THE POOR AND THE PERFECT: THE RISE OF LEARNING IN THE FRANCISCAN ORDER, 1209–1310. By Neslihan Şenocak. Ithaca: Cornell University, 2012. Pp. xiv + 276. $49.95.

Şenocak, a former industrial engineer in Ankara, Turkey, and now assistant professor of history at Columbia University, examines how the Franciscans, a lay brotherhood dedicated to simplicity and poverty, became engaged in Scholastic learning and teaching. Her chronological study, focused on the 13th century, aims to overturn a number of well-established interpretations about the role of learning in the early Franciscan Order, such as the belief that the Franciscans merely copied Dominican educational structures, or that Franciscans engaged in higher learning exclusively to train preachers.

Ş. first tackles the idea that early Franciscanism was riven by conspiracy and betrayal of Francis's original vision. The proposition that there was a conflict between the "Spirituals" (against learning) and the "Community" (for learning) was a later development that was read back into the early years of the Order. Instead, Ş. marshals evidence from within and beyond the Order explaining the complex factors that led to the Order's embrace of learning. Historical circumstances, discrete decisions, and diverse needs and motivations influenced the choice to include study as an integral part of Franciscan life.

Ş. suggests that the friars had a significant image problem. Unlike other religious orders, the Franciscans initially attracted primarily lay, poor, and illiterate men, a constituency that clashed with the medieval idea of religious life. Thus the Order needed learned men in order to garner respect and credibility. It was unlikely that the church would invite poor, illiterate Franciscans to ministries that required learning, or that wealthy donors would be drawn to contribute to the Order. The papacy also needed educated clergy to fight heresy. Gregory IX's mitigation of the Franciscan prohibition against possession of material things opened the way for friars to "use" things necessary to their ministry, including books.

In addition, the need for provincial ministers to evaluate candidates and train lectors to teach theology to the friars required study. This meant that virtually all administrators were well educated. The decision to establish communities in Paris (1219) and other university cities meant that a number of established professors like Alexander of Hales became Franciscans. It also led to a steady stream of student applicants. Becoming a Franciscan was attractive to young men drawn to the intellectual life—a widespread phenomenon in the 13th century. It drew those seeking a life-long pursuit of learning; an academic milieu that nurtured virtue and holiness; and potentially a life of high office in the church with its accompanying prestige and comfort.

Gradually, learning was presented as an integral part of the life of poverty and perfection, with the Franciscan Order as the best milieu for the pursuit of higher learning (120). Haymo of Faversham, an English theologian and master at Paris when he entered the Order, became master general in 1240. During his four-year term, the Order's attitude toward learning changed considerably. He encouraged the need for learning at many levels, but he also remained a loyal son of the poor Francis by living simply, wearing a patched habit, and traveling on foot to visit the provinces. Later, friars such as Peter John Olivi, Bonaventure, and Matthew of Aquasparta endorsed learning as faithful to, not a betrayal of, Francis's spirit. A portrait of Francis as a learned man (inspired by the Spirit) legitimated study for Franciscans. Learning and holiness were now linked.

Francis's attitude toward learning remains a subject of debate (97). Ş. notes that the Rule of 1221 (*Regula non bullata*) contains "not a single line about the pursuit of scholarly learning as such" (35). Francis counseled reverence for clergy and scholars, but his evangelical charism pointed to a vision of a community of love that leveled social divisions based on wealth, pedigree, or education. Tensions over learning within the Order after 1244 stem from the inevitable conflict between Francis's countercultural vision of a radically equal, nonhierarchical, downwardly mobile society, and the values and mores of medieval society and church in which the power and prestige of knowledge were central.

Building on previous scholarship, Ş. provides a careful chronological analysis of textual sources related to the substance, evolution, role, and conflicts surrounding learning in early Franciscan life. She offers a compelling story of when, how, and why the Franciscans marshaled such a widespread and highly developed educational system that contributed so much to the life of the church, but that also took a toll on the Order's cohesion. It is a story that continues to reverberate in the church. Conflicts between theologians and ecclesiastical officers perdure. The 13th-century hierarchy of values also lingers in assessments that judge pastoral care as inferior to university learning. Most recently, we note the ecclesial contrast between power/knowledge/office, and poverty/pastoral care/holiness, incarnate in an erudite, Jesuit, Argentine cardinal who identifies with the poor, cooks his own meals, takes the bus to work, and then becomes a pope named Francis.

Fairfield University, CT ELIZABETH A. DREYER (EMERITA)

ORTHODOX READINGS OF AQUINAS. By Marcus Plested. New York: Oxford University, 2012. Pp. xi + 276. $99.

Since the resurgence of Orthodox thought among Russian émigrés to Paris in the early 20th century, people sometimes have sensed that Orthodoxy