

the sidelights on human nature that we obtain from Jocelin of Brakelond, Matthew Paris or Walter Daniel. All historians will regret that footnotes were not permitted, and we may hope that at some future date Dom Hugh will find an opportunity for re-publishing or re-writing his pages with full scholarly apparatus.

He ends before the Tudor age begins, and the story is taken up (1474–1660) by Dr Tindal Hart, who gives a lively picture of Abbot Islip and a sympathetic account of the surrender and of the Marian revival. Later, the story gradually changes its character from the history of an institute to that of successive deans, and later still come various topics and aspects, and the second half of the book is without sequence of date and theme. Much of it is of interest, particularly the portraits of outstanding deans, but some sections, such as those on architecture and music, seem to fall between the two stools of detailed expertise and skilful vulgarization without satisfying the scholar or the armchair reader save in isolated passages, such as the lively whodunit by Canon Fox on the stolen Stone of Scone, the vignette of that remarkable and eccentric character, Dean Armitage Robinson, and the able survey of nine hundred years of coronations by Mr L. E. Tanner, whose unique learning in Abbey matters might well have been given fuller scope elsewhere. Taken for all in all, a very difficult task has been adequately performed, but the classical history of Westminster remains to be written.

A few details may be mentioned. Dom Hugh is not altogether clear in his treatment of Marial devotion at Westminster. He does not distin-

guish between the pre-Conquest feast of the Conception (the legendary miraculous *active* conception by Anne) and the theological argument of Eadmer for the sinless (passive) conception of Mary herself. Fr S. van Dyk's article in the *Dublin Review* (1954) is not used. Later (p. 35 and elsewhere) he states that from the early thirteenth century onwards the night office (the modern Matins) at Westminster began at midnight 'thus decisively splitting the night's sleep', and (p. 37) that 'compulsory monthly bleeding' was the practice at Westminster in the thirteenth century. What is his authority for this? On p. 70 he takes the 'spice-money' issued to the monks too literally. The word 'spices', as used commercially in the later middle ages, covered a multitude of items including metal, glue and cotton, and 'spice-money' was expended on as many objects as the 'pin-money' of eighteenth century marriage settlements. Dr Tindal Hart, in his section, tells us (p. 90) that the curious use of 'chapel' still current in the printing trade derives from the location of Caxton's press at Westminster, and later (p. 118) that the phrase 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' derives from Westminster's contribution to the repair of St Paul's. In both cases a footnote would have been valuable.

The many illustrations, some of historical and aesthetic interest, others more personal and newsy, keep the reader awake to the last lap. The printing (by Messrs Clay) is excellent. A felicitous and almost solitary misprint *OB DORMINUS* (p. 142) may throw a rusty classic momentarily off the rails.

DAVID KNOWLES

MEDIEVAL LATIN AND THE RISE OF EUROPEAN LOVE-LYRIC by Peter Dronke. Vol. I, Problems and Interpretations; vol. II, Texts. *Oxford, The Clarendon Press*, 55s. and 45s.

'Everyone', wrote C. S. Lewis in a weak moment (but in a book that could afford a lapse or two), 'everyone has heard of courtly love, and . . . knows that it appears quite suddenly at the end of the eleventh century in Languedoc'. This was too jaunty to be true, even in 1936; and Lewis's broad definition of courtly love ('that romantic species of passion') left him wide open to historical attack. Mr Dronke, in the first chapter of this very brilliant and original but also somewhat uneven work, easily disposes of the view that courtly love – unless *very* narrowly understood – was a French medieval discovery. He is convinced that 'the feelings of *courtoisie* are elemental, not the

product of a particular chivalric culture' – nothing essentially to do with feudalism (nor with adultery), not confined to any court or privileged class but springing from a basic *gentilezza* (Dante's term is appositely brought in here) that may be found in any man at any time. I had always felt this was so, and am delighted that so learned a man agrees with me. I do not care for the term Mr Dronke chiefly uses to denote it – 'the courtly experience' – but perhaps there is no better one. What it implies, at any rate, and the manifold richness of the implications, he makes sufficiently clear as he weaves his way through the astonishing material he knows so well – whose every

half-legible fragment and syllable indeed he seems to have pored over with a passion for which the epithet 'scholarly' would be ludicrously tame: for what mere scholar could communicate such delight? He is a consummate scholar who wears his heart on his sleeve. An unusual combination – and a risky one.

Of the two volumes, the second is addressed more particularly to scholars. It contains one hundred and fifty medieval Latin poems, all edited directly from manuscripts and most never hitherto printed: all translated and minutely annotated. A very full bibliography and excellent indices complete a marvellous *instrument de travail*; which is naturally also intended, however, as evidence for the views put out in volume I. This falls broadly into two parts, after the introductory chapter 1. Granted that, as we have seen, Mr Dronke regards the 'courtly' feeling or experience as *not* a medieval discovery (but rather, in Marrou's words twice cited here, 'un secteur du coeur, un des aspects éternel de l'homme'), the question naturally arises, what then is there really new in the medieval European lyric of courtly love? The answer (and it is surely – even obviously – right) is that in this great body of verse the basic erotic feeling that we (or some of us) will agree to call 'courtly' was articulated in terms of motifs and themes of a broadly intellectual character, deriving from Western man's new background of ideas as he emerged from the Dark Ages. So chapter 2 analyses this background – in relation to ideas about love – and chapter 3 illustrates it from vernacular poetry, Provençal, English, German and Italian. That is the first, and to my mind much the less satisfactory part of the volume. The second, chapters 4 and 5, is entirely focussed on the Latin material, and with a view to discerning, both in the great body of medieval Latin 'learned verse' (ch. 4) and in the love-lyric

(ch. 5), evidence of the 'courtly experience', in its manifold guises, and links with its parallel vernacular expressions. I found these chapters beautifully intelligent and sensitive – masterly!

I cannot say the same, for all the learning and wit they display, of the sections on the intellectual background; but to justify and explain my objections would require more space than I can claim. I would only say that when Mr Dronke touches on philosophical matters – like the concept, of which he makes so much, of *intellectus agens* – he often seems hardly aware of the questions he is raising, and inclines to a dogmatism that he would not tolerate in matters closer to his own special field – though to be sure, he is dogmatic (and, I think, wrong) about *Purgatorio* xxv and here and there in the section on Cavalcanti. In general I think it is fair to say that the extraordinary warmth and ardour that quickens the author's intelligence in so many directions throughout this book, and gives the whole work so much of its charm, that this enthusiasm is sometimes, to put it mildly, unrestrained. Too often, especially in the first three chapters, one has the impression that the critic has got too close *emotionally* to whatever text he is commenting on – that conviction is outrunning analysis. This is most certainly the case, too, with the important early generalisation about 'courtly experience' and religion (p. 7): 'God is never imagined [by the poets of this experience] as opposed to love – on the contrary he is continually seen as on the lover's side: they always pray to God to help them in their love'. Well, that seems to leave the *Divine Comedy*, at least, and Petrarch outside the courtly experience; for the term 'love' is left unqualified. But, all in all a distinguished and splendid work which no one who cares for civilisation should ignore.

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