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The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy

FROM THE REDISCOVERY OF ARISTOTLE TO THE DISINTEGRATION OF SCHOLASTICISM 1100–1600

EDITORS
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PREFACE

The idea of this History originated in the Cambridge University Press, and the first discussions that led directly to its publication took place in 1975. Naturally it was conceived of as one of the Cambridge Histories of philosophy. Its place in that series is described in the Introduction, where its principles of organisation and its special purposes are also discussed. Editorial decisions regarding the contents and the contributors were made in 1976, and drafts of most of the contributions were received by the end of 1978. During a two-week conference of the editorial staff in the summer of 1979 the book was given very nearly its final form, and the four editors put the finishing touches on the typescript during the following summer. Proofreading and indexing were done during the summer of 1981. The editorial work of the three last summers was alleviated by the hospitality of Cornell University's Society for the Humanities. The Directors of the Society during those years – first Professor Michael Kammen and then Professor Eric Blackall – cheerfully provided excellent offices and work-space for the staff on all those occasions. Two Cornell undergraduates served as assistants to the staff: Mary Tedeschi helped a great deal with the Bibliography, and William Haines worked with admirable efficiency and intelligence on the Index Nominum.

Editorial thanks can scarcely be offered to the contributors for the substance of their chapters; they are, after all, the authors of this book. But the editors would be remiss if they did not express their gratitude to the contributors for trying to stay within irksome limits and for acquiescing in the editing necessitated by their occasionally failing to do so. The resultant heavily edited typescript of an already complex volume posed a special problem for the typesetters, and we are pleased to offer our congratulations to the printers (the Asco Trade Typesetting company in Hong Kong) to whom the Press entrusted this project; their remarkably accurate work made the considerable task of proofreading and indexing less burdensome than we had expected it to be.

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Long delays are evidently inevitable in the production of a work of this size, and the contributors, almost all of whom submitted their drafts on schedule in 1978, cannot be blamed if the Bibliography lacks references to some recent important work within the fields of their chapters. In the final phases of the book's preparation the editors did a little to bring the Bibliography up to date, but our combined expertise is not nearly broad enough to cover the range of all these chapters.

In editing the drafts we tried to reduce redundancy and inconsistency among the forty-seven chapters, but a history organised topically rather than chronologically and written by many expert authors is bound to contain differing opinions and even discrepancies. We hope those that remain prove to be stimulating.

The reader who wants to make effective use of this book should begin by reading the Introduction and the introductory notes attached to the Biographies, the Bibliography, and the Indices.

Norman Kretzmann

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