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Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz, by John Marenbon

Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz , by John Marenbon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton U.P. , 2015 ; pp. 354 . \$35).

[Simon Goldhill](#)

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Everyone, these days, wants their century to be a long one, but, even so, for

many scholars it may come as something of a surprise to find that in John Marenbon's new book, the Middle Ages stretches from Augustine in the fifth century to Leibniz in the seventeenth. The 'Long Middle Ages', he claims, is a heuristic device to prevent historians 'taking for granted that there is a fundamental division of periods around 1500 or at any other time'; but it is also a device designed to reveal a very long tradition of debate about the category of the pagan in Western Christian thought. There are three central planks of this debate: virtue, knowledge and salvation; and in each case the initial question is simple enough. The term pagan is used by Christians to refer not to Jews or Muslims but...

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