

Review

ENGLISH ART 1100-1216. By T. S. R. Boase: Oxford University Press. 1953: price, 30/-.

This is a very welcome third volume of the new *Oxford History of English Art* edited by Professor Boase, the President of Magdalen College, who has also written this particular volume.

Like the other two it reaches a very high standard, and includes an extensive field, none other than the difficult period of the 12th century with its uprush of new vitality in so many fields. There has been great controversy about dates of work within the period, and now Professor Boase has done much to clear up difficulties. He has related Art in all its forms to the social and political life of the time, and has also taken a wider view than has hitherto been customary in England by tracing the relationship with Continental forms.

We are bound to say we think a mistake may have been made by trying to include so much in a single volume. It was an outstanding period in architecture and most of the other Arts. It was a time of very great variety and also originality. Professor Boase has done the best he could in the space available, yet we feel we want more: for example, MSS. of the period displaying several schools of artistic conception are well and fully treated—better perhaps than anywhere else—but there is practically nothing about wallpaintings, and little about stained glass. The author selects certain great churches, and great subjects like the Monastic Orders, and round them he builds up full descriptions of the structures themselves and the treasures they contain. While this makes it a little bit more difficult for the student, it helps to effect a change from the usual method of rather dull, though accurate, descriptions, and his method enables him to link up the Arts with each other, and not to lose sight of the historic and social connections. This makes the book very much more readable than some with too technical descriptions.

Dr. Boase has availed himself of the latest scholarship concerning these questions, and he makes particular use of Dr. Zarnecki, whose work he generously acknowledges.

He agrees with Dr. Zarnecki's diagnosis of a special school of Norman carving in Herefordshire, which he links up with France. This is particularly interesting, because it is known that the Hereford Liturgy definitely borrowed certain things from the Use of Rouen⁽¹⁾. How far the liturgical Use has influenced architecture has never been thoroughly worked out. It is interesting to see the way in which Professor Boase has clarified so much of what we know about the 12th century architecture and artistic movements. We note that Professor Boase agrees with most modern writers in attributing the great sculptured panels at Chichester Cathedral to the end of his period and not to the beginning. It would be interesting to know what these panels were. Are they the survivors of carved stone backs for the stalls occupying in their time the same position as the well-known late Gothic life of St. Augustine in Carlisle?

Professor Boase devotes a little attention to Scotland—not so much as we could wish. He very interestingly points out that in spite of the ornament of the pillars, the plan of the arcades and stonework at Dunfermline is by no means a copy of Durham. He finds traces of something like Romsey influence at Jedburgh, and he accepts the fact that two Cathedrals followed each other at St. Andrews in quick succession in the 12th century, one in the earlier, the other in the later or definitely Norman style. But why has he omitted the chance of enlightening us on the peculiar 13th century work at the west end of Holyrood? Is there French connection there, and if so, what?

The Index and Bibliography are excellent, and indeed we are laid under a debt of gratitude for the whole book. A word should be said about the illustrations which have been most carefully selected, and much trouble must have been taken to secure such an effective reproduction.

FRANCIS C. FEELES.

(1) See Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, Oxford, 1918, pp. 276, et seq.