

Science, Religion, and the Rise of Biblical Criticism

with James C. Ungureanu, "Introduction to the Symposium on Science, Religion, and the Rise of Biblical Criticism"; Paul C. H. Lim, "Atheism, Atoms, and Activity of God: Science and Religion in Early Boyle Lectures, 1692–1720"; Diego Lucci, "The Biblical Roots of Locke's Theory of Personal Identity"; Jon W. Thompson, "The Naturalization of Scriptural Reason in Seventeenth Century Epistemology"; James C. Ungureanu, "From Divine Oracles to the Higher Criticism"; Andrew D. White and the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom"; Nathan Bossob, "Scientific Uniformity or 'Natural' Divine Action: Shifting the Boundaries of Law in the Nineteenth Century"; Stuart Mathieson, "The Victoria Institute, Biblical Criticism, and The Fundamentals"; and Samuel Loncar, "Science and Religion: An Origins Story."

SCIENCE AND RELIGION: AN ORIGINS STORY

by Samuel J. Loncar

Abstract. In recent scholarship, the science and religion debate has been historicized, revealing the novelty of the concepts of science and religion and their complex connections to secularization and the birth of modernity. This article situates this historicist turn in the history of philosophy and its connections to theology and Scripture, showing that the science and religion concept derives from philosophy's earlier tension with theology as it became an academic discipline centered in the medieval, then research university, with the centrality of Scripture changing under the influence of historical criticism. Looking at Thomas Aquinas and Friedrich Schleiermacher on theology and Scripture's connection to science, it offers a new framework for theorizing science and religion as part of the history of philosophy.

Keywords: Aquinas; bible; knowledge; philosophy; religion; Schleiermacher; science; secularization; theology; university

BEGINNINGS

Origin, essence, paradigm, ruler, first: a few senses of the Greek *arkhe* (ἀρχή), which from its peregrinations through the Latin *principio* becomes our principle. At the foundation of every academic discipline, there is a principle, or *arkhe*, that governs the discipline, functions as its first principle, origin, and essence. Crucially, this matches another aspect of

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arkhe in Aristotle, who gave the definitive exposition of the concept in his *Metaphysics*: it is the root of knowledge on which all other knowledge depends (1012^b 34–1013^a 23). Thus, the arkhe of a discipline is not one concept among others; it is a word whose concept is usually missing, because an arkhe is more the matrix of clear ideas—those that form the actual content of the discipline—than the object of clear conception. Arkhai live in defining names, and thus the one thing an economist, to take one example, will often not think about is: What is economics? It is assumed that there is a simple, clear, and obvious answer to this question, and thus no thought need be given to the matter. But that matter is the essence of the whole field, and thus disagreements about what economics actually *is*, for example, will create theoretically unresolvable disputes between a Marxist economist and a libertarian economist: their economies are not the same, in spite of important and obvious overlap, because their *economy* and arkhai differ.

To engage such a dispute, the movement of thought must shift, become reflexive, and, whether consciously or not, engage in what I call philosophical arkhaiology, inquiry into the arkhai that are structuring the conversation. Unlike Nietzsche's genealogy, or its descendent practice in Foucault, inquiry into the arkhai privileges neither past nor present, structure nor agent, but perceives their necessary coordination. Thus, to inquire into the nature or history of science can mean two different *orders* of activity. One is made possible by an existing arkhe, or principle of science, which it then enacts through activity that develops the arkhe, much as Kuhnian normal science can be seen as the embodiment and extension of a paradigm.

The second-order activity turns to the concepts themselves. This reflexive, or historicist turn, characterizes more of the history of science today than in the past, and it has transformed our understanding of the science and religion debate. Making this transformation explicit, and developing it through a philosophical arkhaiology of the science and religion concept and its central connection to Scripture is the aim of this article. This is a crucial task, because until the implications of the historicization of our concepts become clear, we will inevitably practice a version of scholarship that is exclusively anachronistic, presentist, and ethnocentric, that is, indexed to the assumptions of our era, time, and culture without taking into account the difference and changes in concepts themselves throughout history.

Peter Harrison has shown that, since both "religion" and "science" are very recent concepts in their current form, there can be no meaningful inquiry into *whether* or *how* science and religion are compatible or not, but only into the historical origins of the modern concepts themselves. What is important to see, on Harrison's argument, is the *function* of the science-and-religion idea, which is that of "establishing and maintaining the boundaries of the modern conception 'science'" (2015, 197).¹

It is well known to historians of science that “science” in our contemporary sense is less than 200 years old. If we ask what the “history of science” was *before* the term “science” became dominant (still an Anglophone phenomenon), then we are asking about the history of science not as the modern English word but as its *arkhe*: in other words, the entire regime of institutions and ideas that manifest, create, and regulate what count as paradigmatically legitimate knowledge in our society. The most powerful institution for understanding the *arkhe* of modern science is the one institution that governs knowledge explicitly: the university. Thus, our institutional focus for understanding the history of science-and-religion will be the university.

As contemporary “science” is an occluded part of the broader history of “natural philosophy,” so natural philosophy in turn is part of the history of “philosophy.” If we pull back, historically, then, one half of the science-and-religion pair transforms, and we get (natural) philosophy-and-religion. By inquiring into science-and-religion, we are investigating a set of questions in which the scientific, philosophical, and religious components cannot be *a priori* separated because the origins of the terms as separated ideas is part of what we are seeking to understand.

The reason modern science has a necessary relationship with the category religion, which becomes explicit in the religion-and-science discourse (as Harrison shows), is because *science inherits the role of Philosophy, and more specifically, Reason, as it emerged in two critical junctures in the modern world*, the rise of the university in the Middle Ages and the birth of the research university in the nineteenth century. These two moments, conceptually, constitute the *secularization* of philosophy and reason, in Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), and the transformation of religion, in Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), into something *intrinsically incapable of conflicting with science*, as Schleiermacher understood it. To understand why these two figures are so important, we need to see their shared pattern. Both Schleiermacher and Aquinas play founding roles in envisioning *theology* itself as a science in the university.

