B. EPISTEMOLOGY
Among historians of medieval thought, Henry of Ghent is commonly taken as the epitome of a high-medieval Augustinian. Nowhere is this truer than with regard to his epistemology. Henry’s account of human knowledge represents for many scholars the plainest embodiment of Augustine’s doctrine of divine illumination in the technical language of thirteenth-century Scholasticism. From this perspective, Henry’s works provide the *locus classicus* for the defense of the presumption that the human mind perceives the truth only when bathed in an intelligible light streaming from God, himself. Attention to Henry’s writings reveals, however, that he was also a close reader of Aristotle, indeed a determined exponent of Aristotelian criteria for human cognition. A full participant in the effort, stretching from Robert Grosseteste in the early thirteenth century to John Duns Scotus at the beginning of the fourteenth, to understand Aristotle’s epistemology and extract from it a theory capable of establishing university discourse on a truly apodictic or “scientific” basis, he was a major force in the “Aristotelianizing” of much of scholastic intellectual activity in the later thirteenth century. Viewed this way, Henry’s theory of knowledge can be thought of as taking the first decisive steps outside Dominican circles influenced by Thomas Aquinas to undermine the place of Augustinian illumination in normal human cognition.

In fact, both points of view are valid. That is to say that each offers a defensible interpretation, while at the same time revealing only part of the truth. Simply put, Henry’s epistemology managed a remarkable fusion of what are typically taken as Augustinianizing and Aristotelianizing themes. And although no major thinker following Henry reproduced precisely his amalgam of these two competing tendencies, Henry’s mixture was a potent catalyst for the more stable epistemological stances that established themselves in the fourteenth century. Comprehending Henry, therefore, marks an important first step in coming to terms with late medieval theories of knowledge of all stripes. The primary complication—in addition to the fact that Henry combined Augustinianizing and Aristotelianizing inclinations—arises from the fact that Henry’s