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Florian Wöller • Ueli Zahnd (eds.)

Dominican Culture, Dominican Theology

The Order of Preachers and Its Spheres of Action (1215 – ca. 1600)

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Dionysius, *Theologia*, and Thomas's Final *Summa*

Constant J. Mews

The word *theologia* is notoriously ambiguous. Does it refer to contemplative reflection on God alone, as in the corpus of writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, or does it relate (as in modern usage) to all Christian doctrine, including about Christ, the sacraments and last things? Thomas Aquinas was aware that *theologia* had two meanings. In his commentary on Boethius, he observes that it can be what philosophers pursue, also called metaphysics, but it can also refer to consideration of divine things in themselves, the *theologia* that is passed on in Scripture.[1] He repeats this point within the discussion of *sacra doctrina* that opens his final *Summa*, declaring that *theologia* which pertains to *sacra doctrina* differs from that *theologia* which is part of philosophy.[2] We are so used to his unfinished masterpiece being called the *Summa theologiae* that we tend to assume this is its authentic title. Yet, as Jean-Pierre Torrell reminds us, Thomas speaks of *theologia* very differently from the way we speak about theology.[3]

My concern is to examine the evolution in Thomas's discourse about both *theologia* and *sacra doctrina* in his great surveys of sacred teaching with particular attention to his reverence for the figure he called Dionysius the Areopagite. I argue that Thomas was increasingly concerned by the different meanings given to *theologia* in a university context, and so gave greater attention in his final *Summa* to a broader concept, that of *sacra doctrina* or sacred teaching. I will also suggest that Thomas presented his last great work as a *summa* of sacred teaching, rather than of *theologia*, which he wanted to reserve for its contemplative sense. Much has been written on these issues. Adriano Oliva has already signaled the importance of Thomas's understanding of *sacra doctrina* in relation to the opening of his commentary on the *Sentences*.[4] In recent years, a growing number of

1 Thomas de Aquino: *In librum Boethii de trinitate* q. 5, a. 4, co., ed. B. Decker, Leiden ²1959, p. 195: "Sic ergo theologia sive scientia divina est duplex. Una, in qua considerantur res divinae non tamquam subiectum scientiae, sed tamquam principia subiecti, et talis est theologia, quam philosophi prosequuntur, quae alio nomine metaphysica dicitur. Alia vero, quae ipsas res divinas considerat propter se ipsas ut subiectum scientiae et haec est theologia, quae in sacra Scriptura traditur."

2 Thomas de Aquino: *Summa Theologiae* [*ST*] I, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2, ed. Leonina 4, Rome 1888, p. 7a: "Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophicae ponitur."

3 Torrell, Jean-Pierre: *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, maître spirituel*, Paris 2017, p. 17.

4 Oliva, Adriano: *Les débuts de l'enseignement de Thomas d'Aquin et sa conception de la* sacra doctrina (Bibliothèque thomiste 58), Paris 2006, with a new edition of the commentary on the prologue to the *Sentences* on pp. 303–340 and pp. 279–286 for a discussion of Thomas's use of these terms.

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scholars have started to emphasize the importance of Dionysius in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, including O'Rourke, Rocca, Humbrecht, and Hankey.[5]

Dionysius argued that attention needed to be given to how we can and cannot speak about God. The reductionist tendency to label Thomas as an Aristotelian thinker (in contrast to the supposedly Augustinian Franciscans) disguises how each of these masters were offering their own summary of the core teaching of Scripture. Some masters, like Bonaventure, focused on the wisdom of Scripture, while others (like Thomas) emphasized philosophical wisdom as helping to understand its core themes. Thomas never voiced doubt about the authenticity of the writings attributed to the Athenian philosopher converted by St Paul, whom I shall call Dionysius rather than Pseudo-Dionysius. Through the influence of Albert the Great, he picked up on the way the Areopagite returned the attention of *theologia* to God and how we might know about his presence in the world, but never his full nature. My concern here is not so much with Thomas's understanding of this corpus from a metaphysical perspective, as its impact on a more specific question, namely his evolving understanding of *theologia* in relation to that of his predecessors. In order to appreciate this evolution, I shall begin by considering various twelfth-century authors who use the term as well as the *Summa Halensis*, produced within the school of Alexander of Hales between 1236 and his death on 21 August 1245. How does Thomas's teaching about both *theologia* and *sacra doctrina* relate to that previous tradition?

Fig. 15.1: Relative citations of *theologia*, *theologica*, *theologus*, and *sacra doctrina*

	Theologia*	theologic*	theologu*/i	sacra* doctrina*
	[Theol*+Diony*]	[virtu* theol*]		
Peter Lombard *Sentences*	1	1	2	0
Alexander on *Sentences*	4 [1]	11 [8]	1	0
Summa Halensis	61 [48]	54 [9]	31	6
Bonaventure on *Sentences*	34 [29]	156 [139]	23	0
Bonaventure *Breviloquium*	8 [8]	3 [3]	1	4
Albert on *Sentences*	35 [33]	63 [34]	131	0
Thomas on *Sentences*	25 [23]	117 [114]	34	6
Thomas *Summa CG*	1 [0]	1 [0]	3	3
Thomas *Summa T*	12 [10]	184 [146]	24	53

[5] O'Rourke, Fran: *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 32), Leiden/New York 1992; Rocca, Gregory P.: *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology*, Washington, DC 2004; Hankey, Wayne J.: "Reading Augustine through Dionysius", in eds. Michael Dauphinais/ Barry David/Matthew Levering: *Aquinas the Augustinian*, Washington, DC 2007, pp. 243–257.

This table (fig. 15.1), derived from the Brepols Library of Latin Texts Database and the Albertus Magnus Database, tells a fascinating story about the changing frequency with which five significant teachers in Paris (Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and Thomas Aquinas) use the terms *theologia, theologica, theologus*, and *sacra doctrina* (and their variants) within their commentaries on Peter Lombard and associated *Summae*. The first column provides the number of references to the word *theologia*. This is followed in square brackets by this number, excluding reference to titles of Dionysius, like *De mystica theologia* and *De symbolica theologia*. It is evident from this list that the great surge in references to *theologia* comes about, not in the *Sentences* commentary of Alexander of Hales (from the mid 1220s), but in the so-called *Summa Halensis* or *Summa theologica*. Exactly how much of this *Summa* is Alexander's is debated. It may be that its first and third books, about God and the redeeming work of Christ were by his former student, John of La Rochelle (d. 8 February 1245), while Alexander may be responsible for the first and second parts of its second book, about creation and the fall.[6] Its fourth book, on sacraments, was still incomplete in 1256 when Pope Alexander IV urged William of Melito to complete a work already notorious for its size and complexity.[7] Roger Bacon mockingly described it in the 1260s as being as heavy as a horse, and without any depth in philosophy.[8]

The first column of fig. 15.1 further illustrates how Bonaventure, Albert the Great, and the young Thomas also refer to *theologia*, but not as frequently as the authors of the *Summa Halensis*. In particular, the numbers highlight the astonishing avoidance of the term in Thomas's *Summa contra gentiles* and much reduced presence (ten citations, excluding two references to the *De mystica theologia*) in the work we know as the *Summa theologiae*.

