considers to be the terms of Christianity as a great tradition. He identifies powers, modernity, hierarchy, codes, pantheon, and book as the constituent elements of this Christianity. But he never specifies in any detail why these are dominant features of translocal Christianity. To be sure, Frankfurter's project is not fundamentally to devise a (new) definition of Christianity broadly speaking; this is simply a consequence of his shift to the local. And so, while Frankfurter has laid the foundation for a reappraisal of the contours of late antique Christianity and even Christianity itself, the task now falls to the rest of us to pick up where Frankfurter has left off.

Indeed, it is precisely because the project of *Christianizing Egypt* remains unfinished that it is such an important and compelling work—one that I sincerely hope will produce a wide range of responses and applications. Frankfurter has invited scholars trained in a variety of disciplines not only to think about other regions of the ancient Mediterranean through his syncretistic framework but also to reconsider our rote deployment of the words *Christianity* and *Christian*. Thus, while Frankfurter's book is obviously targeted at scholars of late antique religion, it is enormously useful for anyone seeking a sophisticated model of the developments and negotiations that define a religious tradition. In the end, *Christianizing Egypt* is a book that will force its readers to become better students of religion, in both its great and local forms.

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Ross Shepard Kraemer, *The Mediterranean Diaspora in Late Antiquity: What Christianity Cost the Jews*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 520 pp. ISBN: 9780190222277 (hardcover), ISBN: 9780190222284 (ebook), ISBN: 9780190222291 (online). 520 pp. $105.00.

"Some of this may really have happened" (43). This is how Ross Kraemer begins her discussion of an account of the conversion to Christianity of the Jews of Minorca that is the second chapter of this important and surprisingly personal book. The nod to uncertainty underscores a central problem that any book of this sort needs to address. Clearly, over the interval between Constantine and the promulgation of the Theodosian Code (429 CE), imperial law about Jews had changed in tone and content. The funerary and

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dedicatory inscriptions set up by Jews fall off in the fifth century, which suggests geographical and perhaps some cultural realignment. Narratives written by contemporaneous Christians feature stories of miraculous conversions and open or veiled violence against Jews and their institutions. And yet, laws do not reflect a linear transformation of the status of Jews or an imperial policy. Inscriptions can be correlated with proposed significant changes but can rarely on their own document those changes. Finally, some accounts of conversion or the violent appropriation of synagogues appear to be tendentious if not obviously false.

So what "really happened?" Is it the demographic erasure of the Jews from the Mediterranean through conversion to Christianity or through out-migration (e.g., to the Iberian Peninsula)? An increase in physical insecurity of persons and communal property due to violence? Or perhaps developments in the discourses that constructed Jews as the deserving targets of prejudicial law and often miraculous violence? Kraemer's argument, ultimately, is that in the first half of the fifth century, after a century of Christian expectation of Jewish conversion, Jews' failure to do so in any significant numbers created "dissonance" (275), which was resolved by a rise in actual violence against Jews (among others) as well as a more emphatic and repeated discourse of violence, as theorized through the work of Rebecca Falcasantos (60–61) and Thomas Sizgorich (206).[1]

The first two chapters set the stage. Chapter 1, "The Absence of Evidence as the Evidence of Absence" (1–42), surveys the evidence for Jews in the Mediterranean region, which is much more sparse in the fifth century than it is in prior periods. Kraemer argues that this is not in and of itself evidence for the disappearance of Jews. One of the recurrent themes in the book is that Jews did not disappear but rather were indeed available to be "regularly unreceptive to Christian efforts to convert them." The second chapter, "The *Letter of Severus of Minorca* on the Conversion of the Jews" (43–74), reads as a typecase for the kinds of dynamics explored in the eight chapters that follow. Kraemer attends to the problems of authorship, reliability, and date; contemporaneous debates among Christians over coerced conversion (Augustine versus Consentius, 59); the covering over of violence and coercion in the unfolding of the events; and the absence of state intervention for forced

1. Rebecca Stephens Falcasantos, *Constantinople: Ritual, Violence, and Memory in the Making of a Christian Imperial Capital* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020); Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*, Divinations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

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conversion or appropriation of synagogues and appurtenances, acts that were "literally illegal" (60). We would like to know, but simply can't, whether converts to Christianity on Minorca could have returned to their former Jewish practice or whether Jews claiming that their synagogue was taken from them could seek redress (72–73).

Chapters 3–7 are organized chronologically. A central concern throughout these chapters is a review of laws preserved in the Theodosian Code attributed to the various emperors. This strategy usefully disrupts the apparent uniformity of Roman law or imperial policy. It also allows Kraemer to contextualize the promulgation of laws within court politics and, in particular, the role of ecclesiastical advisors (Ambrose, under Theodosius I), highly placed officials (Stilicho in the West, Rufinus inter alia in the East), and household members (Pulcheria and Eudokia, during the reign of Theodosius II), particularly when new emperors themselves were quite young upon taking power (Gratian, Valentinian II, Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II). Kraemer notes that throughout the fourth century military events, the suppression of traditionalist ("pagan") practice, and the policing of dissenting ("heretical" or "sectarian") Christians took precedence over legislation about Jews, and the laws about dissenters and traditionalists were often more drastic in their consequences. More broadly, in her assessment of "lobbying" interests at court, Kraemer reads critically, raising the possibility, for instance, that Ambrose was less successful than often thought in his conflict with Symmachus over traditional cults and with Theodosius I over the protection of synagogues. None of the costs to the Jews were inevitable or developed in a linear fashion.

