

rests on shakier ground and discuss the vulnerability of such approaches to “parallelo-mania.” They present the volume as a contribution to developing more methodological and theoretical sophistication in the project of understanding the two communities’ mutual contexts.

The chapters are of consistently high caliber; here I note a few that struck this reviewer as particularly significant or likely to be of general interest. Adam Becker’s survey of Syriac anti-Judaism makes a number of productive suggestions about how to understand the role of real and rhetorical Jews in the Syriac corpus. Sidney Griffith’s and Simcha Gross’s chapters, which treat, respectively, the problem of the “Jewish Christian” origins of Islam and the supposedly uniquely Jewish origins of Syriac Christianity, while they are unlikely to be the last word on these debates, interject a salutary note of skepticism. The burden of proof for any special relationship between either Arabian or Syriac Christianity and Judaism seems clearly to rest with their interlocutors. Ophir Münz-Manor’s comparative survey of Syriac, Hebrew, and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic liturgical poetry is a welcome introduction to a neglected body of source material.

The volume is to be commended for its very thorough bibliographic footnotes, which will make it a useful research tool for scholars who may wish to follow in its stimulating interdisciplinary footsteps.

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doi:10.1017/S0009640722000130

***Krankheit und ihre Behandlung: Studien zu Sophronios von Jerusalems Wundern der Heiligen Kyros und Johannes.* By Wolfgang Häfele. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christenum 118. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020. x + 295 pp. \$126.00 paper.**

Wolfgang Häfele’s *Krankheit und ihre Behandlung: Studien zu Sophronios von Jerusalems Wundern der Heiligen Kyros und Johannes* (*Sickness and its Treatment: Studies on Sophronios of Jerusalem’s Miracles of Saints Cyrus and John*) poses a timely and interesting examination of Patriarch Sophronios of Jerusalem’s account of the miraculous deeds of the two saints, not only offering an analysis of select miracles and their relationship to antique medicine but also revealing the patriarch’s views towards contemporary medical methods from a strictly Chalcedonian theological framework. Häfele’s analysis contributes to the lively development of scholarship devoted to Christian holy persons, medical care, and physicians in Late Antiquity. Häfele adds to the work of scholars whose approaches to the past are found in the intersection between classical/late antique religion, social justice, medicine, and medical care.

*The Miracles of Cyrus and John* (the *Thaumata*) records in seventy stories the activity of the wonderworking, Holy Unmercenaries Cyrus and John—an alleged practitioner of healing arts and a soldier, respectively. Sophronios composed the *Thaumata* sometime between 610–620 for reasons that include gratitude, politics, and theological education. Though they were martyred during the early fourth century Diocletianic persecutions,

there is debate about the later foundation of their shrine with respect to intent and epoch (see Dominic Monteserrat, “Carrying on the Work of the Earlier Firm’: Doctors, Medicine and Christianity in the *Thaumata* of Sophronius of Jerusalem,” in *Health and Antiquity*, ed. Helen King [Routledge, 2005]; and Susan R. Holman, “Rich and Poor in the *Miracles of Saints Cyrus and John*,” in *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society*, ed. Susan R. Holman [Baker Academic, 2008], p. 103–124). Häfele notes the debate over the foundation of their shrine as a counter to religious activity devoted to Isis, as well as the recent academic enquiry into the origins of the cult (8).

Häfele’s introduction (1–14) provides the reader with a concise background to the study. In this first chapter, Häfele identifies key components necessary for understanding the analysis, including the practice of incubation within historical context; details on Sophronius of Jerusalem as the singular author of the *Thaumata* and Sophronius’ own visual ailment as the cause for the written account of the healing saints; background on the *Miracles* of the saints; contemporary trends and methods in the study of religion and medicine; and the ongoing relationship between ancient medicine and the Christian religion. The author ends the introduction with an outline of the study that will follow, including a clear intention that the dual focus of the study (6) be exploration of the miracles and how the author of these medical *Thaumata* understood *Krankheit* (sickness or illness), as it is the theme that runs through the entirety of the *Thaumata*. Essential to understanding the *Thaumata* is recognition of Sophronius’s approach to illness as a metaphor for the illness of one’s soul.

