

“totalizing discourse” of Petrine primacy. Such admissions seem to warrant at least the consideration of other readings. One such reading would be that some bishops found their so-called Petrine mandate more useful than did other bishops, and used it in particular and unpredictable ways. This is a fascinating study of a relatively obscure period, and one with significant implications for current understandings of the Roman Catholic tradition and its claims to power.

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*A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq: Riccoldo da Montecroce's Encounter with Islam.* By Rita George-Tvrtković. Medieval Voyaging. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012. Pp. xvii + 248. \$110.20.

Modern Christian theologians engaging with Islam can learn from the experiences of medieval friars like Riccoldo da Montecroce. Thus argues George-Tvrtković in her highly focused study of a celebrated yet still under-studied Dominican who traveled from Florence to Baghdad and back at the close of the crusader era. It is a provocative thesis, and perhaps not convincing (or indeed relevant) to many readers. Nevertheless this is a solid piece of research on neglected aspects of an important writer's oeuvre, which opens new avenues for research on East–West encounters in the medieval period.

Setting aside Riccoldo's best-known (and rather derivative) polemical treatise, *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, G.-T. seeks a fuller sense of the friar's evolving views on Islam by focusing instead on his *Liber peregrinationis* and *Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem*. These consist, respectively, of a memoir detailing Riccoldo's experiences in the lands of the East and a set of five highly rhetorical letters (addressed to God, the Virgin, and other members of the celestial court!) on the potentially calamitous theological implications of the fall of Acre in 1291. Riccoldo's observations of Islamic belief and praxis in these texts are nuanced, with the traveler at times positively enjoying the company of Muslim intellectuals and admiring the piety of his Islamic host community. He learned Arabic and repeatedly expressed not only his pride at being able to “read it in Arabic,” but also his delight in the Qur'an's aesthetic quality. Still more intriguing, in the *Epistolae* Riccoldo made so bold as to ask whether the crusaders' defeat at Acre might be taken as a sign that Islam was in fact favored by God over Christianity. Yet the friar never wavered from his vocation and ultimately returned to pen anti-Islamic diatribes in a Florentine convent. That outcome aside, G.-T. suggests that Riccoldo's occasional expressions of “wonder, doubt, and dissonance” reflect a true personal effort to comprehend Islam on its own terms. His experiences could thus stem from the sorts of “deep tensions inherent in any interreligious encounter”—medieval or modern—and so serve as models for similarly conflicted Christian theologians of (comparative) religions currently seeking to develop a theology of Islam.

Whatever the modern implications, G.-T. provides a skilled, if at times somewhat narrow, reading of sources. Genre is a key consideration, as she acknowledges in a

brief discussion of pilgrim-narrative and epistolary conventions (chap. 2); these works' rhetorical structure, authorial intent, and anticipated audience must all be taken into account. When, in *Liber peregrinationis*, Riccoldo praises Muslim "works of perfection" such as devotion to prayer, charity, and study, he may simply be holding up "infidel" virtue to inspire contemplation and shame in a readership of Christian fellow pilgrims. On the other hand, his unusual expressions of admiration could be taken as evidence that he was also deeply impressed, on a destabilizing emotional level, by the piety of Muslims he had met in real life. There is probably truth in both interpretations; the latter receives more emphasis here.

The intended purpose and real audience of the *Epistolae* is still less clear. These letters were likely theological exercises aimed at a Dominican audience, but the strange and apparently transgressive nature of Riccoldo to suspend disbelief in a Christ-centered history again strikes G.-T. as indicative of real spiritual bewilderment. Another possibility, however, which G.-T. does not sufficiently consider, is that Dominican theologians were more open to thought experiments and to serious engagement with "infidel" teachings than modern scholarship often gives them credit for. Non-Christian texts were taken very seriously by the likes of Thomas Aquinas, while the infamous polemicist Ramon Martí saw no contradiction in simultaneously reviling and seeking kernels of truth in the Talmud, Qur'an, and tafsir alike. Riccoldo's *Epistolae* are certainly interesting for their rhetorical flights, as well as for the extreme scenarios they contemplate as possible explanations for God's abandonment of crusade. But they do not necessarily point to any crisis of faith, let alone one engendered by conflicted feelings about Islam.

This admirable first book (derived from a doctoral thesis) provides a significant contribution to studies of both Riccoldo and the state of Christian–Muslim relations at the turn of the 14th century. Its up-to-date overview and bibliography are welcome, as is inclusion of full texts for *Liber peregrinationis* and the *Epistolae*; translated into English for the first time, these account for more than a third of the volume. Much remains to be said on the topic of Riccoldo's Eastern pilgrimage-cum-missions, and new studies of another neglected work (his *Ad nationes orientales*) will be essential if we are to comprehend his approach to the problem of unbelief in general, of which Islam was but one dimension. For now, though, G.-T. has provided us with an excellent next step along a complicated itinerary.

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*A Century of Catholic Mission*. Edited By Stephen B. Bevans. Regnum Studies in Mission. Oxford: Regnum, 2013. Pp. viii + 313. £30.99.

A compound of grass huts, shoeless children in a classroom, a hospital at the edge of a rain forest—for Catholics these disparate images have hovered around the word "mission." Yet, there is an awareness too that evangelization and foreign missions