

Spirituality and Hebrew Prayer,” which exudes A.’s passion for the quest for the Jewish Mary. In a boldly creative and moving series of reflections, she likens the imagination necessary for a 36-day Ignatian retreat to midrashic interpretation and treats her readers to an intimate portrait of her own retreat. Assuming the voice of the reconstructed Mary, A. prays through the annunciation, visitation, birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

A key aim of post-Vatican II Jewish–Christian dialogue is to understand Judaism on its own terms and subsequently to plumb the wisdom of the Jewish tradition as a source for greater Christian self-understanding. A.’s work not only achieves this goal, but it is also ultimately an edifying spiritual reflection deeply informed by a life of research, teaching, and implementing ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. It is to be read, A. avers, “with both the head and the heart” (xxvii).

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Image, Word, and God in the Early Christian Centuries. By Mark Edwards. Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. Pp. 220. \$89.96; \$35.96.

This wide-ranging study explores how humanity has understood its perception of God through word and image. Its distinct strength is that it combines a thorough survey of Plato and the Platonic tradition on text and image with surveys of Old and New Testaments and various Christian authors (Gnostics, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, Dionysius the Areopagite). The book’s thesis is that “Christianity owes its peculiar character, in the ancient world at least, to a triangulation of person, word and image which was never mirrored even in that diverse and evolving school of Greek philosophy with which it has most in common” (189).

Few scholars are as at home in the literary corpora of Scripture, ancient to late antique philosophy, and theology of the early Christian centuries as is Edwards. This review is certainly limited by my inadequacy—as a student of the New Testament—to evaluate all that E. argues in the book.

The volume, breathtaking in scope, will make an excellent text for graduate students in philosophy, patristics, and theological hermeneutics. I wish to identify two areas in which the book could be strengthened: ecclesiology and plot.

The New Testament chapter affirms, in continuity with the preceding chapter on the Old Testament, that “image never supersedes the word . . . the word remains the indispensable vehicle of the image” (23; also 40). Especially in his coverage of the Gospel of Mark, E. makes the helpful point that even Jesus’ silencing of those who would identify him is revelatory in character: “In every revelation there is a measure of occultation” (33). But this chapter lacks an ecclesiology (see Mt 18:20; Lk 24:30–31; Acts 4:29–31; 1 Cor 5:4–5). Perhaps E. would respond that reading Scripture is always

communal and presupposes the church, but a little more attention to the presence of Christ in the assembly beyond the later section on Dionysius's ecclesiastical hierarchy (185–87) would fill out the consideration of text and image in these Christian centuries.

E. seeks to avoid the shadow of the Second Council of Nicaea, stating that no fourth-century theologian—neither Augustine nor Dionysius the Areopagite—would allow for the veneration of images (149, 187). This is perhaps motivated by his insistence that the text remains more significant than visual images. As he states at the end of his chapter on the fourth century, “The way of ascent was not by the inspection of outward forms or by the contemplation of our maturing faculties within, but by a humble and assiduous meditation on the text which is our one material remnant of the enlightened soul's communion with the incommunicable” (151). E. does recognize that “Christian iconography is abundant in the fourth century,” but he refuses to allow this to complicate his evidence for dependence on text alone by stating that “the ecclesiastical use of image, even for mere adornment, is not commended in any theological treatise of the period” (150). Some admission of the prominence of the cult of saints already in this time period, however, would make for a fuller narrative of text and image.

On plot, I acknowledge that E. does not claim to present a unified narrative, since in his conclusion he describes the book as “a series of studies, discrete and necessarily selective” (189). Still, the book displays a tendency not to consider alternatives to the given readings of the evidence. Such alternatives could profitably complicate or add suspense to a potential narrative. For example, a key point for E. is that the LXX depicts God's people as failing to hear God, and the Gentiles as failing to see God (19). He does not say why this matters for his argument; he seems to consider it in order to presage the priority of a text (that is heard) over an image (21–22). What seems missing is any appreciation for how biblical descriptions of the Temple privilege the visual over the aural (see Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*). E. does consider an objection to his reading of Plato as being suspicious of both text and image and is conscious of more positive readings of *mimēsis* that one could derive from the *Timaeus* (49–53). But, though E. offers Augustine's narrative of the garden-scene “conversion” as evidence for the primacy of the aural or text to the visual experience (173, *Conf.* 8.29–30), he makes no mention of the mystical experience in which Augustine and Monica move beyond human discourse (*Conf.* 9.24–25).

The plot could also be strengthened by drawing more connections. In the final paragraph, E. locates this study as contributing to the place of “the primacy of scripture” within Frances Young's “proposal that the Arian and Origenist controversies should be regarded as serial phases in the ripening of the Christian theology of the image” (192; “God's Image: The ‘Elephant in the Room’ in the Fourth Century?,” *Studia Patristica* 50 [2011] 57–72). We all remain in E.'s debt for providing incisive studies of key periods in the church's quest to articulate how it experiences God.

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