The second chapter, “Annäherung an die *Wunder der Heiligen Kyros und Johannes: Kommentar des mir. 1*,” focuses specifically on the opening miracle of the *octavarios* Ammonios. Häfele provides the text (§1–14) with an elegant translation and detailed commentary. Häfele concludes that Sophronius’s identification of an intentional connection between the personal characteristics of Ammonios and the degree to which this impacts Ammonios’s physical suffering (50–52) functions as a building block for analysis of the concept of disease in the *Thaumata* and the degree to which suffering—though not *caused* by the martyrs—can lead to improvement.

Building on the previous chapters and subsequent to reflection on the contributions of Marcos’s critical edition (*Miracula Cyri et Joannis*, ed. Natalio Fernández Marcos [Instituto Antonio de Nebrija, 1975]), the third chapter, “Entstehung und Inszenierung von Krankheit und Leiden” outlines the development of illness and suffering through analysis of the vocabulary in the miracle accounts (including their descriptions, cause, and treatment by the martyrs and if suffering was evident beyond the body). Häfele further discusses how suffering is identified, the types of suffering and its causes, as well as when and how it arises, all of which provide opportunity for the many colorful types of accounts for which miracle tales are renowned. Häfele concludes that there is less of an association of illness and suffering with demons than other scholars have claimed, noting that most of the disorders are, in fact, biological: “Die meisten Leiden haben eine natürliche Ursache” (137).

Häfele’s fourth chapter, “Die Ärzte und die ärztliche Behandlung,” confirms that (as is often the case) patients consulted professional medical experts (or “ärztlichen Koryphäen” [150]) prior to turning to holy persons for treatment and discusses the imprecise boundaries that naturally occur between the physicians, the divine being, and the holy healer. The fifth and final chapter, “Gedeutete Krankheit,” considers the role of orthodoxy in healing culture. In this chapter, Häfele addresses a theme that is consistent not only in the *Thaumata* but in Sophronius’s works in general:

health is more than a physical state; it is theological as well. After an outline of the heresies and heretics within the *Thaumata*, Häfele provides a text, translation, and commentary of two miracle accounts that fall into this category (Miracle 37 and Miracle 38). Häfele concludes that, for Sophronios, illness of the body and soul are inseparable, and that healing of the soul must, in fact, precede that of the body (269–270). Häfele concludes the study with a summary which revisits the key themes of each preceding chapter.

In this author's opinion, Häfele has contributed significantly to the field, providing thoughtful analysis that contributes to current academic conversations about medicine and religion. Particularly valuable are the author's select translations and commentary from the *Thaumata*, which will prove of great interest to scholars and students of languages.

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doi:10.1017/S0009640722000142

***The Imam of the Christians: The World of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, c. 750–850.* By Philip Wood. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2021. viii + 286 pp. \$39.95 cloth.**

This book provides a history of the administrative structures and operations of the Jacobite church (Miaphysite, Syrian Orthodox) during the early Islamic period. Its presentation rests primarily on analytical description of the primary sources in question, with a focus later in the volume on the tenure of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, who was patriarch of this Christian community from 818–845 CE. The book is a major contribution to the study of Christian communities, their status within the early Abbasid caliphate, and, to a lesser extent, the Umayyad caliphate as well.

These communities have been badly neglected in most previous historical research, such that many basic questions still need to be addressed concerning their important role in the history of the early medieval Near East. Wood's study lays crucial foundations for further work on the religious history of the Christians of the early Islamic world. Nevertheless, as far as readers of this journal are concerned, it should be noted that the study focuses heavily on the political and economic conditions that shaped the administrative institutions of the Jacobite church in the eighth and ninth centuries. Christian religious culture of this era, while certainly not absent from the book, is nonetheless very much in the background of the discussion.

The book begins with a lengthy introduction which offers a brief description of the Christian communities of the early medieval Near East and their histories, focusing on the Miaphysites and Jacobites especially. It also introduces readers to various issues surrounding the now lost *Chronicle* written by the patriarch Dionysius of Tel-Mahre and efforts to recover its content; this text is an important focus of the study, especially later in the book. The first chapter considers the changing circumstances faced by the elites of the Middle East in the aftermath of the region's invasion and colonization by Muhammad's followers. As it turns out, it seems that initially the Christian elites were able to turn these new conditions to their economic advantage. Chapters 2 and