme in this book). Of course, many other female authors could have been selected for discussion. For reasons of constraints of space, I reluctantly decided not to deal with Julian of Norwich's attractive theology, as it is well covered in scholarship, especially in the English-speaking world. Likewise, I had to leave out Catherine of Siena's *Dialogues*, which offer a splendid example of how academic theology (such as Thomas Aquinas's) found an expression in an existentially relevant key in vernacular writings. Medieval theology was

undoubtedly mainly an affair for men, but here too, as in other walks of life, women made a significant contribution, and the new chapters alert the reader to this.

Medieval thought was more plural than it is generally given credit for in another sense also. Latin theology was not only a Europe-wide enterprise, but it was itself in turn deeply indebted to Islamic and (to a lesser extent) Jewish scholarship. This influence occurred especially when the entire corpus of Aristotelian works was being received at the end of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th. Given the nature of Aristotle's writings, it made itself most acutely felt in the world of philosophy. Even so, it was of major theological significance, impacting discussions on the nature of the intellect, immortality, the nature of happiness, the eternity of the world and so forth. Although it was not possible to dedicate a chapter to Avicenna and Averroes, Islamic influence now receives some attention in the context of the discussion of the elements that shaped scholastic theology in the 13th century (Chapter 13).

There were other lacunae. Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure – understandably so – received considerable attention in the first edition. What was lacking, however, was an extensive discussion of some of the authors who exerted a major influence upon these two key thinkers. Hence, in this second edition, the reader benefits from a chapter on “Early Franciscan Theology” (Chapter 15) (drafted by my colleague Dr. William Crozier), which contains discussions of Robert Grosseteste, Roger Bacon and the influential *Summa Halensis*. A chapter on Albert the Great (Chapter 17) has also been included. He was the teacher of Thomas Aquinas and exerted a profound influence that lasted until the end of the medieval period (both in the school of “Albertism” and on Rhineland spirituality) and beyond.

I remain indebted in a variety of ways to the following colleagues: Lewis Ayres, John Betz, Patrick Connolly, Eamonn Conway, Boyd Taylor Coolman, William Crozier, Jos Decorte (†), Eugene Duffy, Rob Faesen, Russell Friedman, Karen Kilby, Katja Krause, Bernard McGinn, Simon Oliver, Philip L. Reynolds and Joseph Wawrykow.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Beatrice Rehl, senior editor at Cambridge University Press, for enthusiastically and expertly guiding this second edition toward publication.

This edition, as was the first, is an exercise, not in theological nostalgia, but in retrieval for the sake of renewal. In this spirit, I dedicate it to my two beautiful daughters, Anna and Muireann.

Abbreviations

<i>BDW</i>	<i>Book of Divine Works</i> (Hildegard)
<i>Brevil.</i>	<i>Breviloquium</i> (Bonaventure)
<i>CDH</i>	<i>Cur Deus Homo</i> (Anselm of Canterbury)
<i>Comm. Jn</i>	<i>Commentary on John</i>
<i>Comm. on Rom</i>	<i>Commentary on Romans</i>
<i>Confer.</i>	<i>Conferences</i> (John Cassian)
<i>Confess.</i>	<i>Confessions</i> (Augustine)
<i>Consol.</i>	<i>The Consolation of Philosophy</i> (Boethius)
<i>CT</i>	<i>Compendium of Theology</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
<i>De Civ. Dei</i>	<i>De Civitate Dei</i> (Augustine)
<i>De Doctr. Christ.</i>	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> (Augustine)
<i>De Lib. Arb.</i>	<i>De Libertate Arbitrii</i> (Anselm of Canterbury)
<i>De Pot.</i>	<i>De Potentia</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
<i>De Prim. Princ.</i>	<i>De Primo Principio</i> (Duns Scotus)
<i>De Sacr.</i>	<i>De Sacramentis Christiane Fidei</i> (Hugh of St. Victor)
<i>De Trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>
<i>De Ver.</i>	<i>De Veritate</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>The Dialogues</i> (Gregory the Great)
<i>Didasc.</i>	<i>Didascalicon</i> (Hugh of St. Victor)
<i>DTD</i>	<i>De Tribus Diebus</i> (Hugh of St. Victor)
<i>Enarr. in Ps.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i> (Augustine)
<i>Enchir.</i>	<i>Enchiridion</i> (Augustine)
<i>Hex.</i>	<i>[Collationes in] Hexaemeron</i>
<i>Hom. Ev.</i>	<i>Forty Homilies on the Gospels</i> (Gregory the Great)
<i>Hom. Ez.</i>	<i>Homilies on Ezekiel</i> (Gregory the Great)
<i>Lect.</i>	<i>Lectura</i> (Duns Scotus)
<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Moralia in Iob</i> (Gregory the Great)
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Major Works – Anselm of Canterbury</i>

<i>Myst. Trin.</i>	<i>Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity</i> (Bonaventure)
<i>Op. Ox.</i>	<i>Opus Oxoniense</i> (Duns Scotus)
<i>Ordin.</i>	<i>Ordinatio</i>
<i>Past. Reg.</i>	<i>Pastoral Rule</i> (Gregory the Great)
<i>Quodlib.</i>	<i>Quodlibetal Questions</i> (William of Ockham)
<i>Rep. Par.</i>	<i>Reportatio Parisiensis</i> (Duns Scotus)
<i>ScG</i>	<i>Summa contra Gentiles</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Commentary on Peter Lombard's Sentences</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> (Thomas Aquinas)
<i>TSB</i>	<i>Theologia Summi Boni</i> (Peter Abelard)