

ments. The uniquely Christian belief of the Spirit as sanctifier allows a Christian confidence in human relationships that is not available to a nonbeliever. Dependence on God as the “middle term” paradoxically allows for independence in human relationships. As the ultimate source of love, God replenishes the “reservoir” of human love (193).

By combining philosophy, theology, neuroscience, and anthropology, Marandiuc succeeds in presenting a nuanced Christian perspective on human attachments and the making of the self. However, her dependence on Charles Taylor and Kierkegaard significantly impacts the depth of a topic that would have been enriched by a broader diversification of sources and lends the book a repetitive tone. It is curious, perhaps, that so much time is dedicated to Kierkegaard’s understanding of human love attachments, given his own complicated personal relationships. While his interpretations of biblical concepts, such as love for the other, love for the self, and love for God, are meritorious and illuminating, Marandiuc could have included at least one other primary theologian/philosopher to provide balance to her work.

One aspect of love that was not fully developed in this book is that of Christ’s sacrificial love in relation to the cross. Although Marandiuc references the incarnation, she does not provide a thorough discussion of Christ’s death on the cross as the ultimate example of unconditional love or how it repairs and enables the human-divine relationship. In addition to the co-creation of the self, Marandiuc could have analyzed attachments in relation to the re-creation of the self. How does the self change after conversion? How does conversion alter relationships? These are not so much omissions as they are opportunities for further development and research.

Ooltewah, Tennessee

SARAH E. BURTON

Schenk, Christine, CSJ. *Crispina and Her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017. xx + 459 pp. Softcover. USD 29.00.

Christine Schenk has done admirable research exploring the scope of female authority in the first five centuries of Christianity in her new book, *Crispina and Her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity*. She has divided the volume into eight chapters and fourteen appendixes. The chapters do not follow the same structural pattern throughout the book. Some chapters have an introduction and a conclusion, while others do not. The book itself has a main introduction, which is very well written. It delineates the book well and defines authority, a crucial concept throughout the document. Broadly speaking, *Crispina and Her Sisters* focuses on two main things: context and material. Looking at the sociocultural context, the author draws heavily on books such as the one by Carolyn Osiek, Margaret Y. MacDonald, and

Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006). At the same time, Schenk notably does not engage with different views such as those in Gary Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). In the material part, Schenk analyzes and interprets funerary iconography of early Christian art.

In order to build her argument, Schenk lays the book's foundation by reviewing the female world of early Christianity. She gives a historical overview of the first centuries BCE and CE using secular and biblical texts. The first chapter exemplifies the transition from Aristotelian thought—in which men are innately superior to women—to the thought of the Second Sophistic period portrayed in the Gospels, in which women are important for the Jesus movement and the spread of Christianity.

The author turns to the issue of female authority in the second chapter. Using evidence from literary sources, archaeology, and the social sciences, Schenk points to the authority and participation of ordained women in early Christianity. The following chapter discusses early Christian iconography, and the frequency of biblically-based images appearing on sarcophagi. It also discovers the change of religious themes depicted in Christian iconography before and after Constantine the Great.

Chapter four discusses catacomb frescoes and inscriptions. It also explores literary evidence that forbade women to preside over congregations, raising evidence that points to the presence of educated women, celebrated in the Scriptures and able to exercise authority in the church. The next chapter deals with funerary iconography and customs and how they changed over time.

The main contribution of the book is in chapter six. It is a statistical investigation of the iconography of 2,119 Christian sarcophagi artifacts from the third to the fifth centuries. The analysis renders interesting results. For example, of the Christian portraits, 156 were female and 47 were male. The study also suggests a change in female portrayal. Instead of highlighting beauty, fidelity, and marital harmony, second-century depictions show women as knowledgeable about the Bible and having ecclesial authority.

Chapter seven continues the statistical analysis, but focuses on different themes like the *orans* position (hands raised in prayer), couples, children, solo adult males, and mourning parents. The book concludes with a literary analysis of female authority texts within their historical context. It brings to attention women like Empress Helena, Olympias, Marcella, Melania the Elder (Rufinu's patron), and Paula (Jerome's patron and Hebrew translation partner), among others. Hence, the author makes it clear that influential Roman women were important in shaping the theology, spirituality, and social mission of the church during the fourth century.

