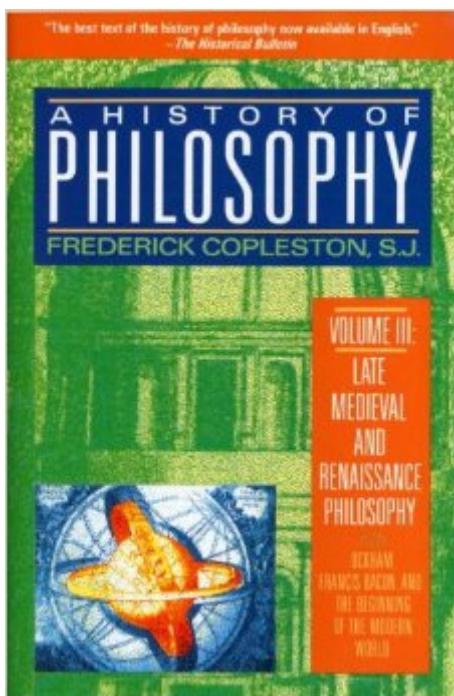


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A History Of Philosophy, Volume 3: Late Medieval And Renaissance Philosophy: Ockham, Francis Bacon, And The Beginning Of The Modern World



Synopsis

Conceived originally as a serious presentation of the development of philosophy for Catholic seminary students, Frederick Copleston's nine-volume A History Of Philosophy has journeyed far beyond the modest purpose of its author to universal acclaim as the best history of philosophy in English. Copleston, an Oxford Jesuit of immense erudition who once tangled with A. J. Ayer in a fabled debate about the existence of God and the possibility of metaphysics, knew that seminary students were fed a woefully inadequate diet of theses and proofs, and that their familiarity with most of history's great thinkers was reduced to simplistic caricatures. Copleston set out to redress the wrong by writing a complete history of Western philosophy, one crackling with incident and intellectual excitement -- and one that gives full place to each thinker, presenting his thought in a beautifully rounded manner and showing his links to those who went before and to those who came after him. The result of Copleston's prodigious labors is a history of philosophy that is unlikely ever to be surpassed. Thought magazine summed up the general agreement among scholars and students alike when it reviewed Copleston's A History of Philosophy as "broad-minded and objective, comprehensive and scholarly, unified and well proportioned... We cannot recommend [it] too highly."

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Customer Reviews

I bought several of these back when I was majoring in philosophy in college... way back in the old days... and I rarely use them anymore because I've moved on in my life - no longer being a student, I don't do as much philosophy, I already know about the stuff that I want/need to know about,

etc. But I still get a curiosity now and then, and I've found that these are really excellent references. I'll give two examples. First, Marsilius of Padua, a medieval thinker who wrote an important and fascinating work of political philosophy. I'd heard of him back in the day but didn't remember why, and then recently he came to my attention in a way that made me want to know more about him. Now I have two other excellent sources that helped me research him a bit but actually the best source turned out to be Copleston, who has a very nice essay here, very sympathetic to Marsilius and very insightful. I thought that maybe Copleston would be more interested in religious or metaphysical philosophy, but he did a great job with Marsilius. (This is in vol. 3, to which this review will be attached.) Second, David Hume. Now Hume is known today very much for his metaphysical and religious philosophy, but recently I became interested in his economic thought, which might have been the biggest influence on his friend Adam Smith. On a hunch, I thought, let's see if Copleston has anything to say about this, and... voila, he does. It's not much, but it's something, better than nothing, and that's impressive considering that this is really one of the back alleys in the history of western thought.

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