Chapter 1

A Brief Genealogy of "Philosophical Theology"[1]

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In this chapter, I hope to give a cursory "genealogy" of the origins of "philosophical theology".[2] Indeed, since the phrase "philosophical theology" is not self-explanatory, and the historical relationship between both "theology" and "philosophy" is an entwined, albeit contested one, it seems beneficial to situate the discussion in this volume within this broader context before commencing with our more contextual focus. Indeed, the relationship between theology and philosophy as a historical and principled interaction is long and complex. Here, I make no claim to adequate comprehensiveness; rather, broad indications are given based on some of the scholarship available.[3] As is widely known, early Christianity drew upon Greco-Roman philosophy in its apologetic and doctrinal development.[4] Early Christianity absorbed an already Hellenised context of Second Temple Judaism, exemplified by the Septuagint and Philo of Alexandria.

1 A shortened version of this chapter also appeared as a section of "Philosophical Theology in South Africa?" *Journal of Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, no.3 (2022): 1-60. Parts of it however have been substantially revised for this book.

2 By "genealogy," I am indicating some dependence on forms of historicism that impress the contingency of knowledge formations, that certain ways of thinking become possible through historical and linguistic configurations; see, for example, Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan-Smith (London: Routledge, 1989).

3 See Jan Rohls, *Philosophie und Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

4 The literature on this question is extensive, but a helpful account of the early Christian approach to philosophy can be found in Hubertus R. Drobner, "Christian Philosophy," in Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 672–690.

In the earliest stages of its development, Paul the Apostle taught an apocalyptic relativising of "the wisdom of the world" through the Christ-event.[5] For him, the logic of cross and resurrection, and God's election of "the weak things of the world" overturns the ancient standards of philosophical acumen through spiritual wisdom (1 Cor.1:17–2.16, cf. Col.2:8). Nonetheless, the critical consensus on the New Testament has established that Paul's theology draws upon philosophical categories, including Jewish, Stoic, and Platonic traditions.[6] We should add, especially after the seminal work of Pierre Hadot, that "philosophy" in late antiquity was much more expansive and holistic than our modern categories suggest. Ancient philosophy was understood as a comprehensive way of life,[7] and so by proposing a distinct philosophical option, early Christians – when they appropriated the language of "philosophy" positively – were demanding nothing less than an alternative pattern of being-in-the-world, covering many things that would not traditionally be considered under "philosophy" by moderns.

Because of this, any hard categorical divisions of "philosophy" and "theology" should be approached carefully within pre-modern intellectual traditions; for as is well-known, Christianity by many was considered the *verissima philosophia* (Augustine)[8] or τὴν ἀληθῆ φιλοσοφία (Clement of Alexandria).[9] Some, like Tatian and Tertullian, were opposed to philosophy as such, due its pagan origins – hence the latter's famous

5 See L. L. Welborn, *Paul's Summons to Messianic Life: Political Theology and the Coming Awakening* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

6 Stanley K. Stowers, "The Apostle Paul," in Graham Oppy and N.N. Trakakis (eds.), *Ancient Philosophy of Religion: The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2014), 145–157; Stowers, "Paul and the Terrain of Philosophy." *Early Christianity* 6 (2015):141–156. Paul's speech in the Areopagus also demonstrates something of his perceived engagement with ancient philosophers and pagan metaphysics (cf. Acts 17.16–34). The Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews are also widely recognised as drawing upon Hellenistic Judaism, Platonism, and Stoicism.

7 Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002).

8 *Against the Academics* 3.19.42.7.

9 *Stromateis* 2.11.48.1

query about what Athens had to do with Jerusalem; but their position would not ultimately win out, and even they ascribed "philosophy" to Christianity.[10] In fact, the title of "philosophy" was by far the preferred option for early Christians, while "theology" could often be used pejoratively.[11] θεολογία was initially a pagan term that first appeared in Plato[12] and was later connected to philosophy by Aristotle,[13] as well as within the Stoic division of philosophy.[14] θεολογία is often spoken about as something below philosophy and as counterpoised to scientific knowledge. It initially was linked to those who spoke poetically about the gods or divine things. Augustine, in *De civitate dei*, drawing from Marius Varro, distinguished between three kinds of theology, namely the "mythical" theology of the poets (e.g., Hesiod, Homer), the "natural" or "physical" theology of the philosophers (e.g., Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Epicurus), and the "civil" or "political" theology of the city, that is, the worship of the pantheon as mediated by the priestly class.[15] Of these options, it is the second one that Augustine considers most open to the title "theology," while the other options were considered religiously and soteriologically insufficient. The theology of the philosophers provided a somewhat distinct option insofar as it engaged in a

