

that of their nationality: dentist, teacher, journalist, priest, student, professor, photographer, theologian, farmer, art therapist, communications manager, solicitor, goldsmith, politician, cleaner, bishop, boatman, among them.

The cold, hunger, and sleeplessness of the Lough Derg experience reduces all pilgrims to the commonality of the human condition. The sneaky and persistent torturing by the midges is a problem for many, and in terms of creating the ultimate egalitarian atmosphere there is no doubt but that bare feet is the key.

Lough Derg, like all pilgrimages, offers an opportunity for opening up the mind and heart, for letting go of preconceived ideas and prejudices in order to make room for a joy and hope that can sometimes be in short supply today. Although often unconscious of the fact, more than one pilgrim goes to Lough Derg to confront the very core of their being, to meet themselves. For them in particular, perhaps, celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation and the eucharistic liturgy in the basilica is the highlight of their sacred journey.

The book does not confine itself to the experiences of the pilgrims. The reader is taken behind the scenes to observe Lough Derg through the eyes of the officials and employees on the island – the boatmen, the household staff, the priests on duty, and, dare I say it in relation to Lough Derg, the caterers!

Pilgrims' Tales is a bedside book, easy reading. And yet, it is a serious book, a sacred book, a book of revelations opening windows into the human soul with every turning of a page. And one of those revelations is a reminder that conversion is a continuing process, not always reaching completion on the holy island. For one hungry pilgrim the moment of truth came in a row with his brother over not sharing two battered sausages on the night of his homecoming. On meeting a blank refusal, the brother cynically remarked: 'So much

for your going to Lough Derg if you can't share your food when you come home'. And the light dawned!

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MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales: Bibliotheca 4 – Averroës Latinus. Louvain: Peeters, 2002 (New Edition). Pp. xxii+16. No price given. No ISBN.

One of the most momentous events in the history of thought in the Middle Ages was the translation of Averroës's works from Arabic into Latin by Michael Scotus. These works were brought by him from Spain to Paris by the beginning of the 1230s and found a home at the court of the Emperor Frederick II in the south of Italy. Within a few decades of the death of their author, a series of commentaries, short, middle, or long, became available to Christian thinkers and Averroës became known simply as the Commentator. For the first time, Aristotle's naturalistic approach to philosophical topics became available, as distinct from the religious tendencies of Neoplatonism. The reaction has long been documented: the rise of Latin Averroism, the reaction of Augustinianism, the middle way of Aquinas, the condemnations of 1277. The triumph of Aquinas over Averroës, such as that famously depicted by Francesco Traini in the Dominican Church of Santa Caterina in Pisa, seems to demonstrate a definitive 'overcoming' of Averroës by the end of the thirteenth century, especially with the defeat of representative figures such as Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. The evolution of the history of thought, however, is rarely as simple as it appears on initial inspection. Despite the commentaries of Aquinas, and independently of them, the commentaries of Averroës continued to be used in the centuries which followed. Figures as diverse as

John of Jandun and Richard FitzRalph regarded Averroës as the authentic interpreter of Aristotle. The Averroistic interpretation remained influential until the Renaissance, especially in the north of Italy. Apart from a number of modern editions, present-day scholars have had to make use of the edition of Averroës' works made by the Giunti brothers of Venice in 1562-74 and reprinted in 1962. This Renaissance edition, quite apart from the difficulties encountered in consulting it, does not present us with the text of Scotus' translation such as it was read in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The need for new editions of the *translatio Scoti* was recognised as early as 1931 by H. A. Wolfson and subsequently a number of editions appeared from the Medieval Academy of America in the 1940s and 1950s.

For the past two decades the *Averroës Latinus* project has been based at the *Thomas-Institut* of the University of Cologne. The results of the researches undertaken there and elsewhere are now bearing fruit in the new edition of three works in collaboration with the De Wulf-Mansion Centre of the Catholic University of Leuven. Over the next two years editions of the Long Commentaries of Averroës on the *Physics*, *De caelo*, and *Metaphysics* will appear in *Bibliotheca*, the monograph series of the *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*. All three commentaries will be available on a searchable CD-Rom together with (a) the commentary on *De substantia orbis* (1562); (b) those Latin texts published by the Medieval Academy of America, namely the middle commentary on *De generatione*

et corruptione (1956), the long commentary on *De anima* (1953) and the epitome on the *Parva naturalia* (1949); and (c) the middle commentary on the *Peri hermeneias* edited by Roland Hissette in 1996.

The importance of these editions cannot be underestimated, nor however can the difficulties posed for the editors. For example, the Arabic original of the *Commentary on the Physics* does not survive and so will have to be recreated from the Latin translation as well as the Arabic versions of the epitome and middle commentaries which were never translated into Latin. Again, it is becoming increasingly rare that a scholar has the necessary competence in Medieval Latin, Arabic, and Hebrew together with philosophy and theology. Thus, in the case of the *Commentary on the Physics*, Guy Guildentops has made a pragmatic decision, justified in my view. He accepts that the Renaissance editors had produced a more or less reliable text from medieval manuscripts, and that if such a text is stripped of its Renaissance 'improvements' with the aid of medieval manuscripts, that the result will be a reliable working text. This meets the present needs of scholars and prepares the way for a critical edition, something that will take quite a number of years.

Finally, it is an encouraging sign that university institutions and government departments of education in some European countries still consider it worthwhile to devote financial and human resources to real scientific research in the humanities.

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