PHILOSOPHIA, THEOLOGIA, AND SCIENTIA: THE RISE OF THE UNIVERSITY

It is crucial to remember how little “philosophy” through its history looked like the contemporary academic discipline, yet it is also crucial to see how philosophy, theology, and science came to seem like the self-evidently separate activities and domains of today. To do both at once, we have to bring the key epistemic institution of the West into focus: the university itself as a new technology and context in the division of labor. Epistemic institutions specialize in the regulation, control, and production of knowledge, and they, therefore, only emerge when the division of labor is sufficiently

developed for such specialization. Once they emerge, a tension with other, more general sites of epistemic power is natural, as occurred with monasticism and the medieval university. The university is the most powerful epistemic institution in Western society, and it has a natural tendency to forget its own history, thereby naturalizing its categories and projecting them onto the past. The university, one might say, has an inborn amnesia about what anything “inside” it looked like before it became disciplined and regulated by the university itself. If we do not understand this, and the sheer novelty of the contemporary academic partition of the world, we will not understand secularization, or the process by which the world became a clear and distinctly articulated domain of reality, leading to a shift in the meaning and function of key religious institutions, ideas, and practices.

Prior to the rise of the university in the Middle Ages, both philosophy and theology as we know them today—academic disciplines whose primary representatives are paid professionals organized on a guild-model—did not exist. *Philosophia* continued to refer to wisdom and the life of wisdom, a quintessentially religious life in a world ordered toward divinity (Burkert 1985, 206 ff). As a result, the attendant sense of learning and erudition was not yet “academic” knowledge disembedded from an ordered way of life, but learning ordered toward divine wisdom. Within this context, *theologia* likewise preserved its literal sense (discourse about divinity), and thus continued to exist as a concept interior to, and certainly cognate with, *philosophia*.

Philosophy and theology were distinguished, in that *theologia* as such referred to Christian Scripture and teaching, while *philosophia* referred to wisdom or a body of knowledge. But *philosophia* and *theologia* were not separated since natural theology (*theologia naturalis*) was part of philosophy and philosophy itself still preserved the ancient usage seen, for example, in the monastic context. How, then, did *theologia* develop from meaning “the Bible and its teachings” to become itself a science in the new university?

THE RETURN OF ARISTOTLE

The most significant intellectual event precipitating the birth of the university was the rediscovery in the West of Aristotle’s writings on metaphysics/theology and natural philosophy.² Through Aristotle, the idea of *scientia* (*episteme*) as knowledge through first causes, or *arkhai*, became the most powerful and rigorous paradigm of knowledge in scholastic culture. Prior to Aristotle’s rediscovery, a broadly Platonic philosophy uninformed by Aristotle (some logical writings being the exception) dominated Latin theology.

At the foundation of theology as a science in the university is Aquinas, who can be seen as a key “founding figure” of scholastic theology and

culture, which existed continuously in the Roman Catholic church until the twentieth century (Leinsle 2010, 1–15, 277ff.). The organizational origins of the medieval university lie in the medieval guild culture, in which a corporation or *universitas* of tradesmen organized themselves in order to control and regulate their domain of activity (Verger 1992, 35–76). This organization arose in the context of the system of medieval cathedral schools and monastic orders, in which Masters of eminence, like Abelard, attracted students from all over Europe.

The study of the Bible, which was primarily institutionalized in the monasteries, required no justification in the Middle Ages, for commentary was the inherited norm of Christian pedagogical practice and Scripture and theology were synonymous (Smalley 1964, 37–82; Lobrichon 2012, 536–554; van Liere 2014, *passim*). But the idea that theology was a “science” and belonged in the newly founded university was controversial and required defense against those who thought it corrupted the true nature of theology. The first Question of Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*, investigating the nature of *sacra doctrina*, treats the subject of theology at length precisely because it is foundational to the legitimacy of the institutionalization of theology in the university and schools. Grasping what is at stake for Aquinas requires a clear understanding of two new pressures that become acute with the institutionalization of scholastic culture in the recently chartered university of Paris.

The first pressure was the need for disciplinary distinctness, the second for the epistemic or cognitive legitimacy linked to the university from its inception: the possession of knowledge as *scientia*. Both of these pressures for Aquinas were mediated through the challenge Aristotle posed to the Middle Ages. There was no question in the Christian Middle Ages that humans could attain some kind of knowledge of God, but whether that knowledge was up to the standards of Aristotle was a distinct, and highly controversial, issue.

The recovery of Aristotle’s work imposed a challenge of integration on a scale never before encountered in the Christian West. To make matters more difficult, Aristotle’s thought, particularly as it was mediated through the Arabic commentary tradition, seemed incompatible with Christianity on two major issues: the creation of the world and the immortality of the soul.

No small part of Aquinas’s historic significance lies in his confident acceptance of Aristotle’s philosophy and his belief that it provided the best framework for interpreting the distinctive teaching of Christianity. But this position put immediate pressure on Christian teaching, *sacra doctrina*, for Aquinas accepts the concept of science found in Aristotle’s *Organon*. If theology is to be a university discipline, then, it has also to be an Aristotelian science, for only a coherent body of knowledge belonged in the university. Aquinas, in taking up this position, was a revolutionary, for,

though building on the work of his predecessors, notably Albert the Great, he offered what is widely accepted as the major contribution to the problem of whether theology is a science according to Aristotelian standards.³

The best way to see how important this task was is to see it as arguably the foundational instance of a persistent, if rarely understood, problem in the university: the problem of *disciplinary constitution* (Loncar 2016, 23–24). Often more determinative than the “content” of an academic discipline is its form and structure as an institutional and ideological reality. Put differently, the institutional and ideological framework is as important a part of a discipline as its content, for it expresses the *arkhe* of science in its very forms; thus, as *arkhai* of knowledge change and compete, institutional forms of knowledge are concomitantly transformed. Academic disciplines are not simply receptacles or factories of knowledge; they are *forms* of knowledge, the institutional framework in and through which we think of ideal, normative cognitive content, and these forms change as ideas of “science” change. An academic discipline tells its practitioners what kind of problems and questions matter and are legitimate, what should be ignored and left out of discussion, and how inquiry should be conducted. Crucially, academic disciplines exist within and embody some background view of what counts as valid “scientific” knowledge. Part of knowing how to operate successfully within an academic discipline is knowing the whole range of questions, and ways of asking questions, which are acceptable, and those which are implicitly or explicitly “not our concern,” from the perspective of the discipline. Disciplining a domain always involves separating it from its nearest competition and establishing its cognitive legitimacy as a science, an organized field of knowledge, and this cannot happen unless there is some consensus on the background issue of what counts as a legitimate body of knowledge.