10 See Tertullian's (in)famous denunciation of philosophy in *The Prescription of Heretics* VII and *Apology* XLVI.

11 On this question in general, see the entries by Jean-Ives Lacoste on "Philosophy" and "Theology" in Jean-Ives Lacoste (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, *Vol. 3* (London: Routledge, 2005), 1234–1240; 1554–1562 resp.

12 *Republic* 379a

13 *Metaphysics* E 1025a19: "ὥστε τρεῖς ἂν εἶεν φιλοσοφίαι θεωρητικαί, μαθηματική, φυσική, θεολογική"; also cf. K 1064b3; W.D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924 (repr. 1970 [of 1953 corr. edn.]).

14 On Cleanthes division of philosophy, see *Diogenes Laërtius* 7.41.

15 *De civitate dei*, VI.5. Referencing Varro, he writes "Deinde illud qu le est, quod tria genera theologiae dicit esse, id est rationis quae de diis explicatur, eorumque unum mythicon appeflari, alterum physicon, tertium civile?" (VI.5.17-19). Later he substitutes "physical theology" for "natural theology", again in relation to Varro's contestation of the "fabulous" theology of the poets: "Loquebalur enim non de naturali theologia, non de civili, sed de fabulosa, quam libere a se putavit esse culpandam" (VI.5.7-9); *Sancti Aurelii uepiscopi de civitate dei, vol. 1: lib. I-xiii*, eds. Bernardus Dombart and Alfonsus Kalb (Stuttgart and Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1993).

critique of pagan superstition. Augustine especially mentions Socrates and the Platonists as moving pagan philosophy towards a deeper concern for moral questions; it thus was singled out as the closest to Christianity and therefore the most profitable for dialogue.[16] However, pagan philosophy was still restricted insofar as it remained within the worship of the pantheon and not the one God, even as they performed the amiable work of rationalising and demythologisation.[17] In the end, the true philosopher for Augustine is the lover of God and divine wisdom, concerned with true worship, so that *verissima philosophia* is ultimately that way of life which leads the creature towards the love of divine truth.[18]

Philosophy and theology, in their Christian and pagan forms, were thus related and intermingled from early on. This is one reason why the phraseology of "Christian philosophy" or "philosophical theology" is fraught with hermeneutical challenges, especially when considering the complex attitude exhibited by early Christian thinkers towards both philosophy *and* theology – precisely because of their mutual pagan linkages. Much like other philosophical schools, Christian philosophy patterned itself as a way of life, complete with distinctive identity markers, spiritual practices, texts, and doctrines.[19] In this regard, some do query whether early Christianity developed a thoroughgoing philosophical programme of its own (e.g., the Academy of Athens), particularly after the collapse of the School of Alexandria.[20] There was simply too much diversity to for it be organised within a unified philosophical school, as already recognised by Origen.[21] The idea of a single "Christian philosophy" is therefore questionable. Others, like Pierre Hadot, have argued that Christianity undermined the ancient practice of philosophy,

16 *De civitate dei*, VIII.3-15.
17 *De civitate dei*, VII.5ff.
18 *De civitate dei*, VIII.1.
19 Johannes Zachhuber, "Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity: Some Reflections on Concepts and Terminologies," in Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides and Ken Parry (eds.), *Eastern Christianity and Late Antique Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 52–77.
20 Winrich Löhr, "Christianity as Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives of an Ancient Intellectual Project." *Vigiliae Christianae* 64.2 (2010): 160–188.
21 Cf. *Contra Celsum* III.12

exemplified by the closing of the Academy in 529 CE by Justinian, and further by the later intellectualising of philosophy during the medieval period. However, research also confirms that ideas addressed and appropriated by theologians in the early intellectual development of Christianity touched on analogous themes to pagan philosophers, thus strengthening the idea that they were engaging in a comparable intellectual project (with all due differences acknowledged).[22]