Given that four chapters refer to Theodosius II in their title ("Honorius and Theodosios II, 408–423", 188–239; "Theodosios II in His Majority, 423–450," 240–75; "In the Aftermath of Theodosios II in the East, 450–604," 276–314; and "In the Aftermath of Theodosios II in the West, 450–604," 315–41), Theodosius's reign should serve as a watershed. But this is attributed less to Theodosius II's policies—his laws remained equivocal (270–71)—than to regnant interests at court, the ability of Jews to lobby those interests, and, finally, to "evidence of repeated contestations between Christians and Jews, as well as an escalating struggle between those who sought to authorize and implement such restrictions and those who, for diverse motivations, defended the rights of Jews under existing Roman laws and customs . . . . The very laws that explicitly prohibited the burning or vandalizing of Jewish synagogues seem *necessitated by the actuality of such*

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attacks, most fully depicted in the Letter of Severus of Minorca" (271, emphasis added).

Chapters 8 and 9 outline the aftermath to Theodosius in the East and West. Treatment of the East is dominated by attention to Justinian, whose celebrated "accomplishments must be balanced against the devastation he wrought on the non-orthodox, Christians and otherwise" (282), exemplified by Novella 37 (535) that among other things suppressed synagogues in North Africa in theory, if not in fact. For the West, Kraemer juxtaposes the approaches toward coercion of Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great and gestures toward the conversion of the Visigothic kings to [Chalcedonian] Orthodoxy and its ominous implication for policies toward the forced conversion or exile of Jews.

Chapter 10, "The Price of (Christian) Orthodoxy" (342–401), is the last substantive chapter. It summarizes the "increasing pressures intended to effect [Jews'] conversion to Christianity" (342) and then proceeds to give the best overview of Jewish responses to their changing status in the Mediterranean to date. It is particularly noteworthy for its attempt to bracket the evidence of Palestinian or Babylonian rabbinic literature without condemning those not in the rabbinic orbit to oblivion.

This is not an easy book: it covers a lot of time, geography, and evidence and—with Kraemer's characteristic honesty—weighs possible interpretations against each other without always definitively drawing conclusions. It leaves us with issues large and small about which scholars do and will continue to differ. Most importantly, it appears to signal the end of a scholarly era. When I entered the field, the study of Mediterranean Jews was embarking on an era of good feeling exemplified by the happy implications of the Sardis synagogue and the Aphrodisias inscriptions: Jews were well integrated into the Roman and late antique city and generally safe and secure. For the period covered by this book, Jews' visibility in John Chrysostom's Antioch was more interesting than John's invective; Jews' parodic display of Haman as the crucified Christ, more telling than the legislation that condemns it; Theodorus of Magona's service as city councilor and *defensor civitatis* more significant than Severus's tale of his conversion. Kraemer signals her now more pessimistic view explicitly (39). The shift is most powerfully underscored in her treatment of women synagogue officials in the Eastern Mediterranean (material that Kraemer was instrumental in putting on the map). The phenomenon of women in leadership roles may derive not primarily from Jewish women's self-determination and communal engagement and may not demonstrate that

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Mediterranean diaspora communities could serve as a counter example to rabbinic gender norms. Perhaps, instead, it derives from the shortage of men to take on these roles (365).

As Kraemer already notes in her preface, although the book was long in the making, it is hard not to read the transformation she describes in light of contemporary struggles with religious, political, and (in our idiom) racial violence. In response, there has been renewed interest in understanding the systemic underpinnings of violence and inequality. A major contribution of the book is to underscore just how dispersed systemic processes may be, and how variable their outcomes.

It is naively satisfying to attribute the transformation of late antique society and the place of Jews in it to an inexorable master plan set in motion by Constantine, given theoretical articulation a century later by Augustine, still incomplete at the end of the reign of Theodosius II, and yet manifested in that most governmental of media, legal codification, by both Theodosius and Justinian. It is relatively straightforward, too, to put Jews at the center of this transformation, constructed as Christianity's ideological other. Kraemer outlines processes that are instead more complex, more contingent, and more puzzling. In her reconstruction, the marginalization of Jews was driven by Christian expectations and fantasies, but created by lobbying and allegiances at court and by entrepreneurial violence spoken and performed from below, or at least from outside the official structures of the state. "The state" (that is, emperors and their praetors and some vested interests at court and most provincial governors) may well have generally taken the side of Jews, or at least of law, order, and property. The puzzlement is openly acknowledged by Kraemer but left unresolved: the equivocal position of Jews in the economy of violence and legislative restriction, when compared to the experiences of traditionalists, the nonorthodox, and even Samaritans as individuals, communities, and collectives. These differential outcomes are the aggregated result of repeated conflict, incomplete resolution, and commemoration and reenactment, leaving in their wake a transformed moral economy with implications down to the present.

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