



## The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism (Cambridge Companions to Religion)

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The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism is a multi-authored interdisciplinary guide to the study of Christian mysticism, with an emphasis on the third through the seventeenth centuries. The book is thematically organized in terms of the central contexts, practices, and concepts associated with the mystical life in early, medieval, and early modern Christianity. Written by leading authorities and younger scholars from a range of disciplines, the volume both provides a clear introduction to the Christian mystical life and articulates a bold new approach to the study of mysticism. The book looks beyond the term "mysticism," which was an early modern invention, to explore the ways in the ancient terms "mystic" and "mystical" were used in the Christian tradition: What kinds of practices, modes of life, and experiences were described as "mystical"? What understanding of Christianity and of the life of Christian perfection is articulated through mystical interpretations of scripture, mystical contemplation, mystical vision, mystical theology, or mystical union? What practices and experiences provided the framework within which one could describe mystical phenomena? And what topics are at the forefront of the contemporary study of Christian mystical practice and experience?

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Advanced Praise: "A far-ranging collection of essays by leading scholars in the field, particularly appealing for its attention to definitions and aspects of current scholarly interest. A Companion that goes far to take the mystification out of Christian mysticism." - Robert E. Lerner, Northwestern University

"With its comprehensive choice of topics and its historical scope, this superb volume is much more than a handbook. It is a place where Christian mysticism will be rediscovered through the multiple voices that are collected here. All of them are acute in the analyses of key terms, concepts, and historical developments - and all of them stimulate further conversation about these essential topics in intellectual and cultural history." - Niklaus Largier, University of California at Berkeley

"A brilliant array of scholars addresses the complex and varied phenomena gathered under the rubric 'Christian mysticism.' Both insisting that historical specificity matters and situating these ancient, medieval, and early modern texts in twenty-first-century conversations, this volume truly and profoundly demonstrates what editor Amy Hollywood asserts: the study of mysticism is indeed 'endless.'" - Carolyn Dinshaw, New York University

#### About the Author

Amy Hollywood is Elizabeth H. Monrad Professor of Christian Studies at Harvard Divinity School. She is the author of *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart* (1995); *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (2002) and *Acute Melancholia and Other Essays* (forthcoming). She has written widely on topics medieval and modern and is currently engaged in a historical, philosophical and theological exploration of enthusiasm in the modern West. She is also the editor of the *Gender, Theory and Religions* series for Columbia University Press and on the editorial board for the University of Chicago Press's *Religion and Postmodernity* series.

Patricia Z. Beckman teaches in the Department of Religion and the Great Conversation program at St Olaf College. Her research and writing explore medieval women's mystical teaching and practice, especially Mechthild of Magdeburg's. She serves on the Council of the American Society of Church History and has worked as senior fellow for the Ford Foundation Difficult Dialogues project. She is an advocate for the public understanding, discussion and debate of all things religious and historical.

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#### Connie King:

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**Roberto Senn:**

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