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Grundeken and Verheyden's "Early Christian Communities Between Ideal and Reality" (Book Review)

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Humanities. These qualifications make these women the ideal editors to compile a volume tracing the influence of early Jewish and Christian writings on the development of narrative prose. As evidence for their argument that early Judeo-Christian writings contributed to the development of certain literature genres, they include articles from credentialed theology professors describing ancient Jewish narrative; Christian gospels, acts, biographies and martyrdoms; as well as pagan and Christian narratives, social worlds and philosophical agendas. There are a few typographical or grammatical errors, but they do not detract from these scholarly, documented articles. As with other offerings from the publisher, Mohr Siebeck, this volume includes graduate or doctoral level sources pertaining to a very specific subject. As the bibliographies attached to each article suggest, there is a plethora of material on this subject, yet these women have compiled a focused volume in which several articles cite each other. For literary researchers, this compilation is ideal because cited articles in one contribution are included in the same volume for easy reference.

These contributions compare and contrast Christian writings. The editors arranged the chapters in such a format as to show the dependence of each genre on preceding genres. Jewish poetry appears to be the foundation for early Jewish prose, which was a building block for early Christian martyrdoms, which contributed to the development of the early Christian novels. Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings, Jewish and Christian scriptures, and numerous other ancient writings deftly support the particular arguments put forward by the contributors. As this volume has such a focused subject matter, it is most suitable for graduate or postgraduate research in ancient narrative art forms.

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**Early Christian Communities Between Ideal and Reality,**

 Reviewed by W. Terry Martin, Director of Library, Louisiana College, Pineville, LA

This new addition to the long-running series *Wissenschaftlich Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* contains the proceedings of an international symposium held at the University of Leuven in 2012. The subject of these eleven essays is the Christian community and its organization during the first half of the second century A.D. as seen in the writings of the apostolic fathers. Two of the essays are written in German and nine in English with a smattering of Greek and Latin phrases. In their attempt to provide a glimpse into the lives of early Christian communities, the authors consider a variety of aspects concerning the structure, function, and complexity of Christian...
communities found in the writings of the apostolic fathers. The specific texts that are analyzed are the Didache, First Clement, Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, Shepherd of Hermas, and Epistle of Barnabas.

There are essays which survey the sacramental practices and customs of the early Christian communities up to the time of Justin Martyr and essays that argue that Paul’s epistles and First Clement are responding to conflicts within Christian communities due to governance. Another essay asks, “Why in the Shepherd of Hermas is the focus concerning baptism more on existing Christians than on baptizing new converts?”; while a second essay on Hermas explores demographic structures of early Christians in Rome.

All of the essays contain excellent footnotes. Beginning on page 223 is an index of the ancient sources used in this volume. Sources are divided by type of literature: Christian scriptures, early Christian non-biblical sources, Jewish literature, and Greek–Roman. In addition to the indexes of sources there are indexes for modern authors cited and a thematic index.

This book should be useful to upper-level undergraduate students, graduate students, and professional researchers.

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Egypt as a Monster in the Book of Ezekiel,

Reviewed by Lisa Cutforth-Anderson, Learning Resource Coordinator and Old Testament Professor, Alberta Bible College, Calgary, AB

Safwat Marzouk writes this scholarly volume from a unique perspective. He is an Egyptian Christian trying to answer the question of why Ezekiel portrays Egypt as a monster. This answer is crucial for today’s Egyptian Christians who wish to be loyal to both their native country and their Lord who inspired Ezekiel to portray Egypt as a villain, acting against His own people. His in-depth, well-documented and indexed research offers a convincing solution to this problem. He traces the use of monster imagery in ancient Near Eastern literature and other biblical books to argue convincingly for a different focus on the exodus retelling in Ezekiel: in opposition to the liberation story presented in the book of Exodus. In Exodus, Egypt plays the role of oppressor. In Ezekiel, Egypt plays the role of the other, a monster, to encourage Israel to cling to Yahweh as Saviour, not Egypt. In minute detail, he traces the literary development of monsters in literature that is contemporary to the Babylonian exile. The monster, or other, is repulsive because it takes the worst of our failings and exaggerates them to the point of revulsion.