

for example, examines dialogues between Christians and Muslims among Syriac-speaking Christians in the seventh to ninth centuries (*John and the Emir, Disputation between a Muslim and a Monk of Bet Halé*), where the Muslim interlocutor serves to inculcate Christians with the appropriate Christian values. The Muslim makes a better opponent than a Jew, Freidenreich argues, because Muslims were perceived as intellectually and politically powerful, and therefore a more worthy opponent in debate. Chapter 6 examines stories of the origin of Islam, and the way Christians tied that origin to Jews and Judaism (Theophanes, Al-Kindi, Petrus Alfonsi). Chapter 7 turns to origin stories among Latin Christians (*Otia de Machomete, Roman de Mahon*). Muslims, like Jews, become useful “to think with,” as David Nirenberg has argued, and the real target was other Christians, whether heretics or lax Christians.

The third section, “Anti-Christian Muslims,” covers the most extreme forms of anti-Muslim arguments, from claims that the links between Jews and Muslims were so strong that Muslims could be blamed for the death of Christ (chapter 9), to conspiracy theories in the fourteenth century that linked Muslim rulers to Jewish communities in France seeking to destroy the realm through leprosy (chapter 10), to the elevation of Muhammad as the anti-Christ, both in terms of apocalyptic scenarios, but more importantly as the “idol” that all non-Christians adore, resulting in the claim that Pilate, for example, was a worshipper of Mahomet (chapter 11). The final chapter turns to the writings of Luther, and unsurprisingly, also returns to Paul and Galatians.

Freidenreich shows remarkable scope in discussing material from Syriac dialogues from the seventh century to Luther in the sixteenth, and his arguments certainly clarify medieval conflation of Jews and Muslims. I learned a great deal from the book; I was unaware of the long history of Paul’s exegesis in Galatians, for example. But the scope of the book inevitably leads to a loss of specificity; the Armenian historian Sebeos is analyzed alongside Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem; while both can be connected as “seventh-century eastern Christians,” their intellectual, cultural, and religious worlds were utterly distinct. The reader might also wonder how the pattern that Freidenreich identifies fit in with broader scholarship on religious and ethnic polemic. The pattern of dividing the world in the categories of “us” and “not-us” is certainly not limited to medieval Christians.

The book is written in a very accessible style, with minimal endnotes, and would be quite useful in an undergraduate course. Freidenreich takes care to explain terms and historical context for a broad audience. The book also contains a number of images; the Press is to be commended for their inclusion while still keeping the price of the volume low.

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Fiction, Memory and Identity in the Cult of St. Maurus, 830–1270.

By **John B. Wickstrom**. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan,

2022. xiv + 388 pp. EUR 130,79 print; EUR 96,29 eBook.

Saint Maurus has been on John Wickstrom’s mind a lot over the years. It has been sixteen years since the publication of his translation of Odo of Glanfueil’s *Life and Miracles*

of *Saint Maurus* (Cistercian Studies Series 223; Trappist, KY, 2008), and the monograph under review counts both as a spiritual sequel to that translation, and the culmination of several decades' worth of study into all aspects of the cult of Saint Maurus in medieval Europe. The result is a book that is brimming with ideas and insights on the ways in which the hagiography, historiography, and liturgy connected to a saint may intersect with the more practical aspects of their cult, ranging from the economical to the architectural. While this means it is sometimes challenging to keep track of the main argument, it also makes for a narrative that challenges the reader to think about other saints' cults in such an all-encompassing way.

Wickstrom starts his book with a brief introduction where he reflects on, and resolves, the tensions between "facts, fictions and history." This informs the narrative threads running through the book. The "facts" are mainly found in the monastery of Glanfeuil itself. To Wickstrom's credit, this not only includes the many charters that show how the community carved out a place for itself in Francia, but also the archeology of the site, which, as the author shows in one of the most fascinating chapters of the book, has been subject to heavy interpolations by medieval hagiographers and modern archeologists alike. These interpolations, then, are part of the "Fictions." Originating from the hagiographical narratives about the saint, these are invariably based on the idea that it was Maurus, a disciple of Saint Benedict, who introduced monasticism in Francia. In dealing with these stories, Wickstrom shows how the authors under scrutiny (chief among them Odo, for obvious reasons) were predominantly looking toward the future: the establishment of the cult of Saint Maurus, it is emphasized time and again, would benefit the community of Glanfeuil, and vice versa. Finally, the reception of those fictions, and the way they formed the basis for 'new' facts and new memories, are what constitutes the "history." In his epilogue, Wickstrom concludes that this history is based more on what people (want to) remember than on what they actually (think they) know. The cult of Maurus "has been created through imagination, duplicity, and half-forgotten memories, then reshaped by additional fictions and forgeries," he muses (356), before ending on the programmatic observation that it makes more sense to regard this as an example of the "porous boundaries between fact and fiction" than to attempt to disentangle the true from the false.