In terms of phraseology, John Chrysostom is credited with coining the term "Christian philosophy" (Χριστιανικῆς φιλοσοφίας) in his *Homilia in Kalendas*, by which he intended a way of life in distinction from the pagan and Hellenic pattern.[23] Still, early Christian philosophers like Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen appropriated and thereby transformed pagan thought within their theological systems. With strong connections to the Stoics, they imagined philosophy as implying true knowledge, as being a union of the theoretical and the practical, and as a pathway to happiness.[24] For Justin, philosophy is "'the knowledge of that which exists, and a clear understanding of the truth," with happiness being its final orientation.[25] Famously, he believed that the σπέρματα αληθείας are given to all,[26] and that philosophy was given to human beings by God.[27] Again, Socrates is singled out as having anticipated Christianity through a recognition of the Logos, and thus Christ himself.[28] Origen defined philosophy

22 George Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Durham: Acumen, 2013).

23 John Chrysostom, *Homilia in Kalendas* (PG 48:956). For this, see H.M. Schmidinger, "Philosophie, christliche," in Karlfried Gründer (ed.), *Philosophie in der Geschichte ihres Begriffs: Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschafliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), 8868–87. On the idea of Christian philosophy as a *vita philosophica*, see Jean-Yves Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, trans. W. Chris Hackett (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 1–29.

24 Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity*, 48–59.

25 *Dialogue with Trypho* 3.5. Translation taken from St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. Thomas B. Falls (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

26 *First Apology* 44.10

27 *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.1ff.

28 *Second Apology* 10.8

as that which "professes to possess the truth" and that this "knowledge of realities instructs us how we ought to live."[29] He envisaged Christian philosophy as a spiritual understanding of scripture, including the law, the prophets, and the gospels;[30] for him, "anyone who constructs a Christian philosophy will need to argue the truth of his doctrines with proofs of all kinds, taken both from the divine scriptures and from rational arguments."[31] He suggested parallel developments amongst the Hebrews and the Greeks regarding the divisions of knowledge into ethics, physics, and epoptics, mirrored in the biblical curricula of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, respectively dealing with morals, the natural world, and theology – with "logic" interwoven through all of the disciplines.[32] Clement, for his part, envisaged Greek philosophy as a fruit of divine providence which anticipated the truth of Christianity by leading the Greeks into righteousness. He defines philosophy as "a form of the practice of wisdom" insofar as "wisdom is the scientific understanding of things divine, things human, and their causes." As such, it is a practice which is subordinate to "wisdom," which exercises "authority" over it. Much like the history of Israel and the Mosaic law, philosophy was a guardian for the Greeks as the law was for the Hebrews. For Clement, there might be only one path to truth, but there are many tributaries flowing into one eternal river of divine wisdom.[33] All these thinkers, however, considered pagan philosophy to be inadequate and inferior to Christian teaching – being dependent on Moses and the prophets who preceded them – and that Christianity therefore provided a more reliable form of philosophy than its Greco-Roman alternatives. In response to this, pagan philosophers, especially Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Proclus, and Iamblichus, were in turn influenced by Christianity, and sought to provide a sophisticated pagan

29 *Contra Celsum* III.12. Translation taken from Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).
30 *Contra Celsum* 1.9.
31 *Contra Celsum* IV.9
32 *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, prologue 3.1
33 *Stromateis* 1.5.28–32. Translation from Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis: Books One to Three*, trans. John Ferguson (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991).

alternative by way of an elaborate metaphysics, Platonic theology, and ritual theurgy.[34] These traditions were in turn taken up in the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius and the Cappadocians, and thereafter disseminated into the medieval period via Boethius, John Scotus Eriugena and Thomas Aquinas. It is through Christian Neoplatonism that the scriptural mysteries of symbols and revelation were merged with orders of scientific knowledge and demonstration, so that both theology and philosophy were now thematically joined; theology now becomes a reasoned reflection that deciphers the divine reasons hidden within the symbols of holy scripture, approaching a "theological science" in the spirit of Aristotle.[35]

Detailing the medieval understandings of the relationship between philosophy and theology is simply beyond what can be achieved here. But one can mention that revisionist historians of medieval philosophy like John Inglis have questioned whether the major thinkers of this epoch – such as Aquinas, Scotus, or Ockham – should even be classified as philosophers, thus destabilising a genealogy that imposes divisions between reason and revelation that were not necessarily pertinent for all medieval theologians.[36] In general, philosophy was used as an aid to theology, apologetics, and the exegesis of scripture, even as it was subordinated to sacred doctrine – under the medieval regime of *philosophia ancilla theologiae*.[37] In distinction from early Christianity and the monastic context, philosophy as a discipline gradually came to be distinguished from theology within the burgeoning medieval university, understood more as intellectual technique than a way

34 See Kevin Corrigan, "Pagan and Christian Philosophy: Plotinus, Iamblichus and Christian Philosophical Practice," in Mark Edwards (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Early Christian Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2021), 293–312.

