needs a sacred city, i.e., a protected Temple area in which his name dwells and his will is done. Less convincing, however, is his claim that Nehemiah's wall reflected a Hasmonean rather than a Persian-period reality.

Ran Zadok presents various issues in current scholarship surrounding Nehemiah too numerous to explore here. He provides a helpful compendium for anyone wishing to discover the main knotty problems confronting scholars today and supplies his own views. Zadok cogently argues that the Temple cult follows norms set out in first-millennium Babylonia (e.g., a militia accompanies the workmen of the temple).

The second part of the book focuses on text, literature, and interpretation. David Marcus presents a fascinating explanation of the doublets and catchwords in the Masorah, rabbinic comments in the margins of the biblical text. Marcus argues that this data has value not only for preservation of the correct text and as an aid to memory but also for exegesis. For example, the Masorah notes that the description that Ezra during mourning "did not eat bread" (Ezra 10:6) is a phrase referring only to Moses elsewhere in Scripture. This notation may be an implicit comment that Ezra should be given a status comparable to Moses.

Deirdre Fulton examines the list of settlers in Neh. 11:25–36 in both the MT and LXX versions. She concludes that the LXX is the earlier, as it is much shorter. She attempts to sort out the reality behind the texts in regard to the Judahite, Benjaminite, and Levite settlement in Persian and post-Persian Judah.

Paul Redditt tackles the problem of the considerable difference between the subtotals of the settlers in Ezra 2/Neh. 7 in comparison to the actual totals at the end of the lists. He argues that only the persons included in the subtotals are the people the author considers to be truly Israel. The totals represent both "true" Israel and others in the community. However, Redditt's interpretation requires too much work from the reader. If it was the author's intent to delineate the numbers of "true" Israel from unauthorized persons, why did he not make that clear? He certainly is not subtle on this point elsewhere.

Joseph Fleishman claims that Nehemiah's request (Neh. 2:1–9) to King Artaxerxes reveals strategies based on the assumption that the Persian kings were Zoroastrians. For example, their concern with care for the dead is highlighted in Nehemiah's request to travel to Jerusalem to repair the graves of his ancestors. Fleishman also points out that the reference to Jerusalem's destruction as "consumed by fire" (a *hapax legomenon*) may be a purposeful way of telling the king that fire, sacred to Zoroastrians, had been wrongfully utilized, and hence the city's walls must be rebuilt. Fleishmann explains Nehemiah's "bad/sad" face as giving a message to the king that he was impure. This point seems a bit of a reach, since, while Ezra-Nehemiah does on occasion employ purity terms, none are mentioned in Nehemiah's request.

Mark Boda's contribution rounds out the palette of essays with a literary analysis of Nehemiah focusing on its prayers. He argues that the first part of Nehemiah (Neh. 1–6) focuses on his development of the community's infrastructure, while the second part (Neh. 7–13) treats the spiritual renewal of the community. He points out that the two longest prayers (Neh. 1 and 9) accentuate this shift in the shape of the book and he raises the question as to the possibility of "inner rhetorical logic" and even separate authorship for Nehemiah and Ezra (p. 276).

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Syrien im 1.-7. Jahrhundert nach Christus. Edited by DMITRIJ BUMAZHNOV and HANS REINHARD SEELIGER. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, vol. 62. Tübingen: MOHR SIEBECK, 2011. Pp. viii + 284. €64 (paper).

In the failed hope of preserving the "Languages and Cultures of the Christian Orient" chair at Tübingen beyond the anticipated retirement of Stephen Gerö (chair, 1980–2008), the university's Catholic and Protestant faculties organized a series of conferences on "The Christian East in Late Antiquity." This collection of essays gathers nine papers from the first of these conferences: "*Syrien im*

1.-7. Jahrhundert nach Christus" (15–16 June 2007). It also includes three other contributions not presented at the conference, but deemed suitable for inclusion, specifically essays by Luise Abramowski (Tübingen), Cornelia Horn (Tübingen), and Jonathan Loopstra (Capital University). These make up for the omission of six conference presentations not intended for publication, including one by Gerö himself. Only four of the published essays are in English; the rest are German.

