Ulrich Lehner, Richard Muller, and A. G. Roeber, eds.

The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600–1800. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 668. Hb, \$150.

Though not without its problems, this Oxford Handbook will be a valuable reference tool for any scholar interested in Christianity in the early modern world. Indeed as we are in the middle of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, this anthology, which looks well beyond the sixteenth century, is a welcome addition in a season when we have been inundated with monographs, encyclopedias, and textbooks on Luther; it is a helpful reminder that theological discussion and debate flourished well beyond the age of the Reformers. The editors have successfully shepherded a massive project of over forty essays that covers significant territory. The heart of the volume are a series of articles divided into four major categories that evaluate Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and other Christian theologies such as Unitarianism and Anabaptism. There is a shorter section that considers Eastern Christian traditions as well as the interaction of Judaism and Islam on Western theological traditions. A substantial final section devotes closer attention to philosophy and its impact on Christian theology. René Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Baruch Spinoza, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant all receive their due.

What about the Jesuits? The editors chose not to give them a separate and independent essay, a wise decision from my vantage point. Instead, their activities are scattered across the volume as a whole. Their political role, their involvement in the Chinese rites controversy, and their interaction with Jewish communities are all briefly considered. There are some Jesuits such as Francisco Suárez and Robert Bellarmine, who receive significant attention while others such as Francis Xavier are skipped over completely. Even Ignatius merits only fleeting mention. Granted, the latter two are sixteenth-century figures but still some background would have been helpful as many essays begin chronologically in the sixteenth if not fifteenth centuries. Thematically, the volume does a better job assessing their impact. Their place in the Molinist and Jansenist controversies are evaluated and their influence shaping early modern exegesis and moral theology are investigated. One absence in particular should be noted: Jesuit missionaries. A chapter devoted to their work would have been very useful. The opening essay to the volume, which provides a brief historical overview of theological developments in the non-European world, is a helpful beginning. Both Matteo Ricci's work in China and Roberto de' Nobili's efforts in South Asia are mentioned in passing. The volume would have been stronger had this essay written by a historian been paired with that of a theologian

examining more closely the elaborate schemes developed by Jesuit missionaries to engage systems of belief in both China and India.

Stepping back from the coverage of specific issues and questions, what are we to make of the volume as a whole? As in any edited collection, some essays are stronger than others. Scholars depending on their own specialty and training will drift to certain topics and away from others. This was an interdisciplinary endeavor bringing together historians, theologians, and philosophers, but those without training in historical or systematic theology may find some of the articles especially challenging. Inevitably, errors will also creep into a volume of this size. There is a mention of “the Bohemian theologian Nicholas Comenius” (518), a mistaken reference to the polymath John Amos Comenius who was a self-identified Moravian. More important are issues of coverage. Not surprisingly, there is a general tilt toward Western Europe. Treatment of Reformed and Unitarian traditions, for example, generally jump over areas such as Poland, Lithuania, Transylvania, and Hungary where there were substantial communities that produced influential leaders for these churches. To their credit the editors included two essays on eastern churches, primarily Orthodox communities. They failed, though, to include any treatment of Peter Mogila, the most influential reformer of early modern Ukraine who revitalized this important center of Orthodoxy in fundamental ways. When we move to the west, several absences are notable. There is no discussion of some of the most radical theological experiments of the seventeenth century, those that were spawned during the English Civil War with groups such as the Diggers and Levellers. Though it is inevitable that certain topics will slip through the scholarly net, it was particularly surprising to find no coverage of a religious tradition that had such a profound impact on the Anglophone world in particular, the Quakers. Finally, what do we take away from the volume as a whole? The editors wrote a short introduction outlining the boundaries of the text, the organization of the collection, and a rationale behind the project. They briefly raise the question “why early modern?” Why is there a need to cover the period 1600–1800? I do not think that issue is in question; the handbook is the first attempt to survey this critical period and should be saluted as such. There is also a useful essay that examines continuities and contrasts between early modern theologies and their medieval predecessors. Nevertheless, it would have been useful had they wrestled more deeply with this question in an afterword or conclusion. Are there themes or issues that make these two centuries a coherent period of analysis? Is there an overarching narrative that can be developed for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? What is distinctive about theological activity in the early modern world? These, of course, are large, open-ended

questions. Still, it would have been helpful had this distinguished team of editors reflected on this issue more directly.

Howard Louthan

University of Minnesota

hlouthan@umn.edu

DOI 10.1163/22141332-00502005-12