I highly recommend this thought-provoking book to scholars of Early Christianity, ancient Mediterranean religions, and economic history, and I hope to see it become a cornerstone in research on the nexus of religion and economics in antiquity.

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God's Body: Jewish, Christian, and Pagan Images of God. By **Christoph Markschies**. Translated by **Alexander Johannes Edmonds**. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2019, xvi + 616 pp. $64.99 cloth.

This remarkable book takes aim at the commonplace that in antiquity belief in a corporeal deity was the province of the uneducated masses alone, the realm of popular piety rather than serious philosophy or theology. This is no small task. The notion that believing in divine bodies indicates a lack of philosophical or cultural formation is not merely a product of modern Western chauvinism, but goes back to late antique polemic. Markschies' impressive argument, which is supported by 164pp. of endnotes, a bibliography, and indexes of passages and persons, leaves no doubt that polemic on behalf of God's or the gods' incorporeality has left a distorted impression of ancient religion.

A brief opening chapter lays out the medieval and modern traditions of argument *against* God's body and sets the book not uncritically among "anti-essentialist" histories of embodiment.[1] Chapter 2 turns to the Hebrew Bible, which Markschies, following Benjamin Sommer, takes as firmly corporealist—a theme developed recently by Francesca Stavrakopoulou.[2] The chapter then outlines two strands of thought in Greek philosophy and subsequently among Jewish and Christian interpreters of scripture: one holding with Plato that the ultimate principle is incorporeal; the other affirming divine embodiment with the Stoics. In fact, there was much influence across these strands, as the Aristotelian idea of ether as the heavenly and thus divine body became fused with the Stoic idea of God as fiery matter and appropriated within the Platonist system. Numerous Christians must have picked up on philosophical corporealism, of which Tertullian is our clearest Christian example. As Markschies notes, "The frequency and thoroughness with which Origen argues against the position of God having a body makes apparent that an evidently not-so-insignificant number of individuals, and not merely faithful but also well-educated Christians thought in such a manner" (69). The corporealist viewpoint in early Christianity, while chiming with the biblical portrait of God, was not simple biblicism, but part of a philosophical movement as respectable as Platonism.

Chapter 3 examines material evidence, in particular divine statues and the ancient discourse around such objects. Markschies again argues that belief in the divine

[1]E.g., Caroline Walker Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995), 1–33.

[2]*God: An Anatomy* (New York: Knopf, 2022).

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inhabitation of material objects was not restricted to the masses. He cites learned discussions of the topic in Plutarch, Apuleius, and the novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, among others. Markschies also discusses the wall paintings at the synagogue in Dura Europos and early Christian art, which show that material depiction of God was not an exclusively pagan practice.

Chapter 4 investigates whether one's position on the corporeality of *God* necessarily links up with a position on the corporeality of the *soul*. Markschies charts a curious divergence between mainstream Neoplatonism and late antique Christianity. Beginning with Iamblichus, Neoplatonists nearly universally embraced the idea that souls possess an "astral body" (112). This Stoicizing view entails placing souls among the embodied cosmic gods of the *Timaeus* (101–102). The first principle and the divine *nous*, by contrast, are entirely incorporeal. Christians were divided on the question. There was a tradition affirming that only the Trinity, and not the soul, is truly incorporeal. Perhaps because this notion did not carry the day, it has been judged less philosophical than its rival, though Markschies notes its congruence with contemporaneous developments in Neoplatonism. He draws attention to an understudied debate of the late fifth century between Claudianus Mamertus and Faustus of Riez. Claudianus took Augustine's position: God, angels, and the soul are entirely incorporeal. But this preference was not necessarily the product of greater learning: neither Claudianus nor Augustine entertained the Stoicizing notion of a body for the soul. Augustine, Markschies speculates, "may well be responsible for the fact that the classic choice between Stoic and Platonic beliefs endured unchanged with the Christian sphere" (122).

