

repair, maintain and heat it.

So the question is, if a building from the start, or soon after, fails both technically and in function, and becomes a financial burden on its owners, remaining as a large piece of public sculpture, by what criteria is it judged to be 'architecture', not to mention outstanding architecture, such as justifies its permanent retention at a cost both the owners and the public purse? This question is touched upon but hardly discussed in this book—unsurprisingly, perhaps, from a body whose existence and very title depends on a definition of architecture as an object of artistic monumentality. Yet this question lies at the core of a rational conservation policy. It is useless to argue, as defenders of the present system sometimes do, that application of rigorous criteria of use and technical performance would have condemned medieval cathedrals, Georgian terraces and Victorian railway stations to demolition. The historical record shows all these to have been usable (and many are still in use) without disastrous expenditure. Beautiful as they may be, they also perform and performed, both socially and technically. St Peter's is a stern reminder of how far we need to go to arrive, or arrive again out of Postmodernist chaos, at a culturally authentic and socially just definition of architecture.

THOMAS A. MARKUS

THE CONCEPT OF WOMAN: The Aristotelian Revolution (750 BC — AD 1250) by Prudence Allen RSM, Grand Rapids, *Wm B Eerdmans* (distributed by Alban Books, 79 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5PF), 1997, xiv + 583 pp., £22.99 paperback.

Sister Prudence Allen, professor of philosophy at Concordia University, Montreal, has published several important articles over the years. In particular, she has developed what she calls a philosophy of integral sex complementarity. In patristic and medieval times, her story goes, the great concern was to establish Christianity as a monotheism over against various tempting pagan polytheisms, so that Augustine and Thomas Aquinas emphasized the singleness of God and saw the image of this one God reflected in man, the individual male human being. By herself a woman could not reflect the image of God, while a man could, so Augustine thought. Thomas modified this: a woman by herself could reflect the image of God, but she did so less perfectly. The return to the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity in recent times opens the way to refiguring the image of God so as to respect the difference between man and woman and also take seriously the equality, on analogy with the divine Persons who are absolutely different and yet radically equal. This is a polemical intervention in a culture which is tempted to go either for androgyny (no difference between men and women) or for Mary Daly style gyn/ecology (nothing but difference). In this welcome second edition of the encyclopedic study that she brought out in 1985, Allen shows that, far from being ignored, as many suppose, consideration of the nature of woman has been a central aspect of philosophy since it began in Greece in the

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sixth century BC. In the end, however, theories that believed in the equality of men and women while recognizing significant differences, were defeated by the victory of Aristotle's philosophy in the thirteenth century. According to his sex polarity, women and men are different all right, but women are inferior. While with such theorists of sex complementarity as Hildegard of Bingen there were women on the intellectual scene in the twelfth century, Aristotle's doctrine of sex polarity was institutionalized in the universities and women were excluded. Allen's case is massively documented, and the book is studded with interesting asides. For example, Shakespeare might have seen a printed collection of the works of Roswitha of Gandersheim; women graduated in medicine in the first universities in Italy but were excluded at Paris; Roger Bacon regarded Aristotle as a Christian, on the basis of a text mistakenly attributed to the philosopher; and much else. Retelling the story of the horrific murder of Hypatia, the neo-Platonic philosopher, in 415, Allen assumes that it was 'secretly arranged' by Cyril of Alexandria: his complicity has long been suspected, though never proved, but that he 'arranged' it is a bit strong. As for the thesis itself, there could be discussion.

As Professor Michael Nolan suggests, in two important essays, what Aristotle believed about women needs to be considered in the context of his biology as a whole (*New Blackfriars* May 1995) ; and what Aquinas took from Aristotle is not so straightforward either (*New Blackfriars* March 1994). For the record, the text Allen cites from Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* 1a. 93, 5) does not say that a man 'more perfectly' contains the image of God than a woman but just that God's image is found in a man in a way in which it is not found in a woman, in as much as 'man is the beginning and end of woman, just as God is the beginning and end of all creation'. Woman was born of man, Aquinas thought. As far as being created after God's image, as Allen rightly says, Aquinas leans towards complementarity: 'the image of God is common to both sexes, being in the mind which has no distinction of sex' (93, 6 ad 2) — not that all gender theorists nowadays would be so sure that women's minds are not significantly different from men's. Allen's book is, anyway, by far the most important study of the concept of woman in philosophy from the pre-Socratics to the mid-thirteenth century. She promises a sequel, to take the story into the fifteenth century humanist Renaissance.

FERGUS KERR OP

PERSONS IN COMMUNION: TRINITARIAN DESCRIPTION AND HUMAN PARTICIPATION by Alan J. Torrance, Pp. xii + 388. *T&T Clark*. Edinburgh, 1996. £24.95.

For a hardback book this is certainly a bargain. The author teaches at King's College, London, in one of the two or three 'schools' in the United Kingdom with a distinctive theological orientation. For one thing, he takes it that the Christian doctrine of God is radically *trinitarian* — not always taken for granted by Christian theologians! For another, though he does not harp

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