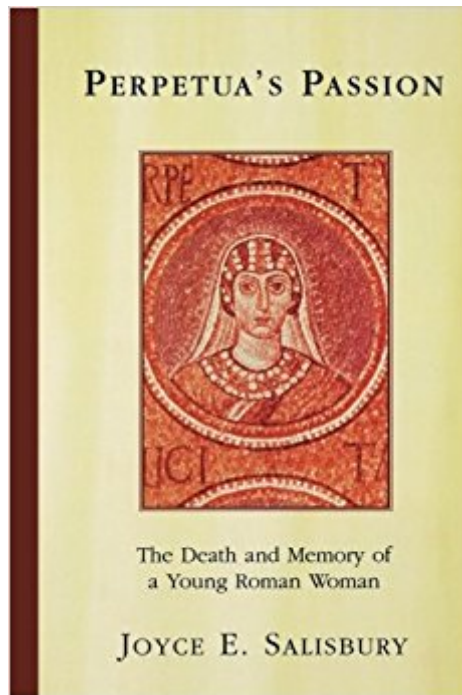


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Perpetua's Passion: The Death And Memory Of A Young Roman Woman



Synopsis

Perpetua's Passion studies the third-century martyrdom of a young woman and places it in the intellectual and social context of her age. Conflicting ideas of religion, family and gender are explored as Salisbury follows Perpetua from her youth in a wealthy Roman household to her imprisonment and death in the arena.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In her study of the life and death of Perpetua, a third-century Christian martyr, Salisbury (history and humanities, Univ. of Wisconsin, Green Bay) examines the cultlike mentality that drove a 22-year-old woman with an infant son to turn away from her family and accept with enthusiasm a horrific death for her faith. Salisbury describes the social, political, and religious climate in Carthage that made Christianity so appealing to its disillusioned youth. In addition, pagan Rome's emphasis on magic and omens combined with the North African tradition of noble suicide to create a social dynamic in which public death in the arena would be viewed as not only acceptable but also desirable. Utilizing Perpetua's prison diary as well as an eyewitness account of her final hours, Salisbury analyzes the martyr's "passion," her recorded dreams and visions, in relation to these existing forces. The impact of her death on those who witnessed the event as well as those who heard about it became apparent in the veneration bestowed on Perpetua by her contemporaries and in the efforts of patriarchal church leaders like Augustine, who tried to minimize her strength and leadership qualities. This remarkably objective, insightful piece of scholarship is highly recommended for all public and academic libraries. ?Rose Cichy, Osterhout Free Lib., Wilkes-Barre Pa. Copyright 1998

An insightful, moving account of the death of an early-third-century Christian martyr, based on her own diary. Vibia Perpetua was the daughter of an old respected Roman family of Carthage and, although raised in accordance with the pagan religious traditions of Rome, converted to Christianity, one of many faiths competing for devotees in the Roman Empire. Just 22 years old, she was arrested with several other converts to Christianity and, because she refused to acknowledge the divinity of the emperor Septimus Severus (and even though she was the mother of an infant), was sentenced to be killed by beasts in the Carthaginian arena. Salisbury (Medieval History and Humanities/Univ. of Wisconsin, Green Bay) uses the text of Perpetua's diary, written in prison, to explore this extraordinary young woman's decision to renounce her prosperous life and embrace a horrible death, and to depict in vivid and fascinating detail the world of pagan Rome and the insular community of the early Church, with its emphasis on prophecy and speaking in tongues. Salisbury notes the contrast between the Roman religion, with its thousands of household gods, and monotheistic/trinitarian Christianity with its claim to be the only universally true religion. Also, the patriarchy of traditional Roman society, which restricted women to the roles of wife and mother, stood in stark contrast with the egalitarian promise of Christianity, which taught that all persons were equal before God and often gave women a leading role. Using Perpetua's text, Salisbury shows that, despite the dangers, the young woman turned her back on her affectionate family and infant son to become a Christian because of her profound conviction that she was experiencing the presence of God. A uniquely absorbing and poignant study of the vanished world of the early martyrs. (11 illustrations, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

THIS IS A WELL RESEARCHED HISTORY BOOK ABOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND CHRISTIAN MARTYRDOM AROUND THE YEAR 200 AD. UNFORTUNATELY, PERPETUA'S DIARY IS SEGMENTED THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, MAKING THE SUBJECT MATTER MORE ABOUT THE HISTORY THAT SURROUNDED THE STORY THAN THE DIARY ITSELF. PERHAPS THE TITLE IS MISLEADING, THE BOOK IS EXPENSIVE AND NOT WHAT I WAS EXPECTING, BUT IT WILL BE A GOOD HISTORICAL REFERENCE .

This is an excellent description of the early Christian Martyrdom and the inspiration these brave people of faith gave to others. The church truly is "built on the blood of the martyrs" Reading this book may help one to better appreciate the early martyrs as well as call us to stand with them many

martyrs of our current time.

This is one of the best historical reads ever. It paints a complete picture of early Christianity in what was then known as Carthage. