Henri de Lubac, S. J. (1896-1991) was a Catholic Cardinal and one of the significant Catholic theologians of the twentieth century. Particularly influential among his works were his various contributions to the history of biblical exegesis. He was one of the main contributors to the renaissance of Origen and of patristic exegesis in the past forty years, as well as having stimulated a renewed interest in lectio divina approaches.

This volume presents Lubac’s Exégèse medieval: Les quatre sens de l’écriture (Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1961) in English for the first time. The publisher is to be thanked for making Lubac’s important analysis of medieval Bible interpretation available in English (translated by E. M. M. Macierowski; Professor of philosophy and classical languages at the Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas).

As representative figures of medieval exegesis, with its emphasis on the four senses of Scripture, Lubac has chosen Berno of Reichenau (1-71), Hugh of Saint Victor (211-67) and the Victorine School (269-326) and Joachim of Flora (327-419). Lubac also offers an extended discussion of “Subjectivism and Spiritual Understanding” (73-146; including the relationship of Christian exegesis to Jewish exegesis and examining positions of many Christian interpreters) and raises the question of whether medieval exegesis stems from Jerome, and, if so, which elements (147-210; Lubac covers Paschasius Radbertus, Christian of Stavelot, Bruno of Segni, Rupert of Deutz; his discussion further includes the significance of Hebrew and Greek and instances of criticism of Jerome and other patristic interpreters during the medieval period). The volume contains detailed notes (421-767) and an index of names. While some of Lubac’s analysis and conclusions have been challenged by more recent studies, this volume is still a mine of information and astute observations. It shows that Bible interpretation in the Middle Ages was certainly not as stale and unproductive as it has often been characterised.

Biblical Interpretation II: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) – a thematic approach to various issues in Bible interpretation and including Eastern Orthodox and medieval Jewish interpretation.

The translation of Lubac’s volumes and these detailed contributions to the history of exegesis testify to the shift in academic discourse from historically oriented biblical studies to various approaches of cultural studies and an increasing interest in the reception of the Bible in the church and academy, but also beyond these confines; for a brief summary of this development, see the introduction to the new Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception Volume I: Aaron-Aniconism, H.-J. Klauck, B. McGinn, P. Mendes-Flohr et al. (eds.) (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2009), ix-xi.

Lubac’s volumes I and II of Medieval Exegesis: Four Senses of Scripture have appeared in the same series (I: 1998; II: 2000).

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