


BOOK REVIEW AND NOTE

*Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Travel Experiences, 3rd Century BCE–8th Century CE.* Edited by **Susanne Luther, Pieter B. Hartog, and Clare E. Wilde.** Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – Tension, Transmission, Transformation 16. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023. vii + 356 pp. \$113.99. 978-3-11-071741-9.

This volume takes a comparative approach to the experiences of travel within religious systems, particularly the three monotheisms that prevailed in Afro-Eurasia over the period covered in the volume. The aim, as described in the introduction, is to explore the ways that Christian, Muslim, and Jewish travelers experienced travel in terms of identity formation (of both individuals and groups), uncertainty and danger, the search for wisdom, and spiritual consolation; a larger aim is to compare the three religious cultures' approaches to travel as part of their "intricate connectedness" (3). Fifteen contributions analyze themes of travel, both earthly and otherworldly, in texts and genres from antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Some essays address depictions of actual travel experiences, while most incline more toward travel as a motif, theme, or literary device in ancient texts. Even as a literary motif, these essays demonstrate the importance of travel for our understanding of ancient identities, experiences, and cultural conceptions of geography and movement through the world. Far more than just pilgrimage, the types of metaphorical or real travel represented in these texts include migration, mercantile travel, communication, educational movement, heavenly journeys, military-political travel, and more. Several of the essays take an explicitly comparative approach, while others closely read a single text or passage. Despite the stated objective to include Islam on equal terms with Christianity and Judaism, only two essays concern travel in early Islam (one of which is also about Christians). One paper concerns the non-monotheistic cult of a North Sea god. The majority of the essays, however, are close readings of biblical texts, making the book perhaps most useful for scholars of ancient Judaism and early Christianity.

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