

This is a complicated, wide-ranging book that focuses on landscapes and the author's interpretation of them. Clearly moderns will never know exactly what early medieval people thought about women saints, and this approach of using landscapes is a fruitful if incomplete one (Bitel never suggests her interpretation is complete). Also, most church historians would prefer at least some treatment of the historical Genovefa and Brigit, if for no other reason than to understand upon what if any base the hagiographers and architects built. But Bitel has produced a creative, thought-provoking study that establishes the landscape as an element in understanding early medieval saints, especially the women whose achievements later generations of writers conspicuously diminished.

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The Cambridge History of Christianity: Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100. Edited by **Thomas F. X. Noble** and **Julia M. H. Smith**. The Cambridge History of Christianity 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xxii+846 pp. \$195.00 cloth.

Peter Brown's elegant and learned essay, "Introduction: Christendom, c. 600," opens *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100*, the third volume in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. His vision is panoramic; from Visigothic Spain to the Sasanian Empire, moving in and out from "churched" and "unchurched" Christianities, from urban episcopal "nerve centres" to rural "de-Christianized" regions, in a sweeping and evocative narrative. John H. Van Engen ends the volume with a surprisingly parochial essay, "Conclusion: Christendom, c. 1100," which, apart from focusing exclusively on western Europe after 1100, seems unaware of (or simply has no interest in) either the early medieval world or the intentions and objectives of the other contributors. Between these two essays are twenty-nine mostly exceptional articles (largely exemplifying Brown's expansive vision) spread over five thematic parts by thirty-two leading scholars. The volume more than justifies the historiographical assumption of contingent and variable early medieval "Christianities" rather an unchanging and immutable "Christianity."

Part 1, "Foundations: Peoples, Places, and Traditions," has six essays, beginning with Philip Rousseau's superb "Late Roman Christianities." Andrew Louth follows with "The emergence of Byzantine Orthodoxy,

600–1095,” surveying iconoclasm, learning, monasticism, the patriarchate, and heresy in the Byzantine Empire. Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev’s “Beyond empire I: Eastern Christianities from the Persians to the Turkish conquest, 604–1071” and Thomas M. Charles-Edwards’s “Beyond Empire II: Christianities of the Celtic peoples” illustrate the meaning and practice of Christianity outside (even if influenced by) the Roman and Sasanian empires. Lesley Abrams’s “Germanic Christianities” is solid and useful, while Jonathan Shepard’s “Slav Christianities, 800–1100” is an impressive study of conversion, Christianity, and “statecraft” in eastern Europe.

Part 2, “Christianity in Confrontation,” has five essays, starting with Bat-Sheva Albert’s satisfactory “Christians and Jews.” Hugh Kennedy’s “The Mediterranean frontier: Christianity face to face with Islam, 600–1050” is smart and expansive. Sidney H. Griffith’s “Christians under Muslim rule” is less about the day-to-day existence of Christians under Islam than an intellectual history of particular Christian thinkers living within Muslim lands. Tia M. Kolbaba’s “Latin and Greek Christians” is an astute study overturning the familiar tale of inevitable conflict between Latin and Greek Christians, a story fundamentally “flawed by its teleology of ‘the schism’” (229). Ian N. Wood’s “The northern frontier: Christianity face to face with paganism” is an outstanding essay.

Part 3, “Christianity in the Social and Political Order,” has six essays, commencing with Thomas F. X. Noble’s substantial (if a bit dull and rigid in understanding what makes an ecclesiastical “institution”) overview, “The Christian church as an institution.” Anne-Marie Helvétius and Michel Kaplan’s “Asceticism and its institutions” is impressive and rewarding. Janet L. Nelson’s “Law and its applications” is wonderfully lucid and valuable. There is much to learn from Rosemary Morris’s splendid “The problems of property,” and it is regrettable that a similar essay was not commissioned about Christians and property in Islamic lands. Julia Barrow’s “Ideas and applications of reform” is a good and critical survey (if perhaps too short). Dominique Iogna-Prat’s “Churches in the landscape” is vague and rambling about such a specific and important subject.

Part 4, “Christianity as Lived Experience,” has six essays, opening with Frederick S. Paxton’s excellent “Birth and death.” Rob Meens’s “Remedies for sins” is a skillful demonstration of what can be gained from closely reading penitentials. Peregrine Horden’s “Sickness and healing” is a thoughtful examination of early medieval medical learning, the connection of magic to religion (although he concentrates more on what intellectuals thought about the “magical” rather than the ideas and behavior of ordinary men, women, and children), and the conception of the hospital. Lynda L. Coon’s “Gender and the body” is a vivid and impressive study of sexuality, obscenity, passion, and masculinity. Arnold Angenendt’s “Sacrifice, gifts,

and prayers in Latin Christianity” is good and accomplished (and goes well with Meens’s essay). Éric Palazzo’s “Performing the liturgy” is sophisticated and thought-provoking.

Part 5, “Christianity: Books and Ideas,” has six essays. The first is Alain Boureau’s scholarly “Visions of God” (although he really did need to link such visions to the mundane reality of human existence). E. Ann Matter’s “Orthodoxy and deviance” evokes a broad Christian horizon through time and space, sharply examining orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the Byzantine empire, before ending with an unexpectedly traditional (and mistaken) approach to the apparent resurgence of heresy in the Latin Christendom in the eleventh century. Guy Lobrichon’s “Making sense of the Bible” is very clever. Leslie Brubaker and Mary B. Cunningham’s “The Christian book in medieval Byzantium” is terrific, at once capturing the divinity, artfulness, and physical sensuality of texts. Julia M. H. Smith’s “Saints and their cults” is outstanding, expertly and eloquently examining how cults and their saints were capable of “endless reinvention.” Crucially, her essay emphasizes that “the attribution of sanctity remained rooted in the needs of living communities to find holiness in their midst in ways which made sense of the world” (605). More contributors should have tried to elucidate this “rooted” relationship between holiness and community in their essays. Jane Baun’s “Last Things” is a moving and intelligent essay on “death and judgment; heaven, hell, and the places in between, the Second Coming and the Last Judgment” (606).

All in all, *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100* is a worthy volume about Christians and their various “Christianities.”

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Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe. By **James William Brodman.** Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009. xi+318 pp. \$59.95 cloth.

The discourse on religious charity in the medieval European West is obviously complex and diverse. Its history is an evolving story from personal/communal obligation to more regulated institutions for the spiritual and physical welfare of Christian society. In his book, *Charity and Religion in Medieval Europe*, James William Brodman surveys this broad and rich landscape in one comprehensive study, considering over seven chapters the many spiritual, religious, canonical, theological, and institutional dimensions and practices of medieval giving. The organization and function of charity is given top