

WERK UND WELTBILD DES MICHELANGELO. By Charles de Tolnay. (*Albae Vigiliae* VIII). (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag S. Frs. 9.—.)

THE DREAM OF POLIPHILLO, related and interpreted by Linda Fierz-David. Translated by Mary Hottinger. New York: Pantheon. (Bollingen Series XXV; \$3.50.)

The admirable *Albae Vigiliae* series has hitherto been mainly concerned with classical cults and myths: the several studies contributed by Professor Karl Kerényi have been particularly outstanding and illuminating. The inclusion in the series of this translation of Professor de Tolnay's four lectures to the Collège de France on *L'art et la pensée de Michelange* marks a new but not unfitting departure. Better than many more cumbersome studies, they help us to a deeper appreciation of Michelangelo's work through understanding of the spiritual, mental and socio-economic struggles which evoked it, and to see it as the unfolding of a titanic inner development which finds its term in the rugged repose of the Rondanini *Pietà*. The importance of the impact of Dominican, Savonarolan, Humanist and Evangelical influences on his thought and art are impressively emphasised. Michelangelo emerges from these singularly lucid and sober pages, not only as the battlefield of all the conflicts which rent his age, but as one of the giants of history, whose embodiment of essential humanity has a message—a profoundly Christian message—for all time.

Fra Francesco Colonna, O.P., the traditionally supposed author of Poliphilo's *Hypnerotomachia* (Dream-Love-Strife!) was of altogether lesser stature both as man and artist, and the Christianity of any message which he may have wished to convey is, to say the least, not easy to detect. But his 'novel' had much fascination for the men of the Renaissance (and, it seems, of Elizabethan England). Unlike Michelangelo, he belongs, not to its heyday, but to its still more confused and confusing dawn, and (as Frau Dr Fierz-David remarks), 'the Dominican Order had not yet passed through the thoroughgoing reformation it was to undergo at the end of the century under the influence of Savonarola'. Most modern readers will find his complicated dream-courtship exasperatingly tedious and artificial, and his long and detailed descriptions of the houses, palaces and temples of his dreamland can now be of little interest even to architects. But this 'relation and interpretation' does much to explain its former vogue, and to show how this tortuous book—no less than the mighty works of Michelangelo—represents the sincere and courageous working-out of a profound personal problem by one deeply affected by the *Zeitgeist* of his period. As Dr Jung remarks in his Foreword, 'Like every real dream, it is Janus-headed; it is a picture of the Middle Ages just beginning to turn into modern times by way of the Renaissance'. This interpretation he

justly calls, 'the first serious attempt to pluck the heart out of Poliphilo's mystery, and to unravel his crabbed symbolism with the methods of modern psychology'.

V.W.

THE OTHER WORLD, ACCORDING TO DESCRIPTIONS IN MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE. By Howard Rolvin Patch. (Harvard University Press; London, Geoffrey Cumberlege; 40s.)

All the other-world schemes, sacred and profane, which Professor Patch's happy erudition has assembled here, are for us, as they are to him, mainly 'the stuff that men's dreams are made of.' At the best they are shades and images of what the Lord hath prepared for them that love him. But generations of Christians, like their oriental and classical predecessors have evoked material settings, casts and properties to stage their paradisaical speculations and symbolise their visions. So in this adventurous piece of scholarship we set out with oriental and classical other-worlds, so on to pre-Christian, Celtic and German folklore, proceed to medieval conjectures and revelations and end with the paradisaical content—there is not much purgatory or hell—of medieval romances. The Romance of the Grail is rightly exhibited as occupying in symbolism the rank that Dante's *Divine Comedy* holds in allegory.

The author has deliberately shelved the impossible task of deciding how much truth there is in any of his material, though he has occasionally suggested the contemporary estimate in which that material was held. The most august vision, that of St Paul, is the least detailed, the most qualified, the most cautious. But what a wealth of colour, shapelessness, sound and perfume goes to make up the lost Edens and anticipated elysiums of lesser men.

H.P.E.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ANCIENT GREECE. By William Bell Dinsmoor. (Batsford; 30s.)

The remarkable civilisation which grew up and flourished on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean during the two thousand years before Christ produced some of the most glorious architecture the world has ever seen, architecture which is unique in the stylistic influence which it has had in other periods throughout Europe and the New World. No serious student of architecture, whether historian or creative designer, can pretend to a true comprehension of his subject without knowledge and understanding of the processes by which the simple and utilitarian buildings of the earliest settlers in Crete developed into the glories of the Athenian Acropolis.

Professor Dinsmoor's book first appeared in its present form in 1927