35 Olivier Boulnois, "The Concept of Theology," in Alexander J.B. Hampton and John Peter Kenney (eds.), *Christian Platonism: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 101–121.

36 John Inglis, "Philosophical Autonomy and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 5.1 (1997): 21–53.

37 Malcolm De Mowbray, "Philosophy as Handmaid of Theology: Biblical Exegesis in the Service of Scholarship." *Traditio* 59 (2004): 1–37.

of living.[38] Famously, Thomas Aquinas argued for the distinction of metaphysics and theology: on the one side, philosophical metaphysics began with the knowledge of creatures and thereafter moved towards God (e.g., *kalām,* the Five Ways), from the *ens commune* to the *Ipsum Esse subistens* – a gesture framed overall by the principle of analogy and the *via negativa.* On the other side, sacred doctrine moved from the knowledge of God towards the creature (e.g., revelation, the sacred scriptures). Aquinas himself was influenced by Neo-Platonist currents of a Procelan and Pseudo-Dionysian theory of "intensive being,"[39] mediated also by Arabic sources[40] (e.g., Ibn-Rushd,[41] *Liber de Causis*[42]), as seen in his accounts of ontological participation and causality:[43]

> the philosopher takes his argument from the proper causes of things; the believer, from the first cause…the teaching of philosophy, which considers creatures in themselves and leads us from them to the knowledge of God, the first consideration is about creatures; the last, of God. But in the teaching of faith, which considers creatures only in their relation to God, the consideration of God comes first, that

38 Cf. Lacoste, "Philosophy," 1234–1238.

39 Fran O'Rourke, "Virtus Essendi: Intensive Being in Pseudo-Dionysius and Aquinas." *Dionysius* 15 (1991): 31–80. Aquinas had read the Latin translation of the *Elements* by William of Moerbeke ; Carlos Steel, "William of Moerbeke, translator of Proclus," in Stephen Gersh (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus: From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 247-263.

40 Richard C. Taylor, "Aquinas, the *Plotiniana Arabica*, and the Metaphysics of Being and Actuality." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59.2 (1998): 217–239.

41 Olivier Boulnois, *Être et représentation: Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne a l'époque de Duns Scot (XIIIe -XIVe siècle).* Épiméthée (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 328-339.

42 For a summary of the Proclean trajectory of this text, see Cristina D'Ancona, 'The *Liber de Causis*,' in Stephen Gersh (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus: From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 137–161. Also see Werner Beierwaltes, "Der Kommentar zum ‚Liber de Causis' als Neuplatonisches Element in der Philosophie des Thomas von Aquin." *Philosophische Rundschau* 11.3-4 (1963): 192–215.

43 See Edward Booth, O.P., *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers* (Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 1983), 267.

> of creatures afterwards. And thus the doctrine of faith is more perfect, as being more like the knowledge possessed by God, who, in knowing Himself, immediately knows other things (*Summa Contra Gentiles* II.4).[44]

For Aquinas, overall, the divine science may be divided into a *duplex* in which *sacra doctrina* deals with the revelation of sacred scripture while metaphysics or *theologia philosophica* focuses on effects of God in creation. It is centred on being *qua* being (*ens in quantam ens*), and not God as such, insofar as it seeks to relate that which is caused to its transcendent cause. Both of these, however, are subalternated by Aquinas to an eschatological knowledge of the beatific vision (*scientia beatorum*) which is the supernatural end of all created beings.[45]

Later, after the Parisian Condemnations of 1277,[46] this *duplex* was widened so that reason could actually now be separated from faith. The Thomistic distinction between theology and metaphysics, in contrast to the Boethian tradition,[47] would eventually lead to the creation of an independent science of metaphysics and ontology, especially after Duns Scotus.[48] It was

44 Translation taken from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book Two*: *Creation*, trans. James F. Anderson (New York: Doubleday, 1955).

