

which is now so dominant in Catholic moral theology, needs to be rejected in favour of an 'ecologically informed reappropriation of the pre-Enlightenment natural law tradition', precisely because it was focused 'not just on human life and human moral goods but on the moral significance and moral goods of the natural created order'.

Chapter 6 contains a fine exposition of the natural law ethics of Thomas Aquinas, as giving expression to 'the Hebraic ideas of created order, natural justice, natural wisdom and the relationality of human and non-human life, and at the same time to the Christian belief in the restoration of natural created order from the ambiguity of fallenness and sin, of human evil and natural evil in the Christ events'. It would be difficult, again, in the space, to provide a better account. One advantage, again, is that this natural law tradition is found in Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and the primal religions, as well as in Judaism and in pre-modern Christianity. This will not recommend it to some Christian theologians. The Reformation, Northcott contends, completed the late-medieval rejection of the traditional natural law ethics by reducing it to just one conceivable philosophy instead of something that is manifested in the inherent order and relationality of the cosmos. The influence of natural law ethics continued, all the same, particularly in England, in the plays of Shakespeare and in the theology of Richard Hooker. Indeed, Hooker's version of natural law ethics turns out to be 'even more suggestive of an ecological ethic' than that of Aquinas himself!

Never overwhelming, always discriminatingly presented, the wealth of information about the environmental crisis provides the context for a well documented and rigorously worked out contribution to theological ethics — a very good book indeed.

FERGUS KERR OP

THE LADIES OF ZAMORA, by Peter Linehan, *Manchester University Press*, 1997, xvi + 192 pages £25.

This book, dealing with aspects of early Dominican history, contains two puzzles, a liberal sprinkling of wit and a great deal of refined scholarship. It is vintage Peter Linehan, the Cambridge don who has made the study of medieval Spanish history sparkle.

The two basic puzzles are these. Surviving documents tell of scandalous behaviour in the town of Zamora (near Salamanca) involving some Dominican friars and nuns before the summer of 1279. It is a tale of sexual improprieties, cross-dressing, general mayhem inside the nunnery and other irregularities. The records are definitely evidence of something, but of what? The first puzzle therefore concerns the nature of these allegations. Do they record an actual scandal or are they the record of a deceitful campaign to discredit mendicant friars trying to establish themselves in a world dominated by bishops and secular clergy? Linehan tends to favour believing that

there actually was hugely scandalous behaviour.

The second puzzle arises out of a letter written to a cardinal in 1281 by the then prioress of Zamora. She implored him to intercede with the pope so as to be spared further misery at the hands of the Dominican friars. In tears, she could not bring herself to catalogue fully all the past misbehaviour between the local friars and nuns but added that 'apart from all the other things they did, brother Munio and the Dominicans often told the nuns not to observe the promises they had made to the bishop'. The puzzle concerns the identity of this Munio. Linehan argues that the named friar was Munio of Zamora, who went on to be elected Master General of the Order in 1285. According to Linehan, Munio's past eventually caught up with him, and during the 1290 General Chapter the thunderbolt news came that Pope Nicholas IV was ordering his removal from office.

Linehan presents several important topics of more general interest raised by these nuns' tales. At least in outline, we are made to consider the impact on Church and society of the new mendicant Orders, the emergence of Dominican nuns and their links to the friars, and papal policy towards the friars and towards various ecclesiastical and secular powers.

In the discussion of these broad themes, greater use could have been made of the surviving material relating to the Dominican friars' care of nuns in the 13th century, and it is not helpful to speak of an 'anti-feminist tide in the Order'. In general, however, Linehan's exuberant text is reliably based on the meticulous research recorded in the endnotes. The volume will remain valuable, whatever historians may uncover in future.

For now, Linehan has stated the puzzles and discussed possible interpretations and solutions. As one has come to expect from him, there is a marked interest in historiography. He, like his readers, is hampered by a couple of unfortunate gaps in the surviving documentation. The capitular records of Zamora for the 1270s have been published but 'bizarrely not distributed', as Linehan says with exasperation (p.20). There is also a mystery concerning a photographic record (p.94 n.68). It all adds to the general air of conjecture. Despite the advances made by Linehan's study, aspects of this whole saga are still unresolved. The author's concluding thoughts are cautious ones (p.150).

Meanwhile, the mosaic tomb slab in the Dominican church of Santa Sabina (Rome) continues to draw the attention of visitors to Munio of Zamora OP. As Linehan mentions, it could be that the tomb was designed to rival that of Nicholas IV, the pope who had brought him down. An intriguing possibility, not considered, is to see it as significant that the tomb slab of a man who had been Master General and then bishop shows him without any emblems of rank. Even in death, Munio is puzzling.

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