The second column documents a parallel expansion in the thirteenth century in use of the adjective *theologica*, in particular to describe the virtues of faith, hope and love, as distinct from the four so-called cardinal or political virtues. This practice of describing these virtues as theological rather than as catholic (such as by Simon of Tournai in the later twelfth century), subsequently became common-place, for example in the sermons of Pope Innocent III and Alexander's *Sentences* commentary.[9] The third column reports the relative frequency in

[6] On the complex dates about its authorship, see Bougerol, J.-G.: "The Summa Theologica of Alexander of Hales", in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977), pp. 437–447, and the many valuable papers in Schumacher, Lydia, ed.: *The Summa Halensis: Sources and Context* (Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie 65), Berlin 2020, and on its teachings, Schumacher, Lydia. ed: *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought* (Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie 67), Berlin 2021.

[7] *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* [*CUP*]: eds. Heinrich Denifle/Emile Chatelaine, vol. 1, Paris 1889, no. 287, pp. 328–329.

[8] Rogerus Bacon: *Opus Minus*, ed. J. S. Brewer: *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita* (Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores 15), London 1859, pp. 311–390: 325–327 and *Opus Tertium*, ed. Brewer: *ibid.*, pp. 3–310: 30

[9] The term is not used by Hugh of Saint-Victor, but it does occur in Pseudo Hugo de Sancto Victoris [Conrad of Hirsau?]: *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, PL 176, pp. 997–1006: 999A, and Innocentius III: *Sermo* 5, PL 217, p. 615 and *Mysterium euangelicae legis et sacramenti*

these texts of the term *theologus* or its variants. The fourth column reports the relative frequency of the phrase *sacra doctrina* (or its variant forms).

The table reveals that in his original *Sentences* commentary Thomas speaks of *theologia* twenty-three times (other than as titles used by Dionysius), with just six mentions of *sacra doctrina*. Yet in the *Summa contra gentiles*, he never mentions *theologia*, while referring three times to *sacra doctrina* (and making 84 references to *sacra scriptura*).[10] In his final *Summa*, however, Thomas refers to *theologia* on just ten occasions (twelve including references to titles of Dionysian texts), but fifty-three times to *sacra doctrina*, beginning with his opening discussion of the subject.

1. The Title of Thomas's *Summa*

The relative reduction in Thomas's references to *theologia* in the work known as the *Summa theologiae* must raise the question whether or not this was his intended title. This issue has not attracted wide attention apart from a small article published by Angelo Walz in 1941, in which he pays minimal attention to the manuscript record.[11] His arguments in favour of the authenticity of the traditional title are not strong. His major argument was that it was used by William of Tocco in a list of Thomas's writings within a *Life*, compiled between 1317 and 1323 as part of the campaign for his canonization.[12] Ptolemy of Lucca, writing c. 1317, refers to it (more accurately, I would argue) simply as his *Summa*.[13] Walz did not mention that throughout the *Correctoria* provoked by Thomas's teaching between 1277 and 1286, Thomas's critics refer only to his *Summa*, never to his *Summa theologiae*.[14]

eucharistiae 2.50, PL 217, pp. 763–946: 828. The description of catholic virtues in Simon of Tournai and Peter the Chanter is discussed by Bejczy, István P.: *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 202), Leiden/Boston 2011, pp. 124–130.

10 Thomas de Aquino: *Summa contra gentiles* [*SCG*] I, c. 26.244, ed. Ceslas Pera, vol. 2–3, Turin/Rome 1961, vol. 2, p. 37b; III, c. 90.2659, ed. Pera, vol. 3, p. 131a; IV, c. 6.3387, ed. Pera, vol. 3, p. 251a.

11 Walz, Angelo: "De Genuino Titulo 'Summa Theologiae'", in *Angelicum* 18 (1941), pp. 142–151. Davies, Brian: "God", in eds. Philip McCosker/Denys Turner: *The Cambridge Companion to the Summa Theologiae*, Cambridge 2016, pp. 87–101: 87.

12 Guilelmus de Tocco: *Ystoria sancti Thome de Aquino* 18, ed. Claire le Brun-Gouanvic (Studies and Texts 127), Toronto 1996, p. 129.

13 Ptolemeus de Lucca: *Historia ecclesiastica nova* 23.11, ed. Ottavio Clavuot (MGH.SS 39), Hannover 2009, p. 591.

14 It is referred to simply as the *Summa* in the *Correctorium corruptorii 'Quare'*, ed. Palémon Glorieux: *Les premières polémiques Thomistes* (Bibliothèque thomiste 9), vol. 1, Kain 1927, p. 3, a Dominican response (c. 1284–6) to the *Correctorium fratris Thomae* of William de la Mare (1277–9). See also *Correctorium corruptorii 'Sciendum'*, ed. Palémon Glorieux , vol. 2, Paris 1956, p. 29, a careful comparison (*c.* 1280) of passages in Thomas's commentary on the *Sentences* improved in his *Summa*. See also a Franciscan ruling from 1282 about the *summa fratris Thome* and Gauthier, René Antoine: "Les 'Articuli in quibus frater Thomas melius in Summa quam in Scriptis'", in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 19 (1952), pp. 271–326, with edition of the text on pp. 300–326.

William of Tocco's phrase may well derive from the popular usage of Parisian booksellers, who made available in 1286, the *Summa fratris Thome de Aquino super theologiam*.[15] As Richard and Mary Rouse have brilliantly demonstrated, the key booksellers active outside the Dominican convent at Saint-Jacques, were William and above all his widow, Marguerite of Sens.[16] Yet there is no evidence within the work itself that this was a title planned by Thomas. The phrase *super theologiam* may have been added by a bookseller simply for clarity, to distinguish it from the other great *Summa* of Thomas, the *contra gentiles*, not because it was Thomas's original title. The fact that early manuscripts survive of the final *Summa* which use the title *Summa theologie* (as in Yale, Beinicke MS Marston 232) or *Summa de theologia* (as in two early MSS of French origin) may simply reflect the practice of the Parisian bookseller who made available the *Summa* for copying.[17] The fact that a bookseller described all books about doctrine or exegesis as *exemplaria super theologiam* does not mean that Thomas agreed with such use of the word.[18] The bookseller was simply following standard university popular usage, current since the 1215 statutes, of using *theologia* in a much broader sense than Dionysius the Areopagite, to mean the whole gamut of Christian teaching. Thomas was certainly aware of this much broader use of the term, as he makes clear from the outset of the *Summa*.[19] The key question, however, is whether Thomas himself sanctioned the title *Summa theologiae*, or whether (as I suggest), he saw it as a synthesis, not of *theologia*, but of sacred teaching.