Although the medieval university did not know the advanced specialization of the modern research university, proto-disciplines emerged in the Middle Ages, initially represented by the faculty divisions of the Arts (philosophy) and Law, Medicine, and Theology. As Aristotle presented a new normative conception of what counted as a *philosophia* and *scientia* and shaped the curriculum of Arts or Philosophy, philosophy as a domain of knowledge in the university now included a pagan alternative view of the world and God, one that had developed independently of any Christianization. This is a major reason the medieval church sought to suppress the teaching of Aristotle, quite unsuccessfully.

Thus, the philosophy faculty already included theology in the form of metaphysics or (natural) theology within itself, complete with a commentary tradition from the Islamic world addressing in detail the metaphysical/theological controversies Aristotle’s work raised. The challenge in such a context was to distinguish clearly and thus to constitute distinctly academic theology and philosophy—a distinction that was not part of the

Augustinian or Platonic tradition, in which treatment of the divine was seamlessly integrated into a picture of the natural world. Nor, crucially, was such a distinction part of the *Aristotelian* tradition itself. In other words, metaphysics and theology (including now the contents of the Christian faith) were not only *not* differentiated, but their unity was an important dimension of the broader worldview of the Middle Ages. The attempt to differentiate philosophy and theology represents a kind of historically necessary violence against their organic history and unity, one imposed by a mix of institutional demands and internal intellectual problems centered on articulating highly distinct and even competitive visions of theology.

THE SEPARATION OF FAITH AND REASON

Aquinas had a daunting task: both to establish theology as a discipline in its own right, while also maintaining the legitimacy of philosophy and “the Philosopher,” as he referred to Aristotle. His manner of doing this has shaped the conception of “philosophy” and “theology” to the present day by giving us a sense of their distinctness based on the division of faith and reason. This context helps us appreciate as inevitable what might seem otherwise strange: Why is the first question of the *Summa Theologiae* whether, besides *philosophicas disciplinas*, any other *doctrina* (i.e., *sacra doctrina*, or *theologia*, in this case) is necessary (ST I.I Q.I.1)? In other words, the first question of the classic work of truly academic theology is: is this kind of theology necessary, given that we already have philosophy?

The problem of philosophy’s apparent *autonomy* is exactly why the problem of theology’s disciplinary and scientific status is so acute. The *philosophicas disciplinas* function in the first objection precisely because they could reasonably be thought to constitute anything knowable, in short, the whole range of science. That is what the term *philosophia*, which included the older sense of theology *within* it, actually still meant to many in Aquinas’s time, leaving no room for a special science based on Christian Scripture.

Although complex and knotty in its details, Aquinas’s means of constituting theology (and by way of contrast, philosophy) as a separate science from Philosophy is to distinguish it by its object and the mode of apprehending the object. Aquinas distinguished between faith (*fides*) and reason (*ratio*) as distinct modes of apprehending truth. These two modes both apprehend the truth and are thus, for Aquinas, necessarily compatible, for nothing that is true can contradict itself, and thus the truths of faith cannot be contrary to the truths of reason. But faith and reason are distinct and in one respect incompatible, viz. when they are being used with respect to the same object.

The articles of faith for Aquinas are those truths that cannot be known by reason, and thus are the foundations of theology as a science. They

are only knowable because God in Scripture has revealed them. There are some truths that are knowable both by faith and reason, including the existence of God. Most people, however, believe God exists on the authority of revelation and thus apprehend God's existence by faith. A much smaller group, like trained philosophers, could come to *know* that God exists by means of reason. This means they could have knowledge of God's existence in the strict sense of *scientia*, which is demonstrable knowledge through eternal and necessary causes, that is, through the *arkhai*. Knowing is possible in the strict sense, Aquinas thinks, because he agrees with Aristotle that God, as the *arkhe* or *principio* of the world, can be cognized as such. And when we apprehend a series of effects *as* effects of an *arkhe* that is necessary and evident to our minds, we possess the highest form of cognition, *scientia*.

Such knowers, Aquinas concludes, could no longer be said to have faith in the existence of God; they do not know (in the loose sense) or grasp it by faith precisely because they grasp it by means of reason; they thus know it in the strictest sense. Such truths, revealed by God but also knowable by reason, become technically "preambles" to the articles of faith, which are those truths that are knowable only by faith, because they have been revealed and could not be achieved by reason (ST II.II Q.1.6 ff.).

Philosophia, then, on Aquinas's view is distinguished from *theologia / sacra doctrina* as a domain, for it concerns only the truths knowable by reason; theology deals properly speaking (as a *scientia*) with the truths revealed by God, *sacra doctrina*, and in the strictest sense theology as a *science* begins with the articles of faith, truths which, though they do not contradict reason, are *above* it for they cannot be known by reason. The articles of faith function for academic theology as the "first principles" or *arkhai* necessary for any scientific body of knowledge, on the Aristotelian analogy of how a "subalternate" science like optics assumes the science of geometry as its foundation (I.I Q.I and II.II Q.I).

