

M. shows considerable familiarity with the research findings of present-day scholars with regard to the origin, institution, source, and paradigm of the baptismal rite. M. examines why Jesus' baptism which was cited in the early creeds and whose second-century feast might have been subordinate in celebration only to the Easter cycle lost its importance in the fourth century when there emerged a new emphasis connecting baptism with the theme of Christ's death and Resurrection. Since little has been written in English on this topic, this is by far the best summary work on these questions.

On the whole, this is a clear, concise, balanced, illuminating, and monumental work that is a "must" buy for libraries and those interested in the development of baptism and/or seeking to learn how the early Fathers preached and catechized the themes contained in Jesus' baptism in order to instill a greater participation in Christ's prophetic mission. My only major caveat centers on its treatment of divinization, which I think needs greater precision. Granted that it is difficult to lay bare the meaning underlying the early Syriac writers' poetic and symbolic terms, I question whether their understanding of one's "putting on" and "sharing in God's glorious life" is equivalent to what the Alexandrians, "Monophysites," and we today intend by the term "divinization."

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SYMEON THE HOLY FOOL: LEONTIUS'S *LIFE AND THE LATE ANTIQUE CITY*. By Derek Krueger. Transformation of the Classical Heritage. Berkeley: University of California, 1996. Pp. xvi + 196. \$35.

A study and English translation of a seventh-century hagiographical text by Leontius, bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus. The story of Symeon is set in Palestine and Emesa in Syria, but K. suggests that Leontius's statements about Emesa reveal more about his own setting in seventh-century Cyprus. The social picture

that emerges is of a prosperous, religiously diverse society which was also a haven for those exiled because of religious persecution or the Arab conquests. Leontius presents Symeon as someone able to evangelize in a complex urban society by adopting the persona of "fool."

K. notes the parallels between Leontius's portrayal of Symeon and the commonly known anecdotes about the Cynic Diogenes of Sinope, as well as the significant Jesus typology that shapes the narrative line of Symeon's ministry. K. emphasizes the Diogenes material more than the Jesus parallels, for his primary interest is to interpret Symeon's outrageous behavior as a fool. The parallels with the life of Jesus therefore receive less attention than they might; in them, of course, lies the evangelical heart of Leontius's project. Furthermore, Symeon's career as a fool for Christ takes up only half of the *vita*; the first half, in which Symeon makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and becomes a monk in the monastery of Gerasimos, receives scant attention from K. Although it is more conventional in content and tone, further exploration of that first half could help to situate the more unusual second half in the broader world of early monasticism, particularly that of Palestine and Syria.

K. writes well, provides adequate documentation in his notes, and translates smoothly.

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STUDI SULL'ETICA DELLA PRIMA SCUOLA FRANCESCANA. By Antonino Poppi. Padua: Centro Studi Antoniani, 1996. Pp. 194. L. 30,000.

An important, balanced, and much-needed account of the emergence of early Franciscan thought. Poppi starts with the sermons of Anthony of Padua, the defender of human rights, and the writings of Bonaventure. While the "philosophy" of each is based on the Scriptures, Anthony's is a starkly, realistic indictment of clever, human practices like usury that exploit the neighbor, while Bo-

naventure's leads to an ascent to divine illumination of true happiness. From below and above, both call the rational human to a modest self-assessment which does not undermine the capabilities of reason but frees it from pretensions.

Language and method take shape as well: Anthony's prophetic and Bonaventure's mystical language prompted Roger Bacon to pursue a philosophy expressed through rhetoric seeking poetic expression rather than the Schoolmen's pursuit of the speculative through scientific form. But the language of persuasion couples with the concrete, and Bacon advanced the relationship between rhetoric and phronesis. In three essays, P. defends Scotus's concern for contingents precisely as the call to respond to objective criteria and not as an excuse to escape to subjectivity. Scotus brackets the call to right reason with the primacy of freedom and the love of God; the former is at the service of the latter.

After briefly treating Peter Aureoli's encounter with Averroism, P. deals with Ockham, negotiating the debate between Louis Vereecke's insistence that obedience overrides all other Ockhamist interests and Marilyn McCord Adams's claim that Ockham does not undermine rationality in general or phronesis in particular. P. concludes this admirable work with John of Capistrano's casuistry, hinting at the influence that Franciscan interest in rhetoric, phronesis, and contingency might have had on that important form of moral reasoning. This is a satisfying and illuminating work on an oft-neglected school in the history of ethics.

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JEWS IN THE NOTARIAL CULTURE: LATINATE WILLS IN MEDITERRANEAN SPAIN 1250-1350. By Robert I. Burns, S.J. Berkeley: University of California, 1996. Pp. x + 267. \$45.

Burns is a pre-eminent scholar on the history of medieval Mediterranean Spain. This latest contribution is intended for three audiences: re-

searchers in his own specific field, persons specializing in medieval studies generally, and a wider, non-specialist audience. While the book will not prove an easy read for the third group, B. provides a glossary of unfamiliar terms to facilitate the process.

Those familiar with the discussions about Christian-Jewish relations since Vatican II's affirmations about the Church and the Jewish people will find this work of special interest. The medieval era has been relatively neglected in terms of research on Christian-Jewish relations. Recent scholarship has tended to concentrate on the first and the twentieth centuries. When attention has turned to the medieval period, it is usually in terms of the widespread anti-Semitism that scared its face. B. here looks for more constructive aspects of the relationship.

B. examines some 50 Jewish wills and will-related charters prepared by notaries of the time. These materials offer a remarkable window on the daily life of the pluri-ethnic society of Mediterranean Spain. His analysis clearly shows that Jews were not totally marginalized in medieval Spanish society. On the contrary, they were far more integral to the life of the general society than is usually presented in history books about the period. B. also gives special attention to the role of women in these documents and to women's wills in particular, extracting from them material important for an understanding of the role of women and of gender relationships during this era.

This well-researched and well-documented volume adds considerably to our knowledge of an era whose full picture is still somewhat veiled.

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ERASMUS OF THE LOW COUNTRIES. By James D. Tracy. Berkeley: University of California, 1997. Pp. ix + 297. \$40.

Tracy is a distinguished historian, whose specialties are Erasmus and the history of the Netherlands. He brings these two subjects together