

REVIEWS

THE LIFE OF SAINT DOMINIC IN OLD FRENCH VERSE. Critically edited by Warren Francis Manning. Harvard Studies in Romance Languages. 20. (Harvard University Press: Milford; 22s. 6d.).

In 1888 Paul Meyer drew attention to the importance of a 13th century life of St. Dominic in vernacular verse existing in two manuscripts, one in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the other in the Municipal Library of Arras. Subsequently quotations from the Paris MS. appeared in the works of various writers on Dominican history, including *Mother Drane*, but it was only towards the end of last year that a critical edition of the *Vie Saint Dominique* became available, after several years' work by Professor Manning. The result of Professor Manning's research was first presented to Harvard University in 1941, as a doctorate dissertation in Romance Philology, and was revised between then and March, 1943, for publication.

Both MSS. derive from a lost third, itself a copy of the lost original. The Arras MS. has 12 folios missing, but as it is otherwise the slightly the better text, Professor Manning has used it as the basic manuscript, filling in the gaps with the Paris text. He was especially influenced in this choice by the fact that the Arras text follows closely throughout the Latin prose work of Petrus Ferrandi, whereas the other version after following the Latin source closely for 3,529 lines violently condenses an important part of the story. That the *Legenda* of Petrus Ferrandi, the second oldest life of St. Dominic (about 1234-9), is the source of the vernacular poem, is clearly shown by a comparison of the two works. The poem follows the prose life so closely as to be almost a translation in parts. Differences between the two are of three kinds. Sometimes the poet expands his biographical material by introducing moral reflections, as in a passage in the Prologue where he describes those who put off going to Confession until the last possible moment each year, and then,

Quant ses confesseurs le reprent,
Qu'il reconisce apertement
Son peccié; ançois velt mostrer
Raisons et paroles larder
Por soi partir legierement.

Sometimes an explanation is added to some statement. Petrus Ferrandi, in his account of B. Guala of Brescia's vision at the hour of St. Dominic's death, says that the figure seen by B. Guala was *similis fratri habenti faciem velatam capucio, quemadmodum in ordine moris est fratres sepeliri defunctos*. The poem elaborates:

Si li keusent le chaperon
Tout aval desous le menton,
Que riens ne pert de sen visage;

At other times the expansion is what might be called purely artistic, a poetic flight. Such is the conclusion of the account of St. Dominic's death, which may be quoted at some length as an example of the writer's quality.

. a cest point trespassa
 Et les douleurs de ci laissa,
 Ou il a tant travail et paine,
 Et Jhesu Cris en son demaine
 L'en mena, c'est en Paradis;
 Et lors fu en tos biens assis
 En tote joie sans faillir.
 La li acompli son desir;
 La trova joie sans douleur;
 La trova leece sans pleur;
 La trova vie parmanable;
 La trova tote amor estable;
 La trova ames enmielées,
 De totes amors enivrées;
 La vit Jhesu Crist et sa Mere,
 A cui langue ne s'acompere
 De dire la joie qui est
 En l'arme qui en cel liu est.

The couplets do not always run so smoothly, perhaps because the author seems more concerned to produce a faithful version of the Latin narrative, than to polish his verses. Use of the cheville is frequent, *c'est vertés* being a very common example. Helped also by whole line padding from time to time, the verse keeps considerable smoothness for most of the total length of 5368 lines.

The author, Professor Manning plausibly suggests, may have been a Dominican, perhaps a member of the community at St. Jacques, writing about 1256-9 for the edification of some lay public or, the editor's favourite hypothesis, possibly for a community of Béguines. This question is discussed in the last of ten introductory chapters, which include detailed studies of versification, morphology, and language. Linguistic evidence suggests that the author was a native of the Beauvais district. A chapter on the Latin source gives synopses of the sections of the *Legenda Petri Ferrandi* side by side with those of the verse life. There is an extensive bibliography. Two small slips occur in it when Professor Guiraud and Mrs. Galbraith are noted as Dominicans! A particularly interesting appendix contains a list of the known extant legendaries containing prose lives of St. Dominic in Old French.

There is only one serious complaint to make, about a glossary which looks like a hasty afterthought. It contains many incorrect references; e.g. under *Chaelet*: l. 502 is not *chaelet* but *chaelés*, ll. 403, 421, 429 have *caelés* not *caelet*, and a third variant—*chaet* in l. 506—is omitted. Omission of variations is common. One

would have expected to find the form *dusk'a* under *dusque*. Similarly in some other instances. The glossary would be little help to those frightened by Old French. It could have made the reading of the text possible for many more people by giving a few indications of the more common dialectal phenomena, or even by the inclusion of such words as *illuec*, *soef*, *neporeuc*, and *joventel*. Yet one finds in it such obvious forms as *miliu*, *prophesie*, *sovrain*, *soing*, *besoing*, (but not *loing*!), *vespre*, *onzime*. It should be made clear that random checking of the philological chapters has given no reason to doubt the accuracy of references in the remainder of the book. And in general one would conclude by heartily agreeing with these lines from the Archbishop of Cincinnati's *Foreword*: 'The Dominican Order, philologists, and all who know and love the scholarship of the thirteenth century are indebted to Professor Manning for editing this unique life of the Founder of the Order of Friars Preachers.'

ANTHONY ROSS, O.P.

THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN HUMANISM. By D. J. B. Hawkins, D.D., Ph.D. (Blackfriars, The Aquinas Papers, No. 1, pp. 16; 1s.)

After rapidly skating over history from Clement of Alexandria to Cardinal Sadolets, the position is reached that, while the theoretic reconciling of grace and nature may present no problem at all, in practice the Christian will have to go gingerly about what is, though worthy, only a second-best, and cannot share the blandness of the eighteenth-century epitaph on the man who 'united a rational enjoyment of the pleasures of this world with a confident expectation of those of the world to come.'

A.B.

ST. THOMAS AND NIETZSCHE. By F. C. Coplestone, S.J., M.A. (Blackfriars; Aquinas Papers No. 2; 1s.)

In dealing with apparently hostile systems or movements, a mind possessing the philosophy of Aquinas should exercise a power, not of criticism only, but, more gracious, of intellectual sympathy, as far removed from good-natured accommodation as active peace is from torpor. Such a spirit, not conspicuous in the manualists, nor indeed in most scholastic authors, dignifies this informed and temperate introduction to Nietzsche; there is no transformation of him into a journalese Nazi, no jibe at his madness. At first you might think that the title presages an impossible task; that the two are more than poles apart, for where is their axis? Yet by the respectful and clear delineation of the genealogy of ideas in the energetic nihilism of the one, and by their reference to the hierarchy of values established by the other, both thinkers are made clearer and even, effect of the best kind of dialectic, brought into society together.

C.P.O.