An important achievement of the book is to show the following irony: male leaders generally attempted to prevent women from becoming leading

parishioners, but the surviving evidence of women's authority and participation in early Christianity comes to us through these male church leaders writing against female participation in the church.

The author is also fortunate in her statistical analysis of sarcophagus iconography, where she finds three times more Christian female solo portraits than Christian male solo portraits. Considering the high cost of sarcophagi, the large number of solo female portraits points to the women's wealth and their high level of participation in Christianity. Schenk also finds indications that many women in the Christian social network were portrayed as role models with influence and authority.

On another note, there are some parts of the book where I would question the author's interpretation of the data. For instance, when talking about authority and apostolic succession in the gospel of Luke (chs. 11–13), the author suggests that Luke reduced the female role to make his writings more appealing to the male Roman audience. According to Schenk, this is the only option for interpretation. However, later in the book (66), Schenk uses Luke's narratives of the prophetesses Anna and Elizabeth to support her claim of female leadership. Thus, Schenk's theological presuppositions probably guided her hermeneutics of the biblical passage, making her interpretation of the Gospel of Luke inconsistent throughout the book. Furthermore, her interpretation is not consistent with the overall Gospel of Luke. If Luke really wanted to diminish women's role in his gospel, he would not have started his book with the stories of two women, Elizabeth and Mary. Their partners in both stories (Zechariah and Joseph) failed to believe, whereas the women believed and were faithful. In addition, it was the faithfulness of these women that allowed them to conceive by divine intervention and give birth to John (the greatest man born of a woman) and Jesus (the Messiah). Hence, it is more likely that when writing his gospel, Luke's intention was something other than to reduce female roles.

Another point which I find debatable is the author's reasoning for the absence of female names in ancient texts (28). She points out that in Roman culture, the names of respectable women were not even mentioned in public, and that this might be the reason that ancient texts mention so few women's names. Next, she allows for two exceptions to her hypothesis, where female names were present in the public sphere, these being the dedicatory statues honoring female benefactors, and in Paul's letters. However, these two groups of evidence are too significant to be treated as exceptions. Furthermore, considering that the New Testament is one of the main literary sources of information about daily life in the first century, it should not be dealt with as an exception.

The last point I want to raise is that the author fails to connect the growth of the priests' wealth and power with the negative portrayal of women made by men in the fourth century. She describes the growth of power and

wealth among clergymen in the fourth century in relation to the conversion of Constantine (334). And in the following section, she looks at how male leadership associated the female sex with heresy during the same period. Yet, Schenk does not make the association between the growth of priestly wealth and power, and the denigration of women. She only connects the change in the emperor's religion with the changes in the priest's role, not with the male attack on the nature (ontology) of females.

Despite the above-mentioned issues, I recommend the book to anyone looking for information on the role of women in early Christianity. Those interested in Christian funerary practices from the third on through the fifth centuries will find the book even more helpful. While I do not agree with a few of Schenk's conclusions, I think the book makes an important contribution. It fills a gap in the knowledge about early Christian funerary iconography. The book is well written and thought provoking: worth the read.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

CARINA O. PRESTES

Shoemaker, Stephen J. *The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. 272 pp. Hardcover USD 59.95.

Stephen J. Shoemaker is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Oregon and a specialist on Christian and Islamic origins, specifically for late antiquity and early medieval periods (Byzantine and Near Eastern Christianity). Shoemaker considers the present volume the "natural successor" to his previous book entitled *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

In *The Apocalypse of Empire*, Shoemaker offers both a compact treatise on imperial eschatology which dominated the interlocking religious cultures of Byzantium in the sixth to seventh centuries CE, as well as a revised history of the origins of Islam. Shoemaker defines the imperial eschatology of this period as the idea that the end of all things will follow the universal dominion of a "divinely chosen world empire" (3). He seeks to situate early Islamic eschatology within the "apocalyptic imagination" of the "broader religious context of the late ancient Near East." He does this by taking a close look at "the fusion of apocalypticism and imperialism" (2), while "using the same historical-critical methods and perspectives that have guided the study of early Judaism, Christianity, and other religions" (1). The author's goal is to cull a cogent schematic of imperial eschatology from a welter of apocalyptic texts and traditions circulating at a time when Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Muslims shared the belief that "God is working through imperial power