2. Dionysius and *theologia* in the Twelfth Century

Before reviewing the evolving attitude of Thomas to *theologia*, it may be useful to survey briefly its adoption in the twelfth century, in particular by Peter Abelard. He makes no mention of the term within the earliest version of his treatise on the divine unity and trinity, as composed c. 1120, although he does so when looking back at the work in his *Historia calamitatum* from c. 1132.[20] Abelard re-

[15] *CUP* 1, no. 530, p. 646, mentioning *Summa fratris Thome de Aquino super theologiam*.

[16] Rouse, Richard M./Rouse, Mary A.: *Manuscripts and their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols., London/Turnhout 2000, pp. 85–93.

[17] MS Yale, Beinicke Library, Marston 232 (s. xiii^{ex}, from northern Italy) begins (f. 1r*):* "Incipiunt Rubrice summe theologie fratris thome de aquino ordinis fratrum", but then follows on f. 5r*:* "Incipit prima pars summe fratris Thome de aquino ordinis predicatorum." The title "Incipit secunda pars summe de theologia [...] predicatorum" is used on f. 3r of a manuscript from before 1300 sold privately at auction at Christie's, 12 November 2008, https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/st-thomas-aquinas-op-1225-1274-sum7 ma-theologica-5138488-details.aspx (c. 1300, French; accessed on 26 July 2024). It probaє bly belonged to the convent of San Domenico, Gaeta. See also Dinca, Adinel-Ciprien: "A little known Aquinas MS in Romania (Sibiu, Brukenthal Library MS 608)", in *Chora* 7–8 (2009–2010), pp. 359–371.

[18] *CUP* 1, no. 530, p. 645.

[19] See n. 2 above.

[20] Petrus Abaelardus: *Theologia 'Summi boni'* [*TSum*], eds. Eligius M. Buytaert/Constant J. Mews: *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica* 3 (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis 13), Turnhout 1987, *editio* pp. 85–201, with discussion of the title on pp. 17–19; *TSum* is

places the terms *divini* by *theologi* within its much expanded version, the *Theologia christiana* (c. 1122–27), a title that he introduces at the same time.[21] Abelard makes a similar shift from Latin to Greek terminology when he changes the dedication of his oratory from the Holy Trinity to the Paraclete.[22] Abelard refers specifically to the second book of his *Theologia christiana* in his *Collationes* (from either the late 1120s or early 1130s).[23] Surprising as it might seem, databases of Latin texts reveal that the phrase *theologia christiana* had never been used prior to Abelard, and would never be used subsequently in any regular way until Erasmus.[24] By the 1130s, Abelard drops the adjective *christiana* from the title of his treatise, which he then refers to simply as his *Theologia*, or *Theologia 'Scholarium'* as it is now called.[25] Abelard never discusses its meaning in that treatise, which he describes as an introduction to Scripture.[26] He does clarify his meaning, however, in the *Sententie Parisienses*, a record of his teaching taken down by a student: "We have spoken about those things that pertain to theology. Now we must speak about those things that pertain to benefits, because catholic faith consists in two things: knowledge of the divine essence and benefits, the first of which is the supreme love when God took human flesh."[27] Abelard is repeating a classic

preserved for the sake of continuity with that introduced by Ostlender, Heinrich: *Peter Abaelards Theologia 'Summi boni'* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und der Theologie des Mittelalters 35.2/3), Münster 1939. See also Petrus Abaelardus: *Epistola* 1.35 ed. David E. Luscombe: *The Letter Collection of Peter Abelard and Heloise*, Oxford 2013, p. 54: "et quendam theologie tractatum de unitate et trinitate diuina scolaribus nostris componerem."

21 Petrus Abaelardus: *Theologia christiana* [*Tchr*], ed. Eligius M. Buytaert (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio medieaevalis 12), Turnhout 1987, pp. 71–312; see *Tchr* 3.75, ed. Buytaert, p. 225 ("omnium theologorum auctoritas" replacing "spiritualis doctor" in *TSum* 2.34, eds. Buytaert/Mews, p. 126); *Tchr* 3.178, ed. Buytaert, p. 262 ("theologi" replacing "diuini" in *TSum* 2.110, eds. Buytaert/Mews, p. 153); *Tchr* 3.181, ed. Buytaert, p. 263 ("theologis" replacing "diuinis" in *TSum* 2.112, eds. Buytaert/Mews, p. 154); *Tchr* 4.133, ed. Buytaert, p. 331 ("omnes fere Latini theologi", a new passage).

22 Abaelardus *Epist.* 1.54–55, ed. Luscombe, pp. 84–86.

23 Petrus Abaelardus: *Collationes* 78, ed. John Marenbon/Giovanni Orlandi: *Peter Abelard. Collationes*, Oxford 2001, p. 98: "de quibus quidem, memini, contra eos qui fidem rationibus uestigandam esse denegant secundum etiam *Theologie christiane* liber tam uirtute rationum quam auctoritate scriptorum plenius disserit et rebelles conuincit." On its date, see the introduction by John Marenbon, pp. xxvii–xxix.

24 The Brepols Library of Latin Texts reveals that the first major author to speak of "theologia Christiana", as distinct from phrases like "theologi Christiani", used once by Jean Gerson, was Erasmus, *Correspondence*, eds. P. S. Allen/H. M. Allen/H. W. Garrod, 11 vols., Oxford 1906–1947, as in *Epistolae* 1297 (*ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 81), 1458 (*ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 477), and 3002 (*ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 87)

25 The title "Theologia" is used within the list of contents by Petrus Abaelardus: *Theologia 'Scholarium'*, capitula 1, eds. Eligius M. Buytaert/Constant J. Mews: *Petri Abaelardi Opera Theologica* 3 (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis 13), Turnhout 1987, pp. 313–549: 317, but "theologi" are never mentioned in its text.

26 Abaelardus *Theologia 'Scholarium'*, prefatio, eds. Buyaert/Mews, p. 313: "Scolarium nostrorum petitioni prout possumus satisfacientes, aliquam sacrae eruditionis summam quasi diuinae scripturae introductionem conscripsimus."

27 *Sententie Parisienses*, ed. Arthur Landgraf: *Écrits théologiques de l'école d'Abélard* (Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense 14), Louvain 1934, pp. 1–60: 29: "Diximus illa, que pertinent ad theo-

Greek distinction between *theologia* as knowledge of God alone, and the study of his benefits, namely about Christ, the sacraments and ethical behaviour.

While Abelard never quotes from the Areopagite, he certainly respected Dionysius as a philosopher converted by St Paul in Athens, even if he preferred Bede's opinion that he was bishop of Corinth to Hilduin's claim that he was bishop of Athens before moving to Paris.[28] Hugh of Saint-Victor voiced similar respect for Dionysius as bishop of Corinth in his *Didascalicon* (from *c.* 1120). Here he explains that *theologia* "contemplates invisible substances", and is "the summit of philosophy and the perfection of truth, by which there can be nothing higher for the contemplative spirit."[29] By separating out *theologia* from the domain of doctrinal discussion, Hugh preserves its contemplative character. Yet when he came to write his commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, Hugh transforms the meaning of *theologia* in a way that is quite removed from Dionysius, namely by explaining that *theologia mundana* is about the work of creation, while true *theologia* considers the works of redemption—a sense of the word radically different from that given by Abelard in his *Theologia*.[30] Hugh does not introduce the Dionysian term *theologia* into his great *summa*, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, as if he was cautious about introducing Dionysius into his major teaching. Nonetheless, Hugh's discussion in his commentary of *theologia* as about the work of redemption laid the ground for a broadening in understanding of the term.

