

In Part III, Smith shows Augustine's continuity with the teaching of Ambrose and his development of it. In Chapter 6, Smith analyzes Augustine's use of the term *magnus animus* and concludes that it describes one who is bound to God in love. Greatness consists paradoxically in the Christians' recognition that they are lowly souls made to praise, love, and adore God. Again, the love that unites them to God finds its fullest expression in compassion (236). In chapter 7, Smith looks at Augustine's critique of Roman virtue and his refinement of the Christian ideal. In the *City of God*, Augustine develops the significance of conscience as he considers the plight of Christians after the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410, many of whom had taken refuge in North Africa. He is confronted with the pastoral two-edged sword of women who committed suicide to avoid rape and those who endured rape and dishonor in order to avoid suicide. Augustine has often been accused of an unfair and heavy-handed critique of Lucretia. Smith does an admirable job of showing how in the judgment of chastity, the witness of conscience outweighs the witness of death (257).

We owe J. Warren Smith a debt of gratitude for providing us with a thorough and excellent account of the pursuit of virtue and greatness in the ancient world. He has shown both the making of the great-souled man in pagan and early Christian writers and the immense difference Christianity brought to the horizons of greatness.

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Sharing Myths, Texts and Sanctuaries in the South Caucasus: Apocryphal Themes in Literatures, Arts and Cults from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Edited by Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev. *Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha* 19. Leuven—Paris—Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2022. xx + 363pp. €105.

To outsiders, the region named for the Caucasus Mountains often evokes wonder, fear, and confusion. Routinely imagined to lay at the juncture of “East” and “West,” Caucasia's peoples are often described as living *between* worlds, that is, occupying the margins—and sometimes constituting a bridge linking—the great “civilizations” of Afro-Eurasia. Though ubiquitous, this characterization cannot be defended, for pre-modern Caucasia was a dynamic, long-term site of cultural production and cross-cultural encounters. The modern obsession with nations and ethno-linguistic groups has added additional layers of confusion. A welcome corrective is offered by this thoughtful and engaging volume, which is based on papers presented at a conference held at Universität Regensburg in February 2020. Edited by noted Armenologist Igor Dorfmann-Lazarev, it offers snapshots of late antique and medieval Caucasia that underscore the region's agency, interconnectedness, mobility, diversity, and cross-cultural contribution to the Eurasian ecumene.

Dorfmann-Lazarev sets the scene in the superb introduction. His definition of the South Caucasus, the focus of this tome, encompasses lands between the Black and

Caspian Seas and located south of the main range of the Caucasus. Not all Armenian scholars regard Armenia as belonging to Caucasia; to his credit, Dorfmann-Lazarev does. He notes the millennia-old diversity of (at least the southern part of) the isthmus and its cultural “affinity”—by which I think he means its cross-cultural condition—and the existence of a “shared cultural repository” (1). In this regard, Dorfmann-Lazarev underscores the “deeply entangled” Christianization of southern Caucasia. The book features Caucasia’s apocryphal and mythological traditions because they “allow us not only to study the endurance of various motifs in time, but also to build bridges across linguistic, religious and territorial divides of the South Caucasus” (2).

Sharing Myths, Texts, and Sanctuaries consists of eleven main contributions as well as lively postscripts by Jean-Pierre Mahé (whose short essay is in French) and George Hewitt. As is typical for this kind of publication, topics and themes stretch across a broad spectrum. The various Armenian and, to a lesser extent, Georgian peoples receive the lion’s share of attention. The initial essays by Abraham Terian and Lilit Mikayelyan examine sacred objects and spaces. The next six contributions—by Kevin Tuite, Nicolas Preud’homme, Jost Gippert, Valentina Calzolari, Irma Karaulashvili, and Zaruhi Hakobyan—engage literary and linguistic topics, with an emphasis on the rich hagiographical traditions in Armenian and Georgian. This section is perhaps the most coherent of the volume. The final three chapters, by Dorfmann-Lazarev, Tereza Amryan, and Alikber Alikberov, probe the plural and cosmopolitan religious environment of Caucasia through the interplay of local Christianity, Islam, and Yezidism.

