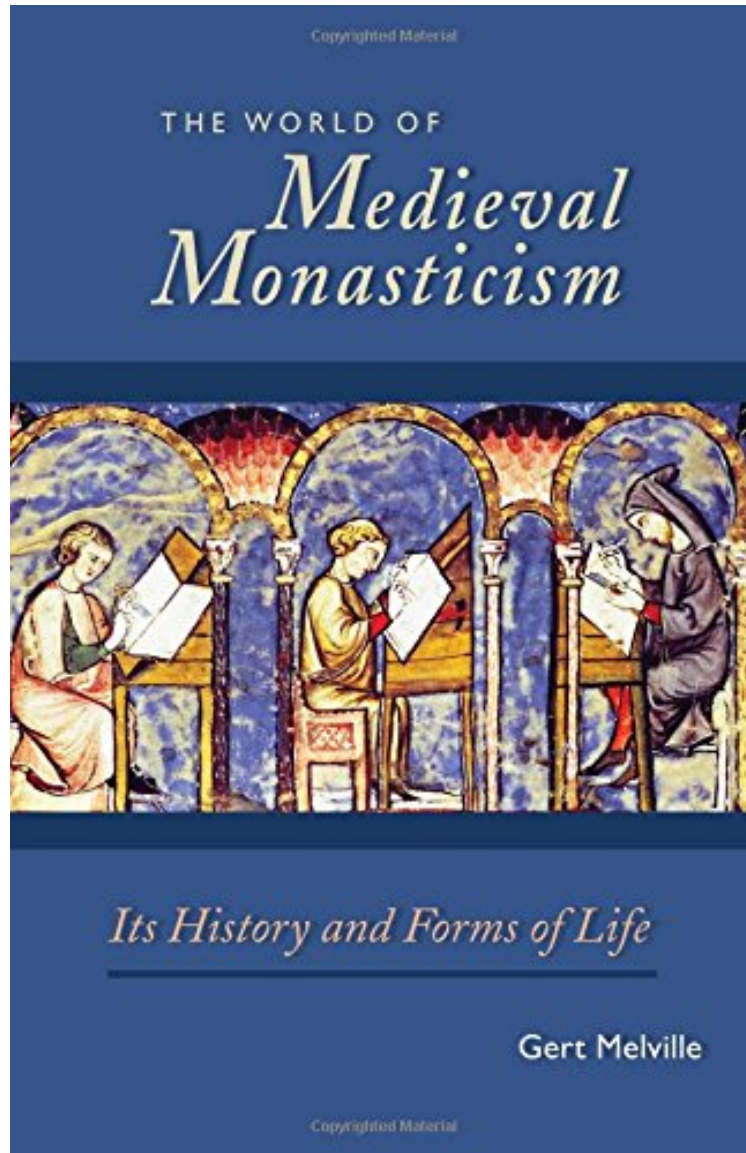


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This book surveys the full panorama of ten centuries of Christian monastic life. It moves from the deserts of Egypt and the Frankish monasteries of early medieval Europe to the religious ruptures of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the reforms of the later Middle Ages. Throughout that story the book balances a rich sense of detail with a broader synthetic view. It presents the history of religious life and its orders as a complex braid woven from multiple strands: individual and community, spirit and institution, rule and custom, church and world. The result is a synthesis that places religious life at the center of European history and presents its institutions as key catalysts of Europe's move toward modernity.

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