Twelfth-century masters refer to their exposition of the teaching of Scripture in various ways (*divinitas, sacra lectio, scientia divina*, *scientia divinae scripturae,* or *scientia divinorum operum*), but never as *theologia*.[31] Peter Lombard makes a sin-

logiam. Nunc dicendum est de his, que pertinent ad beneficia, quia fides catholica in duobus consistit, in cognitione divine essentie et beneficiis. [...] Primum beneficium est illa summa dilectio, qua maior non est, scilicet quod Deus carnem suscepit et quod obediens fuit Patri usque ad mortem."

28 Petrus Abaelardus *TSum* 2.22, eds. Buytaert/Mews, p. 121: "Cuius quidem ignoti dei aram magnus ille philosophus Dyonisius Ariopagyta apostolo Paulo legitur ostendisse"; repeated in *Tchr* 3.45, ed. Buytaert, p. 213.

29 Hugo de sancto Victore: *Super Hierarchiam Dionysii*, 1 Prol., ed. Dominique Poirel (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis 178), Turnhout 2015, pp. 403–404: "Prima enim, id est mathematica, speculatur uisibiles rerum uisibilium formas; secunda autem, id est physica, scrutatur inuisibiles rerum uisibilium causas; tercia uero sola, id est theologia, contemplatur inuisibiles substantias et inuisibilium substantiarum inuisibiles naturas. [...] Hic autem summa philosophiae est et ueritatis perfectio, qua nichil altius esse potest animo contemplanti."

30 Hugo de sancto Victore *Super Hierarchiam Dionysii*, 1 Prol., ed. Poirel, p. 403: "Sed mundana, ut diximus, theologia opera conditionis assumpsit et elementa mundi huius secundum species creatas, ut demonstrationem suam faceret in illis; theologia uero diuina opera restaurationis elegit secundum humanitatem Iesu et sacramenta eius quae ab initio sunt, naturalibus quoque pro modo subiunctis, ut in illis eruditionem conformaret."

31 Hugo de Sancto Victore: *De sacramentis christianae fidei* 2.3.2, ed. Reiner Berndt (Corpus Victorinum. Textus historici 1), Münster 2008, p. 344 (cf. PL 176, 421): "Postquam autem clericus factus est debet deinceps de stipendiis Ecclesiae sustentari, et sub tutela et custodia spiritualium magistrorum, scientia divina ecclesiastica disciplina erudiri, quatenus ad sacros ordines ministerii divini cum ratio poposcerit digne possit accedere." Petrus Abaelardus *Epist.* 1.9, ed. Luscombe, p. 14: "ut de diuinitate addiscerem"; *id. Epist.* 1.12,

gle, rather dismissive reference in the *Sentences* to those "skilled in *theologia*", and once to "the zealous and modest speculation of *theologi*" which he insists should be based on Scripture.[32] He cites Dionysius only from one short section of the *Celestial Hierarchy* about angels, which he is quoting from Gregory the Great, without any awareness of Hugh's commentary on Dionysius.[33] By the mid twelfth century, however, the practice was gaining ground of referring to teachers of Scripture and doctrine as *theologi*. This encouraged a tendency to apply *theologia* to much more than a discussion of the divine nature.[34] This shift accelerated after Pope Innocent III's letter of 1207, in which he observed that *theologi* were responsible for the discipline of the sacred page, and that the number of masters of *theologia* should not exceed eight.[35] This terminology was repeated in the 1215 charter of Robert de Courcon.[36] *Theologia* was becoming used as shorthand for the teaching of Scripture.

3. *Theologia* and *sacra doctrina* at the University of Paris

A key figure involved in promoting the teaching of Dionysius the Areopagite and thus his understanding of *theologia* was Alexander of Hales in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, composed probably in the mid 1220s. From among Dionysius's works, Alexander refers most often to *On the Divine Names* (39 times), *On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (11 times), with *On the Celestial Hierarchy* cited 5 times and *On Symbolic Theology* just once. Alexander is certainly aware of the *triplex via* of Dionysius, namely of knowing God through removal (*ablatio*) or negation, eminence, and causality.[37] Paradoxically, however, he mentions *theologia* just four times in his *Sentences* commentary, three being as part of

ed. Luscombe, p. 20: "non minus in sacra lectione me persequi cepit"; *id. Epist.* 1.34, ed. Luscombe, p. 52: "quod sine magistro ad magisterium diuine lectiones accedere presumpsissem."

32 Petrus Lombardus: *Sententiae in libri IV distinctae* I, d. 32, c. 4.3, ed. Ignatius Brady (Spicilegium Bonaventurianum 3–5), Grottaferrata 1971–1981, vol. 1, p. 237: "cunctisque in theologia peritis patenti"; *ibid.*, I, d. 1.2, ed. Brady, p. 55: "Cumque his intenderit theologorum speculatio studiosa atque modesta, divinam Scripturam formam praescriptam in doctrina tenere advertet"; *ibid.*, prol. 2, ed. Brady, p. 3: "ac theologicarum inquisitionum abdita aperire, necnon et sacramentorum ecclesiasticorum pro modico intelligentiae nostrae notitiam tradere studuimus."

33 Petrus Lombardus *Sent.* II, d. 9, c. 1, ed. Brady, vol. 1, p. 371 and *ibid.*, II, d. 10. c. 1–2, ed. Brady, pp. 377–379; cf. Gregorius Magnus: *Homiliae in euangelia* 2.34.12, ed. R. Etaix (Corpus Christianorum. Series latina 141), Turnhout 1999, p. 312.

34 Iohannes Salisburiensis: *Metalogicon* 1.5, ed. J.B. Hall (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis 98), Turnhout 1991, p. 21 ("duos fratres theologos") and *ibid.*, 2.10 ed. Hall, p. 72 ("in solis theologicis habui praeceptores").

35 *CUP* 1, no. 5, p. 65: "ad quam pro sacre pagine disciplina celebris recursus habetur theologorum".

36 *CUP* 1, no. 20, p. 79: "Circa statum theologorum statuimus [...] et quinque annis audiat theologiam, antequam privatas lectiones legat publice [...]."

