

with rather more success, vindicates the usefulness of this new translation into good idiomatic English of the present day. Now the non-specialist can read Joinville with enjoyment. On the other hand the student is well served by having, as well as an eminently readable version, one that may be compared paragraph by paragraph with the original (Wailly's numbering has been retained), providing with a good introduction and excellent notes (there are none to speak of in Marzials and those of Dr Evans are much less extensive). For full measure we are also given in the Appendix Joinville's *Credo*, his letter to Louis X, an epitaph composed by him, the letter of John Sarrasin from Damietta, and finally St Louis' letter to his people, written at Acre in 1250, appealing for more knights.

In this version those flat and rather wooden figures, who in so many medieval illuminations endure impassively unspeakable tortures, are suddenly galvanized into life, and pain, dirt, and disease appear as real in the thirteenth century as in the twentieth: 'The epidemic in the camp began to grow worse; our men had so much dead flesh on their gums that the barbers had to remove it to enable them to chew food and to swallow'. Yet through this sordid reality (with its lighter moments) appears constantly the genuine idealism that animated the crusading knight not only St Louis himself but a Lord of Brancion or a Joinville.

A. ZAINA

ST DOMINIC'S SUCCESSOR. By Marguerite Aron. (Blackfriars Publications; 13s. 6d.)

When this study of Blessed Jordan of Saxony first appeared in France twenty-five years ago it was recommended to any hesitating reader by the late Père Mandonnet, O.P., as a means of gaining 'the knowledge, through a well-informed and agreeably written book, of a beautiful page of history from the most beautiful century of Christian Europe'. The French title—*Un Animateur de la Jeunesse au XIII Siècle*—is a more attractive description of Blessed Jordan than the English one. Inevitably there is a loss in translation and the present version is at times somewhat heavy. There are certain blemishes: the retention of French spelling as in 'The Rule of St Augustin', 'The Decretals of Gratien'; 'Great Britain' for thirteenth-century England.

The frontispiece is the familiar portrait of Blessed Jordan from Fra Angelico's 'Crucifixion' at San Marco. This is a happy choice, for it supplements the unavoidable *lacuna* in the text concerning Blessed Jordan's appearance. Mlle Aron discusses the problem of his age at great length, since the documentary evidence is slight, and comes to the conclusion that he was in mature age, about forty, when he

entered the new Order of Preachers. This seems likely and explains his swift promotion to the office of second Master-General after less than three years in the Order; it also explains the compelling attraction he had for young people, who so eagerly became his spiritual sons and daughters.

Jordan of Saxony can certainly be described with absolute accuracy as a charming man. His paternal affection for the saintly girl, Blessed Diana d'Andolo, and his warm friendship towards the young Dominicans are not least among his engaging qualities.

If, as seems probable, Jordan of Saxony can be identified with the celebrated mathematician Jordanus Nemorarius, it would explain his influential part in the development of Dominican studies in the universities. His story must be told against the background of the medieval university and here it is told extremely well. It is pleasant to know that Jordan of Saxony stayed at the old Blackfriars, Oxford, in 1230.

This biography of St Dominic's successor is not only an account of a saintly and lovable man; it is also a record of the early years of the nascent Order, which Blessed Jordan helped to bring to maturity, which St Albert the Great and St Thomas Aquinas were so soon after to ornament with their intellectual splendours.

KIERAN MULVEY, O.P.

THE MYTH OF THE ETERNAL RETURN. By Mircea Eliade. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. (Routledge & Kegan Paul; 18s.)

Only a fear not to appear overambitious, Professor Eliade tells us, prevented his titling this book an *Introduction to a Philosophy of History*. It is a slender volume, but such a subtitle would have been accurate, and well in accord with its comprehensiveness. Hitherto known for his exhaustive field-work and empirical research into the history of religions, the author here reveals himself as a considerable philosophical thinker reflecting upon the data which he has amassed.

For all its brevity it is, in our opinion, a work of exceptional importance. For the first time we are shown, on purely empirical grounds, the essential and vast difference between the Hebrew-Christian tradition and 'other religions'. It is found to lie in their respective attitudes to history: the hostility of the latter toward 'every attempt at autonomous history, that is, history not regulated by archetypes'; the former, culminating in the Incarnation, involving the 'fall into history', the obliteration of the gulf between the sacred and the profane, repetition and originality. The examination of our past leads to some profound reflections on the present dilemma of Western man and his formidable tasks in the future. We are also shown the