


Constantinople, and transmitted together with the acts of the Council of Toledo in 688 (*Apologeticum de tribus capitulis*). The author critically analyzes the first of the treatises, the *Comprobatione*, especially in its categorization as an anti-Jewish work, preferring to place it in a context of concern for the correct measurement of the times that were to properly place the coming of the Messiah and his triumphant return. In fact, the author considers that the essential aim of the text is to prove the messiahship of Jesus. Interestingly, the work, recalled by Julian's biographer Felix, seems to have had little impact in the immediate aftermath. This little impact contrasts with the impact of *Prognosticum futuri saeculi*, the first systematic treatise on Christian eschatology. The author, deeply influenced by Augustine in this text, gives a detailed description of the structure of the work and of the explanatory keys that help to understand its later impact. There is no doubt that the text is closely related to the previous one, although the author has not treated them consecutively in his work. In addition to the need to fix the order of the times, which presided over the *Comprobatione*, there is now the need to accept that the present world will not last forever. Julian also wants the text to serve to teach the faithful these truths. The text is intended to be disseminated among bishops as a pedagogical one, something that undoubtedly contributed to its medieval dissemination. The pedagogical character is equally unquestionable in the case of *Antikeimena*. Julian's least studied text, the last to receive a critical edition, constructed to resolve the apparent contradictions of the sacred texts and a precious example of the exegetical level of the Visigothic theologians and of our author in particular.

And if the previous texts show Julian's high theological profile, the *Apologeticum* shows his capacity as a polemicist and his energy in defending the orthodoxy of the Visigothic Church and its Christological positions, which Rome questioned. The profound analysis of this chapter (235–299), far beyond Julian's theological thought, constitutes an invaluable review of the never-resolved controversy of the communion between Toledo and the bishop of Rome. This assessment sums up, in a way, an exquisite work in method and care in form, where history and theology go hand in hand to unravel a work and a period that has received scarce attention in recent historiography.

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Wohltätigkeit im antiken und spätantiken Christentum. Edited by Andreas Müller. Patristic Series, Vol. 16. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishers, 2021. viii + 158 pp. €60.00 hardback.

This edited volume on aspects of charity and the understanding of charitable behaviors in early and late antique Christianity presents a multidisciplinary approach to the topic, representative of the creative scholarly work undertaken by the Patristic Working Group in their most recent biennial conference. The reader is treated to the spectrum of work,

the range of understanding about this important virtue in early Christian life, and the methods by which scholars seek to uncover an understanding of the past.

Müller's introductory essay (1–28) provides both a historiographical analysis of scholarship on the topic and an effective summary of potential research; it serves as a welcoming foyer to a volume that offers evidence of academia's continued and creative engagement with the important relationship between theology, economic activity, and ethical behaviors within a religious administration. The contents traverse the range of the field, with additional attention to the historiography of *caritas* and *diakoniegeschichtes-schreibung* (Schneider, 109–131), exegetical and comparative analysis of the vocabulary (Koet, 29–45; Leppin, 47–65), theological anthropology (Volp, 67–92), eastern Christian/Byzantine attitudes and practices regarding charity (Caner, 93–107; Heimlicher, 133–141; Lemhaus, 143–150), and the role charity plays in hagiography (Seeliger, 151–158). Taken together, the volume is ecumenical in its content, with distinctions in the understanding and interpretation of charity (*caritas*, *diaconia*, or *philanthropia*) fully represented in the various essays.

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***Invitation to Syriac Christianity: An Anthology.* Edited by Michael Philip Penn, Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, Christine Shepardson, and Charles M. Stang. Oakland: University of California Press, 2022. xviii + 431 pp. \$150.00 cloth; \$39.95 paper; \$49.95 e-book.**

Invitation to Syriac Christianity: An Anthology fills a conspicuous gap in Syriac studies. It offers an introductory sourcebook on the Syriac Christian traditions, bringing together accessible English translations of a variety of key texts that will be of interest to teachers, students, and general readers alike. For a field that has long been cognizant of its importance to early Christian, late antique, and Middle Eastern studies but has had trouble demonstrating that importance to non-specialists, a volume like the present one was much needed. The editors should be commended for the care taken in producing it.

The book organizes its translated excerpts into four areas: foundations; practices; texts and textual transmission; and interreligious encounters. This prudent editorial choice allows the reader to follow the evolution of the premodern Syriac traditions thematically rather than through a series of individual theologians, which might have been a simpler but less elegant organizing principle.

Otherwise, the picture of Syriac Christianity and its study that *Invitation* provides is a fairly traditional one. The focus is religious thought, literature, and practice rather than social history, and the volume includes no texts later than the fourteenth century, the putative onset of Syriac literary decline according to an old but persistent western scholarly view. The editors' choice of thematic focus is certainly fair enough. Almost all Syriac literature is religious in some sense; its western academic study has been weighted toward biblical studies and theology; and the title invites the reader to Syriac Christianity, not to other dimensions of Syriac Christians' historical experiences.