37 Alexander Halensis: *Glossae in quattuor libros Sententiarum 1–4*, eds. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 4 vols. (Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi 12–15), Grottaferrata 1951–1957; see *ibid.*, I, d. 3. n. 3.f, ed. Grottaferrata, vol. 1, p. 39.

a book or chapter title by Dionysius, along with a single reference to Genesis as a *liber theologiae*.[38]

Alexander gave much more attention, however, to John of Damascus, whom Peter Lombard had first introduced to the Latin West in both the first and third books (especially about Christ) of his *Sentences*.[39] Alexander cites this John on almost 200 occasions, as compared to about a 1,000 references to Augustine. The great advantage of the *De orthodoxa fide* of John of Damascus was that it draws on Dionysius, but summarizes key themes of Scripture as a whole, rather than focusing on words used about God, as in the writings of Dionysius. Following Greek tradition, John distinguishes between *theologia* about God, and *dispensatio*, the economy of salvation.[40] Yet he also says that "the most sacred and most theological (*theologissimus*) Dionysius, reported that all theology (namely divine Scripture) speaks of nine celestial substances."[41] John's thinking differed from Augustine not just in his exposure to Dionysius, but in his not being familiar with Augustine's notion of original sin. John devotes the second of his four books to creation and humanity, without focusing on the Fall. Alexander was excited by John's perspective as well as that of the *De spiritu et anima*, a fusion of Augustinian an Boethian perspectives circulated as by Augustine.[42] Alexander's genius was to impose thematic distinctions into each of the four books of the *Sentences*, making it much easier to use as a foundational text for teaching. While Augustine dominated his commentary, he used Peter Lombard to create a framework for debating multiple perspectives on the core themes of Scripture.

The next table (fig. 15.2) reveals the relative attention in various texts to authorities other than Augustine. It reveals that the ratio of citation of Dionysius against that of Augustine falls from 11% in the *Sentences* commentary of Alexander of Hales to 8% in the *Summa Halensis*. This fall might reflect reserve in the Franciscan school to the way Dionysius was provoking certain Dominicans (like Stephen of Vernizy) to emphasize that God's essence could not be seen—views that were condemned in January 1241.[43] The ratio jumps to 17% in the *Sentences* commentary of Albert the Great, who delivered in the 1240s the first complete

[38] Alexander Halensis *Sent.* I, d. 3, n. 12, art. 3, ed. Grottaferrata, vol. 1, p. 43; *ibid.*, d. 8, n. 28.c, ed. Grottaferrata, p. 108; *ibid.*, d. 31, n. 24.c, ed. Grottaferrata, p. 311; *id.: Sent.* II, d. 1, n. 3, ed Grottaferrata, vol. 2, p. 1: "Primus enim liber theologiae, Genesis."

[39] Petrus Lombardus *Sent.* I, d. 19, c. 3.2 & 9.3, ed. Brady, vol. 1, p. 161 & 167; *ibid.*, d. 25, c. 3.6, ed. Brady, p. 196; *ibid.*, d. 27, c. 3.1, ed. Brady, p. 205; *ibid.*, d. 33, c. 1.10, ed. Brady, p. 243; *id.:* Sent. III, d. 2, c. 1.2–4, ed. Brady, vol. 2, pp. 28–29; *ibid.*, d. 3, c. 1.3, ed. Brady, p. 32; *ibid.*, d. 3, c. 4.5, ed. Brady, p. 37; *ibid.*, d. 5, c. 1.12, ed. Brady, p. 45; *ibid.*, d. 6, c. 3.3, ed. Brady, p. 53; *ibid.*, d. 7, c. 1.4 & 1.9 , ed. Brady, p. 60–62; *ibid.*, d. 7, c. 2.4, ed. Brady, p. 65; *ibid.*, d. 8, c. 2, ed. Brady, p. 68; *ibid.*, d. 9, c. 1.4, ed. Brady, p. 70; *ibid.*, d. 22, c. 3.2, ed. Brady, p. 139.

[40] Iohannes Damascenus: *De orthodoxa fide* 2, 59 and 70, trans. Burgundius Pisanus, ed. E.M. Buytaert (Franciscan Institute Publications 8), St Bonaventure, NY 1955, pp. 13, 232, and 272.

[41] Iohannes Damascenus *De orthodoxa fide* 17, ed. Buytaert, p. 73: "Sicut autem sanctissimus et sacratissimus et theologissimus ait Dionysius Areopagita: Omnis theologia, scilicet divina Scriptura, caelestes substantias novem esse dixit."

[42] Mews, Constant J.: "The Early Diffusion of the *De spiritu et anima* and Cistercian reflection on the powers of the soul", in *Viator* 49 (2019), pp. 297–330.

[43] *CUP* 1, no. 128, pp. 170–171.

exposition of the Dionysian corpus. It climbs to a massive 44% in the *Sentences* commentary of Thomas Aquinas. Thomas was responding to the *Summa Halensis* by expanding much more than Alexander and his school on the contribution of Dionysius alongside Augustine. Thomas went further even than Albert (whose lectures on Dionysius he followed) in showing that Augustine did not provide the only way of summarizing the core themes of Scripture.

Fig 15.2: Frequency of citations of Augustine, Dionysius, and other authors

	Augustine	Boethius	Dionysius	*Hier. cel.*	*Hier. eccl.*	*nom. div.*	*mys.*	*ep.*	John of Damas.
		Boet/Aug	Dion/Aug						John/Aug
Peter Lombard *Sentences*	1378	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	21 (2%)
Alexander on *Sentences*	1065	64 (6%)	114 (11%)	5	11	39	1	5	198 (19%)
Summa Halensis	4708	350 (7%)	355 (8%)	22	0	109	9	0	679 (14%)
Bonaventure on *Sentences*	2171	67 (3%)	22 (1%)	22	2	36	6	1	387 (18%)
Bonaventure *Breviloquium*	18	0	0						0
Albertus on *Sentences*	2086	327 (16%)	360 (17%)	35	24	56	5	4	374 (18%)
Thomas on *Sentences*	1481	198 (13%)	655 (44%)	60	16	3	2	15	999 (67%)
Thomas *Summa CG*	37	15 (41%)	43 (116%)	6	0	1	1	0	7 (19%)
Thomas *Lectura romana in I Sent.*	52	10 (19%)	13 (25%)	1	0	5	0	0	8
Thomas *Summa T*	2797	121 (4%)	541 (19%)	92	63	3	4	12	327 (12%)

A key feature of the *Summa Halensis* is its opening discussion about whether *theologia* is a science. Its importance and originality has rightly been emphasized by Lydia Schumacher and her colleagues as part of a broader project to rescue early Franciscan thought from simplistic assertions (which go back to Roger Bacon) that it is simply Augustinian, without philosophical depth.[44] By the mid 1240s, eager students, as Saccenti has shown, were keen to record different perspectives on the beginning of the *Sentences*.[45] Boyd Coolman has offered an intriguing comparison between the beginning of the *Summa Halensis* and that of Thomas's last *Summa*, suggesting that their different views have certain elements in common.[46] The opening treatise of the *Summa Halensis* refers on five occasions to *sacra doctrina*, a phrase never used by Augustine, Peter Lombard, or

[44] See the volumes edited by Lydia Schumacher (n. 6 above) and her monograph, *Early Franciscan Theology: Between Authority and Innovation,* Cambridge 2019.

[45] Saccenti, Riccardo: "From Wisdom to Science: A Witness of the Theological Studies in Paris in the 1240s", in ed. Clare Monagle: *The Intellectual Dynamism of the High Middle Ages*, Amsterdam 2021, pp. 43–62.

