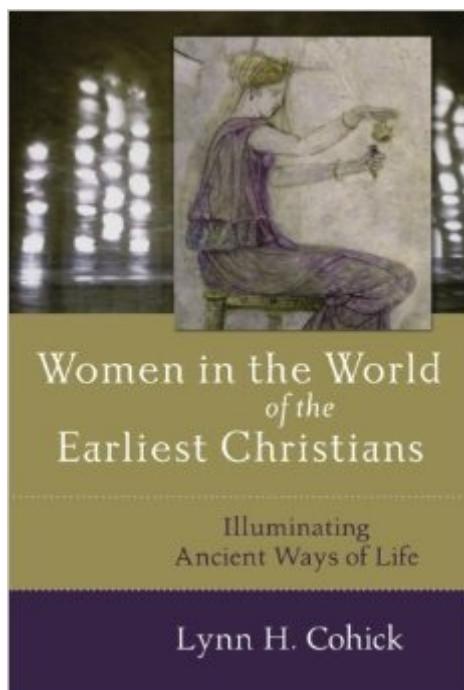


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Women In The World Of The Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways Of Life



Synopsis

Lynn Cohick provides an accurate and fulsome picture of the earliest Christian women by examining a wide variety of firstcentury Jewish and GrecoRoman documents that illuminate their lives. She organizes the book around three major spheres of life: family, religious community, and society in general. Cohick shows that although women during this period were active at all levels within their religious communities, their influence was not always identified by leadership titles nor did their gender always determine their level of participation. The book corrects our understanding of early Christian women by offering an authentic and descriptive historical picture of their lives. Includes blackandwhite illustrations from the ancient world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I appreciated this book's attempt to correct scholarship that has painted the Judaism of that era with a wide single-colored chauvinist brushstroke (this has no doubt pained some Jewish scholars and perhaps even fed anti-semitic ideas in some individuals). There is much treasure in here. However, in focusing on the little details that she finds that would complicate the picture among both Hellenistic and Hebrew society, I fear she may get lost in the forest for the trees a bit. It seems like a lot of contemporary history scholarship is a reconstructionist platform aimed at counteracting another reconstructionist platform, and I've started to become wary in reading some of these books that we may be in part counteracting error with error. To her credit, she notes that she is only presenting a possibility of what the world of women might have looked like, but it seems to focus on

the rose-tinted pictures and on the rather novel, exceptional finds rather than the likely position for women as a whole. She is smartly applying a hermeneutics of suspicion to historians who have come before, but one can be over-suspicious. You might want to read this alongside her oft-critiqued Jeremias (as did I... but he is dry) or her careful contemporary Ben Witherington. I've picked up Patricia Cox Miller's *Women in Early Christianity* and plan to read that next. I agree with the author's concluding aside that if women were granted leadership abilities at times in that era and certainly w/in the Christianity of that era then we ought to keep that in mind when trying to limit the same contemporaneously (in other words, how about we call unnecessary limitations off?).

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