Most papers in the collection fall under the canopy of Syriac studies. However, even a quick glance at the essays included in this volume will reveal a generous interpretation of the conference's theme. The term "Syria," for one, is taken broadly to include the entire sphere of Syriac-speaking Christian influence and exchange, including areas such as southern Arabia (so Yury Arzhanov). Similarly, the conference's interest in the "Christian East" has not precluded the inclusion of one study focused primarily on Ummayad politics (Heintz Gaube). Even the stated interest in the first through seventh centuries is not strictly enforced (again Gaube and perhaps Cornelia Horn). The editors, confronted with this diversity, avoid grouping the essays according to theme, region, or period. Instead, the table of contents merely organizes the essays by the last names of their authors in descending alphabetical order. In light of this diversity, the appeal of this book to a given reader is likely to depend upon his or her interest in one or several of its essays. Happily, the volume gathers more than one compelling study.

From the perspective of late antique and Syriac Christian studies, the first and longest essay of the volume—accounting for roughly twenty percent of its content—may be its most valuable. In it, Luise Abramowski explores the origins of the peculiar double title "Catholicos-Patriarch" applied to the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. In so doing, Abramowski also clarifies the historical relationship of the East Syriac see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon and the West Syriac patriarchate of Antioch. This discussion is of critical relevance to any scholar interested in the history and ecclesiology of the ancient Church of the East and its descendant traditions: the Assyrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic patriarchate, and the more recent Ancient Church of the East. Frankly, the discussion is of a scope and quality that begs its own monograph.

In "Syrische Quellen zur Geschichte des Christentums und des Judentums im vorislamischen Südarabien," Yury Arzhanov (Bochum) leaves the region of Syria behind to explore the reliability of several Syriac texts in the reconstruction of Jewish-Christian relations in southern Arabia to the seventh century. These texts include the letter of Simeon of *Beṯ Aršam*, the *Martyrium Arathae* (via translation), and the Book of Himyarites. The essay, however brief, provides a fascinating portrait of the complex, and ultimately hostile, relationship between the Jewish community of the region and competing Christian groups. Arzhanov demonstrates that the Miaphysite claim of a sympathy between Jews and (so-called) Nestorians may reflect real contacts between those two communities. He also finds evidence that Jewish attacks against local Christians were primarily directed at the Miaphysites. This history should appeal to Islamicists exploring the religious context of the pre-Islamic Arabian peninsula.

The juxtaposition of the next two studies is fortuitous as both address fundamental tensions in the East Syriac monastic identity. In the first, Dmitrij Bumazhnov (Tübingen) explores the development and relationship of the Syriac expressions "sons and daughters of the covenant" (*bnay* or *bnāt qyāmā*) and "single ones" (*iḥīdaye*) up to the time of Aphrahat. Bumazhnov sets out to reconcile the communal overtones of the first expression with the monadic overtones of the second. In the contribution immediately following, Till Engleman (Göttingen) explores the interplay of the systematic and the mystical in the theology of Babai the Great. His guiding question (Is Babai "a monastic theologian or a theological monk?") aptly captures the spirit of the East Syriac monastic tradition revived by Babai the Great.

The most anomalous essay in the collection is undoubtedly that of Heintz Gaube (Tübingen), who offers a proposed reconstruction of the original purpose of the so-called "desert-castles" of the Syro-Jordanian desert. Gaube persuasively argues that the strategic location of these structures near popular watering places, and the presence of reception halls with them, suggest they played a critical role in facilitating royal alliances with desert nomads. Though they had first been developed by the Ghassanids with Byzantine support, Ummayad rulers up to the eighth century took up periodic residence in such structures to entertain, and dialogue with, nomadic leaders. Since its interest in the "Christian East" is peripheral at best, Gaube's contribution should primarily interest Islamicists and scholars of the interstitial or nomadic polities of Syria.