[46] Coolman, Boyd Taylor: "On the Subject Matter of Theology in the *Summa Halensis* and

Alexander in his *Sentences* commentary, as distinct from Augustine's notion of *doctrina Christiana*, Christian teaching.[47] The *Summa Halensis* then explains that "sacred teaching is said to be divine or theological because it is from God and about God, and what leads to God—namely the beginning of fear, love, and the mercy and justice of God."[48]

Its opening discussion may be relatively crude in comparison to that of Aquinas, but it marks a new stage in thinking about the nature of *theologia*.[49] *Theologia* is mentioned 61 times, but only in the first and third books of the *Summa Halensis*. We cannot be certain whether these references were inspired by the more philosophically inclined John of La Rochelle, much more familiar with Avicenna than Alexander of Hales who mentioned *theologia* only once in his *Sentences* commentary, when describing Genesis as "a book of theology".[50] The *Summa Halensis* attributes to Augustine (inaccurately) a definition of *theologia* as a science about things which pertain to human salvation—when in fact Augustine was speaking not about *theologia* but *rerum divinarum scientia*.[51] It draws on a comment of Hugh of St Victor in his commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* that *theologia* is about the works of restoration.[52] The *Summa* actively promotes *theologia* as relating to the history of salvation, the foundation of which is the teaching of Scripture. The price of its promotion of *theologia* was that it threatened to undermine the philosophical emphasis of *theologia* as about the unseen God, and as the foundation of metaphysical enquiry.

St Thomas Aquinas", in *The Thomist* 79 (2015), pp. 239–266; see also Olszewski, Mikołaj: "Beginning of the Discussion of Practical or Theoretical Character of Theology: The Positions of Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great and Giles of Rome", in *Studia Mediewistyczne* 34–35 (2000), pp. 129–146.

47 *Summa Halensis* [*Summa Fratris Alexandri*] I, tract. intro., q. 1, c. 1, ad obi. 2 & 4 and c. 2, quaestio, eds. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 6 vols., Quaracchi 1924–1979, vol. 1, pp. 3–4.

48 *Summa Halensis* I, tract. intro., q. 1, c. 2, ad obi. 1–4, ed. Quaracchi, p. 5: "Ad obiecta autem respondendum hoc modo: quoniam doctrina sacra dicitur divina seu theologica, quia a Deo et de Deo et ductiva ad Deum. 'A Deo': quod convenit aliis scientiis, sed tamen non hoc modo convenit sacrae Scripturae. In aliis vero scientiis, speculativis scilicet, est acceptio veri ut veri et etiam boni ut veri; in practicis autem moralibus, etsi sit acceptio veri ut boni, non tamen ut boni gratuiti, sed moralis: unde non dicuntur editae a Spiritu Sancto. Item, 'de Deo' dicitur esse ista scientia et non sicut aliae scientiae, velut Prima Philosophia, quia non agunt de Deo secundum mysterium Trinitatis vel secundum sacramentum humanae reparationis. Item, 'ductiva ad Deum': per principium timoris et amoris ex fide misericordiae et iustitiae Dei; quod non convenit alicui ex aliis scientiis. Et per hoc patet solutio ad obiecta."

49 The classic study of this theme by Chenu, Marie-Dominique: *La théologie comme science au XIIIe siècle*, Paris ^{3}1969, an expanded version of an article of that title first published in 1927, presents Thomas Aquinas as a key figure in this development, but without awareness of the *Summa Halensis*.

50 See above n. 38.

51 *Summa Halensis* I, tract. intro., q. 1, c. 1, sed contra b, ed. Quaracchi, p. 2: "Item Augustinus XIV *De trinitate*: Theologia est scientia quae est in rebus que ad salutem hominis pertinent; ergo est scientia." In fact this is a free summary of Augustinus Hipponensis: *De Trinitate* 14.1, ed. W. Mountain (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 50A), Turnhout 1968, pp. 423–424.

52 *Summa Halensis* I, tract. intro., q. 1, c. 2, sed contra d, ed. Quaracchi, p. 5: "Theologia vero est de operibus reparationis."

The sheer size of the *Summa Halensis* created problems to which both Bonaventure and Thomas wished to respond, but in different ways. In his *Sentences* commentary, Bonaventure expressed reverence for his teacher, Alexander, arguing that *theologia* was about both God and creation.[53] He was here building on the claim of the *Summa* that symbolic *theologia* names God through creation.[54] In his *Breviloquium*, from the mid 1250s, Bonaventure appeals to Dionysius to support his emphasis on holy Scripture "which is called *theologia*".[55] Yet while Bonaventure had absorbed from Alexander and Hugh of Saint-Victor a strong interest in the Dionysian triad of the purgative, illuminative and perfective paths to God (from the *Celestial Hierarchy*), he never cites the Dionysian triad of speaking about God through causality, negation and eminence.[56] Bonaventure was more interested in relating what Scripture had to say about experience than in reflections of Dionysius about what could and could not be said of God. In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure starts to use the phrase *sacra doctrina* as relating not just to God, but to six other themes in the history of salvation, presented by Scripture.[57]

Albert the Great's decision in the later 1240s to create the first detailed commentary on the Dionysian corpus challenged the limited presentation of Dionysius within the *Summa Halensis*. Albert never uses the phrase *sacra doctrina* in his own *Sentences* commentary (as distinct from *doctrina sacrae scripturae*). He subsequently mentions it only occasionally in later works.[58] If anything, Thomas, who

[53] Bonaventura: *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum* I, d. 1, diuisio textus & dubium 6, eds. PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura: *Opera omnia 1–4,* Quaracchi 1882–1889, vol. 1, p. 29 & 43: "quia cum theologia sit de Creatore et de creaturis." On his debt to Alexander, see *Sent.* II, praelocutio 1–2, ed Quaracchi, vol. 2, pp. 1–2 and *ibid.,* d. 23, a. 2, q. 3 concl., p. 457.

[54] *Summa Halensis* I.2, inq. 1 q. 1.2.2 num. 335, ed. Quaracchi, p. 495: "symbolica autem Theologia nominat Deum 'per creaturas exteriores'."

[55] Bonaventura: *Breviloquium*, prol., eds. PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura: *Opera omnia 5*, Quaracchi 1891, pp. 201–291: 201: "Magnus doctor gentium et praedicator veritatis divino repletus spiritu tanquam vas electum et sanctificatum in hoc verbo aperit sacrae scripturae quae theologia dicitur."

[56] Dionysius Areopagita: *De caelesti hierarchia*, ed. Philippe Chevallier: *Dionysiaca. Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopage*, 2 vols., Bruges/Paris 1937–1951, vol. 1, pp. 794–795 and 880.