This balancing act between positivism and post-modernism is the main strength of the book. Wickstrom knows the material connected with Glanfeuil inside and out, and this erudition allows him to approach Maurus in such a holistic fashion. Whether we see the monks of Glanfeuil enter into lengthy conflicts over relics or land possession, or we have to make sense of the community's relationship with the Rule of Benedict and the way this rule was instrumentalized, the book consistently treats the sources as a series of overlapping and mutually reinforcing narratives, rather than singling out separate genres to make separate points. Learning about these manifold connections and the worlds of meaning hidden in plain sight between the texts, is one of the main joys of reading this book.

Still, this holistic approach comes at a price. The book at times reads like it is two monographs pushed into one another: one on the stories around the memory of Maurus, and one on the development of Glanfeuil as a cult center around the relics of Maurus. Sometimes, these two approaches are at odds, when the interests of the monastery are not always in line with what was going on in a broader ecclesiastical context. In practice, this means that the author sometimes seems to fall for the very self-congratulatory monastic rhetoric he tries to analyze, and implicitly makes Glanfeuil the most important site in western Christendom. At other times, however, readers

are left with the impression that the community had no agency at all, and that it is simply tossed about by the reforming whims of popes and rulers in faraway places. Wickstrom's take on the way the monastery positions itself vis-à-vis the monastic reform movement of the early ninth century is an obvious example: by taking the classical approach to these "reforms," according to which changes to the life monastic were almost exclusively determined by decisions cast at the imperial court, the author undermines the image of a self-confident and ambitious monastery evoked in other places. To some extent, this is a consequence of the fact that, as the bibliography shows, the author has not always taken the latest insights into such broader questions into account. One should even note that the bibliography betrays a certain indifference to the literature, possibly on the part of the publisher – numerous titles and names have been misspelled, for instance (e.g., "Judith" rather than "Janet" Nelson), which does not necessarily instill confidence in the reader. Be that as it may, beyond the occasional discursive footnote, Wickstrom does not seem occupied with shifting new paradigms except when they deal with Glanfeuil directly.

This tension seems an unavoidable consequence of Wickstrom's holistic approach – it is impossible to do everything, after all. The book's merits do not lie in its theoretical approaches, but rather in its repositioning of Glanfeuil and Maurus in the greater scheme of things. That is also the stated goal of the book, and the author does an admirable job reaching it. *Fiction, Memory and Identity* stands as a testament to Wickstrom's aptitude for close reading – be it a charter, a *vita* or an archeological dig. In a broader sense, it is a welcome reminder of the gains that may be made if one takes the time to patiently engage with a corpus of texts in its entirety.

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***Readers and Hearers of the Word: The Cantillation of Scripture in the Middle Ages.* By Joseph Dyer. Ritus et artes 10. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. 268 pp. €85 hardback.**

The study of ancient and medieval liturgy is often dry. The material is complicated, the scholarship convoluted, and much material remains available only in old editions or unedited manuscripts. Original work requires a variety of skills and frequently painstaking research. All too often it has been left to specialists, and there is a certain genre of liturgical scholarship that is all but inaccessible to other historians, as well as to practitioners, let alone a general audience. Joseph Dyer's recent book upends all these stereotypes.

The text is clear: it has been designed for wide readership, but with enough references to satisfy most experts. The chapters and the argument are elegantly constructed, moving through a variety of elements pertaining to liturgical reading. Here, Dyer helps capture the rich sensory experiences involved in reading or hearing the scriptures in medieval churches, as well as preparing the appropriate texts. He discusses in sensitive detail and in successive chapters the tools used for reading (1), the readers themselves