It is important to note that philosophy and theology are *not* distinguished by their possession or lack of "religious" content, but by whether that content can be known by reason or must be revealed and apprehended by faith. This distinction of theology and philosophy as faculties or modes of apprehending reality is the origin of the widespread and still predominant idea that philosophy has to do exclusively with reason, and theology *distinctively* with faith (Aquinas would have never accepted the idea that theology did not operate in conjunction with rationality—an idea that makes theology as a science *prima facie* absurd). Aquinas's *ratio* is not yet "secular" in the sense of not religious, nor is *fides* irrational or even a-rational, but the terms faith and reason will maintain their positions as founding distinctions long after Aquinas's view of their *nature* had been altered or rejected. From the Thomistic distinction of faith (whose object is revealed truths) and reason (whose objects are knowable without the

assistance of revelation), we also derive the idea that theology is limited to revelation, and philosophy to “reason alone.”

There are other senses in which theology is separate from philosophy for Aquinas, but the faith-and-reason distinction is crucial for separating the domains by the faculty, or mode of apprehension, they employ. Identifying the realm of philosophy with reason “unaided” by faith was one of the most consequential developments in Western religious and intellectual history, yet it is important to recognize, relatively speaking, how late it is. While it now antedates our own time by 700 years, it is preceded by 1200 years of Christian tradition that developed without any clear separation of philosophy and theology, and thus by roughly 1600 years since Plato first coined the term “theology” or Aristotle described it as “first philosophy.”

Aquinas’s division of theology and philosophy proceeds by reference to the mode or faculty by which certain truths are apprehended. The object of theology as a science is also God, although with the qualification, prepared by the faith-reason distinction, God *as revealed* in Scripture. More broadly, theology’s formal object is all things in relation to God as their cause and end.⁴ While natural theology or metaphysics can know God as the cause of the world, it cannot know crucial truths, revealed in Scripture, about God or the world, and thus metaphysics, as Gaukroger notes, forms a bridge between philosophy and what we now call the natural sciences and theology as the distinctively Christian knowledge of God (2006, 77).

The result of Aquinas’s academic constitution of theology is to introduce a new clarity containing a deeper confusion. The clarity is the careful distinction between theology and philosophy through the disciplinary constitution of theology and, with it, the most classic articulation of the nature of the faculty of philosophy (the domain of reason without reference to revelation) as a distinct territory from theology: *Theology is the realm of faith and revelation (employing philosophy/reason as a handmaiden), on the one hand, and philosophy is the realm of unaided reason, meaning reason in abstraction from the distinctive revealed truths of Christian faith.* The overlap with philosophy exists at the level of natural theology, or God as known through the world itself and reason.

This is the first major step toward the literal secularization (*saeculum*: world, age) of philosophy as a concept, and is a foundation stone for the prevalent myth that philosophy is not religious. But it is important to stress that philosophy is still not secular in the contemporary sense of non-religious, for its highest domain, natural theology/metaphysics, still treats of the divine. Yet, the divinity that it knows, and its religious significance, has now been relativized by being explicitly separated from the revealed content of the “true religion.” Pagan theology, originally itself a reform of Greek religion, is now differentiated from—at a *disciplinary* level in the new university—Christian theology, which completes and relativizes

philosophy and philosophy's own theology (*theologia naturalis*), which is now explicitly subordinated to Christian theology as its "handmaid" and, for the first time, turned into a separate institutional territory: the philosophy faculty of the university.

One could argue that what Aquinas and the university more broadly had done is simply bring a process latent in the Christian tradition into its manifest form. Even if one accepted this characterization without qualification (which requires one ignore its distinctively Aristotelian context), it is simply an oblique way of making a much more significant point. What Aquinas has done is theorize and at the same time contribute to (in part *by* his theorizing) the new level of differentiation in Western society that the university itself both assumes (as it develops in urban centers) and dramatically advances. The university does this above all by institutionalizing the expert division of labor on which all modern professions rest and providing professional training and certification (Le Goff 1980, 122–134, 135–149). As the sociologist Andrew Abbott has shown, professions operate, compete, and develop through a fluid process of establishing and seeking to maintain a particular jurisdiction of expertise—one they often themselves create in order to control (e.g., the medieval church both created the jurisdiction governed by Christian theology and then sought to regulate it through control of the theological faculty) (1988, *passim*).

Once philosophy and theology are disciplined and divided through the creation of the medieval university, it is essential for each to establish clear and distinct jurisdiction. Hence, the uneasy (because inherently unstable) peace between disciplinary philosophy and theology that has reigned since the European university was founded. In crucial periods, the peace has broken out into war as one faculty sought to engulf the other (a threat usually occurring in the modern period from the side of philosophy and reason, as it eats up theology's ever shrinking kingdom, but also as it defends itself from the encroachment of academic theology).

This tension between (academic) philosophy and (academic) theology emerges with, because it is literally constituted by and within, the university system. To look for or attempt to conceptualize its source apart from its institutional origins is to fall prey to that understandable error mentioned earlier: approaching the history of ideas as if historical and institutional contexts did not matter.

The clarity introduced by Aquinas on this point should not be seen as merely intellectual; by being at the same time *disciplinary*, it legitimates an institutional division that contributes to the secularization of Europe, for it theoretically lets the realm of reason as the faculty of philosophy move unhindered within its own domain (for Aquinas, this domain was more or less identical with Aristotle). This is a crucial moment in the emergence of the secular both as an institutional contribution to differentiation and as an intellectual justification of that differentiation (which

justification, it must be remembered, itself partly constitutes the differentiation) (Casanova 1994, 11–39).

Yet with this clarity emerges a new confusion and forgetting. Theology as it is institutionalized in the university and conceptualized by Aquinas is irrefragably philosophical in its content and method. From the beginning, for example, we have seen that academic theology borrows its very sense of itself as a science from philosophy. In spite of its disciplinary distinction from metaphysics, theology cannot alter its nature, history, or concepts.

