

June 1642 to Duke August of Braunschweig-Lüneburg makes clear that the *Christiani amoris dextra porrecta* and the *Christianae Societatis Imago* were a reaction against that “undignified jest of the fictitious Rosicrucian Fraternity” [Andreae: *informem hanc Societatis alicujus Christianae imaginem, machinatus sum, quam fictitiae Fraternitatis Rosecruciae ludibrio indigno opponeremus*; Böhling: *diese Skizze einer christlichen Gesellschaft dem unwürdigen Scherz der erdichteten Rosenkreuzerbruderschaft entgegenzustellen* (343, 345)]. In his introduction, Böhling aptly describes these works as the “Verchristlichung der Rosenkreuzermythe” and summarizes what is known about this chapter in Andreae’s life story, especially his friendship with Wilhelm Wense, Christoph Besold, and others, with whom Andreae sought to establish the Christian brotherhood he envisioned in his writings. The editor offers a straight forward German translation of Andreae’s more elegant Latin style on facing pages. The few textual variants are given at the bottom of each page. The commentary is helpful and would be even more so had it been placed at the bottom of the page (where the textual apparatus is now).

This new edition of the *Schriften zur christlichen Reform* makes available to readers what ought to be the essential legacy of Johann Valentin Andreae, a legacy that has been unfortunately obscured by the unavailability texts. As such, it is a most welcome addition to Andrea scholarship. With each new volume of the *Gesammelte Schriften* that appears, the portrait of this educational and social reformer, who so embodied the Protestant culture of Germany in the transition from Renaissance to Baroque, becomes more complete.

Nabil Matar. *Europe Through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. xxviii + 313 pp. Review by TAREK EL-ARISS, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.

In this erudite and beautifully written book, Nabil Matar tells an untold story about Christian-Muslim relations in the early modern period. Often suppressed or ignored by historians, this period comes to life in Matar’s text as a dynamic stage of cultural and political exchanges between Europe and the Muslim world. Challenging the epistemological paradigm that situates the East-West encounter as

one between Europe and the Middle East (Crusades, Ottoman empire), Matar introduces the role of the Western Arab world, namely the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya) in shaping this relation. This focus allows him to identify an encounter that could no longer be explained through the now canonical models of imperialism and orientalism. Examining writings by captives and state officials going back and forth between Europe and the Maghreb, Matar provides in the first part of his book a historical contextualization and analysis of Christian-Muslim relations in the early modern period. The book's second part consists of letters and correspondences, and various descriptions of wars and expulsions, exquisitely rendered in Matar's translation.

Engaging works by European and Arab scholars from Fernand Braudel to Aziz al-Azmeh, Matar presents a clear picture of the prevailing cultural and political conditions that determined Muslim-Christian encounters during that period. He discusses both the difficulties and possibilities involved in these encounters, which are staged as much through in anxiety and fear as through fascination and curiosity. He discusses the military expansion of such European powers as Portugal, England, and France; the role of piracy in determining perceptions and exchanges between the various parts of the Mediterranean; and the importance of the Moriscos' expulsion from Spain and their settling in North Africa in shaping these encounters.

Matar debunks the notion that Arabs and Muslims were simply uninterested in Europe; the scarcity of Arab sources on Europe is partly explained in Matar's book through a discussion of the problematic access of Muslim ships and travelers to European ports and cities. Going a step further—and this is the book's important methodological contribution—Matar argues that in order to identify Muslim perceptions of Europe during that time period, one should also examine *other* historical materials such as letters and captivity narratives by important figures and commoners. "Microhistory," writes Matar, "can uncover evidence to challenge the prevalent theories about early modern Arabic and Islamic ignorance about Christendom" (19). Through this methodological approach, in line with the work of such historians as Carlo Ginzburg, he reconfigures what constitutes a historical document. Matar's attention to the non-canonical or non-

official text is a gesture that liberates the writing of history, opening it up to other cultural forms that involve descriptions, reports, and letters. This approach, in this particular context especially, exposes the Eurocentric bias that has thus far governed the study of the Muslim perception of Europe during that period.

The originality of Matar's research lies in his unearthing of an Arabic *corpus captivitis*. Captivity was an ever-present reality, haunting inhabitants of the Maghreb's cities and coasts. Matar quotes proverbs that capture this reality and call attention to its horror: "Luck is in three things, [a good] marriage, [avoiding] captivity, and crossing the sea [safely]" (40). Arabic narratives of captivity were made up mostly of letters sent to family members, rulers, and coreligionists. Matar discusses letters sent from slaves describing mistreatment and other affairs pertaining to battles and politics. These accounts were so appreciated in North Africa that captives were encouraged to report on European military plans and other hostile intentions. Matar focuses on these narratives' epistemological production, reading them as sites of coercion that generate important forms of learning and interactions. He identifies instances where captivity led to intellectual collaborations, thereby giving rise to books, maps, and other cultural artifacts attributed to both Europe and North Africa.

These textual mediations and religious conversions of captives in some cases reveal a complex picture. We learn from Matar that some Maghreb rulers, for instance, ransomed not only Muslim but also Jewish and Christian subjects, and captives gained prominence as state officials while in captivity. This enabled the emergence of a multilingual and multi-cultural bureaucracy in Europe and in the Maghreb. Matar discusses letters exchanged by ambassadors and government representatives written in French, Arabic, Spanish, and English. He reveals that treatises, contracts, and official letters were written in either of these languages. For instance, Moriscos in North Africa continued to use Spanish to conduct official business long after their expulsion. This shows a level of cultural exchange and multilingualism seldom acknowledged when examining this time period.

Matar's strategic emphasis on the slipperiness of texts that lie at the intersection of captivity narratives and official reports reveals the effectiveness of his methodological approach. This slipperiness reflects

the state of captives themselves, situated in-between cultural spaces, forced to gain knowledge of the culture of the other in extenuating circumstances. By examining how these texts shift and go back and forth between different states and locales, Matar demonstrates that the text itself, the “elite text” produced by the state representative or the “expert,” is in fact an unstable historical document. This text can only be read in juxtaposition to that of the captive, often suppressed in the historical investigation.

The exchange of ambassadors and the exchange and ransoming of captives between Europe and North Africa, in addition to the texts they produced and the interchangeability of their positions—all these things, beautifully captured and discussed in Matar’s text—characterize this early modern period. Matar identifies a period of instability that involves constant cultural and political negotiations both for the freedom of captives and for trade between states. Knowledge circulates both peacefully and violently through the exchange of books and also through pirate raids and captivity. However, this often violent and coercive exchange is not reduced to its violence: Europe is not simply a hegemonic power seeking to control and subdue its neighbors to the south. Matar sees in this violence epistemological possibilities and openings vis-à-vis the other. Through this microhistorical approach, Matar identifies the processes of translation and cross-cultural representation as the key characteristics of this time period. It is this back and forth between European and Arabic texts and archives—the back and forth of ambassadors, captives, and contemporary scholars—that this new history, full of possibilities, comes to life in Matar’s book.

Feisal Mohamed. *In the Anteroom of Divinity: the Reformation of the Angels from Colet to Milton*. University of Toronto Press, 2008. xiv + 242pp. 6 plates. \$55.00. Review by CHRISTOPHER BAKER, ARMSTRONG ATLANTIC STATE UNIVERSITY

Despite their nonmaterial nature, angels maintained a palpable presence within the religious and literary compositions of early modern England. Feisal Mohamed’s monograph charts their influence from the Henrician era through the end of the Interregnum by trac-