The three remaining chapters are on God's body in, respectively, Jewish mysticism, late antique Christian theology, and antique Christology. Markschies rescues even the so-called "Anthropomorphite" monks of late fourth-century Egypt, who have been disparaged as simpletons since their own day. Markschies sees their view of God's body as rooted in anthropology. Roughly, their reasoning went: Human beings are made in the image and likeness of God; whatever humans essentially are must bear the divine likeness; humans are essentially soul-body composites; therefore, the human body must bear the divine likeness. This line of reasoning was in turn rooted in a tradition of *texts*, including Irenaeus of Lyon and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, which receive a fascinating treatment here. Some readers today might find it more compelling than the alternative—that only *part* of humanity, the incorporeal soul, is made according to the image and likeness. Markschies himself is correcting a bias in our historical sources rather than pursuing a theological agenda, but his excellent monograph gives ample food for thought for historians and theologians alike. He shows how inextricably tangled anthropology and theology are, and how we are misled by tidy binaries (body/soul, pagan/Christian, elite/non-elite).

A final note: The book was first published in German in 2016. Unfortunately, this English translation does not do it justice. The first chapter and Conclusion especially contain a number of unintelligible sentences. Perhaps the most serious substantive distraction comes in the subtitle of the Conclusion: "Settled Conceptions of God?," which is "Erledigte Vorstellungen von Gott?" in the German. Markschies takes his adjective *erledigte* from Rudolf Bultmann, who used it to refer to the status of mythic concepts in the modern world: they are outmoded, no longer tenable. Markschies disagrees—in addition to recognizing "the necessity of demythologization," he urges us to appreciate "the truth of myth" (326). The translation, by contrast, asks whether mythic ideas of an embodied deity are "settled," which connotes being fixed and unquestionable—a

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different inquiry altogether. Naturally, this criticism should not detract from the author's laudable achievement in this book.

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Simplicity and Humility in Late Antique Christian Thought. By **Jaclyn L. Maxwell**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xii + 193 pp. $99.99 cloth.

In this nuanced and clearly written study, Jaclyn Maxwell directs attention to an understudied paradox: how elite Christian clergy reconciled their own privileged status with the model of the humble, illiterate apostles. The focus throughout lies less on the realities of wealth and poverty in late antiquity than on "social imagination." How deeply, Maxwell wonders, did new ideas about the dignity of ordinary people reach? (6, 159).

The first chapter begins by examining traditional Roman attitudes toward social inequality and manual labor, before turning to the views of early Christians in the first three centuries. Instead of finding consensus, Maxwell discovers differences of opinion. Social mobility, as well as the real although chronically unacknowledged presence of middling socioeconomic groups, can, in part, account for these divergent views, but a more powerful explanation, Maxwell suggests, lies in the fact that "people can hold inconsistent ideas and multiple identities simultaneously" (33), an observation that is reinforced in the chapters that follow.

Turning to the evidence of the fourth and fifth centuries, chapter 2 offers a rapid overview of the Cappadocians, John Chrysostom, Epiphanius, and the church historians. In general, Maxwell finds that although Christian teachings on wealth and labor did not affect social structure or relations, they did make traditional ideas about status more complex.

Chapter 3 focuses on how the Cappadocians and John Chrysostom viewed the apostles as models for episcopal office. On one hand, they extoled the simplicity of apostles, citing their lowliness and lack of education as proof of the universal appeal of Christianity (59). On the other, they retained traditional views on status and education. Gregory of Nazianzus thus continued to draw on stock insults to undermine his opponents, characterizing them as provincial, lower class, and uneducated, and flatly denied that the uneducated were suitable candidates for clerical office (66). Gregory of Nyssa opined that a virtuous life and an ability to communicate were more important qualifications for bishops (71). Only John Chrysostom consistently developed the social implications of the apostles' lowly status. For him, their humble background "affirmed the value of ordinary people and called elite privileges into question" (76). These striking differences of opinion, Maxwell suggests, can be correlated in large part to the different audiences that the men addressed. While the Cappadocians wrote to their elite peers, Chrysostom spoke to a more diverse general audience.

Chapter 4 takes up the challenges posed to the ideal of apostolic simplicity by theological controversy. Although Epiphanius blames excessive education as the source of doctrinal error, later church historians tend to discredit theological rivals by pointing

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