

remarkable facets of late medieval perceptions of the Bible,” the first and most important being that “the canon was not yet closed, but was still open, beyond the twelfth century” (p. 17). Some readers—particularly those less familiar with the greater fluidity and elasticity of *sacra scriptura* prior to the printing press, the Reformation, and modernity—will doubtless be confused by such an affirmation. Whereas Linde makes use of the scholarly work of Ceslas Spicq (1944) and Rainer Berndt (1988) on Hugh’s understanding of the Fathers vis-à-vis the New Testament (pp. 12–13), curiously she does not engage more recent considerations of what remains an important question in Victorine scholarship (in spite of her acknowledgment that “the literature on Hugh is vast” [p. 171, n. 18]). Over against the older view that Hugh boldly advocated an open canon of the New Testament that included the Fathers, some more recent scholars maintain that the Victorine master was merely reiterating a traditional list of sacred texts that included both canonical and non-canonical writings without distinction (see, e.g., *Interpretation of Scripture: Theory* [Victorine Texts in Translation 3], pp. 39–40).

In spite of such shortcomings, however, this collection will offer medievalists of every stripe much food for thought and fodder for further research.

*Boston College*

FRANKLIN T. HARKINS

*Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference: Commentary, Conflict and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean.* Edited by Ryan Szpiech. [Bordering Religions: Concepts, Conflicts, Conversations.] (New York: Fordham University Press. 2015. Pp. xvi, 329. \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-8232-6462-9.)

This volume brings together thirteen essays originating in a conference held at the University of Michigan in 2011. The contributions range from the tenth century to the sixteenth and from Baghdad to Paris. The common goal is to examine how Jews, Christians, and Muslims used exegesis—learned interpretation of their own scriptures and of the scriptures of the rival monotheistic religions—as vehicles for apologetics (defining and justifying their own religious communities) and polemics (attempting to undermine the legitimacy of those outside their communities).

It is common to class the three faiths as “Abrahamic,” emphasizing common ground symbolized by the patriarch revealed in all three traditions. Yet understanding of Abraham/Ibrahim could vary greatly within and between exegetical traditions, as Sarah Stroumsa shows in her study of how the patriarch is understood by two Andalusian exegetes, the Muslim Ibn Masara (d. 931) and the Jew Maimonides (d. 1204). Walid Saleh compares the approaches to the Hebrew bible of the Catholic Humanist Johannes Reuchlin (d. 1522) and the Mamluk scholar al-Biqā’ī (d. 1480). Saleh highlights the different kinds of interest in Judaism of the two intellectuals and their religious and cultural milieus. The keen interest in Judaism in sixteenth-century Christian Europe was accompanied by increasing persecution of Jews, whereas the relative lack of interest among contemporary Muslim intellectuals helped permit a relative tolerance of Jews in Mamluk society.

These intellectuals were often quite aware of rival exegetical traditions, and at times exploited them deftly. Various Christian writers highlighted Qur'anic praise of Jesus and Mary in their writings against Judaism; others used the Qur'an's commendation of Torah and Gospel as an argument against the notion of *tabrif* (corruption of scripture by Jews and Christians). Sidney Griffith presents the work of Ibn al-Mahrūma, a fourteenth-century Syrian Miaphysite who uses Muslim exegetical arguments about the abrogation of the *shari'a* to affirm Christian supersession of Jewish law.

A number of the articles deal with Dominican exegesis of Bible, Talmud, and Qur'an, often in the contexts of disputations and anti-Muslim or anti-Jewish polemics. Thomas Burman, through a close study of a Parisian manuscript, looks at the intellectual baggage of Ricoldo da Montecroce, who wrote an influential anti-Qur'anic polemic in the early fourteenth century. The Dominicans' penchant for finding apologetical arguments for Christianity in the writings of Jews and Muslims became compelling enough that at least one fourteenth-century Dominican, Alfonso de Buenhombre, forged text by purportedly "Jewish" and "Muslim" authors which vindicated the superiority of Christianity. Alfonso affirms that he "found" these texts in the Maghreb and "translated" them into Latin (as we see in the article by Antoni Biosca i Bas). Harvey Hames and Ursula Ragacs examine the 1240 Paris trial of the Talmud and the 1263 Barcelona disputation, showing how Dominican and Jewish writers mobilized exegesis to present their divergent takes on the meaning and outcome of those events.

Several articles show how Jewish exegetes used figures in Hebrew scripture to represent and denigrate rival traditions. Esperanza Alfonso looks at how various Sephardic exegetes understood the "strange woman" of Proverbs, who was seen as representing sexual impurity, the uncircumcised, the study of gentile philosophy, or of heresy and apostasy—particularly to Christianity. The dangerous and enticing nature of this strange woman reveals the writers' unease concerning the attractions and dangers of relations between Jews and the majority Christian society. Alexandra Cuffel examines the rich and complex traditions of the *Toledot Yeshu*, oral and written, from the Middle East and Europe, that make Jesus into a charlatan and magician in efforts to parry Christian and Muslim traditions about him. It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to a rich and fascinating collection of essays by top scholars in the field, which together provide an important synthesis of interest to scholars working on the history of exegesis and on Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations.

*Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Ange Guépin,  
University of Nantes*

JOHN TOLAN