cluded to help guide a broad audience through their introductory pursuit of historical materials. Having said that, Bellavitis's didactic text will certainly spark much additional interest in this field.

Elizabeth Bernhardt, *University of California in Rome*

The Medieval Invention of Travel. Shayne Aaron Legassie. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. xiv + 302 pp. $29.

A title such as *The Medieval Invention of Travel* runs the risk of raising expectations that cannot be met. But Shayne Aaron Legassie's first monograph is a bold, refreshing, well-researched, and well-written take on his subject. The book advances a series of contentions that, taken together, stake a claim to the centrality of the medieval in a field—that of travel writing—that has tended to marginalize it.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part highlights "the indispensable part that the discourse of travail played in the conception and reception of works of exotic travel writing" (12), including John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, Odorico da Pordenone, and Marco Polo. It explores connections in these accounts between travel as hard travail, its presentation as requiring intellectual self-discipline, and what Legassie calls "the prestige economy of long-distance knowledge" (42). To make these connections between labor, prestige, and perceived value, Legassie pays careful attention to the nature of his sources' authority claims and how these are manipulated and rewritten through transmission processes.

The second section places pilgrimage writing center stage. Legassie argues that pilgrimage texts, often overlooked as deeply derivative, are in fact central to the "reinvention of travel as literate labor" (13). It is in pilgrimage texts that we see developed the trope of distinguishing, through one's writing, "the heroic traveller from his frivolous counterparts" (13), or indeed the knowledgable, literate, learning pilgrim from the credulous crowd. Examining the works of travelers such as Felix Fabri, Burchard of Mont Sion, Niccolò da Poggibonsi, Thietmar, John of Wurzburg, and Riccoldo da Montecroce, Legassie argues for a growing trend among pilgrim-authors to present their works as the "culmination of the ennobling spiritual and intellectual labor of their journey" (100), and, among the largely clerical, Latinate authors in what he calls the "synthetic tradition" of pilgrimage writing, to associate or conflate "the writing process with the memory work of pilgrimage" (117). Again, Legassie makes the link between travel, writing, authority, and prestige. But he also suggests that pilgrimage writing has a hitherto-underacknowledged part to play in a late medieval "inward geographical turn" (15) that provided the impetus to subject proximate and familiar locales to the same kind of scrutiny as exotic spaces, and to see the "unfolding journey" as an object worthy of scrutiny in its own right (143).

In a welcome move, given the preponderance of attention to the exotic in travel-writing scholarship, Legassie's final section pursues the notion of the medieval discovery of the proximate. Noting that many more travel accounts tend to treat short-range journeys after 1350, he focuses on two specific travelers: the prehumanist intellectual Petrarch, whose journeys paradoxically culminate in a rationale for staying put, and Castilian noble Pero Tafur, whose writings attempt to make his journeys conform with existing "courtly ethnographic" and chivalric "adventure" modes (204). While these final chapters are often observant and illuminating accounts of Petrarch's and Tafur's texts, at times they read as less closely bound into the concerns of the volume than their forerunners. As Legassie himself points out, that Petrarch "distinguishes himself from most of his contemporaries by resisting the tendency to assimilate literate labor to the art of travel" may partially explain the imperfect fit (15). However, chapter 5's attempt to explain Petrarch's attitudes through "the diasporic orientation of his political consciousness" (202) also reads as an underexplored afterthought rather than as central to the chapter's analysis.

Nonetheless, this is a well-researched, thoughtful, and stimulating engagement with an impressively broad range of late medieval travel texts. It benefits particularly from its attention to multiple textual versions across a range of original languages. Legassie's cultural-historical methods are surefooted; he both situates travel texts in their cultural contexts and uses them to identify previously unrecognized trends in the thought and practice of travel and travel writing. Finally, he tells us a compelling new story about the writing and culture of travel in the later Middle Ages and their hitherto-unrecognized modes of connectivity with prior and later eras, all without lapsing into a teleological narrative. This volume is likely to become essential reading for scholars and students in the field.

Marianne O'Doherty, *University of Southampton*

The African Prester John and the Birth of Ethiopian-European Relations, 1402–1555. Matteo Salvadore.
Transculturalisms, 1400–1700. London: Routledge, 2017. xii + 236 pp. $149.95.

This is the first book-length study on Ethiopian-European encounters during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It has three revisionist aims. First, Matteo Salvadore seeks to highlight the African (understood as sub-Saharan) contribution to the Renaissance world. While studies on European representations of Africa and Africans abound, the African perspective on Europe is often out of reach. Second, Salvadore opts "to de-Atlanticize and de-Americanize" African history by challenging the prominence of topics like racism and slave trade in current scholarship. Ethiopia in the late medieval and early modern period was a proud, proactive, and Christian African entity that met with European authorities on equal terms. A literate culture on its own, it provides sources