

the lost unity not just of mankind, but also of the cosmos, is scriptural. It follows straightforwardly from a full commitment to His divinity, combined with a belief that the Fall was not merely a human phenomenon. Fr White explores with pastoral sensitivity the benefits of the consequent understanding sin of as something that we 'fall into' rather than commit.

This world-view also underpins an illuminating account of the liturgy. Stepping back from the familiar battles over types of church music, Fr White asks rather, 'Why do these battles occur?'. He reimagines liturgical music as primarily a mystical ministry, in which hymns such as 'Of the Father's heart begotten' were a means of passing down a cosmic vision, a sharing in the healing power of Wisdom. Such a ministry needs to be consciously prepared by a life of prayer and aware of the great tradition of which it is a part. Similarly, instead of arguing about 'liturgical dance', we should reenvision the liturgy, with its orchestrated movement, as something that is itself a kind of dance. Relics of the ancient tradition such as the feast-day dances found in a couple of Spanish cathedrals make sense in this context. The faithful on earth were mirroring the dance of the angels (as depicted for example by Fra Angelico).

Liturgy, Fr White writes, 'is weird . . . Like art, it seems beyond analysis.' But this is partly because we have lost the knowledge that made sense of it. An immensely suggestive chapter describes what our sacramental worship might look like if we recovered the ancient wisdom. The ancient analogies between our bodies, the Temple and the cosmos, the sense of participating in the cosmic healing power of Christ, the rebinding of the bonds broken by sin: this is the task of liturgy. Again, this analysis enables Fr White to integrate a wealth of otherwise puzzling details, from debates over altar rails to the visions of St John in *Revelation*.

Dialogue with the questions of the 'New Age' has stimulated this inquiry. Yet Fr White is clear about the dangers of Gnostic and New Age spiritualities: their adherents seek to separate themselves from their 'lower' selves, the past, and the community. Catholicism rather seeks to *integrate* the whole person, the community, the tradition, the heavens and the earth, as the cosmic cross so powerfully signifies. This book is only a beginning of a vast project, and Fr White invites us all to join the exploration. If you are intrigued, visit: [lostknowledgeofchrist.wordpress.com](http://lostknowledgeofchrist.wordpress.com)

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**HAGAR'S VOCATION: PHILOSOPHY'S ROLE IN THE THEOLOGY OF RICHARD FISHACRE, OP** by R. James Long, *The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2015, pp. xviii + 271, \$69.95, hbk*

This is a most interesting book, both in content and composition. The format which gathers together contributions on Richard Fishacre

OP written over many years by Professor Long and previously published in a variety of books and journals, makes it much easier for the reader to gain a real insight about Fishacre as a philosopher.

The schools in Oxford had weathered the interdict of 1208–1215 imposed on King John, and during the regency of the minor Henry III enjoyed comparative peace. Richard Fishacre (d.1248) was one of the early members of the Oxford Blackfriars community founded in 1221. He was a student of Robert Bacon OP, and incepted under him. Robert Bacon brought a chair in theology into the Blackfriars *studium*. Blackfriars was part of the development of the young university of Oxford almost from the beginning and a major element in the faculty of theology. When the Franciscans founded a community and school in Oxford in 1224, Robert Grosseteste was its first regent master. Fishacre was the first Englishman, the first Oxford scholar, and the first Dominican to write, as an established Master of Theology, a Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in England. It is important to note that although Fishacre benefited from the international exchange of personnel and manuscripts among Dominicans and especially those from Paris, his poor health precluded him ever studying in Paris. He reflects the English reality he found in Oxford, where Arabic science and mathematics which had come into the Cathedral School in Worcester from Spain eventually made their home.

One of the most eminent masters was Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln from 1235, who was not only a theologian, but a philosopher who took Aristotle seriously. Grosseteste was also in modern terms, a scientist who wrote a well-known treatise on the *Physics* of Aristotle. It is clear from the studies in Long's book that Fishacre also took to philosophy like a duck to water. Moreover, as the image Fishacre chose to designate philosophy illustrates, he saw philosophy as essential living preparation for the study of theology.

The topics Long has selected for discussion are: the Role of Philosophy in Richard Fishacre's Theology of Creation; Between Idolatry and Science – the Magical Arts of the Grosseteste School; Of Angels and Pinheads – The Contributions of the Early Oxford Masters to the Doctrine of Spiritual Matter; the First Oxford Debate on the Eternity of the Word; Fishacre and Rufus on the Metaphysics of Light; The Division of the Waters (*Gn.1: 6–7*) – the History of a Conundrum and its Resolution by the Early Oxford Masters; Adam's Rib: a Test Case for Natural Philosophy in Grosseteste, Fishacre, Rufus and Kilwardby; Richard Fishacre and the Problem of the Soul; Interiority and Self-Knowledge according to Richard Fishacre; Richard Fishacre's Treatise *De libero arbitrio*; Undoing the Past – Fishacre and Rufus on the Limits of God's Power; The Virgin as Olive Tree: a Marian Sermon of Richard Fishacre and Science at Oxford; Richard Fishacre's *Quaestio* on the Ascension of Christ; Richard Fishacre's *Super S. Augustini librum de haeresibus adnotationes*. Each selection has commentary, and in some cases Latin

text(s) where available. Texts and references come from the works of Fishacre, (where appropriate from the published parts of his *Sentences Commentary*) Richard Rufus, Alexander of Hales and Grosseteste.

These fifteen articles covering so wide a variety of topics, indicating Fishacre's questing mind, also show Long's mastery of his subject. There is some content identified by Long, such as the *Quaestio* on the Ascension and more recently the edition of Fishacre's arguments based on Augustine's study of heresies. And there is an interesting discussion on free will. Moreover, some of the articles discuss matters on the edge of theological and philosophical investigation such as the enquiry on magic. Some of the illustrations or *exempla* are taken from the science being studied in Oxford at that time. For example, Fishacre's sermon 82 (in *Laud Misc.* 511) quotes a passage from his Commentary about matter. His description is near the modern scientists' description of 'black holes'. All fifteen chapters have a thematic unity namely, Richard Fishacre's conviction, captured in the guiding metaphor of Abraham and Hagar, that to understand theology, that is the scriptures, one had to first understand the physical world, a kind of knowledge which he and his contemporaries called natural philosophy and which we name science. Here I add a tentative comment on the relationship between Richard Fishacre OP and Richard Rufus of Cornwall OFM. There seems to be some element of competition, as well as the fact that one was Dominican and the other was Franciscan. But there could be another factor. I come from the same shire, Devon, and just twenty-five or so miles from Fishacre's probable home. Richard Rufus is clearly a Cornishman. The real cultural difference between Devonshire and Cornish people goes back more than a millennium and is still around today. Could this difference be a factor in the relationship between Fishacre and Rufus?

In the 1980s Sir Richard Southern raised the question of Bodleian Library, Oxford MS *Laud Misc.* 511 being published by the British Academy. This was not accepted because there is only one identified version of that manuscript. Consultation with *Père* Louis Jacques Bataillon OP of the Leonine Commission led to the exploration of the publication of Richard Fishacre's *Sentences Commentary*. This was taken up by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich; Books II and III of the Commentary are already in print. The international team editing Fishacre's masterly work is led by Professor Long with Dr Klaus Rodler as the publication editor. It is hoped that the complete publication of Fishacre's *Sentences Commentary* will not only add significantly to our knowledge of early Oxford theology but, from its use of early Oxford science and mathematics in its doctrinal and philosophical studies, will help to mend the modern divorce between theology and science. Professor Long's book is a valuable introduction to the scholar, Richard Fishacre OP.

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