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of J. Edgar Hoover over the FBI for 50 odd years — while playing down its accomplishments. The FBI is described variously as an “American Gestapo” and the “apparatus of an oppressive police state” (p. 11). While I share concerns about the power wielded by such enforcement and intelligence-gathering agencies wherever they might be found, including the FBI, I think calling the FBI a Gestapo overstates matters somewhat. Many modern societies have endured police states, but the United States, despite its own great many faults, is not among them. Even at the height of the McCarthy era, the rule of law, however imperfect, still existed. The FBI did not strangle its opponents with piano wire nor put bullets in the back of their heads. Many German and Soviet citizens were not so well treated by their own hideous regimes in the 1930s and beyond.

The author is right to note that the FBI, led by the dangerously clever Hoover, keenly took advantage of circumstances — the Red Scare after World War I, the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby, and Prohibition — to advance its particular interests. This, however, is not a new notion. It is said, often ruefully by American soldiers, that everywhere that the Marine Corps goes a camera is sure to follow. Like the Marines and General Douglas MacArthur, Hoover realized quickly how to use the media to shape his message that the FBI constituted America’s first line of defence against internal subversion and crime. As is rightly pointed out by the author, the FBI did not always do a good job, but the same could be said about most national agencies charged with the same undertaking. If anything, Canada’s renowned red-serge-clad Mounties, rather than always getting their man, often indulged in activities — barn burning, Red-baiting, and sloppy gathering of evidence — that make the FBI look quite professional by comparison. If the FBI verged on being a rogue agency, and the author certainly appears to be making that case, perhaps the fault lay in America’s political establishment — presidents, senators, and congress members — who failed to direct it properly and rein it in.

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MADIGAN, Kevin — *The Passions of Christ in High-Medieval Thought: An Essay on Christological Development* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology). New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. 145.

As the eminent linguist Bernard Cerquiglini reminds us, nowadays scholars are “fond of whatever is unstable, multiple and precarious.” The observation encapsulates Kevin Madigan’s provocative monograph. By examining the interpretive strategies of high-medieval thinkers, who sometimes represented their patristic legacy in ways hardly consistent with an earlier Christology, Madigan underscores the “fissures” and “discontinuities” that render “any talk of dogmatic continuity deeply problematic” (p. 7).

As part of its background, the study considers the way Nicene defenders of orthodoxy treated biblical texts that especially appealed to “heretics,” particularly Arians, who combed Scripture for evidence of Christ’s subordinate position in relation to God the Father. The book itself is thematically arranged according to key scriptural passages, with the bulk of the chapters (3 to 7) treating the commentary tradition on the following biblical questions: “Did Christ ‘progress in wisdom?’” “Was Christ ignorant of the day of judgment?” “Did Christ suffer pain in the passion?” “Did Christ experience fear or sorrow in Gethsemane?” “A praying God?”

Given this arrangement, the work’s most obvious value is what it offers in terms of method. By focusing on the reception of salient pericopes, Madigan furnishes an approach for registering the tradition’s fragility. These passages stirred theological controversy precisely because such verses seemed to heighten Jesus’s humanity — his ignorance, susceptibility to suffering (“passibility”), powerlessness, and recalcitrance. They are hard places in the narratives on Christ’s life, the very episodes Athanasius himself identified as heretical favourites. Diachronically tracing the interpretation of such passages proves to be a fruitful undertaking.

In their commentaries on scenes poignantly depicting an all-too-human Christ, such prominent fourth-century thinkers as Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose, and Augustine furnished the orthodox position with ample arguments, but these arguments are embedded in the highly specific Christological polemics of their era. The views of patristic authors, the *auctoritates* whose works serve as the definitive guide on Christian teachings throughout the Western Middle Ages, underwent intense scrutiny by later exegetes eager to claim their adherence to the tradition but at the same time facing very different theological and intellectual needs than those of Late Antiquity. In an attempt to bring together and compare these various interpretive components, each of the main chapters treats the patristic positions on the key questions (listed above) before moving to the reception of that tradition by thinkers of the High Middle Ages. Thus the way Madigan arranges the various textual layers provides a solid foundation for doing what we now call “historical theology”: first comes the biblical passage, then the interpretive dossier, with the late-antique positions laid out and juxtaposed to the medieval ones. It is this encounter between the patristic and high-medieval commentators that the book illuminates.

What emerges most prominently from the encounter is the medieval resistance to patristic Christological teachings, which at the same time the medieval authors are reluctant to dismiss, precisely because such teachings are thought to have authoritative status in the tradition. Madigan’s succinct comments on Bonaventure serve as a useful example, for this Franciscan “declared that several of Hilary’s Christological positions appeared to be ‘false, doubtful and erroneous’” (p 52). What to do when the writings of a fourth-century thinker combating a specific heresy could not be easily accommodated to the theological situation of the thirteenth century? Should Bonaventure reject Hilary’s Christology? Could he ignore it? “No: A rescue and retrieval operation had to be undertaken. Hilary’s erroneous opinions had to be revised, modernized, rectified —

transformed” (p. 53). Even more intriguing is the treatment of Ambrose by Thomas Aquinas, who takes up the question of whether Christ progressed in knowledge. It is a rivetting section to read (pp. 23–38), revealing not only Thomas’s shifting position but also the way the intellectual climate of his era led him to take a stand that departed from his patristic predecessor. With his perceptive treatment of such tense episodes in the history of Christology, Madigan opens up a world of religious thought that is truly “unstable, multiple and precarious.”

Apparently, researchers have long been reluctant to acknowledge such theological ruptures. One thinks especially of the work of Newman, who appears here as a figure still guarding the gate of Queen Theology’s castle: though Newman might not be fashionable among contemporary historians of Christianity, his vision of doctrinal continuity, which Madigan opposes, seems to linger (pp. 7, 91–92). And there is more than an old Cardinal’s ghost. The author’s conclusion — that medieval thinkers offer a “quite radical distortion of patristic opinion” — has been beyond reach of modern scholars due to an alleged intellectual presupposition perhaps rooted in their religious affiliation. His assertion deserves to be quoted: “The intellectual (and religious?) assumptions underlying virtually all of this century’s work on high-medieval scholasticism, particularly that undertaken by French and German Catholics, have not only precluded such a conclusion. They have forestalled interpreters from taking seriously, or even perceiving, the data on which it is based” (n. 5, p. 96). These are strong words and perhaps justified, though not easy to reconcile with all those defunct churches in Europe. It is possible, too, that the work of other scholars might temper Madigan’s assessment. Trained at the Catholic University of Louvain, Philipp Rosemann offers a book that in many ways is complemented by Madigan’s; its title speaks for itself: *Understanding Scholastic Thought with Foucault* (New York, 1999).

If we accept Madigan’s assessment of the scholarship, the “fissures” and “discontinuities” his book so superbly uncovers might not have been as problematic to medieval thinkers as they are to some of us. After all, a twelfth-century theologian could write of his malleable tradition in a way we must surely admire: “authority (*auctoritas*) has a waxen nose,” says Alan of Lille; “it can be bent in whatever direction you like.” Given the author’s high level of engagement, Madigan’s reply to Alan would be gratifying to hear.

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MARSHALL, Peter — *Mother Leakey and the Bishop: A Ghost Story*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. 323.

Peter Marshall prefaces this study with an unusually frank account of how this work happened, capturing, on the one hand, the pleasure of stumbling across