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# The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Medieval Period

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## The Medieval Theologians



Edited by  
G. R. Evans



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**From Brand: Wiley-Blackwell : The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Medieval Period** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Medieval Period:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Collection of Introductory Essays!By mickmaxThis book is a treasure. The book chapters introduce many of the leading lights of the middle ages, as well as some who are less well known. The chapters are written by leading experts, and are accurate and insightful. Marcia Colish provides,

for example, in her chapter on Peter Lombard, the best compact summary of the Sentences available in the English language. Other chapters I particularly liked included Jonathan Rist's on St. Augustine, Jenny Swanson on the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and Willimien Otten's survey of Carolingian theology. Great resource!<sup>32</sup> of 32 people found the following review helpful. The rise of Christendom's spirit

By FrKurt Messick

The editor of this volume, G.R. Evans, is a lecturer in history at Cambridge, and author of a number of texts that deal with issues and topics of the same period, as well as other historical periods. For the most part, however, Evans lets the articles from scholars speak for themselves. Her role, apart from the worthwhile introduction, was to select from among the best scholars in Britain, North American and Europe to produce a companion volume to Blackwell's 'Modern Theologians'. (Alas, other volumes, such as *Ancient Theologians*, *Reformation and post-Reformation Theologians* have not yet been done.)

The book is divided primarily into five sections, the first being 'The End of the Ancient World', which begins rather naturally with Augustine. Augustine occupies a unique place in being the last great classical and first great medieval writer. Boethius and other theologians, described as postpatristic, round out this section with articles by John Rist, Charles Kannengiesser, and Andrew Louth.

The second section deals with the Carolingians, and highlights the work of the Venerable Bede. Benedicta Ward writes on Bede, and Willemien Otten looks at other Carolingians such as Alcuin, Theodulf and Eriugena. While much of the patristic period was taken up by classifying and clarifying doctrine and defending against heresy, the Carolingians also dealt with potential heresies, and set the stage for some controversies that remained undercurrents until coming to the forefront in the Reformation.

The third section looks at the Medieval 'Renaissance', which included persons such as Anselm, Abelard, Bernard and the monastic movement, and Peter Lombard. Scholars Lauge Nielsen, Emero Stiegman, Jenny Swanson and Marcia Colish provide articles, as does the editor Evans herself. As Evans states, this period saw a rise in the quality of scholarship coupled with a renewed interest in both patristic concerns and Carolingian issues.

The fourth section examines the 'High Medieval Debate', which also helped solidify much of Catholic dogma for hundreds of years, saw a rise in mysticism, but also began to push into uncomfortable relief issues that would explode during the Reformation era. This was a time of great scholarship, including such notables as Duns Scotus, William Ockham, and Thomas Aquinas. Scholars Michael Robson, Fergus Kerr, Oliver Davies, and Alexander Broadie deal with particular issues and personalities, whereas Takashi Shogimen looks more generally at the academic controversies arising out of Bishop Tempier's condemnation of 219 philosophical/theological propositions (note that this is more than twice the number of Luther's later Theses).

The fifth section is on Dissent, particularly as it was concerned in church and state issues (never separate even in today's world, but much more identified with each other in the past), the poor of Lyon (the Waldenses), the idea of dualism (including Albigensians), and the Wyclif and Lollardy issue. Scholars Euan Cameron, Gerhard Rottenwohrer, Matthew Kempshall, and Stephen Lahey provide essays.

There are two concluding essays, one by Evans looking toward a specific in Luther's later ideas, and one more general essay by Paul Rorem tracing the trail from Augustine through the Medievals toward the Reformation.

This text is a must for any student of theology, particularly those who have an interest in the history of the church and the development of ideas. The writing is intelligent and scholarly without being overpowering or needlessly technical. However, this text may send the reader looking for more reference material and further study (and this is not a bad thing!) - to this end, most articles have a good references list (although this is not always consistent across the articles, as some have notes, some have references, and some have both). The index at the end is reasonable, but could be fleshed out a bit more.

Overall, this is a great text for the student of theology and church history, as well as useful for the student of more general medieval philosophy, medieval European history, and general religious studies.

The *Medieval Theologians* provides a clear and comprehensive introduction to the period through an examination of the key individual theologians of the time. Chronologically arranged, it allows students to explore this crucial period when so many important theological developments took place. Covers the important period from the 5th to the 16th centuries, when theology took shape as an increasingly formal subject of academic study. The only book to trace developments in the field by individual theologian, rather than thematically, as is the case in other texts. Provides a unique and distinctively theological perspective. Written by leading authorities from around the world.

"[This book] forms a very full introduction to medieval theology in general. Edited by a leading scholar in the field...the list alone of the other contributors assures the reader from the outset of the high quality of the scholarship. The lucidity and clarity of the presentation of the material are remarkable, and they make the book highly accessible to the general reader as well as to the specialist." *Theology*

"The present volume is a fine comprehensive introduction to medieval theology and introduces students to the major individual theologians of that period. I recommend this text as a very good introductory text. Were I teaching a course on medieval theology at the moment, I would probably list this as required reading for my students." *H-Net*

s "The collection succeeds because of the substantial number of essays which are truly outstanding. Those of us who offer courses in medieval theology would do well to consider using this book alongside primary texts." *Religious Studies*

The editor provides an extremely useful introduction [and] some very incisive lines of thought This is an excellent addition to the series and will be a valuable introduction to the crucial

formative period of Christian theology. Australian Religious Studies "It fills a considerable gap in theological literature, for I know of no other book that comes close to covering medieval theology as thoroughly as this one does." John S. Hammett, Faith Mission "This collection of essays is a success, for they are not perfunctory summations, but include genuine insights." Anglican Theological "Evans has provided a genuinely useful introduction to a central, and yet surprisingly neglected, area of medieval studies." Ecclesiastical History

**From the Back Cover** This comprehensive introduction to medieval theology introduces students to the period through examination of the major individual theologians of the time. Chronologically arranged, it allows students to explore the crucial period between the Church Fathers and the Reformation when theology first emerged as an academic discipline and when important controversies took place. These issues clarified the nature and purpose of the church and the sacraments, and reopened many of the earlier debates about orthodoxy. This was the period which sowed the seeds of the divisions in the church which have persisted until today. Introduced with an editorial essay from G.R. Evans, this volume will appeal to theologians and historians. Each theologian is presented by a world renowned scholar who also demonstrates the relevance of medieval theological debate to the modern period.

**About the Author** G. R. Evans is Lecturer in History at the University of Cambridge. She is the author of numerous critically-acclaimed books in the fields of patristic, medieval, and Reformation history and theology including *Augustine on Evil*, *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates*, *The Church and the Churches*, *Philosophy and Theology in the Middle Ages*, and *Anselm*. Dr Evans is a prominent member of the Church and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England and has written extensively on contemporary ecclesiological issues.