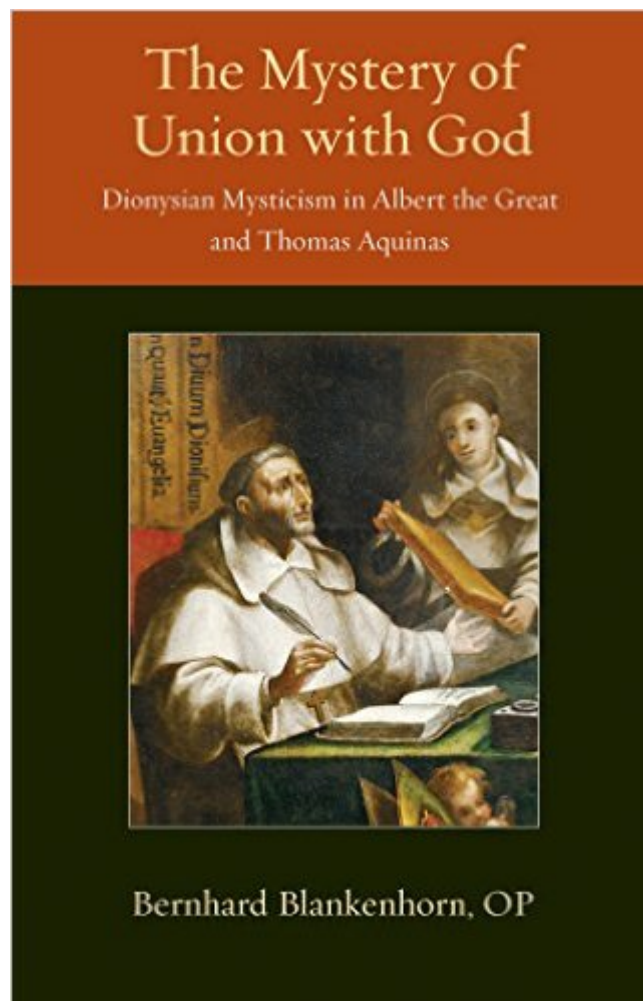


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The Mystery Of Union With God: Dionysian Mysticism In Albert The Great And Thomas Aquinas (Thomistic Ressourcement Series)



Synopsis

"A highly detailed study. Ample in scope, richly documented, and equipped with an excellent bibliography and indexes, Blankenhorn's erudite study will be a worthwhile addition to any academic library that supports an advanced program in theology." â€•Catholic Library World"Blankenhorn brilliantly renders the great service of addressing the much-neglected role of St. Albert the Great, whose influence on his better-known student, St. Thomas Aquinas, is often acknowledged but seldom explored. . . . This book provides much-needed insight into the intellectualist strand of medieval Dionysian reception, running parallel to the affectivist strand in such authors as Thomas Gallus and St. Bonaventure. . . . Blankenhorn's interpretation also attends to the theological assumptions, implications, and perduring significance of this thirteenth-century Dominican tradition of mystical theology, thus rendering it available for fruitful contemporary engagement." â€•Boyd Taylor Coolman, Boston College"Bernhard Blankenhorn's book is a welcome addition to the study of high scholasticism. He gives us a well-researched account of links between the work of Dionysius, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas on the question of union with God. Blankenhorn offers a fresh point of entry for the study of Thomas's theology, as well as expanding significantly our understanding of his sources, showing how the context within which Thomas's thought developed is richer and more complex than is often allowed." â€•Vivian Boland, OP"An erudite work that renews our understanding of Albert's and Thomas's mystical theologies. The analysis of 'union above mind' is truly masterly.. . . Blankenhorn beautifully shows the integration of metaphysics, epistemology, Trinitarian theology, Christology, and eschatology within Thomas's doctrine of mystical union." â€•Gilles Emery, OP, University of Fribourg

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Customer Reviews

A great deal of labor clearly went into researching and producing this book. I am grateful for Fr. Blankenhorn's contribution to an area that I find interesting, namely St. Thomas's reception and use of Pseudo-Dionysius. The summary provided above explains the number of topics that are covered in this book (from the divine missions to anthropology to divine naming, etc.). These topics are covered in some detail according to their appearance in the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Albert and St. Thomas. I assume that anyone with interest in the myriad of topics covered in this book would find at least some helpful insights. Fr. Blankenhorn's approach makes it possible to see a certain topic both in its development from one thinker to the next, its development within the course of each individual thinker, and in the context of the other doctrines under consideration—all focused around the topic of union with God. In particular, I enjoyed the treatment of how Augustinian and Aristotelean anthropologies provided different frameworks for the reception of Dionysius's teaching about union. (In short, partly because of his Aristotelian commitments, St. Thomas doesn't think that the soul in union with God can be strictly speaking passive, something that certainly appears to be a departure from the Areopagite.) Since Blankenhorn considers many primary texts in detail, I can see this book as being a helpful reference. Although I am not too familiar with the field, Fr. Blankenhorn seems to be staking out new territory in identifying the place of St. Albert in mediating the thought of the Areopagite to his disciple, St. Thomas, certainly something worth tracing in detail. Unfortunately, I cannot give the book five stars.

Two new books about the thought of the medieval Catholic theologian St. Thomas Aquinas can help us deepen our understanding of the thought of the 20th-century Swiss Reform psychiatrist and psychological theorist C. G. Jung, M.D. (1875-1961): (1) Bernhard Blankenhorn's book MYSTERY OF UNION WITH GOD: DIONYSIAN MYSTICISM IN ALBERT THE GREAT AND THOMAS AQUINAS (Catholic U of America P, 2015) and (2) Daria Spezzano's book THE GLORY OF GOD'S GRACE: DEIFICATION ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (Sapientia P of Ave Maria U, 2015; distributed by Catholic U of America P). On the dust jacket of his book, Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P., is identified as an associate professor of theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (also known as the Angelicum) in Rome. In the acknowledgments in her book, Daria Spezzano of Providence College thanks Blankenhorn, among others, for "encouragement, helpful

suggestions, and constructive criticism of [her] manuscript" (viii). Now, when Blankenhorn uses the expression "Dionysian mysticism," he is referring to the anonymous medieval author known variously as Dionysius the Areopagite, Denys the Areopagite, and Pseudo-Dionysius, whose writings appeared in the early sixth century. The anonymous author is not St. Paul's Athenian convert known as Dionysius the Aeropagite. Thus Blankenhorn is not referring to the ancient Greek god Dionysius, or to ancient Dionysian spirituality and ritual practices, which Jung explicitly refers to. Nevertheless, I argue that what Blankenhorn refers to as Dionysian mysticism involves the depths of the human psyche that Jung refers to as Dionysian. So I see a connection between Blankenhorn's and Jung's use of the term Dionysian.

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