

Scholastics

Scholasticism (skōlās`tīszəm) - philosophy and theology of Western Christendom in the Middle Ages. Virtually all medieval philosophers of any significance were theologians, and their philosophy is generally embodied in their theological writings. There were numerous scholastic philosophies in the Middle Ages, but basic to all scholastic thought was the conjunction of faith and reason. For the greatest of the scholastics, this meant the use of reason to deepen the understanding of what is believed on faith and ultimately to give a rational content to faith. It was in the course of applying reason to faith that medieval thinkers developed and taught important philosophical ideas not directly related to theology.

As a doctrine, scholasticism refers to the kind of philosophy, theology, medicine, and law (canon and civil) taught by the faculties responsible for these disciplines. These four faculties constituted the medieval universities that began to be organized in the 12th century, beginning in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford.



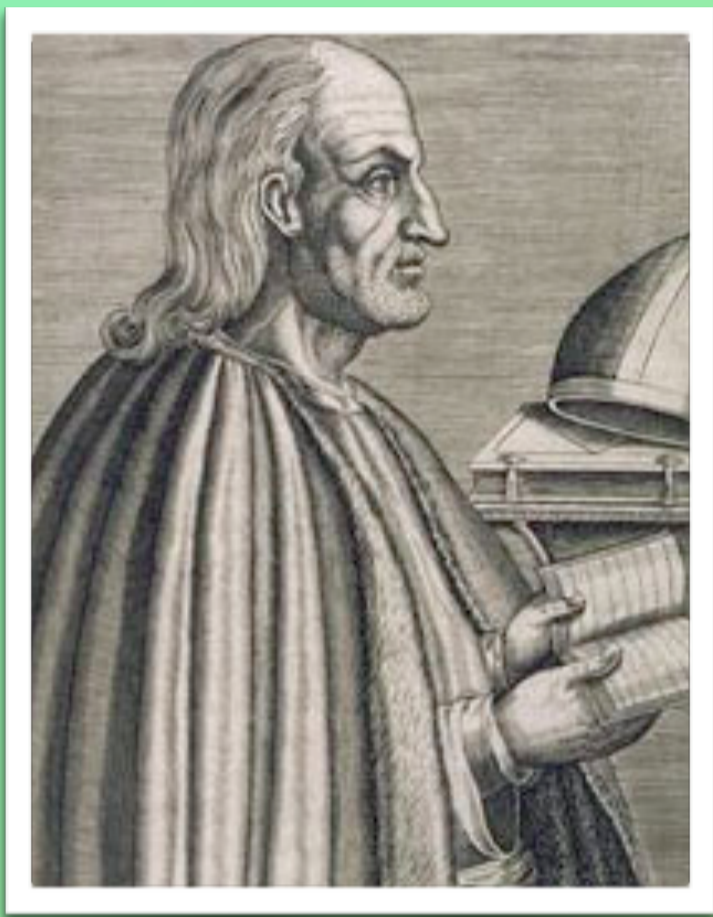
Scholastic methods

The scholastics would choose a book (say, the Bible) by a renowned scholar, auctor (author), as a subject for investigation. By reading it thoroughly and critically, the disciples learned to appreciate the theories of the author. Other documents related to the book would be referenced, such as Church councils, papal letters and anything else written on the subject, be it ancient or contemporary. The points of disagreement and contention between multiple sources would be written down in individual sentences or snippets of text, known as *sententiae*.

Once the sources and points of disagreement had been laid out through a series of dialectics, the two sides of an argument would be made whole so that they would be found to be in agreement and not contradictory. This was done in two ways.

The first was through philological analysis. Words were examined and argued to have multiple meanings. It was also considered that the auctor might have intended a certain word to mean something different. Ambiguity could be used to find common ground between two otherwise contradictory statements.

The second was through logical analysis, which relied on the rules of formal logic to show that contradictions did not exist but were subjective to the reader.

