

***Women in the Mission of the Church: Their Opportunities and Obstacles throughout Christian History.*** By **Leanne M. Dzubinski** and **Anneke H. Stasson**. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021. xii + 239 pp. \$25.00 paper.

For historians, it may be difficult to remember a time when the details of the past were unknown. Imagine not knowing the stories of Perpetua, Macrina, or the Beguines! In reality, of course, most people do not know these stories, even faithful Christian people. *Women in the Mission of the Church* aims to correct that oversight.

The strength of this book is its broad scope. Part I covers “Women’s Leadership in the Early Church,” Part II, “Women’s Leadership in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” and Part III, “Women’s Leadership Since the Reformation.” Each part has multiple chapters that are topically arranged: for example, “Virgins, Scholars, Desert Mothers, and Deacons” (chap. 2), “Beguines and Mystics” (chap. 5), and “Social Justice Advocates” (chap. 7). Each chapter describes women who lived out their faith in a particular way in their social context.

A weakness of the book—as with all histories this broad in scope—is the lack of detail and occasional misunderstanding of a particular period. In the early church period, for example, Roman culture functions as a foil, providing a backdrop of women’s repression against which Christian women appear countercultural. The authors do not acknowledge the ways that the virtues and leadership of women were consistent with Roman culture.

The utility of the book would be greater had the authors provided a short bibliography for each of the figures or groups listed. This would give students a toehold to probe individual women’s stories more deeply. Although there are footnotes and a bibliography, important primary and secondary sources are missing, at least in the period with which I am most familiar.

Nevertheless, the book meets its goal of introducing readers to various roles of women through the centuries. The authors are not making a veiled argument for women’s ordination or for any particular roles for women in the present. This is a history book, and the authors’ stated desire in the conclusion is that these stories become more widely known. They provide an excellent resource toward that goal.

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doi:10.1017/S0009640723000422

***Jewish-Christian Disputations in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fictions and Realities.*** Edited by **Sébastien Morlet**. Late Antique History and Religion, LAHR Volume 21. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2020 x + 275 pp. \$117.00, hardback.

Like many anthologies of essays, *Jewish-Christian Disputations in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fictions and Realities* emerged from a conference—or, in this case, two

conferences, each of which yielded a book. The purview of this volume is quite focused. Following an introductory survey and analysis of mid-twentieth-century historiography on Jewish-Christian disputation literature by William Horbury, Part I contains six essays presenting a variety of approaches to the fifth century polemical text, *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*. The three essays in Part II turn to the manuscript tradition, generic models, and literary strategy of Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus contra Iudaeos*. The two essays comprising Part III turn the tables to examine late antique and medieval anti-Christian polemical tracts written by Jews.

Engaging with assumptions in the dominant scholarship about the reality and purpose of late antique and medieval polemics, this volume offers a broad spectrum of approaches and conclusions. Several essays frame their questions about whether the texts in question aimed to represent reality with helpful overviews of recent scholarship in the field. Two essays stand out in presenting novel arguments or material. Mark Sapperstein introduces two relatively unknown Jewish polemical works as evidence that Jews were actively involved in developing the genre. Yannis Papadogiannakis's essay examines the role of emotions in polemical literature. The theoretical framework of this piece is fundamentally different than most essays in the volume, but this is a highly innovative approach that would yield very interesting results were its purview systematically expanded to include medieval polemics.

This volume brings together an important collection of essays on the literary and structural form of premodern religious polemics; however, it might have benefitted from a more deliberate curatorial hand. Some of the essays read as lightly revised conference papers, while others are more fully developed; there is a notable imbalance between Part I, which comprises half of the book and largely focuses on scholarly debates around the text of Timothy and Aquila, and the two remaining sections, which together comprise fewer total chapters on more varied themes. Still, both in the aggregate and in its constituent parts, *Jewish-Christian Disputations* is an important contribution to the scholarship on the intersection between texts representing interfaith disputations and the nuances of Jewish-Christian relations on the ground.

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doi:10.1017/S0009640723000045

***A Companion to Byzantine Iconoclasm*. Edited by Mike Humphreys. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 99. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2021. xviii + 630 pp.**

This large volume contains twelve chapters: a long Introduction written by the editor (pp. 1–106); two chapters on images before Iconoclasm (Robin Jensen's "Figural Images in Christian Thought and Practice before ca 500" and Benjamin Anderson's "Images in Byzantine Thought and Practice, ca 500–700"); three chapters on the sources ("Chronicles, Histories and Letters" by Jesse Torgerson and Mike Humphreys; "Acta, Treatises and Hagiography" by Richard Price; and "Material Culture" by Sabine Feist); two chapters on Byzantine iconoclasm in action (the editor's