

13th Century Scholasticism

Historical Theology

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WHAT IS SCHOLASTICISM?

From Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary:

Scholasticism is, “a philosophical movement dominant in western Christian civilization from the 9th until the 17th century and combining religious dogma with the mystical and intuitional tradition of patristic philosophy especially of St. Augustine and later with Aristotelianism.”

I. ORIGINS OF SCHOLASTICISM

A. CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

1. Charlemagne decreed that all abbeys under his rule start a school
2. The creation of the abbey schools gathered scholars to Continental Europe and led to a resurgence of literacy in Greek

B. RECONQUERING SPAIN

1. Early in the 13th century northern Spanish forces reconquer southern Iberian strongholds from Moorish forces placing most of Iberia under Spanish/Christian rule.
2. The transition from Moorish to Spanish control exposed Spaniards and eventually Spanish scholars to Eastern learning the Moors had brought from Greece and the Middle East, including Aristotle and Plato as well as Astronomy, Economics, Math, Sciences, etc.

3. Connections between the abbey schools led to the translation of many of these works into Latin and spreading them through the schools into Continental Europe.

II. SCHOLASTIC METHOD

A. THREE PARTS

1. Lectio (reading)

Read and summarize literary works usually of a Biblical, theological or scientific nature.

2. Quaestio (asking)

Since most of the works read were translations into Latin this involved reading multiple translations or renderings and asking questions about the reasons for variations among them. Eventually scholastics would take a more aggressive approach to learning the original languages.

3. Disputatio (discussing)

The findings from the first two parts would be assembled and presented to a body of other scholastics who would seek to expose the weakness and fallacies, so they could be corrected and the discoveries could be used to further the whole process.

III. CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTEMPORARIES TO SCHOLASTICISM

A. SAINT DOMINIC

1. Founded Dominican Order
2. Responsible for the growth and promotion of the Rosary for sanctification.

B. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

1. Founder of Franciscan Order
2. Credited with Creating First Nativity Scene
3. Described as Patron Saint of Animals
4. Teachings Form the Foundation of Catholic Doctrine Regarding Ecology

C. THOMAS AQUINAS

1. Studied at Naples where he was probably introduced to Aristotle, Averroes and Maimonides
2. Resolved to become a Dominican as a teenager, and pursued that course against his family's wishes.
3. Eventually rose to prominence among the Dominicans eventually being appointed as Regent Master of Theology at Paris. During this time he would begin writing Summa contra Gentiles
4. In February 1265 Pope Clement IV appointed Thomas as the Papal Theologian, he also headed up a Dominican school in Rome and began writing Summa Theologiae, a summary of Catholic theology for the instruction of beginners in the study of theology.

5. In 1268 he was sent back to Paris apparently to address the rise of Averroism AKA Radical Aristotelianism. These folks were viewed as subjugating Catholic doctrine and the Bible to the teachings of Aristotle and Averroes. Thomas had argued that where Aristotle's methods of understanding the natural world were in line with Catholic doctrine they were useful and that for the most part they were in line, but this group went too far in applying Greek philosophy. However the Franciscans saw an opportunity to defame the Dominicans and Thomas even though Thomas was deeply troubled by Averroism and worked hard to oppose its increase.

6. Thomas is still a formidable figure and his studies and writings have an influence in virtually every branch of the church. In Catholicism his works are required study for anyone who wants to join the clergy. In Protestantism his works are sometimes seen as foundational and sometimes are seen as what we want to avoid. Either way his influence is significant.

D. BONAVENTURE

1. Where Aquinas focused on the interplay between Aristotelian philosophy and Catholic doctrine, Bonaventure did much the same thing but with Plato's philosophy. He also built much of his work on the teachings of Augustine of Hippo.

E. ENGLAND

1. Robert Grosseteste

- a. Made Bishop of Lincoln in 1235.
- b. Based on Aristotle's vision of the dual path of scientific reasoning Grosseteste described a process of "resolution and composition" which when carried out takes the form of observation, hypothesis, experimentation conclusion, repetition.
- c. Seems to have made "progress" towards separating understanding physical things from understanding spiritual things.

2. Roger Bacon

- a. Studied under and continued the work of Robert Grosseteste
- b. In 1256 or 1257 became a Franciscan Friar, but there was some kind of restriction on Franciscans publishing books or pamphlets without approval.
- c. Eventually Bacon's friendship with Guy de Foulques paid off when Guy became Pope Clement IV in 1265 and commissioned Bacon to produce a summary of the sciences in 1266. Which he did producing a collection of books totaling around 1 million words in just one year. These books consisted of his *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, *De Multiplicatione Specierum*, *De Speculis Comburentibus*, and possibly other works.

d. *Opus Majus* laid out Bacon's views about how to incorporate Aristotelian logic and science into theology.

e. In 1268 Pope Clement IV died and Bacon's fortunes reversed again as he lost his protector and was again subjected to the writing ban and possibly imprisoned by Franciscans who opposed his views on science and theology.

WORKS CITED

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All other research sourced from Wikipedia although much was further searched and corroborated through other sites.