[57] Bonaventura *Breviloquium* 1, c. 1, ed. Quaracchi, p. 210: "In principio intelligendum est quod sacra doctrina videlicet theologia quae principaliter agit de primo principio scilicet de deo trino et uno de septem agit in universo scilicet primo de trinitate dei secundo de creatura mundi tertio de corruptela peccati quarto de incarnatione verbi quinto de gratia spiritus sancti sexto de medicina sacramentali et septimo de statu finalis iudicii." *Sacra doctrina* is mentioned on three further occasions in *Breviloquium* 1, c. 3 & 7, and 2, c. 9. It also occurs in certain early works, including *Commentarius in euangelium sancti Lucae* 18:17.32 and 22:12.15–16, eds. PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura: *Opera omnia 7,* Quaracchi 1895, p. 460 and p. 544.

[58] Albertus Magnus: *Super Marcum* 3:16–17, ed. Borgnet: *Opera omnia* 21, Paris 1894, pp. 339–806: 404a: "et guttae lucentes, in nocte ignorantiae hujus mundi in sacra doctrina distillant a cincinnis, hoc est, a Doctoribus et Praelatis, qui dependent ab hoc capite"; *id.: Summa theologiae* I, tract. 1, q. 3, m. 3 ed. Borgnet: *Opera omnia 31–33,* Paris 1894–1895, vol. 31, p. 18a: "In contrarium hujus videtur esse, quod sacra doctrina est de Deo et operibus ejus, in quibus opus nostrum non requiritur, sed requiritur verum quod est in eis. In

followed Albert's lectures on Dionysius, was certainly aware of the limitations of the *Summa Halensis*, but responded to it in a way that was quite different from his teacher. While it was essential for him to discuss whether theologia was a science, he would gradually become more aware of the difficulties of simply identifying it with *sacra doctrina*.

4. Thomas Aquinas and Dionysius

The table (fig. 15.2) of the relative citation of various authors highlights the dramatic increase by Thomas in citations of Dionysius as compared to Augustine in his *Sentences* commentary (44%). This increase is remarkable given that Augustine's writings are so much more prolific than those attributed to the Areopagite. Whereas Bonaventure focused on God's action in the world, Thomas was excited by Dionysius as a philosopher, able to speak about what can and cannot be said about God's nature, the proper subject matter of *theologia*, according to both Dionysius and John of Damascus.

In his *Sentences* commentary, Thomas went further than Albert in the relative attention which he devoted to the *De orthodoxa fide* of John of Damascus. The ratio of Thomas's references to John of Damascus as compared to Augustine jumps to 67%, whereas this ratio had been just 18% for Albert the Great. In Thomas's *Sentences* commentary. Thomas was fascinated by John's celebration of humanity and its capacities, so different from Augustine, who dwells on human weakness. Even more than Alexander, Thomas recognized that John's great value was to provide a systematic overview of the teaching of Scripture, relating to both *theologia* and God's action towards the world. Thomas was aware of the philosophical meaning of *theologia* as metaphysical inquiry. He thus emphasizes that its role is to lead humanity to contemplate God.[59] He knows the claim, spuriously attributed to Augustine in the *Summa Halensis* that *theologia* pertains to human salvation, but emphasizes that it is primarily speculative, focusing on God.[60] In his *Sentences* commentary, Thomas repeats the inaccurate claim (repeating Albert), that Peter Lombard had claimed that all *theologia* is about things or signs of things. Thomas's response is that the works of restoration (to use Hugh of St Victor's phrase) are not properly the subject of 'this discipline, but only in so far as they relate to God.'[61] Thomas resolves this tension by dis-

omnibus autem practicis sive liberalibus sive mechanicis opus nostrum requiritur: videtur ergo, quod haec scientia sit theorica et non practica." On *doctrina sacrae scripturae* see also *id.: Sent.* I, d. 1A, art. 6, ed. Borgnet: *Opera omnia 25–30*, Paris 1893–1894, vol. 25, p. 20.

[59] Thomas de Aquino: *Sent.* I, prol. 1, art. 1, co., ed. Oliva 2006, pp. 302–340: 313: "Vnde oportet ut ea que sunt ad finem proportionentur fini, quatenus homo manuducatur ad illam contemplationem in statu uie per cognitionem non a creaturis sumptam, sed immediate ex diuino lumine inspiratam. Et hec est doctrina theologie."

[60] Thomas de Aquino *Sent.* I, prol., a. 3, ed. Oliva, p. 320: "Set quia scientia omnis principaliter pensanda est ex fine, finis autem ultimus istius doctrine est contemplatio prime ueritatis in patria, ideo principaliter speculatiua est."

[61] Thomas de Aquino *Sent.* I, prol., a. 4, ed. Oliva, p. 326: "Set tota intentio theologie uersatur circa res et signa, ut dicit Magister Sententiarum." This repeats Albertus Magnus *Sent.*

tinguishing between two meanings of *theologia*, one to do with contemplating the divine, the other with the narrative of salvation. Inspired by Albert, Thomas seeks to combine Aristotelian awareness of physical reality with what Dionysius had said about the three ways of knowing God, through causality, negation and 'eminence' or transcendence.[62]

In the *Summa contra gentiles*, completed in Viterbo in the early 1260s, Thomas experimented with a radical shift in method, reserving its first three books to arguments from reason alone. He considered the authority of Scripture in its fourth book. Patristic references are rare, but he mentions Dionysius 43 times, as compared to 37 for Augustine (a ratio of 116%). Perhaps what is most remarkable in the *Summa contra gentiles* is that he never uses the term *theologia*–apart from a single reference to the *Mystica theologia* of Dionysius.[63] This suggests that in the *Contra gentiles* he wanted to experiment with a radical departure from the vocabulary and intellectual concerns at the University of Paris, as articulated in the *Summa Halensis*. Thomas presented his inquiry as *scientia veritatis*, the knowledge of truth.[64] His decision to produce a commentary on the *De divinis nominibus*, most likely after completing the *Contra gentiles* provided an opportunity to deepen his familiarity with its argument. While he had previously assumed that Dionysius almost everywhere followed Aristotle, he now recognized that Dionysius's teaching was closer to that of the Platonists.[65] It is of interest that when he returned to comment a second time on the first book of the *Sentences* in his Roman period (later 1260s), he radically reduced the number of patristic citations (quoting Augustine just 52 times, against 13 citations of Dionysius). As if recognizing the weakness of avoiding patristic citations in the *Contra gentiles*, Thomas realized that he had to revert to a more familiar method of combining arguments from reason and authority, without being as ponderous and wordy as the *Summa Halensis*.

I, d. 1A, a. 1, ed. Borgnet, vol. 25, p. 14. It may pick up on *Summa Halensis* I, tract. intro., q. 1, c. 3, sed contra 5, ed. Quaracchi, vol. 1, p. 6: "Item, res de quibus agit Theologia, secundum Augustinum, sunt res quibus fruendum, quibusque utendum, quae fruuntur et utuntur; sed sub iis comprehenditur omne genus rerum; ergo Theologia est de omnibus."

62 Ewbank, Michael B.: "Diverse orderings of Dionysius's Triplex via by St. Thomas Aquinas", in *Mediaeval Studies* 52 (1990), pp. 82–109.