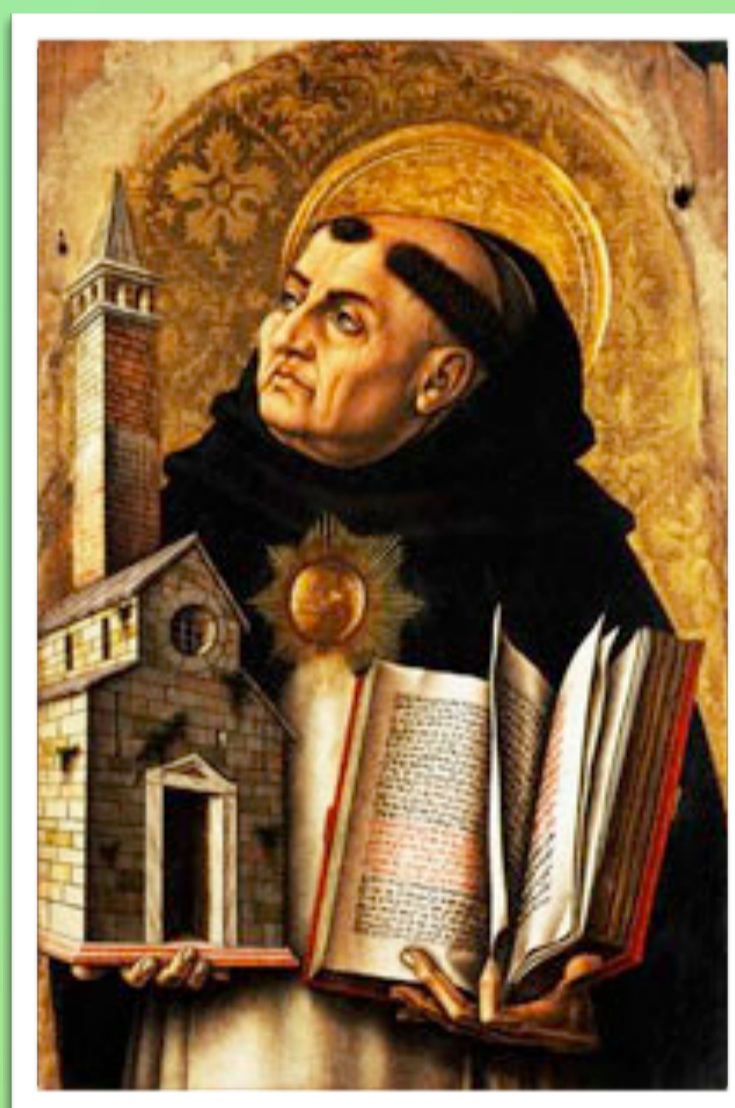


Anselm of Cantenbury (1033-1109)

prelate in Normandy and England, archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor of the Church (1720), b. Aosta, Piedmont. After a carefree youth of travel and schooling in Burgundy, the famed theologian and prior of the monastery at Bec, which Anselm soon joined (1060). Anselm became prior (1063) and abbot (1078) and brought widespread fame to the school there. Monastic holdings in England drew him into English public life, and he won the esteem of William the Conqueror. Anselm succeeded as Archbishop of Canterbury (1093). He disputed the right of William II to invest him, reserving this for Pope Urban II, whom William refused to recognize. Anselm momentarily overcame the king's intransigence and took the pallium from Urban's legate. Anselm's further reform-minded efforts to free the church from ecclesiastical abuses met stiff resistance. When he went to Rome for support, William banished him and confiscated the diocesan properties. At the Council of Bari (1098) Anselm ably defended the Filioque of the creed in the East-West controversy on the procession of the Holy Spirit.

Henry I of England recalled Anselm, who proved valuable in arranging Henry's marriage to Matilda of Scotland and in gaining the support of the barons for the king in his dispute with Robert of Normandy. Conflict over lay investiture now broke out, however, and Anselm refused to consecrate bishops and abbots nominated by the king. He was again banished while appealing in Rome. Anselm eventually won (1107) Henry's agreement to surrender the right of investiture in exchange for homage from church revenues—a compromise that strengthened papal authority in the English church.