In two crucial respects, disciplinary theology, though centered on the Bible, remains a part of metaphysics or theology in the broader, historical sense. First, its primary content (God revealed in Scripture) is both in its dogmatic, creedal form and in the tradition of authorities, notably Augustine and Boethius, of a piece with Greek and specifically Platonic metaphysics. Orthodox Christianity was articulated and codified in the terms of Greek philosophy, of which it was itself, at least in some forms, a variant. In this respect alone, the content of disciplinary theology is intrinsically metaphysical. (Note the confusion that now arises in terminology. For were it not apparently tautologous, it would be more accurate to say that disciplinary/academic theology is intrinsically theological, in the historic, Greek sense. We can say instead that academic theology is a descendant and continuation of philosophy's highest expression in its original form.)

Second, just as Greek theology did not invent its divinities out of whole cloth, but rather took its cultural traditions and subjected them to philosophical reflection, so academic theology, although distinguishing itself from philosophy in the Arts faculty, likewise uses the resources of reason to clarify and systematize Scripture as the locus of God's self-revelation. Since early Christianity had already thought of itself as a form of revealed philosophy, the dependence on the Bible as such does not radically separate the content or practice, at the theoretical level, of academic theology from the broader historical tradition of which it is a part. Nor can the Thomistic conception of philosophy as a realm separate from revelation be used to interpret pre-Thomistic thought without serious anachronism and inaccuracy for reasons that should now be evident.

The philosophical and specifically metaphysical nature of disciplinary theology is one of the least understood yet most consequential legacies of philosophy. If it is rarely acknowledged, that is understandable. There are strong institutional pressures against such acknowledgment, not least of which is the threat to undermine theology's distinctive jurisdiction and contemporary philosophy's self-attributed secularity. The emergence of modern religious studies departments is extremely recent by the timeframe of even the university, and, historically, scholars of religion would most often have been part of a theology or divinity faculty, and thus have the potential of conflicting with their own institutional and religious identity

were they to elide the philosophy/theology distinction. Although many scholars have recognized that Christian theology cannot be studied as an entity distinct from the broader context of which it is a development, this recognition has failed to penetrate the long-standing divisions of the university, and thus insights related in content are separated by the chasm of the disciplinary divide.

Yet, just as disciplinary theology remains part of the philosophical and specifically metaphysical tradition, so disciplinary philosophy inherits the undifferentiated tradition of Christian metaphysics/theology seen as simply another development of the Greek theological tradition. Reflection on the Trinity and Incarnation, for example, along with Jewish, Islamic, and Christian reflection on creation, altered and deepened the tradition inherited from Greece. The result of the academic division of philosophy and theology in the university was a practically inevitable confusion over what was truly “philosophical” or “theological”—today we would say: “scientific” or “religious”—as well as a kind of bad faith or false consciousness implicit in each discipline’s ostensible independence of the other, given that the disciplinary division itself belies the shared history and content of the fields.

When one considers this fact in light of the historical sense of the Middle Ages, the problem deepens. For the medieval historical sense was, strictly speaking, nonexistent. Historians have shown that the sense of anachronism did not arise in Western Europe until the Renaissance (Burke 1969, *passim*; Schiffman 2011, 144ff). The historically indivisible origin of philosophy and theology, though still evident in early Christianity and latent in aspects of the Middle Ages, was neither understood nor remembered.

Just as the historical conditions of early Christianity have only in the past 200 years begun to be understood, so, too, with the historical understanding of philosophy, theology, and science. As the university was born as an institution, then, so too was a powerful agent of forgetting and a disincentive to remember. The shared *arkhe* of medieval philosophy and theology splits into the *arkhai* that ostensibly found the two new faculties: reason and faith, or nature and revelation. From a historical perspective, the history of academic philosophy and theology is the history of the institutionalized forgetting of their own true origins and original concerns, and thus, their profound and continued interdependency.

But the philosophy-theology and reason-faith division creates the possibility of the modern science-and-religion discourse, so the failure to understand the former confusion ensures that the latter one will also be misunderstood. If the two fields of academic philosophy and theology share their origin but imagine themselves as separate and unrelated, then it is inevitable that their ostensible *arkhai*, faith and reason, must remain unthought. For as soon as they are seriously considered, their instability and

incoherence become manifest, and the historical reality of their shared root or *arkhe* threatens to pull them together, eliding clarity and distinctness with a collapse into commonality.

The medieval division of philosophy from theology was to remain unchallenged in the university until the university itself was radically reformed and philosophy itself revolutionized at the turn of the nineteenth century. That revolution of the research university would transform yet deepen the division that arose at its origins.

SCHLEIERMACHER, THEOLOGY, AND SCIENCE IN THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Friedrich Schleiermacher was to the modern research university in the nineteenth century what Aquinas was to the medieval university: its most powerful and influential figure, *qua* theologian, and the source of the distinctive legitimation for theology as an academic discipline in the modern university. Schleiermacher was one of the founding figures of the University of Berlin in 1810 and the first holder of its chair in Theology. The University of Berlin was the first modern research university, one whose purpose and curriculum broke with the scholastic tradition that had formed a line of substantive and linguistic continuity with the original medieval university (Zachhuber 2014, 2–10; Purvis 2016, 218–219 and *passim*).

Schleiermacher's understanding of theology's scientific status can seem quite continuous, on the surface, with that of Aquinas (Zachhuber 2014, 12–16).⁵ And there is significant continuity in the crucial point that theology, as a discipline, has a unique relationship to faith, and philosophy to reason. But the meaning of faith, like almost everything else in Schleiermacher's system, is different. For Aquinas, faith was the distinctive mode by which theology apprehended its object, God. Since God's existence could also be known, in a strict sense, through philosophical demonstration, Christian theology distinguished its description of God by reference to revelation known by faith. On this point, a great division exists between Aquinas and Schleiermacher, and it can be summed up in two words: the Bible and the Enlightenment (Legaspi 2010, 27–52). The status of Scripture and revelation changed completely thanks to the Enlightenment and especially the combined power of historical criticism with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, who more than anyone else shaped Schleiermacher's generation.

