

reviews recent developments in evolutionary theory; if Professor André could find the appropriate expression for his deep vision of the natural world one feels that he could lead us far into the wonder and poetry of nature. Of Professor Hirschberger's book one needs to say no more than that it is now available; his first volume on the history of ancient and medieval philosophy was received with enthusiasm on all sides. This second volume, on Renaissance-to-contemporary philosophy, is sure to receive a similar welcome. To read his book is a joy, an education—and an occasion of humility!



## REVIEWS

MONASTIC SITES FROM THE AIR. By David Knowles and J. K. S. St Joseph. (Cambridge University Press; 55s.)

The close bond between methods and plans of building and habits of life is seldom shown more clearly than in the ground-plan of medieval religious houses. Although custom and rule directed the general scheme of construction, construction—varying as it does with the lie of the ground and local circumstance—must to some extent modify customs of life, much in the same way as St Osmund modified Norman liturgical customs in the light of the structure of the Cathedral of Old Salisbury when compiling the Salisbury liturgical use. Indeed, the whole course of human history on its material side is marked by the impact of person upon place and environment; but human life is short while locality remains almost unmodified, and it is therefore with long-lived corporations such as monasteries that history can best be traced in that dust of which men are made. Ground-plans have, therefore, despite a superficial uniformity, a significance awaiting sympathetic interpretation.

This volume of illustrations from the air of well over a hundred monastic sites in England and Wales is thus a work of serious historical importance. The photographs of Dr St Joseph, as interpreted by Professor Knowles, form an illuminating companion to the latter's histories of the English monastic movement. There is a careful introduction which outlines the genesis, development and modifications of the customary monastic plan, built around a four-square cloister. It is a pity that the recent excavations at Glastonbury were not undertaken until after the publication of this book, for they show that not only was the Glastonbury of St Dunstan's time the first English monastery to be built on this continental plan, but also that the structure was of a size and importance equal to those of Cluny, Fleury and St Gall.

Each illustration has a page of comment from Professor Knowles in which the photograph is interpreted and a history of the foundation given. By some oversight there is no history of Malmesbury, one of the most venerable foundations in the land. (Incidentally there was never a western range of buildings at Glastonbury, owing to the proximity of the ancient, possibly pre-Christian, cemetery.)

Monastic sites are particularly difficult to photograph satisfactorily from the air. In the first place, many of them such as Barking, lie in built-up areas where no low-flying is permitted. Second, and this is the reason why the present volume could never illuminate the unknown in the manner of Crawford's epoch-making *Wessex from the Air*, none of these sites is sown with crops, and it is crop-marking alone which can reveal with any clarity hidden foundations of which no trace lies above ground. The reader should be warned therefore that the value of this book will not leap to his eye immediately. Indeed, he will at first be puzzled by the very varying quality of the photographs, ranging from a really lovely and utterly clear study of Byland in the setting sun to rather indifferent pictures of Durham or St Alban's. The choice of picture is sometimes not easy to justify: how clear and helpful are the photographs of sites such as Holme, Kirkstead or Strata Marcella, but why include pictures of St Michael's Mount or Bardsey which of their very nature do nothing, and could do nothing, to clarify the existing remains? The inclusion of some modern monasteries such as Buckfast (though it is sad to think what remains of archaeological interest must have been destroyed unrecorded when the church was rebuilt on its later medieval foundation) is admirable, but why omit Winchcombe which would especially lend itself to air photography as no stone remains above ground? Finally the absence of any immediately clear indication of the points of the compass renders the photographs peculiarly difficult to interpret at first sight.

These points are stressed merely in order to urge the reader to persist with his study of the book. These photographs only reveal their secrets after long and careful examination. If so examined, *Monastic Sites from the Air* will be found to have an interest and a value which, to one reader at least, are yet very far from being exhausted.

ÆLFRED WATKIN

THE GREY FRIARS IN CAMBRIDGE, 1225-1538. *The Birkbeck Lectures* 1948-9. By John R. H. Moorman. (Cambridge University Press; 35s.)

Mr Moorman tells the story of the Franciscans in Cambridge from their first settlement to the dissolution. He has made a careful study of the chronology and of the sites of the friary. About half of the book consists of appendixes. There are lists of