

Reviews

THE LETTERS OF SAINT ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, Volume One. Translated and Annotated by Walter Fröhlich. *Cistercian Publications*, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1990. Pp.352. £18.95.

Anselm was the greatest Christian writer between Augustine and Aquinas. He stands apart, not only from his contemporaries, but from all other authors of the early Middle Ages. And he has a great deal to teach us today. He was a theological and philosophical genius, and the subjects in which he was interested are still at the centre of theological and philosophical debate.

He has been well served by English translators. Students of his thought can find English editions of all his major works, including his prayers and meditations. Until the appearance of the present volume, however, people unable to read Latin have had no serious access to Anselm's many letters (some four hundred and seventy five of them). For this reason alone the present volume is much to be welcomed. Anyone who really wants to understand Anselm needs to be able to read his letters. Many of them touch on themes which concern him in his other writings, so they add to our knowledge of his ideas. And it is in the letters of Anselm that his character chiefly emerges. It is in his letters, for example, that Anselm the monk truly appears.

The text of Anselm's letters can be found in volumes III–V of Dom F.S. Schmitt's *Anselmi Opera Omnia* (Edinburgh, 1946–1963). The present volume contains a translation of all the letters found in volume III of that edition (translations of volumes IV and V are projected). It also contains a general introduction to Anselm and his letters, a synopsis of each letter translated, plus notes on each letter, an itinerary of Anselm (based largely on Eadmer's *Historia Novorum* and *Vita Sancti Anselmi*), an Anselm bibliography, synchronous charts of Anselm's episcopal colleagues, and relevant historical maps.

Walter Fröhlich is well known to Anselm scholars for his previous work on Anselm's letters. Readers of R.W. Southern's *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, 1991) will know that there are reasons why one might wish to disagree with what Fröhlich has written on the history of Anselm's letters, but this review is not the place to discuss that difficult topic. Suffice it to say that the present translation is very good, and the notes are most useful. The volume is, therefore, highly to be recommended. One can only hope that the project it begins might be successfully completed before too long.

BRIAN DAVIES OP