45 On this, see Jean-Luc Marion, *Givenness and Revelation*, trans. Stephen E. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8–29. Also see Marion, " On the Foundation of the Distinction Between Theology and Philosophy." *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* 13.1-3 (2009): 47–76.

46 The scholarship on this is vast, but see Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1955), 387–410; John F. Wippel, "The Parisian Condemnations of 1270 and 1277," in Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 65–73.

47 Andreas Speer, "The Hidden Heritage: Boethian Metaphysics and Its Medieval Tradition." *Quaestio: Journal of the History of Metaphysics* 5 (2005): 163–181.

48 Olivier Boulnois, 'Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot'. *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995): 85–108; Boulnois, *Être et représentation: Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne a l'époque de Duns Scot (XIIIe -XIVe siècle)*. Épiméthée (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999); Boulnois, *Métaphysique rebelles: genèse et structures d'une science au Moyen Age*. Épiméthée (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France,

within the Scotist tradition, especially in Francis of Marchia, that we see the first distinction of general and special metaphysics,[49] and in Nicolas Bonet we see the "invention" of *theologia naturalis* as subordinate to and separate from metaphysics – here understood as the science of being and non-being.[50] In late scholasticism, this was combined with nominalism and accounts of "pure nature" which argued that the created world could be comprehended without a gesture towards the supernatural.[51] The influence this had on post-Baroque and Enlightenment philosophy has been traced by intellectual historians,[52] establishing that the grounds of secularity are to be found in this period.[53] Martin Luther, for his part, reacted against the Aristotelianism of his monastic training, and also absorbed the nominalism and *via moderna* percolating in the medieval

2013) ; Ludger Honnefelder, 'Der zweite Anfang der Metaphysik. Voraussetzungen, Ansatze und Folgen der Wiederbegründung der Metaphysik im 13./14. Jahrhundert,' in J. P. Beckmann, L. Honnefelder, G. Schrimpf, G. Wieland (eds.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter: Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen* (Meiner: Hamburg 1987), 165–186; Honnefelder, *Scientia transcendens. Die formale Bestimmung der Seiendheit und Realitat in der Metaphysik des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit (Duns Scotus – Suarez –Wolff – Kant – Peirce)*. «Paradeigmata 9» (Hamburg: Meiner, 1990); Honnefelder, 'Metaphysics as a Discipline: From the "Transcendental Philosophy of the Ancients" to Kant's Notion of Transcendental Philosophy', in R. L. Friedman and L. O. Nielsen (eds.), *The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Modal Theory 1400-1700*. The New Synthese Historical Library 53 (Kluwer, Dordrecht-Boston-London, 2003), 53–74.

49 Sabine Folger-Fanfara, "Franziskus von Marchia: Die erste Unterscheidung einer Allgemeinen und einer Besonderen Metaphysik." *Documenti E Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 16 (2005):461–513.

50 Boulnois, *Métaphysique rebelles*, 313–341

51 Of course, a thesis made famous by Henri de Lubac. Also see Jacob Schmutz, "The Medieval Doctrine of Causality and the Theology of Pure Nature (13th to 17th Century)," in Serge Thomas-Bonino (ed.), *Surnatural: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought* (Florida: Sapienta Press of Ave Maria University, 2009), 203–250.

52 See Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

53 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

schools.[54] He still allowed for a Christian use of philosophy, even as he made a definitive distinction between them. Protestant *Schulmetaphysik* would develop this separation, particularly after the systematisation of metaphysics found in Francisco Suárez (important for Kant's and Heidegger's characterisations of metaphysical science).[55] This tendency promoted even further the separation of general from special metaphysics, cementing the division of philosophical metaphysics and theology, and leading to the separation of them, in contrast to their more "aporetic" relation held within the tradition of θεολογική φιλοσοφία[56] and

54 On this, see the sections "Theology and Philosophy" and "Luther, Aristotle, and Nominalism" in Robert Stern, "Martin Luther." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020); https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/luther/.

