narrowly defined, but he does argue that, by virtue of the reader's Christianity, the Christian reader's objects and methods of study are necessarily theologically infused: "if [theology] does not make a difference for how the historian works, then the very way history is done . . . cannot help but reproduce a world in which God does not matter" (203). With Hauerwas's essay placed last, the volume ends with the provocative suggestion that, if the Bible can exist without creating Christians, Christians at least cannot exist without creating the Bible. It is an excellent place for a work on early Christian reading to end; it would be an equally excellent place for another such volume to begin.

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Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions. Edited by **Ra'anan S. Boustan** and **Annette Yoshiko Reed**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xiii + 335 pp. $80.00 cloth.

"Anyone, who looks into four things," warned the Rabbis, "it would be merciful for him if he had not come into the world: what is above, and what below, what is before, and what after" (*m. Hagigah* 2:1; cited on 234). Consider yourself forewarned, yet proceed with delight. This volume treads luminously into these "four things." Focusing on Mediterranean religious texts from the conquests of Alexander the Great to the rise of Islam, these fifteen essays, originally presented at a 2001 symposium, offer close analyses of works by Jews, Christians, and other Greco-Roman visionaries who crisscrossed a vast, if gnarly, cosmos.

The first section focuses on movement between earthly and heavenly realms. In a programmatic essay on the value of scrutinizing religious symbols, Fritz Graf investigates the role of bridges and ladders in narratives about otherworldly voyages. Christians' eventual predilection for bridges and then ladders to the Beyond suggests an increasingly vertical conception of the afterlife. No longer content with the gentler boat rides to the netherworld, Christians stressed the radical rupture that marked passage to the afterlife. Katharina Volk's close exegesis of a passage from the *Astronomica*, by the first-century C.E. Roman poet Manilius, reveals a more irenic cosmic journey as a metaphor for the poet's artistic aspirations. An inverse journey is the subject of Annette Yoshiko Reed's analysis of fallen angels who corrupt humanity through illicit instruction in *The Book of Watchers*, a third-century B.C.E. document that became part of 1 *Enoch*. This apocalypse highlights both the appeal of special wisdom and the danger of forbidden secrets. Gottfried Schimanowski's close analysis of the heavenly worship in the hymns of Revelation 4–5 suggests a "movement" across realms through liturgical imitation. In contrast to Revelation's "sneak peek" of heavenly worship, Sarah Iles Johnston's fascinating essay on the *Chaldean Oracles* focuses on the virtues of deferred hope. Here, the theurgist is advised to escape materiality by opting to reenter it. This bodhisattva-like figure may then guide other incarnate souls toward enlightenment. Johnston's insightful discussion of the theurgists' motivations presents a curious mix of radical hope and despair for a disorderly if redeemable world.

Part 2 develops the theme of "heaven on earth" by examining how various human institutions appeal to, replicate, and manipulate heavenly prototypes.

The Jewish Temple is at the heart of Martha Himmelfarb's essay on two texts from the Second Temple period: *Aramaic Levi* and *Jubilees*. With marked emphasis on incense, these texts reimagine earthly blood sacrifice as a celestial, bloodless, and aromatic sacrifice. John Marshall offers an innovative reading of Revelation as a diaspora Jewish response to the Judean War of 66–70 C.E. With a keen eye for the eerie parallel, Marshall interjects passages from Greco-Roman historians on the nexus between heavenly portents and earthly rule. An influential Christian apocalypse, *The Apocalypse of Paul,* is central to Kirsti Copeland's analysis of the relation between earthly and heavenly Jerusalems in early Jewish and Christian writings. Rather than stress the dialectic between the two cities, the *AP* severs all ties to the earthly Jerusalem and recasts heaven as an Egyptian monastery. Shifting from monks to martyrs, Jan Bremmer analyzes the heavenly imagery in the *Passio Sanctorum Mariani et Iacobi* and other North African martyrologies. East Syria is the subject of Adam Becker's analysis of Syrian writers who presented sacred history as a genealogy of schools. This "scholasticization" of heaven reveals the fluid boundaries between Jewish and Christian identities on the margins of empire.

