



Medieval Mystical Theology

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/ymmt20

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To cite this article: Duane Williams (2024) An Introduction from the Editor of *Medieval Mystical Theology*, *Medieval Mystical Theology*, 33:1, 1-2, DOI: [10.1080/20465726.2024.2334615](https://doi.org/10.1080/20465726.2024.2334615)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20465726.2024.2334615>



Published online: 22 May 2024.



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When the trustees of The Eckhart Society first conceived the idea of the journal, *Medieval Mystical Theology*, they envisioned it being both scholarly and international. It heartens me that each issue of MMT achieves that aim, with this current issue being no exception. Reading the four essays, I was struck by the quality of scholarship and expertise, as well as the passion each author has for their subject. The international significance is also increasingly apparent in that while many of our authors are based in Europe, in this issue, one is in Australia, and the other three in America. This global reach also pertains to the journal's readership. For this, I would like to thank the efforts of those working for the journal's publishers, and the trustees of The Eckhart Society, particularly, Father Michael Demkovich. I am also pleased that the journal not only attracts submissions from established, well-respected scholars, but also studies from emerging scholars, especially those undertaking doctoral research. You will see that the essays in this issue are studies of four different Christian mystics, namely, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Gregory of Nyssa, St Bonaventure, and John Scottus Eriugena. But while the topics are unique and varied, the essays themselves are united in their different ways by the common theme of hermeneutics.

The first essay by Chloe Anastasia is titled, 'Union and Estrangement: The Dynamics of Presence in *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*.' Here, three moments of the articulation of desire for the union with God are explored in Mechthild of Magdeburg's *Flowing Light*. We learn that the Soul's erotic desire for God comprises different stages of movement in a complex relation – all of which are significant. The focus on the unity between God and the Soul does not simply culminate in a complete identity of the Soul with God. This is because the erotic tension of desire remains, on account of the Soul returning to the body. Accordingly, separation and absence are as important as union and presence. Moreover, this individual relation between God and the Soul discloses God's and the Soul's more communal or social love for others. Thus, a greater, more dynamic understanding of love (and experience of love) is brought to bear. Consequently, in the dynamic of union and estrangement, the significance of the body's pain and suffering come to the fore, in turn enriching our understanding and experience of love.

The essay by Noah Karger is titled, 'The Mystical and Moral in Gregory of Nyssa: Recovering a Critical Link.' Karger's essay seeks to show how in the Christian context the mystical and moral are not complete without the other, and how furthermore each should interpenetrate the other. To illustrate this notion at work, he explores Gregory of Nyssa's, *Life of Moses*. Helpfully, Karger explains why the separation between the two has occurred. He also discusses what the consequences of the moral without the mystical are in terms of the diminished significance of moral theology. Looking at how the mystical and moral are brought together in Gregory's *Life of Moses*, Karger first focuses on the concept of *epektasis* – in the sense of eternal progress. Karger's next step examines the significance of the anagoric in Gregory's *Life*, and we learn how *epektasis* and the anagoric are connected in respect of their being the consequence of one another, thus further informing the interpenetration of

the mystical and moral. From here, Karger further expounds these respective interpretations of *epektasis* and anagogy within the context of the three theophanies of Moses, namely, the burning bush, the cloud atop Sinai, and the back of God. Accordingly, we learn that each provides progressively deeper ways of seeing and following God.

The essay by Nathan S. Lefler is titled, ‘Learning to Read: The Metaphysical Structure and Meaning of *Lectio* in St. Bonaventure’s *Incendium Amoris* (1259-60).’ Drawing on the Christian Tradition of *lectio divina* or divine reading, Lefler explores where St. Bonaventure’s understanding of *lectio* stands given that the nature of reading changed between the 11th and 13th centuries. This fascinating essay not only examines different levels of reading in relation to meditation, prayer, and contemplation, but also considers the significance of reading from different perspectives, or what we might (reluctantly) call methodological approaches; these being: the historical, the hermeneutical, and the metaphysical. Reading this text *about* reading, left me asking myself a series of questions, such as: What is it to read? What does reading involve? What does reading achieve? What happens to you when you read? And even, to satisfy those who are inclined towards later critical theory or philosophical hermeneutics, what constitutes the text? Given its complexity, I would suggest that this essay rewards a slow or further readings.

Finally, the essay by Connor Ritchie is titled, ‘Reading John Scottus Eriugena’s *Carmina* as Devotional Poetry.’ Ritchie tells us that Eriugena’s poems in the collection called *Carmina* have tended to be interpreted through a courtly and political lens, when foremost they should be read as theological and devotional in nature. Accordingly, they are more about Christ than Eriugena’s patron, the king, Charles the Bald. Ritchie goes on to examine three poems from the *Carmina* to show how on one hand theological themes frame political ones, and on the other, to show how they reinforce the theological themes central to Eriugena’s masterpiece, the *Periphyseon*. Furthermore, four reasons are given for why the poems should be read as devotional. The first of the poems examined focuses on the significance of deification. The second takes the symbol of the cross as its main theme, as well as Christ’s harrowing of hell. The final poem, the most philosophical of all Eriugena’s poems, explores the mystery of the incarnation. And from here, Ritchie discusses the theological significance of the incarnation for Eriugena in connection with his arguments in the *Periphyseon*. As a result, Nicene Trinitarianism and Dionysian apophaticism are shown to be of utmost importance to Eriugena’s Christology.

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