

***Civic Identity and Civic Participation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.*** Edited by Cédric Brélaz and Els Rose. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2021. 447 pp. \$150.00 hardcover.

This work is an excellent collection of essays examining the concept of “citizenship” in the towns of the Roman Empire during its later stages—the period of Late Antiquity, the sub-Roman period, the Byzantine East, and medieval towns. There have been many volumes concerning this topic in recent years; the editors, however, have a more nuanced view of what citizenship and identity meant to Roman and post-Roman citizens, a view which moves far beyond the idealization of the Greek *polis* model of democracy that used to be the dominant discourse. The effect of the changes to Roman citizenship of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 CE are also underplayed.

The editors have gathered a group of authors whose collected articles provide a varied and fascinating account of how the concept of “citizenship” and civic identity changed over the period looked at and how infinite were the ways in which the citizens of the late Roman empire and the early Medieval period defined themselves in relation to their identity, context, and civic situation. Claudia Rapp, in her incisive conclusion, reinforces this. The extensive use of epigraphic evidence is one of the ways in which this book differs from others. This is a specialist volume but one that should interest quite a wide range of readers.

After a thorough introduction, the first two chapters cover Roman and Greek town civic structures during the first to third centuries CE. Part II covers the period of Late Antiquity, Part III the redefining of identity and citizenship in the post-Roman world, and Part IV civic identity in the early Middle Ages. I would like to mention two articles in particular. Ralph Mathisen’s “Personal Identity in the Later Roman Empire” uses epigraphic evidence widely and demonstrates that during the Late Antique period, individuals referred to themselves in a wide range of ways, for example, as *gens*, *origo*, and *natio* when describing their civic identity. Second, the article by Anthony Kaldellis, “Civic Identity and Civic Participation in Constantinople,” demonstrates how the *populus* of Constantinople could manipulate and control events in spite of living in an imperial autocracy.

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***Performing the Gospels in Byzantium: Sight, Sound, and Space in the Divine Liturgy.*** By Roland Betancourt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xxii + 330 pp. \$130.00 cloth.

As a Byzantine liturgist, I am delighted to see that Byzantine liturgy and ritual is not seen any more at the fringes of Byzantine Studies; rather, there is a new-found appreciation and recognition of the role that liturgy and ritual played in the life of the Byzantines and is (rightly) seen as a great source in the effort to understand the Byzantine identity and society. Examples of this shift are Derek Krueger’s *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in*

*Byzantium* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) and the Euchologia Project of the Division of Byzantine Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, headed by Claudia Rapp (<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/imafo/research/byzantine-research/communities-and-landscapes/euchologia-project>). Roland Betancourt, Professor of Art History at the University of California, Irvine, has produced yet another excellent book, one that reaffirms the value of Byzantine liturgy in Byzantine Studies and demonstrates the value of building bridges among disciplines. This book is a study of the Byzantine Lectionary Gospel book. But its approach is not static and monolithic (i.e., limited to the methodologies and approaches of one discipline); rather, the author takes a dynamic view of the lectionary, examined as a “living” piece of the puzzle that is Byzantine worship, contextualized in view of its liturgical use and its interaction with ritual, architecture, music, sound, image, and person, whether the “receiver” (i.e., the faithful, both as individuals and as a collective whole) or the “transmitter” (i.e., the one carrying/lifting/reading/intoning the Gospel text). The methodological approach central to Betancourt’s approach is “procedurality” understood as the process in which meaning and importance of images (miniatures, decorative spaces and elements in manuscripts and architecture) are dynamic, or “perpetually in flux,” which allow us “to appreciate how images are made to elicit different experiences and readings across their usage in ritual” (5). This book reflects the effort to capture the dynamism and complexity of the lived performance (ritual) of the Gospel lectionary and its equally dynamic reception of meaning(s) by the Byzantine worshipper in the context of his/her experience of the space and sound of Hagia Sophia. Note should be made of the lavish illustrations of the highest quality, which make this book not only a treat for the mind but also a feast for the eyes.

