Russell L. Friedman's *Intellectual Traditions at the Medieval University* is a commendable two-volume book (1,006 pages) that achieves several things for our understanding of medieval philosophy and theology, in particular Trinitarian theology, between 1250-1350. The book is divided into three parts. Part One is on emerging Trinitarian traditions from 1250-1280. Part Two is on the strong use of philosophical psychology by some scholastics and rejection by others from 1280-1320. Part Three is on the ways some scholastics from 1320-1350 prioritized a search for divine simplicity motivated by a theological aesthetic, and which precluded rational explanation of the Trinity.

In the introduction Friedman sets out historical contexts, such as medieval Jewish and Muslim anti-Trinitarian treatises, that clarify why scholastic Christians made detailed explanations of the unity and distinction of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Having set the Biblical, patristic, inter-religious and ecclesial backgrounds, Friedman advances the argument that we can identify two ontological accounts of the Trinity among Latin speaking scholastics. What the accounts have in common is that there is just one divine nature or essence. Where they differ is in how the divine persons are distinct. Friedman calls one account the “relation account” and the other the “emanation account.” The relation account holds that the persons are distinct because of their opposed relations (e.g., ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ [parent and child]). The emanation account holds that the persons are distinct because of the way they exist—that is, the way they originate. The Father is unoriginated, the Son is from the Father by nature, and the Holy Spirit is from the Father and Son by will.

Friedman shows that scholastics in this period chose passages from authoritative theologians (e.g., Augustine, Boethius) to support the account under consideration. Innovations in this period lay in the ontological details of the account in question. Friedman shows that Thomas Aquinas and those following him (usually in the Dominican order) advocated the relation account, and that Richard of St. Victor and Bonaventure and those following them (usually, but not always, in the Franciscan order) advocated the emanation account. This is one of Friedman’s contributions to the history of medieval theology: showing that the Dominicans and Franciscans had strong disagreements about the fundamental explanation of the distinction between divine persons.
Another of Friedman’s contributions is showing the central role that Henry of Ghent (a secular master) played in the development of the emanation account. First, Friedman persuasively shows that Henry rejected the relation account because of what he argued were inadequacies of the particular theory of relation used in the relation account. Henry conceded that there are opposed relations, but denied (against, e.g., Aquinas) that a relation has a dual nature. For Aquinas, a relation is not distinct from its foundation but is distinct from that to which it refers (its term). In general, Friedman gets Henry’s theory of relations and his criticism of Aquinas right. Still, more could be said. For instance, Henry seems committed to a relation’s being numerically the same thing as its foundation without being identical to it (as I have argued elsewhere), and, given Richard Cross’s recent argument that Aquinas seems to lack the concept of identity, this would explain further Henry’s criticism of Aquinas.

Furthermore, Friedman shows that before Henry Franciscans claimed that the Son is from the Father by nature, but Henry identifies the Son’s natural origination as an intellectual origination. He did so to make sense of the passage from John 1:1 (“In the beginning was the Word . . .”) and Augustine’s use of psychology in his De Trinitate. Although Aquinas synthesized in his own way what Aristotle and Augustine said about the intellect and put it in his Trinitarian theology, for Aquinas what distinguishes the Father and Son are opposed relations and not the type of origin. Friedman gives a helpful overview of Henry’s philosophical psychology that provides the dialectical context in which John Duns Scotus critically developed Henry’s philosophical psychology to explain the distinction of divine persons.

Friedman’s overall focus on Henry’s discussion of the Father’s intellectual generation of the Son and its reception and refinement by Scotus and Peter Auriol limits him from discussing Henry’s intricate account of the Holy Spirit’s voluntary origination from the Father and Son. But this isn’t a weakness, because he focuses on intellectual generation to illustrate the strong use of philosophical psychology. Nevertheless, Friedman’s survey of the Dominican Hervaeus Natalis’ criticism of Henry and others gives us an outline of these details. In any case, Friedman demonstrates that Franciscans followed Henry’s strong use of philosophical psychology and that Dominicans criticized it.

In Part Two Friedman does a superb job in detailing Franciscan and Dominican arguments and counter-arguments. He also outlines avenues for future research by giving an annotated bibliography of many Dominicans whose manuscripts are unedited and whose arguments and positions have yet to be sufficiently understood. Further, he carefully narrates the history of “absolute person constitution” beginning with William of Auvergne, through Scotus, and ending with Michael of Massa.