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Cilliers Breytenbach and Julien M. Ogereau eds., (2018) *Authority and Identity in Emerging Christianities in Asia Minor and Greece*. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 103; Leiden-Boston: Brill. xxx + 386 pp. €132.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-36719-7 (e-book, pdf).

This collection of essays brought together under the title *Authority and Identity in Emerging Christianities in Asia Minor and Greece* is the result of a 2015 two-day conference organized by the members and associates of the Excellence Cluster 264 Topoi, Theologische Fakultät of Humboldt-Universität (Berlin) in collaboration with international experts on early Christianity, epigraphy, and the history and archaeology of the later Roman Empire. As its editors claim, the volume marks “an intermediary stage of research,” and it develops within two distinct parts, echoing the geographical development of the project (xii). The authors of these essays had the opportunity to corroborate their expertise and/or research interests against the ancient inscriptions encompassed within the digital database *Inscriptiones Christianae Graecae* (ICG).

The first part of this collection has seven chapters and deals exclusively with the changes in early Christianity within the “borders” of Asia Minor (1–197). The readers can enjoy an assortment of essays ranging from aspects of the Greek *cadastre* inscriptions (Ulrich Huttner), to new analyses on the origin and theological content of Acts of John (Paul Trebilco), some details of the emergence of the early church in Bithynia-Pontus (Markus Öhler), a comprehensive and learnt overview of the Christian inscriptions from the Haymana highlands, Galatia (Jennifer Krumm), a thorough exploration of the various modes of self-(re)presentation of Christian women on funerary monuments of Lycaonia (Christiane Zimmermann), some complex analyses of the name-giving practices of Lycaonian Christians (Cilliers Breytenbach), and, closing up this part, new perspectives on the iconographic and religious significance of sculpted lions on Christian and non-Christian sarcophagi in rural Cilicia (Philipp Pilhofer).

The second part is composed also of seven chapters and deals with the developments of early Christianities in Greece, the Southern Balkans, and beyond (199–346). Essays range from an overview of the Christian epigraphic material from Corinthia and Peloponnese (Erkki Sironen), to a detailed and comprehensive survey of the Christian inscriptions from Macedonia (Julien M. Ogereau), a detailed analysis of the legacy of Paul in the Roman colony of Philippi (Cédric Brélaz), an investigation of the Christian epigraphic testimonia from Stobi, Macedonia (Slavica Babamova), a complex analysis of the ancient practice of inscribing and displaying epistolary documents (Laura S. Nasrallah), a thorough examination of the use of Greek in early Christian inscriptions from

Rome and Italy (Antonio E. Felle), and rounding up with a detailed inquiry into the religious transformation of Cyprus in late antiquity by reassessing the survival of paganism (Georgios Deligiannakis).

All of these fourteen contributions are “new” scholarly attempts to provide tentative answers to questions related to concepts such as *authority* and *identity* within specific geographical and cultural *milieus*. The ways in which these reflections manage to initiate possible dialogues with the literary sources already investigated are indebted to the scholarly trends *at work* today within academia. With this collection of essays, the reader again becomes a witness to another attempt at emphasizing the old idea of “in what way” inscriptions are an indispensable tool in understanding some of early Christian perceptions, constructions, and (self-) representations of social and religious identity. Additionally, this collection provides an important example of “how” the lack of thematic or methodological cohesiveness of papers derived from a conference might shed light on the understanding of the early Christianities, ranging within a set of confined geographical borders and situated between the first and sixth centuries CE.

The readers are given the possibility of understanding this collection of essays as a significant contribution to a better understanding and popularization of the emerging of some socio-cultural features of Christianities in Asia Minor and Greece. The epigraphic and archaeological evidence that is introduced to the general reader is meant to start the dialogue with the existent evidence of other non-documentary sources and theoretical models. However, this dialogue does not escape the conventional mainstream practices of reading only an incomplete set of ancient sources which highlight “the triumph of Christianity” and not that of “emerging Christianities” as the title of this volume misleadingly claims to do so.

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