63 Thomas de Aquino *SCG* III, c. 49.2270, ed. Pera, vol. 3, p. 67a.

64 Thomas de Aquino *SCG* I, c.1.5, ed. Pera, vol. 2, p. 2b: "Sed et primam philosophiam philosophus determinat esse scientiam veritatis; non cuiuslibet, sed eius veritatis quae est origo omnis veritatis, scilicet quae pertinet ad primum principium essendi omnibus; unde et sua veritas est omnis veritatis principium; sic enim est dispositio rerum in veritate sicut in esse."

65 Thomas de Aquino: *Sent.* II, d. 14, q. 1, a. 2, co., ed. Pierre Mandonnet, Paris 1929, p. 350: "Dionysius autem fere ubique sequitur Aristotelem, ut patet diligenter inspicienti libros ejus: unde ipse separat corpora caelestia ab aliis corporibus." *Id.*: *In Dionysii de divinis nominibus* c. 5, l. 1.606, ed. Ceslas Pera, Turin/Rome 1950, p. 231a: "Postquam Dionysius tractavit de bono in 4° capitulo, hic in 5° determinat de ente; de quo determinat primum post bonum, quia bonum quodammodo ad plura se extendit, ut Platonici dixerunt."

5. The Summa '*theologiae*'

As I argued at the outset, there is no evidence that Thomas ever described his final *Summa* as 'of theology'. He opens the work by discussing *sacra doctrina*, not *theologia*, a term that surfaces only three times in the *prima pars*, excluding two references to the *De mystica theologia* of Dionysius, and five times in the rest of the work.[66] Thomas acknowledges that *theologia*, which pertained to sacred teaching, differed in kind from that which was a part of philosophy, but never expands on that former sense.[67] Thomas is determined to emphasise that all things come from and return to God, but he reserves *theologia* for the way in which it was understood by Dionysius, as contemplative reflection on the divine. He makes the same point in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*.[68] While Thomas could not avoid speaking about *theologia* in the way it was commonly used as a short-hand term for sacred teaching, he was keen to preserve the teaching of Dionysius about the limitations of language.[69] As he observed in his commentary on Isaiah, what Aristotle calls metaphysics, we call *theologia*.[70] Yet wherever possible, he avoids the term, to avoid confusion in its meaning.

The practice of calling this work the *Summa theologiae* goes back, I would argue, to the discourse of booksellers, who in turn simply reflected popular usage. The philosophical reflection of the *Secunda pars* about human behaviour could more accurately be called sacred teaching rather than specifically Christian teaching. The practice of referring to his unfinished project as the *Summa theologiae* encourages the misleading impression that he considered *theologia* to refer to the full range of Christian teaching, when it was in fact contemplative rather than argumentative in nature. While he is quite aware of this broader sense, Thomas prefers to see *theologia* strictly as *sermo de Deo*, to be approached as Dionysius advised, through considering causality, negation and eminence (most often, but not always in that sequence).[71] By referring so much more to *sacra doctrina* in his *Summa* than to *theologia*, Thomas found a way of balancing

[66] Thomas de Aquino *ST* I, q. 1, prooemium, ed. Leonina 4, p. 6a: "Et ut intentio nostra sub aliquibus certis limitibus comprehendatur, necessarium est primo investigare de ipsa sacra doctrina, quae sit, qualis sit, et ad quae se extendat."

[67] Thomas de Aquino *ST* I, q. 1, a. 1, ad arg. 2, ed. Leonina 4, p. 7b: "Unde theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet, differt secundum genus ab illa theologia quae pars philosophiae ponitur."

[68] Thomas de Aquino: *In Aristotelis libros Metaphysicorum* 6, l.1.1168, ed. Raimondo Spiazzi, Turin/Rome ²1971, p. 298 "Honorabilissima scientia est circa honorabilissimum genus entium, in quo continentur res divinae: ergo, cum haec scientia sit honorabilissima inter omnes, quia est honorabilior theoricis, ut prius ostensum est, quae quidem sunt honorabiliores practicis, ut in primo libro habitum est, manifestum est, quod ista scientia est circa res divinas; et ideo dicitur theologia, quasi sermo de divinis."

[69] For example, Thomas de Aquino: *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem* 2, c. 3, co., ed. Leonina 41A, Rome 1970, p. 79: "Ut in singulis Ecclesiis metropolitanis essent aliqui qui theologiam docerent."

[70] Thomas de Aquino: *Expositio super Isaiam ad litteram* 3, ed. Leonina 28, Rome 1974, p. 26a: "et hec secundum Philosophum est metaphysica, et secundum nos theologia."

[71] Thomas de Aquino *ST* I, q. 1, a. 7, sed contra: "Sed in hac scientia fit sermo de Deo, dicitur enim theologia, quasi sermo de Deo. Ergo Deus est subiectum huius scientiae."

the discussion of the history of salvation with the highest level of contemplative reflection. Whereas the *Summa Halensis* began by discussing *theologia*, Thomas now opens his final *Summa* with a discussion of *sacra doctrina*.

6. Conclusion

By referring to Thomas's *Summa 'theologiae'*, we can be seduced into thinking that he thought of *theologia* in the modern sense of the word, as meaning sacred teaching about a wide range of subjects. In fact, he was conscious that *theologia* had different meanings for different people. In his early *Sentences* commentary, Thomas had been much concerned with debating whether *theologia* was a science, a theme first raised in a major way by the *Summa Halensis*. In the *Summa contra gentiles*, he realized that the word *theologia* was not necessary to explain his teaching. The only authority that mattered was that of Scripture. His final *Summa* may have been described as "of theology" by the booksellers, who knew the word through its common use in university circles, not because they were following an instruction from Thomas himself. By this time, Thomas's particular interest was in expanding the notion of *sacra doctrina*, first used in the opening of the *Summa Halensis*. The phrase referred to the teaching of sacred Scripture, mediated in a range of ways, including through the Church. "Sacred teaching" may seem to offer only a slight revision of what Augustine called *doctrina christiana*, but it had the advantage of embracing a wide range of teachings from a range of sources, not just about God.

Not everybody agreed with Thomas's more philosophical perspective on *theologia*. Bonaventure was perhaps the most articulate spokesman for a contrary view, when he referred at the opening of his *Breviloquium* to "sacred Scripture which is called *theologia*" and then "Scripture or *theologia*" as providing knowledge about the foundation of all things. In this, Bonaventure was loyal to the teaching of Alexander, even if he went much further in speaking about knowing God through personal experience. The vigor of the criticisms of Thomas's arguments in the *Summa* preserved in the Franciscan *correctoria* of his writings alert us to the remarkable novelty of what Thomas was doing. He did not succeed in quelling argument about how Christian teaching should be presented in practice.[72] Nonetheless, the freedom with which Thomas thought he could experiment in presenting sacred teaching can still provoke our wonder and respect. His final *Summa* still provokes admiration for its willingness both to engage with tradition, and to offer new directions. In that process, the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite played a key role in showing both the contribution and the limitations of what one could say about God.

[72] See above n. 2.