

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

***The Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin Mary.*** Translated with an Introduction by **Stephen J. Shoemaker.** Apocryphes 17. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2023. xii + 356 pp. \$75.00 paper.

This volume makes available in English eight primary texts representing the scope and variety of the ancient tradition of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption. The texts are translated and introduced by Stephen Shoemaker, a prominent scholar of Marian devotion in late antiquity, and the foremost authority on the earliest accounts of the Virgin's departure.

The volume brings together for the first time two of the earliest narratives of the Virgin's Dormition: (1) the fourth-century (or earlier) *Book of Mary's Repose*, translated completely from classic Ethiopic alongside fragments of the text from Syriac and Old Georgian; and (2) the *Six Books Apocryphon*, originating in the fourth century, translated from an unpublished sixth-century Syriac manuscript at the University of Göttingen, with notes on variants from several other Syriac texts. The book also provides translations of two early revisions of the *Book of Mary's Repose*: (1) a sixth-century Greek text dubbed the *Greek Revision of the Book of Mary's Repose*; and (2) a medieval Latin text dubbed the *Latin Revision of the Book of Mary's Repose*. The remaining four texts had never been translated into a modern language prior to this book: (1) a medieval Latin text dubbed the *Latin Transitus Mariae*, from the critical edition produced by André Wilmart; (2) an early *Dormition Fragment* in Old Georgian, transmitted uniquely in a Georgian homiliary; (3) a liturgical passage from the apocryphal *Life of Jeremiah*, transmitted uniquely in the same homiliary; and (4) a sixth- or seventh-century *Homily on the Dormition* attributed to Basil of Caesarea, also surviving in Old Georgian. The book includes a general index and an ancient writings index.

Each translation is scrupulously prepared, with ample notes highlighting textual variants, peculiar expressions, and references to Biblical and ancient Christian texts. The introduction and the bibliography, necessarily focused on the substantial textual and cultural dimensions of the translated accounts, combine for a formidable primer for studying key components of Marian devotion in antiquity. Altogether, this collection offers a judiciously selective overview of the origins and development of several major currents within the apocryphal tradition of Mary's departure.

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