The final section focuses on texts about the fragile boundary between realms. Heaven seeps into earth in Ra'anan Boustan's analysis of the Qumran document, *Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice.* Beneath its highly affective and stylized language, the *Songs* offers a compelling narrative thread in which angels sing praise then fall silent as angelic *images* assume voices. Hence animated and angelified, architecture becomes heavenly host. Christopher Faraone focuses on the home as a site for collapsing the boundaries between realms. His careful exegesis of a divinatory spell (PGM 1.262–347) reveals how its recombination of elements from oracular cult and necromantic ritual recast Apollo as both ouranian and chthonic deity. In contrast to this flattened cosmology, Peter Schäfer presents a multilayered cosmos from a Jewish treatise known as the *Seder Rabbah di-Bereshit.* With deft comparisons to prerabbinic and early Jewish mystical works, Schäfer calls attention to the quasi-Ptolemaic, quasi-biblical mapping of the cosmos that sets apart this work. Radcliffe Edmunds focuses on obstacles and ordeals in the soul's descent into materiality in "gnostic," philosophical, and magical practices. Embraced by some as the benevolent gateway, the moon was perceived as threatening by practitioners of the Mithras Liturgy, who shunned it as the threshold to an enslaving materiality. Susanna Elm offers a more positive picture of incarnation in her analysis of baptismal sermons by Gregory Nazianzen. This late-fourth-century bishop regarded the effects of baptism as a "paradoxical fusion" of two incommensurate realities, the immaterial divine and the material human, inscribed and reinscribed on the self. According to Elm, Gregory's insistence on baptism as both a moment and a process was a potent response to heterodox leaders of his day.

Overall, this volume presupposes an audience already familiar with the late antique religious landscape. More background on these fascinating texts and movements can be found in recent anthologies and surveys (listed in the volume's fine bibliography). Still, both expert and nonexpert have much to gain from this volume, which plunges one into a series of interpretive puzzles that unleash a rich assortment of comparanda. One comes away from this volume with a deeper appreciation for the cognitive maps that informed late antique discussions about death, justice, embodiment, transcendence, and

identity. The editors and contributors are to be thanked for this thought-provoking and cohesive investigation into "four things" and so much more.

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Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity. By **Andrea Sterk**. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004. viii + 360 pp. $45.00 cloth.

Dr. Sterk's purpose in presenting this study and well-crafted monograph is expressed when she observes that while an extensive bibliography has emerged recently about "eastern monks, bishops, and individual monk-bishops, the rise and triumph of a monastic episcopate as a broader phenomenon has been overlooked" (7). And when excellent monographs deal with these principal features of the Church in late antiquity, these nevertheless stress rivalry instead of "convergence." Sterk's carefully marshaled support for her subject reflects the dynamics of the vital emerging institutions of Christianity in late antiquity or as she observes, "a process of asceticization of an institution, the episcopate, and the near institutionalization of asceticism in the ascendance of the monk-bishop" (7 and notes on 252).

Sterk's introduction then clearly defines her thesis and where her scholarship relates to that of her numerous forerunners in the recent and ample body of scholarship, as well as the still provocative studies of Max Weber. There follow nine chapters organized in three parts: "I. Basil of Caesarea and the Emergence of an Ideal," "II. The Development of an Ideal," and "III. The Triumph of an Ideal." Basil's profound impact on the Christianity of the mid-fourth century is the logical starting point for Sterk after her initial chapter in which she provides an overview of imperial and ecclesiastical developments between pages 325 and 375.

Sterk sets the tone for this era insofar as monks and bishops are concerned by beginning this chapter with John Cassian's provocative assertion that, "A monk should by all means flee women and bishops" (13). Her immediate qualification as to what Cassian intended is not entirely unreasonable, but it is also one that not all have agreed with, namely that he was objecting to excessive desire to become part of the hierarchy. (More about Cassian below.) The focus of her initial chapter on the fourth-century Church is the East with its disharmony and powerful "ascetic fervor."

It is at this juncture that Sterk focuses on one of the truly significant figures for the development of the Church, West as well as East, and the monastic as well as secular, Basil the Great. Her chapters on Basil's spiritual and intellectual development, while traversing well-known territory, provide valuable insights and characterizations of this profoundly influential churchman. In the course of his episcopal administration Gregory strongly supported the monastic experience, countering strong objections to the monastic life particularly in his own episcopal jurisdiction. In various ways he encouraged asceticism to the laity as well as to secular clergy. The largest part of chapter 3 describes Basil's efforts to recruit bishops, which according to Sterk may have been his "most important channel for furthering monastic life and reconciling ascetic ideals with episcopal authority" (76). Both his own episcopal jurisdiction as a metropolitan bishop and the evolution of ecclesiastical