Although Schleiermacher's relationship to Kant's philosophy is complex, Schleiermacher's theology broadly assumes the validity of Kant's critique of traditional metaphysics (Welch 2003, 1–85; Dorrien 2012, 84–108). The theological result is that reason no longer has the power to know, in the strict sense, God as an object. Reason, for Kant, can only know objects that it constitutes through its own powers and that have a foundation

in the faculty of sensibility. Kant maintains something he continues to call “metaphysics,” but his metaphysics has a far more restricted range than what had passed under the term historically, including in the scholastic university curriculum of Kant’s own era, in which God, the world, and the soul were the highest objects of philosophical knowledge and thus proper objects of metaphysical inquiry. Kant denied that we can possess true knowledge of any of these realities, and thus denied the possibility of what he called “dogmatic” metaphysics (practically, metaphysics as it had existed more or less until Kant; technically, metaphysics that was not founded on a critique of reason).

More broadly, Kant’s critical philosophy embodied a powerful philosophical argument for the Enlightenment’s central commitment: the supremacy of reason over all other authorities, enshrining the need to submit to reason alone as the foundational principle of human freedom itself (Beiser 2000, 18–36). To subject one’s self to an authority that was external to human nature was *heteronomy*, a violation of the dignity, freedom, and rationality constitutive of humanity.

Kant’s destruction of traditional metaphysics was undertaken in part to save metaphysics as a science (a *Wissenschaft*) and thus a legitimate part of the university. Kant famously described the goal of his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* as putting metaphysics back onto “the secure course of a science [*Wissenschaft*],” which it had lost (1998, 106 [B vii]). Unlike the natural sciences, epitomized for Kant in physics, philosophy had failed to make progress and was in danger of being discredited as a real science, much less the highest science. Though the concept of *Wissenschaft* for Kant no longer demanded self-evident premises or causes, it did demand systematicity, a complex unity organized around reason itself (Franks 2005, 85–145). Although Kant’s successors in German Idealism would differ in many ways with Kant on the details of philosophy, reason, and the idea of science or *Wissenschaft*, the importance of systematicity, a rational unity derived from the object of the science itself (in the case of philosophy, reason), would persist and characterize major thinkers of the next generation, including Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher was an independent and brilliant thinker, and he worked out his own version of post-Kantian philosophy.⁶ In that sense, it is misleading to say that Kant was to Schleiermacher what Aristotle was to Aquinas. But, *mutatis mutandis*, the analogy is valid, in that Schleiermacher, like other thinkers of his generation, was developing in a context whose crucial matrix was shaped by Kant’s philosophy and its reception, just as Aquinas and his generation were shaped by the reaction to Aristotle.

There are four specific contextual differences in the relationship of philosophy and theology in Schleiermacher vis-à-vis that of Aquinas, differences that need to be seen more broadly as radically different background conditions in which the concept of a legitimate science can be interpreted.

Schleiermacher's conception of theology operates in a context in which reason is accepted as the highest authority, not revelation or the Christian church, and thus theology is not the highest science. This is the first major difference between the modern and the medieval university about the status of theology and philosophy, and this difference marks Schleiermacher as a distinctively post-Enlightenment thinker.

The second is the restriction of reason's power and the destruction of metaphysics as theology, or put more strictly, the destruction of theology as a *form of knowledge*. For Kant, metaphysics could only be a science *if it was no longer* theological. For those following Kant's critique of metaphysics, then, reason itself no longer had direct access to God, and thus the cognitive legitimacy of theology or metaphysics as rational discourse about God, whatever its disciplinary location, was in question.

Third, partly as a result of Kant and a broader history of changes in the concept of *scientia*, Aristotle's conception of science as knowledge through first principles or *arkhai* was one of many conceptions on offer, the most influential of which was the conception of *Wissenschaft* as encyclopedic knowledge, which Schleiermacher would develop in his own conception of what counts as true knowledge, and thus what theology as a science would have to be (Wellmon 2015, 77ff; Purvis 2016, 1–13).

Together, these three differences point to the importance of the Enlightenment and Kant in the background of Schleiermacher's work. Yet, the fourth factor is as significant, and it is the rise of historicism with its concomitant of modern biblical criticism (Howard 1999, 23–77 and *passim*; Zachhuber 2013, *op. cit*; Beiser 2015, 23–47; Purvis 2016, *op. cit*). The Enlightenment background, combined with the historicization of the Bible, delegitimated the foundational idea of theology as a kind of Scriptural science. If theology's central text was dependent on history (which Schleiermacher regarded as essential to interpret the Bible as a historical document), then either theology would need a foundation different from Scripture or it could no longer be an autonomous science, for Scripture was now an untenable foundation.

Thus, part of Schleiermacher's extraordinary achievement was to theorize the nature of theology in the radically altered context of the Enlightenment and the changing conception of what history and science entailed. Schleiermacher's conception of *Wissenschaft* still involves the general notion of a rationally ordered body of knowledge, but the conception of demonstrative understanding, or knowledge through first causes, that defined *scientia* for Aquinas was less important by the end of the eighteenth century than the modified ideal of science as a systematic structure created by reason itself.

Indeed, while a number of modern thinkers still held to the view that science required self-evident premises that led to a deductive and necessary body of truth, Schleiermacher's conception of what reason looked

like in an academic discipline was based on the ideal of the research university. This ideal of encyclopedic knowledge was important as a way of conceptualizing rationality against the backdrop of a crisis of overinformation, as Chad Wellmon has shown (2015, 10–19). This specific norm of rationality in the research university, and particularly its creation of the conditions of modern disciplinary domains, represents a complex institutional and philosophical response to what is, at least by philosophers, usually regarded as a purely intellectual question: What is knowledge? But societies can only conceptualize “pure” intellectual questions in philosophically “impure” conditions.