Anselm's writings mark him as one of the founders of scholasticism. A strict Augustinian, operating from the formula *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding), he believed in an essential harmony between revelation and reason. He was the first to incorporate elements of rational Aristotelian dialectics into theology. His precision and mystical insight give permanent value to such works as *Cur Deus Homo?* (1094–98), on the atonement. He constructed rational proofs for God's existence in *Monologium* (c. 1070), and in the sequel *Proslogium* he advanced his famous ontological proof, which deduces God's existence from the human notion of a perfect being in whom nothing is lacking. In *De Fide Trinitatis* he defended universals against the nominalist Roscelin. He taught the Immaculate Conception of Mary in *De Conceptu Virginali* and is said to have instituted that feast in England.



Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

is one of the most important figures in the late middle ages in Europe. (1) The greatest poem of the European middle ages -- Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1300) -- is constructed around a moral architecture derived from Aquinas' Christianization of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. (2) In 1879 -- 6 centuries after Aquinas' death, a century after the French Revolution, and only about a century ago -- his system was declared by Pope Leo XIII to be the official Catholic philosophy. (3) Many of his positions are still taken seriously by Catholic and non-Catholic philosophers, who seek to apply them to important questions of modern life in economics, ethics and aesthetics.

Aquinas powerfully argued that reason and faith are harmonious but autonomous realms, in which the truths of reason complement those of faith. Both reason and faith in revelation are gifts of God, but each has its own proper domain. Note that that this position entails a particular understanding of the limits of the effect on mankind of Original Sin, and insists that God underwrites a properly circumscribed confidence in the powers of unaided reason, which is understood itself to be one of the means by which God accomplishes certain of his intended revelations. rts of which can only be accepted by faith), but natural human reason as well is an expression of God's grace.

Among Aquinas' many works, two stand out like mountain peaks: the two "summae," or systematic expositions of arguments on related questions. The *Summa contra gentiles* (1258-60) - "against the gentiles" - was a defense of the fundamentals of the Christian faith against its non-Christian rivals - Islam, Judaism, and classical pagan philosophy. The *Summa theologiae* (1267-73), though incomplete, is a massive exposition of philosophy on theological principles. Both are classic examples of "the method of philosophy taught in the schools" - "scholasticism," for short.

The method is still forcefully in practice in American and British law: a special version of it is, in fact, the main business of our law schools to impart.

AND IN CHINA...



Qin Shi Huang

Ideal and effective economic policy was long sought for in ancient China, and one of the greatest early reformers was the Emperor **Qin Shi Huang** (260 B.C.E.–210 B.C.E., ruled as First Emperor 221 B.C.E.-210 B.C.E.). He standardized **coin** currency throughout the old Warring States once he unified them under a strong central **bureaucracy**.

He claimed that both the **agriculture** and **commerce** were very important for the economy. He also standardized the **coinage**, introducing a circular **copper** coin with a square hole in the center. Equally important reforms were the standardization of weights and measures, and codification of the law. These reforms benefited both the economy and cultural exchange during the period.

Wang Anshi

However, one of the greatest economic reformers in China lived during the medieval Song Dynasty (960-1279 C.E.), that being Chancellor Wang Anshi (1021-1086). Espousing heated reaction by conservative ministers at court, Wang Anshi's political faction of the New Policies Group enacted a series of reforms that centered around military reform, bureaucratic reform, and economic reform.