A more conventional interest in Syriac literature returns to the fore in the next three essays of the collection. In the first, Cornelia Horn explores the fascinating account of the Syriac *Martyrdom of the*

Mimes (seventh or eighth century). In this text, a group of prostitutes sent to deter martyrs embrace the Christian faith themselves. In so doing, they find "control over their own bodies and souls," culminating in a choice for "ultimate freedom over their bodies by choosing martyrdom" (p. 111). This contribution is to be commended for its multifaceted exploration of body, gender, sexuality, and social status in a Syriac text.

A useful exploration of the pneumatology of the East Syriac Isaac of Nineveh, written by Nestor Kavvadas (Tübingen), immediately follows Horn's piece, followed by Jonathan Loopstra's investigation of certain West Syriac collections of patristic "difficult words" preserved in Vat. Syr. 152. Almost three centuries ago, J. S. Assemani attributed these collections to Jacob of Edessa (d. 708). Loopstra entertains an alternative possibility: later scribes may have compiled these collections, which then became erroneously associated with Jacob of Edessa from a tradition that he had corrected certain patristic texts (e.g., the *Orations* of Gregory Nazianzen).

The next two essays are historical in tone. The first, "Die ersten Christen in Syrien," anchors the low end of the monograph's stated chronological interest. In it, Anna Maria Schwemer (Tübingen) attempts to provide a brief history of the origins of Christianity in the cities of Antioch and Edessa. Her task is obviously complicated by the fragmentary or dubious nature of the biblical evidence and the scarcity of patristic evidence. Still, she produces a critical discussion I believe provides an excellent starting point for future discussions.

Immediately following Schwemer's contribution is the exploration by Hans Reinhard Seeliger (Tübingen) of the post-Nicene episcopal sees of Syro-Palestine. This essay provides a valuable resource for early Byzantine historians, cataloguing Christian centers in the region from the material and literary data. Attention is also given to the functions of cathedral churches in the region.

In the penultimate essay, Felix Thome (Tübingen) offers a glimpse into the exegetical genius of the Church of the East, exploring the theme of "God's love for lost humanity" in the Genesis homilies of Narsai of Edessa. Finally, Jürgen Tubach (Halle/Saale) concludes the volume with an analysis of the "The Hymn of the Pearl" from the Acts of Thomas, the oldest extant Syriac poem.

As a single collection, the book is strongest when it pairs essays of like character (e.g., Bumazhnov and Engleman). It is unfortunate, then, that the grouping principles were not explored in the design of the collection. At the very least, it would have been useful to distinguish the collection's literary studies (e.g., Horn and Thome) from its historical (e.g., Abramowski and Schwemer) and archeological studies (i.e., Gaube and Seeliger). The layout of the volume is fairly clean, though small errors are apparent (e.g., an unnecessary blank space appears on p. 74, and the first paragraph on p. 158 should be indented). It is also worth noting that the collection does contain several editorial errors. One outstanding example appears on p. 186, no. 57, where the right to left text of the first Hebrew formula has been reversed, evidently through a software error. Additionally, several typographical errors have also made it to print in the manuscript (as a single example, consider the juxtaposition of "Burxeles" and "Bruxelles" in consecutive lines of p. 59, no. 9). Strangely, Tubach's article does not provide bibliographic information within footnotes, as do the other articles, but includes a final bibliography instead. A consistent system of citation across all essays would have been appreciated.

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The Ashgate Research Companion to Islamic Law. Edited by RUDOLPH PETERS and PERI BEARMAN. Farnham, Surrey, UK: ASHGATE, 2014. Pp. x + 345. $149.95, £95.

The scope and vision of Wael Hallaq's comprehensive history of Islamic law, *Sharīʿa: Theory, Practice, Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), has made it difficult to imagine the appearance of similarly broad narrative treatments of the topic anytime soon. That is in a way unfortunate because, for all the value of Hallaq's book, it presents the subject of Islamic law, no matter the