retical reflections in his contribution on the Mediterranean ‘others,’ indicate the severe problems with this endeavor to have one collection of studies resulting from a congress with well over one thousand papers. It seems that any study was accepted which had been presented in Leeds and met at least formal requirements by the editors. On that basis, I would refrain from attending that congress. The present volume can be useful for cherry-picking, but not necessarily for a more global examination of ‘otherness.’

Albrecht Classen


This compilation collects primary source materials on the history and representation of the devil in ancient and medieval Christianity. Over the course of eleven chapters, the ninety-eight excerpts included in this book chart the development of the character of Satan and the activities of his demonic minions among humankind from Jewish antiquity to the fifteenth century. The chapters follow a roughly chronological order, but some of them present specific themes over the course of time. Chapter 1 (Sources for the Medieval Devil) primarily comprises excerpts from the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament with two exceptions: samples from Plato on the nature of pagan daemones and from the medieval Aggadah on rabbinic interpretations of the fall of Satan (neither of which actually informed medieval Christian views of the devil). As the editors make clear, biblical texts do not present “a coherent narrative” about Satan, but only “sparse clues” about this “exceptionally elusive and contingent creature” (3). Chapter 2 (Development of a Narrative) focuses on the first three centuries of Christianity with excerpts from Philo of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Lactantius, as well as apocryphal stories like the Gospel of Moses and the Testament of Solomon. Although Origen of Alexandria is present in two excerpts, his important contribution to the doctrine of universalism, according to which all rational creatures obtain salvation, including the devil, deserves a fuller treatment than it receives here.

Drawing inspiration from Elaine Pagels’s The Origin of Satan (1995), Chapter 3 (Forging a Community) shows how Christian communities demonized their enemies and rivals by branding them as allies of the devil. The editors lose the thread of this chapter, which begins with excerpts from scripture and early Christian writings, but then drifts to the end of the first millennium and beyond. Surely Regino of Prüm, Burchard of Worms, and William of Malmesbury faced different challenges and expressed different concerns than their late antique predecessors.

Chapter 4 (The Early Monastic Devil) explores the representation of the devil in ascetical literature as “a personification of the preoccupation of monks with avoiding vice and shunning temptation” (105). While this chapter presents the classic hagiographical treatments of this topic like Athanasius’s Life of Anthony and Sulpicius Severus’s Life of Martin, the inclusion of a long section from Augustine of Hippo’s treatise On the Divination of Demons seems out of place, as do the final two excerpts from the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, neither of which fit the “early monastic” rubric of the chapter title.