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**Intellectual Culture on the Rhine**  
**(1300-1550)**

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## PREFACE

Stretching from Basel to Cologne, the Rhine formed the geographical axis of a broad cultural realm in the late Middle Ages; this region lent its vitality not only to its cities and universities but also to the two great Councils to which it played host. Already in the fourteenth century, the lives of the famous German mystics Meister Eckhart, Heinrich Seuse and Johannes Tauler testify to the presence of an advanced intellectual culture in the cities of the upper and lower Rhine, cities which were connected *via* networks of roads and waterways with the cultural areas to the west (Brabant) and east (Erfurt). In the fifteenth century, the most famous Council of the late Middle Ages took place along the Rhine, namely the Council of Constance (1414-1418), which condemned John Wyclif and Jan Hus, thereby laying the foundation for the *Wegestreit* (the conflict between nominalism and realism) which would hold German universities in its grasp for several generations to come. A few years later, the Council at Basel became a seedbed of philosophical ideas that impressed themselves upon such participants of the Council as Heymericus de Campo and Nicholas of Cusa. With the establishment of the Universities of Cologne (1388), Freiburg (1457), Basel (1459) and Mainz (1476), the intellectual culture of this region took institutional form; these universities followed the pattern of their *alma mater*, the University of Paris, while at the same time seeking to accommodate the needs of German cities and rulers. These institutions have continued to exist until our own day, and symbolize the stability of the intellectual culture of the Rhineland.

### I. Schools and Universities

The five contributions that comprise the section "Schools and Universities" reveal a noteworthy aspect of the late-medieval intellectual landscape of the Rhine: what distinguishes this region as both a geographical and intellectual centre (as well as a point of reference for modern historians of philosophy) is not only its wealth and diversity but also the special significance of Cologne, with its University and *studia* of religious orders, as a centre of education.

The intellectual diversity of the Rhineland and the educational importance of Cologne are evident in the essay of Walter Senner, which is devoted entirely to the Dominican *studia*, and which traces the development