55 See Jean-François Courtine. *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990); Oliva Blanchette, "Suárez and the Latent Essentialism of Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology." *The Review of Metaphysics* 53.1 (1999): 3–19; Giannina Burlando, "Suarez and Heidegger on the transcendental moment in the *cognitio trascendentalis*," in R.H. Pich (ed.), *New Essays on Metaphysics as Scientia Transcendens.* Proceedings of the Second International Conference of Medieval Philosophy (Porto Alegre: Louvain-la-Neuve, 2007), 343–362; Courtine, "Suárez, Heidegger, and Contemporary Metaphysics," in Victor M. Salas and Robert L. Fastiggi (eds.), *A Companion to Francisco Suárez.* Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 53 (Leiden and Boston : Brill, 2015), 72–90; Costantino Esposito, "Heidegger, Suárez e la storia dell'ontologia." *Quaestio: Journal of the History of Metaphysics* 1 (2001): 407–430; Esposito, "The Hidden Influence of Suárez on Kant's Transcendental Conception of 'Being', 'Essence' and 'Existence'," in Lukás Novák (ed.), *Suárez's Metaphysics in its Historical and Systematic Context* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 117–134; Esposito, "Suárez and the Baroque Matrix of Modern Thought," in *A Companion to Francisco* Suárez, 124–47; Jorge J. E. Gracia, "The Ontological Status of the Transcendental Attributes of Being in Scholasticism and Modernity: Suarez and Kant," in Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (eds.), *Was Ist Philosophie Im Mittelalter?, Qu'est-ce que la philosophie au Moyen Age? What Is Philosophy in the Middle Ages? Akten Des X. Internationalen Kongresses für Mittelalterliche Philosophie Der Société Internationale pour l'étude de la philosophie médiévale, 25. bis 30. August 1997 in Erfurt* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 213–225.

56 The exact phrase θεολογική φιλοσοφία ("theological philosophy") seems to have been first used by Maximus the Confessor in *Ambigua ad Joannem* 37.5.6, which he places – following the Evagrian tradition – in the last of the triad of the practical, natural, and theological philosophy. Also cf. *Quaestiones et dubia* 192.13.

the Boethian conception of *scientia divina* as the object of first philosophy.[57] It was particularly Kant's account of the antinomies of natural theology and the delimitation of reason that contributed to a decline in traditional "philosophical theology" in the post-Enlightenment period,[58] even as it experienced revivals and continued development in its Thomistic and analytic varieties.

"Philosophical theology" is a more recent coinage, occurring largely in the post-Reformation period, predicated on the formal division between metaphysics and theology. It is therefore not really surprising that the development of such language, including that of "natural theology,"[59] is something of a post-medieval phenomenon.[60] Ingolf Dalferth, from a

57 Ernst Vollrath, 'Die Gliederung der Metaphysik in eine Metaphysica generalis und eine Metaphysica specialis'. *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 16.2 (1962): 258–284.

58 See his famous section in the Transcendental Dialectic on the antimonies of reason; cf. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A405 / 432 – A 567 / B 595

59 In the Boethian tradition of metaphysics, stemming from the aporetic ontology of Aristotle, the relation between "metaphysics" and "physics" was much more porous. It is, of course, well known that the title of *Metaphysics* was added by the students of Aristotle, and the precise significance of the prefix "meta-" is the subject of significant debate among historians of philosophy; see Anton-Hermann Chroust, "The Origin of 'Metaphysics." *The Review of Metaphysics* 14.4 (1961): 601–616; Hans Reiner, "The Emergence and Original Meaning of the Name 'Metaphysics'." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 13.2 (1990): 23–53 ; Jean-François Courtine, *Inventio analogiae: Métaphysique et ontothéologie* (Paris: Vrin, 2005), 45-107.

60 I have been unable to find a reference to "philosophical theology" predating the seventeenth century. A notable early usage can be found in Ralph Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: The First Part* (London: 1678), 541, in which he pairs philosophical theology with "natural theology." This was anticipated in other works like that of Seth Ward, a Bishop of Exeter and Salisbury, in a series of sermons published earlier in 1672. Other references can be found in John Smith's *Christian Religion's Appeal from the Groundless Prejudices of the Sceptick to the Bar of Common Reason* (London, 1675), 110 and Anthonya Wood's biographical commentary on the deist Thomas Hariot in *Athenae Oxonienses, First Volume* (London, 1691), 390. Moreover, there seems to be not much invocation of *Philosophische Theologie* before the eighteenth century in German literature. Kant makes reference to it in his *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793) as well as to "rational theology" in his *Lectures on the*

