



The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era

Judith Perkins

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The Suffering Self is a ground-breaking, interdisciplinary study of the spread of Christianity across the Roman empire. Judith Perkins shows how Christian narrative representation in the early empire worked to create a new kind of human self-understanding - the perception of the self as sufferer. Drawing on feminist and social theory, she addresses the question of why forms of suffering like martyrdom and self-mutilation were so important to early Christians.

This study crosses the boundaries between ancient history and the study of early Christianity, seeing Christian representation in the context of the Greco-Roman world. She draws parallels with suffering heroines in Greek novels and in martyr acts and examines representations in medical and philosophical texts. Judith Perkins' controversial study is important reading for all those interested in ancient society, or in the history of Christianity.

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