The spring board for the discussion is illuminated Gospel lectionaries of the late eleventh century traditionally associated with Constantinople and, possibly, Hagia Sophia. The central questions are the interplay between materiality and functionality, image, word and the act of reading/intoning, sound and space, oral transmission of the text and its aural reception, all of these in the context of ritual performance.

The book is divided into two parts, each further divided into three chapters. The first part is focused on the Gospel lectionary as a manuscript and the relationship between miniatures, initials, marginalia, orality, and aurality. Chapter 1, titled “Text, Image, and Sound in the Lectionary’s Initial,” unlocks textual signifiers denoting sound, speech, and text to be read/recited out loud, or how “artists and scribes alike played with word placement and iconographic conventions to articulate the function of image-text with the acts of reading and recitation in the liturgy” (55). Chapter 2, titled “Miniatures and Marginalia: A Visual Grammar and Syntax,” looks into how “initials, miniatures, and adjoining marginalia ease readers into the images that the text conveys and they help train the perceptual habits of their users, empowering them. . . so as to make visible the text on the page” (113), enabling the conception of images in the minds of the listener. Chapter 3, titled “Faltering Images: Iconography between Reading, Error and Confusion” looks at images of the Ancient of Days, of John the Evangelist, and of John the Baptist as case studies of images that assist the reader towards the proper identification of the person discussed in the reading. The author argues that “we can say not that an image adheres to an iconographic logic but rather that it echoes the reader-listener’s imagining of the text as it unfolds over the course of the liturgy” (156). The second part places and examines the Gospel lectionary and its use in its liturgical (Divine Liturgy) and architectural (Hagia Sophia) contexts. Chapter 4, titled “The Reading of the Lectionary: Recitation, Inspiration, and Embodiment,” looks at the

presence, the place(s), and the use of the Gospel lectionary in the Divine Liturgy. The Gospel lectionary becomes an image of Christ himself. “In relinquishing his own ‘I’ for that of Christ the Logos, the reader becomes an inspired instrument for the Word of God” (188). Chapter 5, titled “The Sound of the Lectionary: Chant, Architecture, and Salvation,” discusses a metal relief panel over the imperial doorway of the narthex of Hagia Sophia, which presents an enthroned open Gospel lectionary upon which the Holy Spirit descends. The text is John 10:9 with an addition from John 10:7 (see p. 192 and 194 for image) and the noted absence of the word “σωθήσεται” in the panel. This chapter discusses the lectionary as the active proclamation of the Christian salvific message, aurally received by the listeners and ritually celebrated in the Divine Liturgy. Fascinating is the discussion on the musical interpretation of “σωθήσεται” (208–218), which demonstrates the author’s awareness that any effort to understand the Byzantine worship experience necessitates an understanding of all aspects of Byzantine liturgy and its celebration. Finally, in chapter 6, titled “Polyvalent Images: Iconography Shaped by Image, Space, and Sound,” the author examines an opus sectile panel depicting an aedicula (for image, see p. 234). He argues that “the image configures and reconfigures the promise of salvation through allusions to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulcher, the Fountain of Life, and the ambo” (281).

What I find most intriguing about this excellent book is that, in spite of the fact that the author makes no such claims anywhere in the book, it is in fact quite theological in its understanding and interpretation of the function and performance of the Gospel lectionary in the Divine Liturgy. Well done!

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***Embodying the Soul: Medicine and Religion in Carolingian Europe.***  
By Meg Leja. The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022. viii + 378 pp. \$89.95 cloth.

Meg Leja’s masterful study is less about medicine in the early decades of the ninth century per se and more about the body’s relationship to the soul and what medical attention to the body revealed about the symbiosis of body and soul. *Embodying the Soul* effectively demonstrates that “it was the ninth century that saw the true fulfillment of an inherited belief that medicine naturally paired with theology to treat the afflictions of body and soul, respectively” (12). Leja builds her argument block by block in a well-disciplined presentation of the evidence. A major strength of the book is the quality of the research, both primary and secondary. Leja has examined over fifty manuscripts from twenty libraries and archives. She works with little-known or rarely examined materials such as “deontological texts” (138). One does not find the expected dependence on traditional herbals and zootherapeutical works; rather Leja brings to bare theoretical works by classical authors along with lay and ecclesiastical letters, treatises, and handbooks.