specifically Reformed perspective, has typologised several options drawn from this history, ranging from dogmatic philosophical theology – concerned with the proofs for divine existence and so on – to modern trends of the hermeneutical philosophy of religions, concerned less with metaphysical deduction and more with the descriptive and orientating task of thinking through the normative grammar of theological language and the hermeneutics of lived religion.[61] Dalferth, for his part, believes that the project of traditional philosophical theology has been undermined by the critical work of Hume and Kant. However, this is not a consensus position, and reflects something of the influence of Eberhard Jüngel and his critique of theological metaphysics in general. The critical standing of Kant vis-à-vis metaphysics no longer has guaranteed purchase even within the Continental tradition, as seen in recent developments in speculative realism (e.g., Markus Gabriel, Quentin Meillassoux, Graham Harman, etc.). Moreover, numerous works of recent philosophical theology tend to demonstrate that the task of more traditional philosophical theology is alive and well among both analytic philosophers – and even among more Continental varieties.[62]

By and large, today, one could say that "philosophical theology" in the North Atlantic, largely, does not follow a strictly hermeneutical approach in a post-Kantian or Heideggerian

Philosophical Doctrine of Religion (1817). In French, the phrase *theologie philosophique* appears even less during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but can be found in the nineteenth century, such as in the so-called Vignaud pamphlets, like E. M. Bailly's *L'existence de dieu et liberté morale* (Paris: 1824), 480 (on Malebranche); Madame De Staël, *De L'Allemagne* (Paris: 1845), 525 (in reference to Schleiermacher); Felix Ravaisson's *Essai Sur la Métaphysique D'Aristote, Volume 2* (Paris: 1846), 373 (on Neoplatonism), and Eduard Reuss, *Histoire de la théologie chrétienne au siècle apostolique, Volume 2* (Paris: 1860), 430 (on the metaphysics of divine being), amongst others.

61 See Ingolf Dalferth, "Philosophical Theology," in David Ford and Rachel Muers (eds.), *Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918* (3rd ed., Blackwell, 2005), 305–321.

62 For one example, see the plea for a qualified "rationalist" philosophical theology in Vittorio Hösle, "The Idea of a Rationalistic Philosophy of Religion and Its Challenges," in *God as Reason: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 1–23.

fashion, being concerned, that is, with "the conditions of the possibility of every ontological investigation."[63] Analytical philosophy is clearly the preferred avenue for work done in philosophical theology in the twentieth century, as a survey of the literature shows, with its assumption of theological realism and a focus on linguistic meaning and the semantic clarification of metaphysical doctrine.[64] The noted analytic philosopher of religion and Reformed epistemologist Alvin Plantinga has defined philosophical theology as "a matter of thinking about the central doctrines of the Christian faith from a philosophical perspective," that is, about "employing the resources of philosophy to deepen our grasp and understanding of them."[65] The South African philosophical theologian Vincent Brümmer, also placed within the analytic tradition, argued that philosophical theology is "an analysis of internal conceptual problems in systematic theology,"[66] which tries "to determine which conceptual forms can be accepted without contradiction."[67] Continental philosophy, in recent times, has been more wary of metaphysical argumentation and so has tended towards more hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches, bracketing out traditional metaphysics. This might be linked to their distinctive genealogies, which diverge after Locke and Kant, with the former seeking to ground religion in a common rational basis, while the

63 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh and Dennis J. Schmidt (New York: SUNY, 2010), 35. On the Continental philosophy of religion in general, see Merold Westphal, "Continental Philosophy of Religion," in William J. Wainwright (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 472–493.

64 For a statement of this position, see Richard Swinburne, "The Value and Christian Roots of Analytical Philosophy of Religion," in Harriet A. Harris & Christopher J. Insole (eds.), *Faith and Philosophical Analysis: The Impact of Analytical Philosophy on the Philosophy of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 33–45; William Hasker, "Analytic Philosophy of Religion," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion*, 421–446.

65 Alvin Plantinga, quoted in Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 14.

66 Vincent Brümmer, "Meanders in My Thinking: A Brief Intellectual Autobiography," in *Brümmer on Meaning and the Christian Faith* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 10.

