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Yaniv Fox and Erica Buchberger, eds., *Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediterranean Christianities, 400–800* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019). Print, 400 pp., €80.00, ISBN: 9782503581132.

Review

The fifth to the ninth centuries were some of the most transformative years in Mediterranean history, impelled largely by the transition from a Roman to a post-Roman world and catalyzed by Christianization. Consequently, this period has attracted significant multidisciplinary scholarly attention, which has challenged preexisting paradigms and offered new perspectives and methodologies to crucial questions and ongoing debates of great importance. The edited collection under review is the first of two volumes that promise collectively to add much to the conversation if this first volume is any indication. The two volumes together will consider the fifth to the ninth centuries with a concentration on the multifarious transactions in which Christian communities engaged as they grappled with key debates surrounding access to resources – broadly defined – which are ultimately rooted in questions of identity and the decisions that a community makes as to what to include or exclude which, as many essays in this volume demonstrate, can prove profoundly consequential.

Though the volume's title would appear to delimit both the geographical and chronological scope, a few chapters indicate the editors' self-admittedly capacious understanding of what constitutes a 'Mediterranean' Christian community as they follow in the footsteps of Henri Pirenne. Most of the chapters discuss the expected places such as Spain, Italy, and Gaul. Fox, however, writes that the case could be made to include such 'Mediterranean hinterlands' as Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, and Britain due to the sizable impact of the Mediterranean communities in these countries in terms of intellectual, economic, and cultural influence (p.4). Due to this reasoning,

readers will find an essay on *Beowulf*, for instance, that might otherwise come as a surprise in a volume on late antique and early medieval Mediterranean Christianities. The volume itself is divided into four parts, each containing two to four essays therein.

Part one, 'Literate Communities and their Texts,' commences with a careful study of the *Liber pontificalis* in which Carmela Franklin reassesses the argument that the version of the *Liber pontificalis* in a collection of ninth-century Carolingian manuscripts were purposely amended to support Carolingian political aims in the eighth century. Franklin argues that there is no so-called 'Frankish redaction' which posited the Franks modified the papal chronicle for political ends. Instead, she contends that the archetype was actually Roman and any revisions in favor of the Carolingians were at the direction of the papacy. Following Franklin's piece, Dirk Rohman turns attention to the manner in which nascent Christian communities excluded heterodox philosophies that posed a challenge by, *inter alia*, expanding the definition of the word 'heresy' to include pagan writings. Christian authors, Rohman posits, excluded texts threatening orthodoxy by highlighting their descent from pagan teachings. Rohman's piece concludes with an assertion that will likely prove controversial among medieval Irish specialists. Rohman's final few pages argue that parts of the well-known Hiberno-Latin *Hisperica Famina* show evidence of derision of key Christian doctrines that emanated from presumably no longer extant texts 'confiscated by Christian missionaries in Ireland' (p.65). Part I concludes with Shane Bjornlie's piece suggesting that *Beowulf* was written to address primarily Anglo-Saxon and Frankish concerns about 'cultural conflict' vis-à-vis the presence of as yet unassimilated Scandinavians in England.

Part two, entitled 'The Internal Dialogue of the Church,' begins with Yonatan Livneh's essay, which argues that the historians Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen's focus on internal discord in their writings was intended to critique the acrimonious tenor of contemporary debates within the fifth-century Church. The next essay, by Daniel Neary, turns to the writings of seventh-century Palestinian monk Anthony of Choziba, who writes in the context of the ongoing Chalcedonian debates. Neary draws

attention to Anthony's indifference to the concerns, that his contemporaries focused on, and instead lamented their affinity for schism which he believed would prevent the Church from achieving its former glory. Part two concludes with Peter Schadler's chapter that shows how Christian communities in the Levant, in the wake of decreased contact with Constantinople and increased Muslim scrutiny over the authority of church councils, saw those councils prior to and including the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE as their primary sources of authority.

Part three, which focuses on 'Persecution and Dissent,' comprises four outstanding contributions. Éric Fournier's superb chapter offers a valuable reassessment of the coercive methods employed by the Vandals, showing how Huneric and his legal counselors appropriated Roman legal precedent, particularly some of the least coercive laws of Honorius, seemingly to avoid the death penalty. Instead, they primarily opted to use laws that punished the offender with banishment or fines. Fournier argues that the onus of the most severe legislation targeting presumed heretics is on the North African Nicene bishops instead of the Vandals. Robin Whelan's chapter acts as a valuable corrective to modern tendencies which tie Homoian Christianity with ethnicity, particularly the Goths, thereby overemphasizing the importance of ethnicity and diminishing the role of correct doctrine. Whelan uses Visigothic Spain and Ostrogothic Italy to reassess the relationship between religious identity (Homoian Christian) and ethnic identity (Goth) to determine if they were viewed as related by contemporaries. Whelan makes the case that the texts demonstrate that upholding Christian orthodoxy was paramount. Erica Buchberger continues the discussion of Spain, focusing on the period after the 589 conversion to Catholicism by the Visigothic king Reccared. She looks at the way in which Gothic identity was shaped in the seventh century: its close association with Catholicism and the consequent marginalizing effect this vision of a unified Catholic people had on the kingdom's exclusionary policies towards the Jews who served as the 'most convenient other' against which the Goths could 'reassert' themselves (p.212). Picking up on the theme of anti-Jewish policies, Thomas

MacMaster considers the *Chronicle of Fredegar* anew and argues that the ultimately unsuccessful anti-Jewish policies of Emperor Heraclius proved inspirational to King Dagobert I, who instigated a campaign in the 630s against the Jews in Merovingian Gaul, giving it the dubious distinction of being the first Christian state to be purged of its Jewish population.

The volume's final section, 'Elite Networks,' contains two essays that focus on the distinctions made between Romans and 'barbarians' in the fifth century. Emmanuelle Raga's paper analyzes Sidonius Apollinaris's use of food and feasting as a strategy to distinguish between Romans and barbarians. She argues that Theodoric is presented as a typical Roman sovereign on the whole. In contradistinction to typical Roman ethnographic writings, which highlight the differences in barbarian food choices, remarks on Visigothic food are noticeably absent in Sidonius's works, possibly because the Visigoths did not use food as a vehicle of identity expression or distinction. Sidonius does follow the traditional Roman custom of remarking on barbarian foods, but it was always to distinguish social status and not ethnicity, which she argues shows Sidonius did not connect barbarian cuisine with their ethnicity. In part four's final chapter, Aleksander Paradziński provides an illuminating case study of the method one fifth-century family of Roman officials with Alanic ancestry, the Ardaburii, negotiated their identity as both part of yet still distinct from the Roman elites, thus allowing them to tap into Roman and non-Roman networks of power alike. However, their continued attachments to certain aspects of 'barbarian' identity ultimately led to their downfall when their powerful foes used the perception of them as non-Roman to undercut the family's ambitions.

While collected volumes of this sort sometimes suffer from being only loosely related to the collection's theme, the authors and editors are to be commended for ensuring this volume's cohesiveness. Perhaps the only minor critique for this reviewer would be the conspicuous lack of discussion on gender as a criterion of exclusion or inclusion, which perhaps will be addressed in the second forthcoming volume. Nevertheless, readers can expect to find on the whole that each contribution offers a

rich discussion of various strategies for inclusion and exclusion. There is much to recommend in this stimulating volume which will serve as an invaluable resource for those studying not only Mediterranean Christianities between the fifth and ninth centuries but also for those with an interest in strategies of inclusion and exclusion more broadly.

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