

Peter Gemeinhardt

Die Kirche und ihre Heiligen

Studien zu Ekklesiologie und Hagiographie in der Spätantike

[The Church and its Saints. Studies on Ecclesiology and Hagiography in Late Antiquity.]

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In the present volume, Peter Gemeinhardt investigates Christianity in late antiquity as an institution and as a community of saints. He focuses especially on structure and self-understanding of the Church in the 4th and 5th century and on the importance of martyrs even after the end of the persecutions, on the education of saints and on the *Life of Antony* and its author, Athanasius. While proper ecclesiological reflection is rare, it is hotly debated whether the church should be a »Volkskirche«, that is, open for everyone, or an elitist community. Gemeinhardt points out that while the periphery of the church was often blurred, this was made possible by a clear center: the martyrs and saints. This tension between openness and determination appears crucial to the survival and success of Christianity in Late Antiquity.

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