So science, whatever else it is, is a form of social legitimacy and prestige that in Western culture has been institutionally connected to the university system, the inhabitants of which generally possess a special epistemic legitimacy just in virtue of their presence in the university (Loncar 2016, 3–5). The crisis in which universities found themselves by the end of the eighteenth century had much to do with the changing cultural and epistemic conditions marked by the scientific revolution, the growth of modern nation states, and the rapid rise of print culture, which, as Wellmon shows, increased exponentially between 1770 and 1800. The crucial issue remained: Does theology conform to the standards of rationality institutionalized in the university? Schleiermacher had no question that it *could* and *should*, but his conception of theology is radically different from the scholastic ideal because of the radically different conditions.

Like Aquinas, then, Schleiermacher is both creating and responding to a conception of disciplinary rationality—creating in that he is tailoring and embedding one ideal (the encyclopedic and systematic) as a concrete discipline (his novel conception of academic theology), and responding in that he has to articulate the rationality of theology against the existing conditions of his time. Quite simply, theology for Schleiermacher ceased being metaphysical, and thus ceased being theological in the traditional form descending from Plato and Aristotle. That is, theology is no longer the apex of the sciences and the height of knowledge.

Theology can still be thought of as a kind of rational discourse about divinity, but only in a highly indirect sense: it is rational the way any *Wissenschaft* must be to deserve the name. In making this move, Schleiermacher severed the long-standing continuity between the origins of theology in the context of philosophy and its adaption into early Christianity and laid the foundation for a tradition of academic “anti-metaphysical” theology that took shape in the liberal Protestant tradition and came to fame through the theology of Karl Barth.⁷

The crux of Schleiermacher’s reformulation of theology lies in his concept of faith, which takes on a sense radically different from that in Aquinas. Faith for Schleiermacher is not a straightforward epistemic category, like Aquinas’s *fides*, which is a mode of apprehending truth. Rather,

faith is conceptualized as a *modification of human self-awareness*. Moreover, where Aquinas's *fides* and theology have the same object (God), for Schleiermacher, faith is the *object of theology itself*. Thus, the defining object of Christian theology for Schleiermacher is faith, understood as a form of piety. Piety in turn refers to God-consciousness, a state of immediate awareness of God that is *not* a form of scientific knowledge, but is a more basic affect of the human subject, which Schleiermacher calls "feeling" (*Gefühl*).

In a move that became crucial for the history of religion in the post-Enlightenment period, Schleiermacher early on articulated the feeling that grounds religion as a third and autonomous realm, distinct from both science in the broad sense (including philosophy) and morality (which Kant had essentially identified with religion), and he devoted his major theological work, *Der Christliche Glaube* (The Christian Faith), to an exposition of theology as a form of piety or consciousness of the divine (2016, §3–5).⁸ In so doing he, like Aquinas, constituted theology in a way that simultaneously deepens the process of differentiation by articulating the autonomy of theology vis-à-vis the contemporary intellectual, cultural, and institutional conditions of his own time. Schleiermacher links the concept of religion to a kind of human experience not captured in the discourse of rationality but something more subject-oriented, reflexive, and primordial.

More than any other theologian before him, Schleiermacher rendered theology far more autonomous from metaphysics or history than it had ever been, and this autonomy is inseparable from his institutional establishment of theology as its own discipline in the research university and the displacement of the Bible from the center of theology, which ended the commentary tradition as the main practice of academic theology. In this respect, although Schleiermacher and Aquinas can both be seen as contributing to the differentiation process that many have seen as identical with secularization, they represent radically different stages in that process. For Aquinas, the differentiation, although itself a kind of violence to the tradition, arose as an arguably immanent self-differentiation of reason itself, dividing reason's operations based on whether they derive their premises from revelation or somehow reason itself. By contrast, Schleiermacher is able to build on the structural division Aquinas created, with faith, revelation, and Christian theology on the one side, and reason, philosophy, and science on the other side, leaving him with the same implicit question that was explicit in Aquinas: Is theology as a science necessary in addition to philosophy?

To that question, he brings as his own background assumption not Aristotelian science but the Kantian destruction of metaphysics and theology as a rational and Scriptural enterprise. He thus eliminates the internal connection between Scripture, theology, and knowledge of the divine in order to secure the extrinsic, or institutional rationality of theology as a viable

academic discipline in a post-Enlightenment world. In short, *theology becomes a rational modern discipline by disclaiming any scientific knowledge of God, including in Scripture.*

The pressure to do this came from multiple sources, as we have seen. Philosophically, it was increasingly questionable whether the divine was a true object of knowledge, and thus whether reason could attain to its traditional heights. Reason's powers had suffered a series of blows of which Kant's was, to be sure, the most decisive but hardly the first. Yet, the alternative option, which had grounded theology's scientific status, namely that its object was infallible revealed truth (found in Scripture), depended on a traditional view of the Bible, one that was increasingly incredible by the nineteenth century. Since Schleiermacher found such a view of Scripture and inspiration untenable in light of the science of his day, he fashioned a new doctrine of Scripture that grounded its authority ultimately on the God-consciousness or piety distinctive to Christianity.

Thus, we have reached in Schleiermacher, at least *in potentia*, an early version of the view of faith that dominates in the contemporary world and came to seem like common sense for Protestant Liberals in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. On this view, faith is personal, subjective, noncognitive, and thus incapable of coming into direct conflict with knowledge claims found in history, the natural sciences, or philosophy. Scholars of science and religion will immediately recognize here the foundational grammar of the contemporary debate: science is secular, non-religious, while religion is based on faith, and not-rational as a result. Of course, this summary simplifies Schleiermacher's view, but one could say the *function* of faith in Schleiermacher vis-à-vis other sciences or disciplines has become the *meaning* of faith for many modern people: personal experience immune to rational or historical falsification.

This way of thinking about religion—as something deeply personal, private, and seemingly noncognitive—would have immense power and appeal in Schleiermacher's time up to our own. James Ungureanu is thus right to highlight the importance of Schleiermacher, for example, when seeking to understand Andrew Dickson White and the origins of the conflict narrative of religion and science (2019, 79–81, 2021). The separation of faith and reason, of philosophy and theology, and finally of science and religion—these separations have become part of the air we breathe. They became in many ways one of the crucial conditions of and carriers for the myth that philosophy, and now science, are free from the influence of religion and religion is somehow nonrational. Without this new post-Enlightenment *arkhe* of philosophy, theology, religion, and science, the very framing of our science-and-religion questions becomes impossible.