67 Brümmer, "Philosophical Theology as Conceptual Recollection," in *Brümmer on Meaning and the Christian Faith*, 448.

latter delimits reason as a mode of access to the transcendent.[68] This does not mean that metaphysics as themes of discussion have been avoided within Continental philosophy; rather – at least until recently (e.g., speculative realism) – it has tended to mostly avoid full-throated metaphysical speculation. However, the theological turn within phenomenology in recent times (e.g., Jean-Luc Marion, Emmanuel Falque, etc.) has changed this situation somewhat, even as it has sometimes been wary of the terminology of "metaphysics," despite more speculative trajectories being included within it (e.g., Michel Henry).[69]

In this light, with the theological turn in phenomenology and the post-critical return to metaphysics after speculative realism, it seems untenable to assign "philosophical theology" only to analytical theologians and philosophers. Within North America and Great Britain, the analytic approach is the preferred method among philosophical theologians and tends to predominate the academic discussion on the topic. However, other schools with a decidedly more Continental flair, such as Radical Orthodoxy (e.g., John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, etc.), have been enormously influential in the last two decades, producing a contemporary alternative to the APR. Seeking to critique the very foundations of modern philosophy, in both its analytical and Continental guises, this approach seeks to deconstruct any idea of a purely secular recounting of philosophy and the social sciences.[70] This has not proved uncontroversial, but it remains

68 Nicholas Wolterstorff, "How Philosophical Theology Became Possible within the Analytic Tradition of Philosophy," in Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (eds.), *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 155–168; "Analytic Philosophy of Religion: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Inquiring About God: Selected Essays*, *Volume 1*, edited by Terrence Cuneo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17–34.

69 See Dominique Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).

70 See John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2013); John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward (eds.), *Radical Orthodoxy:*

a live option within the current discussion on philosophical theology – including South Africa. Indeed, criticisms of "philosophical theology" have indeed not been absent in general – both externally and internally. Some philosophers of religion have argued that "philosophical theology" is largely an apologetic enterprise to rationalise beliefs that have been decided on other grounds. But the proposed "secularity" of philosophy of religion has itself been questioned as relying on trajectories that are theological and colonialist in nature.[71] Some feminist theologians, from within the tradition of philosophical theology and philosophy of religion, have also criticised philosophical theology, particularly in its analytic variety, for its subtle and sometimes explicit chauvinist framing, as seen (for example) in its account of the free will and divine determination according to "masculinist" ideals of autonomy and non-dependence – a point argued explicitly by Sarah Coakley, amongst others.[72]

This chapter has followed some of the very broad trajectories of the history of philosophical theology. In general, we have seen linguistic shifts and changes in the deployment of both "philosophy" and "theology". Broadly speaking, one can see "philosophical theology" as stemming from the infusion of Aristotelian and Neoplatonist elements into the Abrahamic traditions. However, the exact terminology of "philosophical theology" is a later coinage, often used as a circumlocution for what came to be called "natural theology." In the wake of Kant and Hume, some have claimed the demise of traditional

A New Theology (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998); *Repetition and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); *Aspects of Truth: A New Religious Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

71 For example, Purushottama Bilimoria, "What Is the 'Subaltern' of the Philosophy of Religion?" in Purushottama Bilimoria and Andrew B. Irvine (eds.), *Postcolonial Philosophy of Religion* (Cham: Springer, 2009), 9–33; An Yountae, *The Coloniality of the Secular: Race, Religion, and Poetics of World-Making* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2024).

72 Sarah Coakley, *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy and Gender* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); 98–105; Coakley, "Feminism," in C. Taliaferro, P. Draper and P. L. Quinn (eds.), A *Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 689–694.

metaphysics, instigating the turn to phenomenological and hermeneutical traditions. However, others have continued in the vein of a more classical metaphysics, though now often imbued with a post-Heideggerian inflexion.[73] Moreover, philosophical theology has continued to be practised extensively within APR or so-called analytic theology. While not being without controversy and scepticism, philosophical theology continues to be a vibrant field. The question remains as to whether this reception has been extended beyond Anglo-American and Continental traditions, and into the global South – the focus of the current volume. What form this will take is still unfolding.

73 See, for example, the twentieth-century revival of post-Heideggerian Thomism, particularly among Catholic theologians (e.g., Erich Przywara, Ferdinand Ulrich).