

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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***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

3 chart the development of Jacobite administrative structures and operations in relation to the changing political and economic conditions afforded by the emerging Islamic empire, as well as rivalries among various monastic centers, focusing largely on the eighth century, the period prior to Dionysius's tenure. This theme largely continues over chapters 4 and 5, which observe how the changing administrative geography of the early Islamic empire created new political and economic conditions that determine corresponding shifts in the administrative geography of the Jacobite church. In the process of the empire's eastward shift from Syria to Iraq, Christian centers in Syria became more marginal within the church hierarchy, while those in Iraq rose in stature.

Chapter 6 shifts gears slightly and only briefly to consider some facets of religious culture and how they may reflect these broader changes in ecclesiastical administration and their corresponding political and economic bases. Even so, in this chapter, most of the focus is on canon law, which is ultimately yet another aspect of ecclesiastical administration, bringing attention especially to the regulation of marriage as a means not only of policing community boundaries but also, more importantly, of protecting the community's economic interests. A few pages note the importance of liturgy in shaping communal identity, although not without a peculiar apology to readers for introducing this topic in the first place. Yet, even this discussion quickly moves to observations on how an eighth-century Jacobite liturgical commentary embraces the hierarchical view of the church expressed in Pseudo-Dionysius's sixth-century *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*. And so we return once again to matters ultimately having to do with church administration and governance.

Chapters 7 and 8 center specifically on Dionysius of Tel-Mahre and his tenure as patriarch, and both draw attention to his ability to use knowledge of the Islamic tradition to secure advantageous outcomes for himself and his community. The main source for these chapters is the lost *Chronicle* of Dionysius himself as it can be reconstructed through later sources, so the analysis is based on the patriarch's self-fashioning of his own leadership activities. Chapter 7 analyzes how the patriarch, according to his own account, came to power by carefully navigating the social and political changes that emerged following the civil war in the early ninth century between the future caliph al-Ma'mun and his brother—a conflict in which al-Ma'mun emerged the victor. In the aftermath of this conflict, Dionysius was able to benefit from the resulting centralization of political authority, and he built a close relationship with one of al-Ma'mun's most trusted generals, which gave him access to the caliph himself. Chapter 8 focuses especially on a single incident in which the caliph decided to allow small groups within larger religious communities to break away under their own leadership. This development was, of course, very troubling to Dionysius, as it had potential to undermine his own authority. According to his own account, he succeeded in using Islamic ideas about the status of the Imam to argue that he similarly should be recognized as the Imam of the Christians (whence the book's title). The final chapter considers shifting notions of Syriac ethnic identity from the sixth through ninth centuries; although I must confess that while I found this last chapter interesting, it was not so obviously connected to the other themes of the book.

Given its narrow focus, I suspect that this book will mostly interest specialists in the religious history of the medieval Middle East. It is arguably both a strength and a weakness that the study avoids larger questions regarding the religious history of the period, such as the many thorny questions regarding the early history of Muhammad's new religious movement and its beliefs, as well as its relation to the other religious

confessions of the late ancient Near East, including Christianity. By leaving these highly contested questions to the side, Wood has provided a very carefully argued work that will be of use to scholars on all sides of these lively debates.

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***The Cambridge Companion to Apocalyptic Literature.* Edited by Colin McAllister. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. xvii + 356 pp. \$29.99 paperback.**

It is hard to deny that fears of apocalypse and the appeals of apocalypticism today feel increasingly relevant. As Lorenzo DiTommaso argues in the concluding essay of *The Cambridge Companion to Apocalyptic Literature*, the disorienting breakdown of the post-1945 liberal world order perhaps has triggered a resurgence of the apocalyptic worldview (322). This volume deals with apocalyptic literature and thought throughout history, beginning with its origins in ancient Judaism and early Christianity (in an essay by John J. Collins). Notably useful is Ian Paul's introduction to the Book of Revelation (36–58), covering the question of date and author, major themes, and reception/interpretation. Among many excellent studies, Jesse Hoover, John Carey, and András Kraft provide overviews of apocalyptic literature in Donatist North Africa, medieval Ireland, and Byzantium, respectively.

One of the major appeals here is E. Ann Matter's update of her important 1992 essay, "The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis." Matter's new version incorporates some recent scholarship on the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) and is lightly rewritten and expanded. Though Matter now claims only a scope up to the ninth century (121), reduced from the twelfth in the original, the coverage is not actually curtailed—in fact, Matter has added some concluding comments on the trajectory of exegesis on the Book of Revelation leading to the renewed millennialism of Joachim of Fiore ca. 1200 AD. On this topic, Brett Whalen's contribution on Joachim (190–211) is another standout piece in the volume, providing an excellent introduction for anyone interested in the Calabrian abbot's work and its context.

The volume also highlights the continued relevance of apocalyptic thinking and writing beyond the Middle Ages with essays on apocalypticism in the Renaissance, in the Enlightenment, and among American evangelicals. The level of scholarship throughout is high—the essays here may well fill in gaps in syllabi for upper division undergraduate courses and, more likely, graduate seminars—but many contributors also make efforts to connect their work to popular culture (references to the *Left Behind* series abound).

If the volume has any fault, it is that its coverage is not as broad as its title implies. Approximately half the contributions deal with the European Middle Ages, broadly conceived. The Jewish apocalyptic tradition is underserved. There is but one study on Islamic apocalypticism—concerning the roots of jihadi ideology (270–287). The