Pius ILL <piusill@slu.edu>
To: Islf@slu.edu
Cc: piusill@slu.edu

Thu, Dec 3, 2009 at 2:28 PM

This request has been forwarded from ILL by shockldg on 12/3/2009 2:25:52 PM.

ILLiad Transaction Number: 362787

REQUEST INFORMATION

Call Number/Holding String (if available): BR165 .S42 v.5 1997

Journal Title: Journal of early Christian studies
Journal Vol: 5
Journal Issue: 3
Journal Year: 1997
Article Title: Religion and power: pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East
Article Author: Kelhoffer, James A.,
Article Pages: 464-465

The BORROWER is:

Pius XII Memorial Library

(Full-text has book review section only, faculty needs pdf ot just this review.)

For questions or cancellations, please contact the ILL office at 314-977-3104.

Locust Street Library <Islf@slu.edu>
To: Pius ILL <piusill@slu.edu>

Thu, Dec 3, 2009 at 2:50 PM

Not found as cited. Nothing by Kelhoffer in contents for vols 5 or 7.
[Quoted text hidden]
Questions remain about the precise meaning and importance of this symbolism; but it is no surprise that many more questions arise from a careful presentation of Origen’s thought such as this.

Andrew McGowan, University of Notre Dame Australia

Douglas R. Edwards
Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East
Pp. x + 234. $39.95.

Edwards explains that his “study examines how implied and overt use of religious and mythic symbols enabled pagans, Jews and Christians in the Greek East to define as well as to negotiate their role amid many power networks during the first two centuries of imperial rule” (4). The first two chapters discuss issues of methodology as well as “the wider social and historical context” and “the development of paganism, Judaism and Christianity in the first centuries of this era” (13). Chapters 3–7 constitute the main part of this volume. A discussion of “the power of the past” addresses the significance of “religious symbols” and “the role of tradition.” Chapter 4 (“Cosmic Connections: Defining the Arena of Power”) studies “the role of cosmic power in social and political interactions.” He discusses “geography and the sacred” and “cosmic power brokers” in chapters 5 and 6. A final chapter on “the power of the future” addresses “how symbolic images pertaining to the future influenced the way people interpreted their relations in the present” (13–14). The book includes portions of five essays published between 1991 and 1994 and also contains a brief conclusion, a full bibliography and three indices.

To facilitate this comparison of pagans, Jews and Christians, Edwards focuses on a representative of each group: Chariton of Aphrodisias, Josephus and Luke. The choice of Chariton’s Chaereas and Callirhoe, an “obscure” ancient romance that takes place “shortly after the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.E.)” and “permits few opportunities for explicit mention of Rome or the events contemporaneous with the author” (20), is in my view unfortunate since it does not offer much for comparison with Josephus or Luke regarding issues of power. The author’s interest in Chariton and Luke stems from his unpublished dissertation, “Acts of the Apostles and Chariton’s Chaereas and Callirhoe: A Literary and Sociohistorical Study” (supervised by Howard Clark Kee, Boston University, 1987) which compared the literary genre of ancient romance, typified by Chaereas, with Luke–Acts. The book under review reflects no interest in genre comparison, adds to the equation the writings of Josephus and explores how each author utilized and manipulated “webs of power.”

Chapters 3–7 follow a uniform structure. Often the strongest section is the first, a discussion of Greco-Roman social, political and religious backgrounds. Specific examples then follow from Chariton’s Chaereas. Second, a brief introduction to developments in Judaism precedes a discussion of Josephus. Finally, Edwards touches upon various Christian authors before focusing on Luke.

Much could be said about the specific comparisons Edwards makes. Worthy of further reflection regarding the NT book of Acts is the fifth chapter which discusses how many “groups stressed the spread of their deity across the landscape of the Roman oikoumene,” a claim which “provided symbolic capital for the power and prestige of a deity (and the associated group)” (73, 13). In general, although I appreciate many of the questions Edwards raises, I have many reservations about how he follows through on them. Numerous comparisons he makes are vague, superficial or unpersuasive. For example, after wading through a plethora of diverse examples of “cosmic power brokers”—of which Josephus is said to be “the Jewish cosmic power broker par excellence” (116)—one is left at the end of chapter 6 without a clear conception of what Edwards means by this and other trendy and undefined terms. Repeated claims about the increasing role of local elites in the Greek East during the Flavio-Trajanic period rely upon the work of other scholars and lack comparison with the aristocracy’s position before 70 C.E. (5–6, 17–18, 29–30, 76, 146). At times Edwards takes ancient authors at face value rather than interpreting with a critical eye, i.e., Josephus’ autobiographical statements (BJ 1.3, 104–05) and views of the emperor Titus (BJ 3.484, 108). If the book were to deliver on the promise of its title, it would need to discuss, in more depth and with a more nuanced sense of variation within groups, additional pagan, Jewish and Christian authors. Stylistic and typographical infelicities also detract from this book’s effectiveness.

James A. Kelhoffer, Chicago, IL

Kate Cooper
The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996
Pp. xi + 180. $37.50.

The meaning of ancient literature and its relationship to history is the fodder of many academic careers. When the literature pertains to women the interpreter faces the added difficulty of assessing how works produced by men influenced historical women’s lives. Kate Cooper proposes a novel theory concerning the meaning and purpose of Christian idealization of female virginity in its literature. She suggests that women functioned as a barometer for judging male moral character.

This rhetorical strategy was common to many types of ancient literature. It is found in both the ancient Greek novel and the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Cooper argues that the purpose of the ancient novel was to “mobilize . . . complicity in desire on behalf of the social order.” In other words the romance stories of the ancient novels were intended to promote the status quo in marriage and the city state. Romantic love is reconciled to the common good.