

becomes, and I think Fiddes would agree, a philosophical principle placed within the very structure of existence itself. Fiddes's trinitarian economy is not one whereby the eternal persons of the Trinity have intervened in time and history in such a manner so as to make possible human persons to obtain communion with them. Rather the divine 'dance' is necessarily and ontologically weaved within the very fabric of time and history. Thus, Fiddes conflates the order of grace and the order of nature. Espousing a form of pantheism (see p. 292), there can be only one type of relationship between God and human beings, and that relationship inheres within the very ontological structure of all reality, including God. It is this pantheism that allows Fiddes to see the world and human beings as 'God's body' (see pp. 278-302) and so demands a God that, literally, embodies time and suffering (see pp. 152-90). Such a view raises a host of questions (which I have extensively treated elsewhere) not the least of which is how such a pantheistic God can create *ex nihilo*, since his very own existence is dependent upon the 'created' order. Moreover, Jesus is no longer the distinct person of the Son who became man and who, through his death and resurrection, inaugurated a whole new salvific order (a new dance) comprised of the new life of the Holy Spirit (the new interior choreographer who empowers the new dancers in faith to dance the new eschatological dance). Rather, Jesus merely makes evident the salvific 'dance' that has always been in progress. The significance of Jesus is then reduced to that of a gnostic and pelagian redeemer, the flawless dance master, who exemplifies and so teaches us to dance the old dance properly.

Fiddes, within this book, has set himself the important and noble task of making the Trinity pastorally relevant. He has succeeded in many ways. My fear is that his own theology of God has undermined some of the Trinity's practical relevance.

THOMAS WEINANDY OFM Cap

LA SAGESSE DU MONDE. UNE HISTOIRE DE L'EXPERIENCE HUMAINE DE L'UNIVERS by Rémi Brague *Fayard*, 'L'esprit de la cité', Paris, 1999. Pp. 333, FF 165 pbk.

Professor Brague started off by teaching Greek philosophy, to which he devoted his doctoral and professorial dissertations. He then moved into Arabic medieval philosophy, and now teaches this at the Sorbonne. A specialist in Christian medieval thought, over the last twenty years he has also been studying Jewish philosophy — see his intellectual autobiography, an essay written at the request of *Le débat*, 'Elargir le passé, approfondir le présent' (*Le débat* 72, Nov-Dec 1992). On Greek, Islamic, Jewish, Christian and modern cosmologies he writes with first-hand knowledge. He might well be the most learned Frenchman today. In other words, one should not be too quickly irritated by the title of his book. Still, for an English-speaking academic audience, a less offputting title, albeit more offputting for the non-specialist, could have been, *A History of the Posterity of Plato's Timaeus*.

The thread of the story is the link between anthropology and metaphysics, the 'factual' (nature, the World) and the 'normative', the is and the ought. Brague has never ceased to wrestle with this question, from his

earliest book, a commentary on the *Meno*, to his forthcoming book, a history of natural law, we are told. How does ethics relate to metaphysics? *What sort of wisdom can come from the world?* The book under review is very pleasant to read, written in a simple and elegant style. It is also, if not above all, remarkably broad and enlightening. Published in 1999, it would perhaps already be too old to review, were it not one of those works which should certainly be on the shelves of any decent library, and is bound to become a classic.

A historian of philosophy more than a philosopher, Brague does not defend a particular thesis. Or, more specifically, he seems to be attracted by three different (incompatible) theses and repelled by one. The one that repels him is positivism and, to some extent, the Enlightenment. Sketchy in places, Whitehead, for instance, is not mentioned, his treatment of 'modern' cosmologies (or critiques of) is shorter and slightly more laboured than his treatment of antiquity and the Middle Ages. Brague's allegiance is oddly divided between Leo Strauss, Heidegger and medieval Christianity. Very little is said about Straussians' interpretation of the *Timaeus* as an ironic text, but what is said suggests that a completely different book could have been written (pp.36–8,45). A translator of Strauss, Brague admires him unashamedly, though from some distance. Brague's professorial dissertation (*thèse d'Etat*), *Aristote et la question du monde. Essai sur le contexte cosmologique et anthropologique de l'ontologie* (1988) was a Heideggerian interpretation of Aristotle, and this perspective remains very clearly visible in the conclusion of the book, where Brague mentions the possibility of a Kantian-phenomenological-Heideggerian understanding of the cosmos through an analysis of man's 'worldliness'. Brague belongs to a French Heideggerian and Catholic school, influenced by Jean Beaufret and Pierre Aubenque.

A former editor of the French edition of *Communio*, Brague is a devout Roman Catholic. His ultimate sympathy seems to lie with medieval Christianity, but tinted with melancholy, as if the medieval way of being both a Christian and part of this world, of reconciling Christian humility with man's eminent place in creation, was no longer tenable.

EMILE PERREAU-SAUSSINE

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF RICHARD FISHACRE OP: Prolegomena to the edition of his Commentary on the *Sentences*, edited by R. James Long and Maura O'Carroll SND *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Munich, 1999. Pp. 235 + 31 ill., DM75 pbk.

The medieval English Dominican friar Richard Fishacre (d.1248) may have been insular in never leaving his native country, yet he contributed to a new way of studying theology. He was the first in Oxford to write a Commentary on the four books of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, arousing the suspicions of Grosseteste and the interest of Aquinas. Matthew Paris, not someone likely to flatter the friars, was full of praise for Fishacre's learning in theology and other sciences.

In 1998 a colloquium on Fishacre was held at Blackfriars, Oxford, leading to a special issue of commemorative essays on him in *New Blackfriars* 80 (1999), 317-380. Fishacre's thought and career were tentatively outlined, as part of an international project to publish a critical