Schleiermacher himself would not have accepted all aspects of the contemporary divide, but his reaffirmation of faith as the ground of theology's distinctness, his separation of theology from metaphysics, natural

science, and, in many ways, history, and his placement of feeling and experience at the ground of religion have made the parting of the ways between philosophy and theology seem normal and natural, especially for academics, because, as we can now recognize, Schleiermacher's view of theology, like Aquinas's, is tailored both to legitimate and simultaneously *create* a new form of academic theology. When that form lost wider credibility with the decline of Christianity as a cultural power, theology had no philosophical foundations to which it could appeal, just as religion, in the science-and-religion concept, has no real cognitive contribution to make to science. At best, religion is a personal or communal thing, focused on our feelings and experiences. Science, we would now say, is something wholly different.

The irony is that we think this way because of how theology itself became a science in the university. By bringing this development to light through a kind of *arkhaiology*, a mode of regathering the past and present through focus on the *arkhai* that rule the science and religion field, we can now return to our starting point.

ARKHE

At the critical juncture in which historical consciousness was gaining power and the modern discipline of history was being born, the amnesia embedded in the medieval university was not unearthed but buried even deeper by Schleiermacher's successful and brilliant refounding of academic theology for the modern world. Although the profound conceptual and historical connections between philosophy, religion, and science remain there for all to see and many did see them, it took the great genealogist of the modern world, particularly of Platonism and Christianity's profound entanglement, to put his finger directly on the point. That genealogist was Friedrich Nietzsche:

Among Germans one understands at once when I say that philosophy is tainted by theologian's blood. The protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy, Protestantism itself its original sin. One has only to say the words "Tübingen seminary" to grasp what German philosophy is at its roots – a cunning theology (1999, 176).

All of philosophy, including modern natural philosophy or science, is "tainted" by theologians' blood. As Ungureanu shows, the myth of science-and-religion was crucial in shaping the history of science itself. Moreover, even the scholarly story about the conflict myth of science and religion is itself another myth (2019, 249–259). So, the discipline designed to provide a genuine history of science began as an adjunct to one of the myths, about science and religion, that historical study must inevitably explode.

Through Harrison, Ungureanu, and the work of countless other scholars, one can see the history of science reaching a new form of self-consciousness precisely as it begins to recognize its own mythologies, to historicize its own anachronisms, and to reckon with its own past. In doing so, I have sought to embody through the course of my argument a distinctive role for the history of philosophy, one that links the history of science, religion, and philosophy through the arkhaiological continuum from which they have coalesced into separated silos. Because the arkhai of science and religion, reason and faith, in fact flow from the arkhai of philosophy itself, we now face a fork in the road. We can continue to use the science-and-religion framework by invoking it as an analytic tool, which remains a useful and necessary task. But we can also now recognize that the very idea of “science and religion” is kind of shadow cast by the unseen part of philosophy’s own history, and that in so far as it can lead us to the light, it leads us far beyond the safe precincts of modernity and its idea of science as an autonomous domain, free of philosophy or religion.

Exploring the arkhai of modern science demands a self-consciously interdisciplinary, historicist, even ascetic project, one that is willing to live without the story of science and religion, and thus be willing to stand, for a moment, naked of names and concepts, in the face of the same world scientists study, recognizing that we are all engaged in the same activity, for which we once had a shared name. Philosophy.

NOTES

1. For general overviews of the field, see *Science and Religion: New Historical Perspectives*, ed. Dixon, Cantor, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), and on the latest historiography, James Ungureanu, *Science, Religion, and the Protestant Tradition: Retracing the Origins of Conflict*.

2. On the background and nature of scholastic culture in the Latin West, cf. R.W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe, Volume I: Foundations* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997); *idem.*, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe: Volume II: The Heroic Age* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001); Marcia Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 265–302. On ancient philosophy, see Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*

3. See, for the general context of Aristotelian science and theology, M.D. Chenu, *La Théologie comme Science aux XIII^e Siècle*, 3rd ed. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1969), and, on Albert the Great, *A Companion to Albert the Great*, ed. Irven Resnick (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

4. This is my glossing of Aquinas’s *sub ratione Dei* at Q.1.7: “Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei vel quia sunt ipse Deus.”

5. Zachhuber’s excellent book in my view somewhat underestimates Schleiermacher’s differences from Aquinas, especially regarding the actual object of theology as a science.

6. It is fair to say that Schleiermacher’s philosophy, while interesting, has been systematically neglected in comparison to his theology. See Peter Grove, *Deutung des Subjekts: Schleiermachers Philosophie der Religion* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004) and for a more accessible introduction through the essays in Part 1 of *The Cambridge Companion to Schleiermacher*, ed. Jacqueline Maríña (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

7. On this tradition, see Albrecht Ritschl, “Theology and Metaphysics,” in 151–216, in *Albrecht Ritschl: Three Essays*, ed. and trans. Philip Hefner (Fortress, 1972), Wilhelm Hermann, *Die Metaphysik in der Theologie* (M. Niemeyer, 1876), and, for its influence on Barth’s theology,

Gary Dorrien, *Theology Without Weapons: The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology* (Louisville: WJK, 2000). Cf. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*.

8. Schleiermacher, *Der Christliche Glaube* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), §3–5 for an overview of the concept of piety (*Frommigkeit*) and its status as the highest level of human self-consciousness. This material is immensely difficult, and its details depend upon Schleiermacher's theory of self-consciousness. For background on this key idea, see Samuel Loncar, "From Jena to Copenhagen: Kierkegaard's Relations to German Idealism and the Critique of Autonomy in *The Sickness Unto Death*," *Religious Studies* 47:2 (2011): 201–216.

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