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The Oxford Handbook of Mary. hg. v. Chris Maunder. – Oxford: UP 2019. 736 S. (Oxford Handbooks), geb. GBP 110,00 ISBN: 978-0-1987-9255-0

This massive tome provides a comprehensive survey of the state of Marian studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As an edited volume, with over forty different contributions on a range of topics, it is difficult to do justice to its breadth and quality in a short review, unfortunately, but in general, the quality of the essays is extremely high across the volume, and the contributors are established experts on the subjects that they have engaged.

There are five sections to the book. The first, “Foundations,” looks to the biblical, apocryphal, and patristic traditions that form the basis for Christian devotion to Mary, as well as a brief survey drawing attention to Mary’s importance in the Islamic tradition. The latter is an extremely underdeveloped and rich field for study, and it is heartening to see special attention given to it in this volume, even if there is very much more work to be done on this topic. The second section includes nine essays on developments within the eastern Christian traditions, and again it is most welcome to see significant attention being given to the significance of eastern Christianity – presenting it even before the West – since its contribution to the history of Christianity is so often neglected. Nevertheless, this prominence and priority for the eastern Christian traditions is entirely appropriate in such a volume, since most of the early developments in Marian piety first emerged in the East and then spread to the West. Section three turns, not surprisingly, to the medieval West, with another nine essays on various topics. Part four continues to focus on the West, with ten essays on Marian devotion in the Protestant and Catholic traditions from the Reformations of the sixteenth century up until the twentieth. Finally, the book concludes with a section on Marian pilgrimage, apparitions, and miracles, encompassing eight essays focusing mostly on contemporary examples of these phenomena.

As a historian of ancient Christianity and eastern Christianity who specializes in the origins of Marian piety during the first millennium, I find myself most interested in the first two sections of the book, which cover many of the most relevant general topics that one would expect. Yet several of the essays in the second section bring some surprising focus to more narrow Marian topics within the eastern tradition, such as *Richard Price’s* essay on “Russian Spiritual Verses on the Mother of God” and *Elina Viola’s* contribution on “The Mother of God in Finnish Orthodox Women’s Lived Piety: Converted and Skolt Sami Voices”. The focus of these essays brings some welcome specificity among the many other fine surveys. Also very useful, because such surveys are relatively rare, are *Nurit Sadler’s* study of “Marian Devotion in the Contemporary Eastern Mediterranean” and *Andrew Louth’s* masterful survey of developments in contemporary Orthodox thought in “Mary in Modern Orthodox Theology”. The final section also offers some remarkable studies of contemporary Marian devotion

that were eye-opening for one such as myself who is used to looking at devotion to the Virgin in times long past. *Daniel Wojcik's* essay on "Marian Apocalypticism" stands out in this section, for bringing attention to a fascinating phenomenon that previously was not fully known to me. In the same vein, *Peter Jan Margry's* study of "The Global Network of Deviant Revelatory Marian Movements" also draws our attention to some well-known but often poorly understood aspects of contemporary Marian devotion. And cinephiles in particular will want to be delighted to find *Catherine O'Brien's* fine essay "Symbol, Vision, Mother: Mary in Film".

The bibliographies in these essays alone will be invaluable for future Marian researchers, and the suggestions for further readings at the end of each section will satisfy those readers who are curious to learn more about a given subject. The only real downside to this book is that it is extremely expensive. In all fairness, it is a big book and no doubt it was costly for the press to produce. But at £110/\$150, the cost likely places the book out of reach for many potential readers: even the digital version is priced at \$119. One hopes very much that a paperback may be issued in the future making the book more widely accessible, although, such a large book is perhaps best suited to a sewn hardback binding.

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