

## REVIEWS

ART IN MEDIAEVAL FRANCE (987-1498). By Joan Evans. (Oxford University Press; 63s.)

Dr Joan Evans was recognised even before the publication of this volume as the principal authority in England on the mediaeval art of France. The international recognition that she has received as a scholar emphasises the fact that her study is an essentially English contribution to French art history, perhaps the most important single contribution ever made in England to art history as a whole. It is both the strength and the weakness of English art history that it is the child of archaeology. It still lacks much of the technical equipment of the continental schools, the great photograph collections of Paris or Vienna, it has always been based on a detailed first-hand knowledge of the objects themselves and of the monuments studied on the site. It is precisely this intimately personal first-hand knowledge that gives such unique value to Dr Evans's survey of all French art from the tenth to the fifteenth century—sculpture and painting and architecture, tapestries and plate and furnishings. Her lucid analyses and descriptions are varied by passages of real beauty and emotional insight—it has long been a tradition in English art history to love what is described. Throughout her volume changes in aesthetic standard are related to the changes in social structure that they both illuminate and reflect. No medieval historian, however little interested in art forms in themselves, can afford to neglect Dr Evans's researches. They are illustrated by 280 plates admirably reproduced.

It seems cheap to criticise so great an achievement. But it may be doubted if 'Benedictine' is in fact a satisfactory classification in French art forms and queried if there were 'Rosary' chapels in the Dominican church as early as 1275. The enamelled casket illustrated on plate 156b bears the arms of the Earls of Pembroke and I know nothing that proves it to be of French provenance. The Trinity diptych in the National Gallery reproduced on plate 200 would seem stylistically to be early fifteenth century north Italian. Yet the only note on which this review can end is one of admiration and of wonder that so much has been achieved by a single scholar.

GERVASE MATHEW, O.P.

MEDIAEVAL ENGLISH POTTERY. By Bernard Rackham. (Faber; 21s.)

This monograph consists of 29 pages of preface and 100 plates, four of which are in colour. It forms a useful introduction to a subject that still waits definitive study. Masses of broken medieval pottery are constantly being uncovered in England. If it were possible to arrange them in clearly dated series they would be of the greatest assistance in archaeology and illuminate the survival and developments of popular art forms in England. But compared to our detailed knowledge of Islamic glazed ware the scientific study of