

Boekbesprekingen — Comptes rendus

Gordon LEFF, *William of Ockham. The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1975, xxiv-666 pp., £ 15.

The introduction to this book ends with the words: « However we may regard his effects, scholasticism after Ockham was never again the same » (XXIV). This sentence clearly restates the sub-title of Leff's work, *Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse*. Leff's judgment, however, distances itself from that of the earlier handbooks: before Ockham the bloom period of High Scholasticism, with him the beginning of decadence. Leff has succeeded in refuting this commonplace judgment of the handbooks. The author is already well-known through his study on Gregory of Rimini and other late medieval theologians, and he has a very meritorious work on the history of medieval philosophy to his name. He considers his « Ockham » as a *retractatio* of his earlier works. This Augustinian feature indicates his scientific vitality. With the help of the insights of Hochstetter, Vignaux, Moody, Boehner, Baudry, to name but a few of the innovators in the interpretation of Ockham, Leff now offers us the first comprehensive study in English of O's system of thought. Copleston in his *History* had already achieved something similar on a limited scale, but Leff's work is deeper and more comprehensive. Leff's method follows a recent tendency not simply to sketch the broad outlines of relationship and influence between Ockham and his predecessors and successors, but first to allow O. himself to speak by attending closely to his texts. « We must know the terms before we can know they are related » (XIV). Leff's work is divided into three parts, corresponding to the system of thought on uncreated and created reality. The first part deals with thought itself (2-317). This comprises almost half the book, for, according to Leff, O's greatest achievement in the realm of thought is to be found in his logical-epistemological speculations. That is not to say, however, that O. was a logician devaluing theology and metaphysics. O. rejects an all too superficial connection between thinking and being, preferring to lay bare the depth structure in which the relationship between our thinking and reality is mediated through language. In this first part, entitled the cognitive order, Leff considers the different sorts of knowledge (ch. 1), the status of the concept (ch. 2), and logic (ch. 3). The question can be asked if it would not have been better to have treated logic before epistemology, seeing that logic for O. provides the very best instrument for exploring other fields such as theory of knowledge and theodicy.

The second part, the theological order (320-526), is concerned with the possibility of knowledge about God (ch. 5), God's essence and attributes, the divine ideas and persons (ch. 6), God's salvific relation to creation and the relationship of man to God (ch. 7). In contrast to many other O. scholars, Leff devotes a number of pages to the doctrine of the Trinity, in a section which he entitles «The divine persons» (ch. 6, p. 411-436). It is regrettable, however, that at the beginning of this section he renders O.'s opinion concerning the distinction between the divine persons incorrectly. Leff states on p. 411: «The divine persons, unlike the divine attributes, are distinguished formally». O. himself, however, in his *Commentary on the Sentences* I, d. 2, q. 11, A writes: «Utrum cum unitate numerali divinae essentiae stet realitas personarum realiter distinctarum» and in L «ex distinctione reali personarum et identitate essentiae cum personis et relationibus contingit inferre distinctionem formalem relationis et essentiae». The persons are therefore according O. really distinguished from one another; the formal distinction is between essence and the persons/relations.

The third part, the created order (528-643) deals with O.'s anthropology, more specifically with the structure of the soul (ch. 8), cosmological problems such as the structure of things, time, place, and movement (ch. 9). It is within this framework that the doctrine of the Eucharist is treated. This is perhaps methodologically correct, in that O. here considers the separation of substance and accidents. But by making of O.'s doctrine of the Eucharist a merely philosophical problem his theological concern is too easily lost sight of. In the last chapter, O.'s political ideas are considered. At the beginning of the work an overview of O.'s life and work is presented (XI-XX), and at the end a bibliography is to be found (645-649), together with an index of persons (651-654) and a subject index (654-666).

Because of the high standard of this work we hesitate to mention a couple of small errors. On p. 654 we find Rome, Giles of; on p. XXII omnipotence; on p. 645 certain references to the periodical *Archives*... are imprecise; and on the same page, the title of Ghisalberti's work is given as *Guglielmo di Ockham. Vita e Pensiero*, thereby including the publisher, «Vita e Pensiero», in the title.

M. SCHRAMA, O.S.A.

Zr. HERESWITHA, *Inleiding tot de Geschiedenis van het Kloosterwezen in de Nederlanden. A: Orden ontstaan in de Middeleeuwen. II. 1. f: Orde van het Heilig-Graf* (Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België extranummer 15). Brussel, 1975, 270 pp., 600 BF.

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