

usurped, thus opening the door for *mimēsis* or mis-representation. Though her juxtaposition of *Embassy* with a roughly contemporaneous work of art representing the emperor to whom Athenagoras addressed his treatise, the well-known Capitoline portrait of Commodus as Herakles, offers what seems to be the most direct discourse between text and image so far, this is a missed opportunity, with N.'s attention focused predominately on Athenagoras. She presents a comprehensive discussion of Athenagoras' use of Middle Platonic philosophy to highlight the gap between a name and its essence, and his assurance that unlike pagan élites, who rendered themselves as gods in stone, Christians would not be deluded into believing that material matter could embrace a divine essence. The last chapters are concerned with re-forming the eye towards a Christian vision. First, Tatian's *To the Greeks*, in which he blamed the misleading pedagogical lessons being offered to the public through the Roman acquisition of a Greek artistic heritage on 'the connoisseurs of culture' (247). Christian eyes must be wary of claims to a pure 'Greekness' and righteous *paideia* being made by what were essentially portrayals of the spoils of Greek culture. N. turns finally to Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation* and its opposition to the prolific Aphrodite of Knidos. N. does a fine job of fleshing out Clement's desire to trace the social life of 'divine' objects so as not to induce confusion between true divinity and material matter, for mankind, being fashioned in God's image, and not insensate stone, is the true representation of God.

N. admits that there was no direct discourse between the images and texts under discussion, and one wonders throughout the extent of any actual dialogue between these literary and archaeological spheres in antiquity. Her interdisciplinary engagement of image and text is commendable but her obvious familiarity with the literary texts is unmatched in her treatment of the archaeological material. These criticisms are not to detract from the fresh and insightful contribution to early Christian studies N. offers, but serve to remind us of the inherent dilemmas when juxtaposing textual and visual 'texts'.

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R. MACMULLEN, *THE SECOND CHURCH. POPULAR CHRISTIANITY A.D. 200–400* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplements 1). Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009. Pp. xii + 210, illus. ISBN 9781589834033. US\$24.95.

In a world of 'occupy' movements and escalating attention to the extreme gap between the richest and the rest, Ramsay MacMullen's *The Second Church. Popular Christianity A.D. 200–400* is bound to strike a chord. Championing archaeological evidence as a corrective to the picture presented by lettered Church Fathers, the recent book from this learned and prolific scholar aims to evoke the experience of 'the great mass of Christians, the commonality' (xi) and presents its findings in an accessible and compact package (the book's five chapters comprise 114 pages of prose, plus endnotes and a 24-page appendix of churches). The result is a wide-ranging, if somewhat speculative, re-examination of many current assumptions about the nature and extent of the Christian church in the generations surrounding the conversion of Constantine.

The book is primarily concerned with demographics and proposes a trio of theses. First is that the world of the third and fourth centuries was far less Christianized than is generally thought: M. contends that the church-going populace amounted to as little as 1–8 per cent (shorthand to '5 per cent' throughout the book) of the total population in cities such as Constantinople, Antioch, Rome, Carthage and elsewhere (101, *passim*). The book also asserts, however, that this figure represents only the official church ('the Establishment'), with its ecclesiastical structures inside cities serving the urban, educated élite. As a corollary, M. argues that the remaining 95 per cent, the 'have nots', were drawn primarily to traditional, 'pagan holdover' forms of devotion — the feasting and celebration accompanying funerary and martyr cult — which were topographically located outside cities proper, in suburban cemeteries.

To make his case, M. draws primarily on archaeological evidence of early churches and Christian tombs. He usefully reminds readers that ecclesiastical authors do not present a full or unbiased picture of the early Christian world. For archaeologists this will come as little surprise, but the book's primary intended audience seems to be historians and students of the early Church whose frame of reference tends to be more heavily informed by texts than by material remains. M. also constructively frames the more thoroughly studied material evidence of Rome and Italy with

examination of select sites from elsewhere in the Empire, including Syria and the Holy Land as well as Greece and North Africa.

Indirectly, however, the book also raises difficult methodological questions about the ways that archaeological evidence is used and interpreted, especially for the identification and quantification of Christians and non-élites. Deeply dissatisfied with the lack of empirical bases for previous estimates of third- and fourth-century Christian population size (102–3), M. offers an approach based on the calculation of standing room within extant churches of the period. For example, by assigning one square metre to catechumens who would not likely have had seats and two-thirds of a square metre for those on benches (and leaving room for the movements of the clergy), M. suggests a total congregational capacity of 500–600 for the Anastasis basilica in Jerusalem (12–14). M. uses such numbers, multiplied by known churches and compared to estimates of total urban populations, to arrive at the *c.* 5 per cent figure for the total church-going population. Such calculations necessarily rely on a great deal of speculation, and while the novelty of the approach is thought-provoking, ultimately I am less confident than M. is in the degree to which archaeological preservation and our knowledge of spatial patterns of use support widespread regional and chronological quantitative comparison in this period. I also remain unsure of the reliability of calculations of possible simultaneous attendees in given churches for the extrapolation of broader Christian population figures. In addition, it is important to reckon with the question of the ‘invisibility’ of many Christians in the archaeological record, especially in the third century when Christian worship in unrenovated private homes and burial in graves indistinguishable from those of polytheists was the norm in most parts of the Empire.

Archaeologically ‘seeing’ non-élites presents similar methodological challenges. Asking ‘[h]ow may we catch some glimpse of the great mass of Christians, the commonality?’, M. answers that, ‘... it is only through excavation ... that their lives and behavior can be drawn up for our inspection. Literary evidence can only represent that upper stratum among the Christian population who controlled the written record ...’ (xi). Yet, the churches, shrines, and tombs with permanent *mensae* that are central to the book’s analysis were also created and controlled by élite patrons. It is not clear how we are to reconcile M.’s acknowledgement of this (e.g. 108) with the book’s assertion that such sources present unparalleled access to the beliefs and practices of the unlettered masses. Readers may wonder what the imperially funded basilicas of Rome, for example, or Paulinus’ patronage of St Felix’s tomb outside Nola, or the scores of well-appointed tombs in suburban churches tell us of ‘commoners’ specifically. Indeed, of all the evidence M. presents, it is the disparaging quotes from churchmen such as John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Paulinus and council rulings proscribing certain behaviours (e.g. 29, 58, 61, 93, 109) that most directly attest to the presence and devotional practices of non-élite Christians.

In spite of these methodological issues, *The Second Church* productively encourages us to understand early Christianity in light of a broad spectrum of beliefs and practices, some officially condoned and others not, especially the fundamental rôle of martyr veneration in this period. Moreover, it presents a healthy challenge to think more deeply about the preconceived ideas we bring to our study of the ancient Church and about the limitations of our sources, both textual and archaeological.

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T. D. BARNES, *EARLY CHRISTIAN HAGIOGRAPHY AND ROMAN HISTORY* (Tria Corda 5). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. Pp. xx + 437. ISBN 9783161502262. €29.00.

According to its author, the primary purpose of this book is ‘to describe how Christian hagiography began in the second century as the commemoration of martyrs, but became a vehicle for deliberate fiction in the fourth century and then a normal mode of literary composition’ (xi). This perhaps overstates the coherence of these seven chapters, which are connected in fairly broad fashion by a range of questions arising from the growth and development of Christianity in the Roman Empire from the first to the sixth centuries A.D. At the same time, however, it understates the extent to which Timothy Barnes here sets out to be argumentative more than descriptive. In place of a single overall thesis, the book offers the meticulous demonstration of a method: essentially, the