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THE HISTORY OF
WESTERN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 1: ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 2: MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 3: EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 4: NINETEENTH-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 5: TWENTIETH-CENTURY PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

THE HISTORY OF
WESTERN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Edited by Graham Oppy and Nick Trakakis



VOLUME 3
EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

ACUMEN

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1946; hereafter *History*) provides a model for *some* of the significant features of the present work. Like Russell's more general history, our history of Western philosophy of religion consists principally of chapters devoted to the works of individual thinkers, selected because of their "considerable importance". Of course, we do not claim to have provided coverage of all of those who have made important contributions to Western philosophy of religion. However, we think that anyone who has made a significant contribution to Western philosophy of religion has either seriously engaged with the works of philosophers who are featured in this work, or has produced work that has been a focus of serious engagement for philosophers who are featured in this work.

Like Russell, we have aimed for contributions that show how the philosophy of religion developed by a given thinker is related to that thinker's life, and that trace out connections between the views developed by a given philosopher and the views of their predecessors, contemporaries and successors. While our primary aim is to provide an account of the ideas, concepts, claims and arguments developed by each of the philosophers under consideration, we think – with Russell – that this aim is unlikely to be achieved in a work in which "each philosopher appears as in a vacuum".

Again like Russell, we have only selected philosophers or religious writers who belong to, or have exerted a significant impact on, the intellectual tradition of the West (i.e. western Europe and the Anglo-American world). We realize that this selection criterion alone excludes from our work a number of important thinkers and religious groups or traditions, such as: Asian philosophers of religion, particularly those representing such religions as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism; African philosophers of religion; and individuals, texts and traditions emanating from indigenous religions, such as those found in the native populations of Australia and the Pacific Islands. Clearly, the non-Western world has produced thinkers who have made important, and often overlooked, contributions