Lack of coherence is a universal critique leveled against collections of conference papers. However, with the editor’s guidance, the contributors seldom stray far from apocryphal themes anchored in southern Caucasia. This is accomplished through a wide range of disciplines and methodologies deployed by scholars at various junctures of their careers—and active on at least three continents. Somewhat less efficacious is the book’s title and stated emphasis on “shared myths, texts and sanctuaries.” This is a splendid subject worthy of investigation, but the key here is *shared* and what sharing entails across time and from broader perspectives. In late antique and medieval Caucasia, sharing is part and parcel of the region’s long-standing cross-cultural condition, which extended not only across the isthmus—and into the northern Caucasus, too—but also beyond the region, into Iran, Anatolia, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean. The uneven engagement of sharing is evident from the volume’s tendency to emphasize Armenia and Armenians, through essays by Tuite, Preud’homme, and Gippert (grouped as chapters 3–5) push Georgia and Georgians more to the center of analysis.

What I found wanting as I plunged deeper into this book is a primary *Caucasian* perspective. This is a monumentally difficult task to accomplish, to be sure, but I wonder how some of the chapters would have looked had the authors proceeded chiefly from a regional vantage instead of emphasizing one ethno-linguistic group and engaging others less fully or for comparative purposes. This is a reminder of the immense benefit for scholars able to read both Classical Armenian and Old Georgian, in addition to other languages, and of conducting archival work *in situ*. An artifact of these issues is the oddly inconsistent transliteration of Georgian throughout this tome. Preud’homme sensibly deploys as system of Georgian transliteration that matches the standard Hübschmann-Meillet-Benveniste scheme used for Armenian.

One of the things that stands out across the contributions is Caucasia’s connections to the Iranian and Islamic worlds and the broader Middle East. Mikayelyan, for instance, stresses the importance of Sasanian models and a shared Iranian/Persianate

culture in the sculptures of fabulous creates adorning Caucasia's churches. Preud'homme reminds us of the deep Mazdaean/Zoroastrian strands of Caucasian society, even centuries after its open Christianization. Dorfmann-Lazarev's chapter illuminates the role Kurds played in the formation of medieval Caucasia and their connection to the creation of the Armenian legal tradition. (This is, it should be noted, one of the few essays that engages Caucasian Albania). Amryan catalogs sacred spaces shared by Yezidis and Christian Armenians (the emphasis here is very much on sharing, though I eagerly await more analysis and contextualization of her fascinating material). And Alikberov discusses Caucasia's association with the Wall of Iskander (Alexander) in medieval Islamic literature.

The volume might have included an acknowledgement and survey of existing publications on the subject of apocalyptic and mythical traditions in pre-modern Caucasia—for example, *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition, a Comparative Perspective: Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Robert W. Thomson*, edited by Kevork Bardakjian and Sergio La Porta (*Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 25 [Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2014]).

But these minor issues in no way detract from the great value of this ambitious project. There is much to be learned from *Sharing Myths, Texts, and Sanctuaries in the South Caucasus*. And it is to be hoped that the effort to promote a more balanced, interdisciplinary, and cross-cultural vision will stimulate further research.

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***Hagiography, Historiography, and Identity in Sixth-Century Gaul: Rethinking Gregory of Tours.* By Tamar Rotman. Social Worlds of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022. 196 pp. \$114.00 cloth or ebook PDF.**

Tamar Rotman sets herself a challenge in *Hagiography, Historiography, and Identity in Sixth-Century Gaul* by intervening in the crowded literature on the writings of early medieval bishop Gregory of Tours. Best known for his ten-book *Histories*, Gregory also wrote a handful of works about saints and martyrs that have received only sporadic attention. What makes Rotman's book stand out is her insistence on treating his full hagiographical corpus as a coherent body of work—something heretofore ignored. Building on both hagiographical studies that have demonstrated the genre's utility for social history and historiographical scholarship treating Gregory and other early historians as creative actors who promoted specific agendas in their regional histories, Rotman argues that Gregory created a parallel ecclesiastical history through his hagiography. These works were not just about venerating saints, but also crafting a Christian identity rooted in Gaul and a place in wider Christian history for the Frankish church.

After an introduction that sets out this thesis, her aims, and the scholarly field, chapter 1 introduces Gregory and his authorial choices. Rotman shows how Gregory used