



Jeffrey P. Jaynes. *Christianity beyond Christendom: The Global Christian Experience on Medieval Mappaemundi and Early Modern World Maps.* Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2018. 483 pp. \$173.00, cloth, ISBN 978-3-447-10715-0.

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In *Christianity beyond Christendom*, Jeffrey Jaynes sets himself the formidable task of pulling together more than a thousand years of mapping history into a readable, coherent narrative. Beginning with mapping in the Roman world and proceeding through the sixteenth century, the book tracks instances and mentions of Christian communities outside of Europe that appear in maps, travel accounts, and geographies. Jaynes's expressed intent is to use these materials to gain a deeper understanding of globally dispersed Christian groups in the medieval and early modern periods.

Jaynes splits his book into three main sections, each comprised of multiple chapters that look at different types of geographic representation. While maps and mapping are the book's main focus, Jaynes also considers travel narratives and other nonvisual reproductions of global space in his study. The sections and chapters are largely chronological, though there is some temporal back-and-forth. The chapters themselves are organized around relatively discrete types of mapping, looking separately at topics such as maps in manuscript books, large *mappaemundi* (maps of the world), sea charts, and more. Each chapter has a short introduction and conclusion, set around a series of brief, encyclopedia-like de-

scriptions of specific maps, texts, and authors that fall within the chapter's theme. Most of the book is taken up by these relatively discrete descriptive entries. Each description provides an overview of the text or writer before paying close attention to mentions of far-flung Christian groups and their practices.

The book's first section, titled "The World of the 'Ancients,'" begins with a study of cartographic texts from the ancient Mediterranean and works forward in time, ending with the large late medieval world maps. Jaynes starts with classical geographers such as Pomponius Mela, Pliny, Isidore of Seville, Martianus Capella, and others, and traces how their writings influenced later texts. The author nicely demonstrates the merging of Christian and classical geographic thought, showing how ideas such as Jerusalem's global centrality or the division of the world into three parts after the three sons of Noah were negotiated over time. Jaynes works through the Beatus maps with their apostolic geographies, and then later maps in the works of chronicle writers such as Matthew Paris and Ranulf Higden. The end of this section considers the major medieval world maps such as those at Hereford and Ebstorf.

The second section—by far the shortest of the three—is titled "World in Transition" and consid-

ers late medieval descriptions of the world that fell outside the more traditional *mappaemundi* tradition but predated the reintroduction of Ptolemy's *Geography* in the fifteenth century. Jaynes looks first to the portolan mapping, with its focus on navigation over storytelling, before turning to the influences of travelers' accounts on European global conceptions. Jaynes discusses the texts of well-known European travelers such as Marco Polo and William of Rubruck alongside those of non-Europeans including Ibn Battuta and Rabban Bar Sauma, concluding with the fourteenth-century pseudo-travelogue of John Mandeville. From there, Jaynes looks to late medieval maps such as the Fra Mauro map, the Martellus map, and others that combine elements of travelers' narratives with portolan techniques while retaining some of the *mappaemundi* artists' global sensibilities.

The final section, "World of the 'Moderns,'" begins with the reintroduction of Ptolemy to Europe and traces the way that vestiges of religious geography continued into an era of increasingly scientific global maps and cosmographies. Here, Jaynes moves from the early Ptolemaic maps through early atlases and eventually to the sixteenth-century maps of Martin Waldseemüller, Abraham Ortelius, Gerard Mercator, and others. Much of the focus in this final section lies in a cataloguing of the ways that different mapmakers dealt with the mythical kingdom of Prester John, the actual Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, and the Saint Thomas Christians of India.

There is a great deal to recommend in Jaynes's book. The prose is accessibly written, and the material related to European cartography is well researched. Importantly, Jaynes introduces a number of pieces of German scholarship that might otherwise escape primarily English-language readers. Because Jaynes gives over the bulk of his text to fairly specific descriptions of a huge range of maps, *Christianity beyond Christendom* offers a relatively handy encyclopedia of Euro-

pean maps and mapping. In this respect, the book is a fantastic and concise reference piece. Its utility in this regard is increased dramatically by the book's rich trove of maps and images. Jaynes has included thirty full-color plates and ninety-one black and white figures, almost all of which are reproductions of maps and map sections. The color plates at the back of the book are beautifully rendered, and the figures provide numerous examples of lesser-known geographical images. The figures and plates illustrate Jaynes's account well, and there are seldom instances where the book's descriptions suffer from a lack of visual accompaniment. The images neatly complement the book's text, and are one of its primary strengths.

There are some problems with Jaynes's book, however. Because of its scope, and the related brevity of each descriptive segment, it is likely that specialists will cavil with the treatment of specific texts or eras. Jaynes tends to treat European culture as monolithic, which becomes particularly noticeable in the later section when doctrinal and confessional differences within Europe go largely unconsidered. There are a number of places in the book's first section where Jaynes's discussions of late Roman global descriptions and maps get confused with their later reproductions in medieval manuscripts, and a less-knowledgeable reader will likely assume that Jaynes is discussing extant visual maps from late antiquity. And the book's treatment of John Mandeville's *Travels* is curiously accepting of that text's self-proclaimed veracity.

These complaints all point towards the book's most glaring issue: the central premise of Jaynes's argument—that he can assess historical details of the global Christian communities from primarily European artifacts—does not bear out. The maps and texts that Jaynes so painstakingly details give a sense for the ways that these communities operated within the European global imagination far more than they tell us about the actual communities themselves. But Jaynes most often wants to

rely on the maps as honest historical narrators, and he engages with almost none of the modern historiography on Christian communities in Ethiopia, India, or China. In consequence, the book offers little in terms of substantive argument, and only a small amount of critical analysis of either the maps or their cultural context.

With its \$173 price tag, *Christianity beyond Christendom* was never destined for a wide readership, and it is most appropriate for purchase by university libraries. The book is well suited for such an audience; the encyclopedic nature of Jaynes's descriptions of individual texts and actors as well as the book's fantastic aggregation of maps and images make it an excellent quick reference book. It should not be a library's only reference text for European cartographic history; Jaynes's specific focus on extra-European Christianity would make it a problematic text in that instance. However, Jaynes's book certainly belongs on a shelf alongside the *History of Cartography* series. It will offer an accessible and ready gateway for students new to the field, and a well-ordered, easily navigable overview for more established scholars.

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