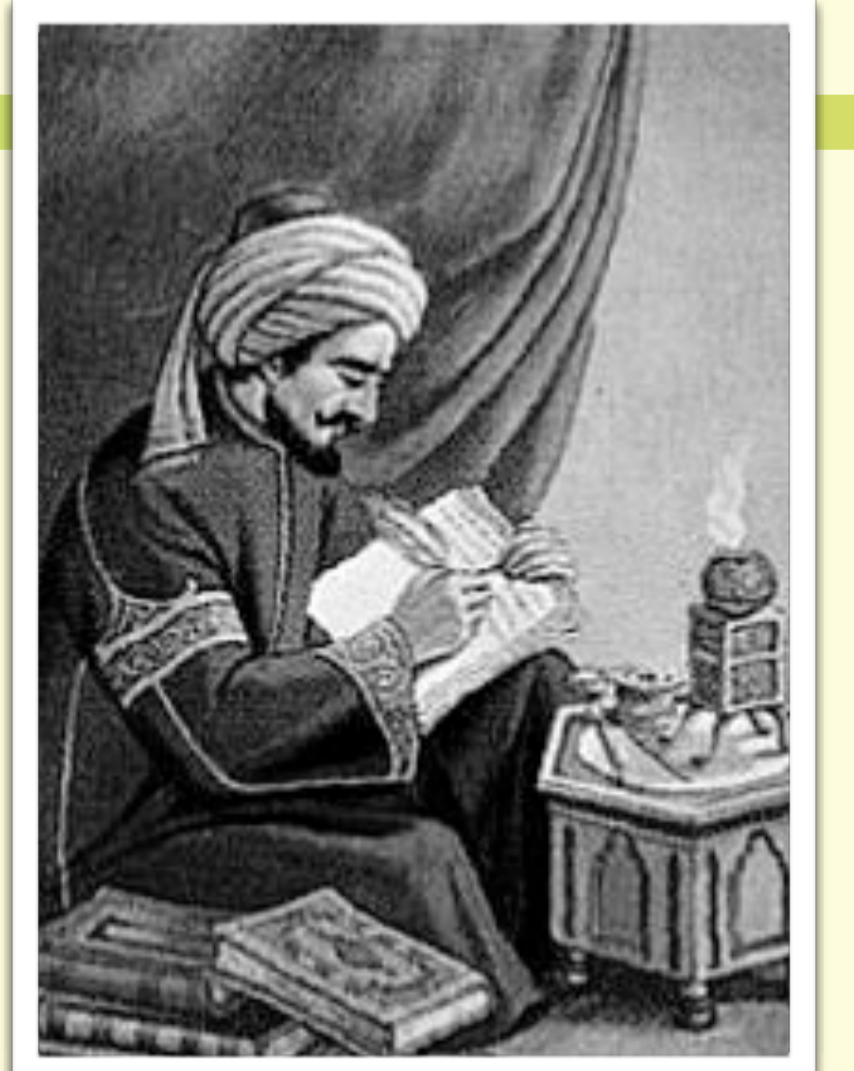
Among the initiated major economic reforms in the interest of merchants and small farmers—whom he considered the backbone of the Chinese economy in terms of production of goods and greatest source of the land tax—were: reduced interest, commutation of labor services, and reduced prices and land taxes.

Zaid bin Ali

Zaid bin 'Ali (10-80 AH/699-738 C.E.), the grandson of Imam Husain, was one of the most eminent jurists of Medina, whom other eminent jurists like Abu Hanifa held in high esteem. Zaid permitted the sale of a commodity on credit at a price higher than its cash price. Muhammad Abu Zahra discussed a rationale of its permission at some length, which is worth quoting in view of the contemporary relevance of the issue:

Those who disallow the deferred price to be higher than the cash price argue that the difference is *riba* as it is an increase (in payment against time), and every increase against deferment (or payment) is *riba*. There is no difference between saying "Either you pay now or pay more in lieu of deferment," and selling at a higher (than cash) price because of deferred payment. The essence is the same and it is *riba*.

One who sells on credit does so out of necessity, he cannot be regarded as doing so willingly. He is therefore not covered by the Qur'anic verse "except when it is trade among you with mutual consent"



The concerns of those early economists involved a number of issues which they held in common, the answers to which are the basis of the structure of well-functioning societies today as much as in those early times. These include how to make markets, taxation policies, and other monetary instruments transparent and free from corruption.

While their ideas were not always complete, and in some cases involved long-lasting debates rather than answers, much similarity can be found in their efforts. It is also of note that early economic thinking, closely tied to philosophical and/or religious tenets, generally took into account the welfare of the common man, the worker, rather than seeking ways to benefit a few elite individuals, themselves or others.

Muslim economic thought enriched the Hellenic contribution to economic thought in the areas of government of the kingdom by the caliph, of the city, and the household organization. In rejecting profit, usury, **egoism**, and monopoly, and in preaching moderation, **altruism**, the practice of fair prices, and unselfishness, Islam inaugurated an "economic system" which has derived from that of the Greeks and which laid the basis for pre-capitalist thought.