

The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas in Late Antiquity. Edited and translated by **L. Stephanie Cobb** and translated by **Andrew S. Jacobs**. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021. xiv + 362 pp. \$96.00 cloth.

Amidst the large output of books and articles about Perpetua and the *Passio* in the last twenty or so years, this volume stands out for assembling all the sources, both textual and visual, that comment on the importance of this text across the empire in the period from the third to the eighth centuries. The book includes the texts of the *Passio* itself (Greek and Latin versions and the *Acta*), interpretations of the text—by far the longest section of the book (for example, Tertullian, Augustine, other martyr accounts), celebrations of the martyrs in liturgical calendars, martyrologies, consular annals and chronicles, and various visual representations (some well-known like the Ravenna and Poreč mosaics, others less so).

Cobb and Jacobs have translated every text both Greek (Cobb) and Latin (Jacobs), and have provided concise but helpful and judicious summaries and introductions to each work, which tell us not only the details of each work but why it is important, and follow the thread of this powerful story from its first telling through the many later renditions of it. Here we have gathered not only the obvious and well-known sources on Perpetua like Augustine but lesser known or little observed texts like Pseudo-Fulgentius and martyrologies from the fourth century on. There is an excellent summary of how the Carthaginian martyrs continued to be used as signifiers of orthodoxy in ecclesiastical debates over time (282).

The authors offer translations of every source, both from Greek and from Latin, some translated for the first time. I occasionally might quibble with some of the Latin translations (which sometime seem too literal or quirky to me), but there are very few errors.


The authors have included useful bibliography, both more general works after the introduction and works specific to each entry after every section. It would have been useful to have a full general bibliography at the end of the book rather than having to search for works in different places. This quibble aside, the authors are to be commended for assembling a most useful book about the enduring legacy of Perpetua and the *Passio*.

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The Apostles Peter, Paul, John, Thomas, and Philip with Their Companions in Late Antiquity. Edited by **Tobias Nicklas, Janet E. Spittler, and Jan N. Bremmer**. Studies in Early Christian Apocrypha 17. Leuven: Peeters, 2021. 340 pp. 74€.

This volume includes collected essays from a 2019 conference on the apocryphal acts of the apostles (AAA). The opening essay by T. Nicklas employs a number of examples to

highlight the role of the AAA in describing the foundation of particular churches or communities, explaining the origins of cultic objects, creating sacred spaces, and organizing Christian time through liturgical practices. The implications of these observations pervade the remaining essays, for an important theme that links many of them is the role of the AAA as *lieux de mémoire* in Christian tradition—literary, textual, liturgical, and spatial. The creative contribution of A. Merkt, for example, uses comparisons to Pokémon Go to argue that stories about Peter created a Christian “virtual reality” in the Roman Forum. Any image or fragment of a Peter story could trigger this heterotopic vision, leading to sightings of a virtual Peter in the minds of those moving through the space. Essays on the literary impact of the AAA on later texts include J. Van Pelt on the Acts of Peter and the ninth-century *Life of Leo of Catania*, K. Staat on the “usefulness” of the Acts of Paul and Thecla for later hagiographical texts, D. Syroyid on a seventeenth-century church Slavonic retelling of the story of Thecla, and C. Pricop on the reception of the Acts of Thomas in a later synaxarion. Other essays take a different approach and analyze the AAA as reception of canonical traditions, including J. Downie on the canonical Acts of the Apostles as chronotopic space for the AAA, J. Snyder on marriage regulations within a minority community, and C. J. Berglund on the Acts of Philip as commentary on discipleship in the canonical Gospels. The volume also includes focused studies on manuscript traditions: T.J. Kraus on the Acts of Thecla, J. Spittler on the Acts of John by Prochorus, and L. Muñoz Gallarte and Á. Narro on the Acts of Thomas. A final group of essays represents focused analysis of particular textual issues: J. N. Bremmer on the Acts of Timothy, S. de Blaauw on a Johannine martyrdom tradition in Rome, and J. Verheyden on the battle against “paganism” (and ultimately the Devil) in the Acts of Philip. Scholars will find in this volume a number of challenges to traditional ways of thinking about the AAA and a consistent encouragement to approach the AAA as highly dynamic and generative traditions.

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***The Bible in the Early Church.* By Justo L. González. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2022. x + 194 pp. \$19.99 paper.**

This is a general introduction to the way in which the Bible functioned in the early Church. It is divided into three sections, the first of which deals with the external shape of the text—the languages in which it was written, the format in which it was presented, and so on. The second section concentrates on the way the Bible was used in public and in private worship, as well as more broadly for educational and social purposes. The final section examines Biblical interpretation and concentrates on three crucial subjects—creation, the exodus, and the meaning of “Word” in the Fourth Gospel.

The book is written in a fluid style and is very easy to read. People who know nothing about the subject will quickly grasp the basics, and the coverage is comprehensive.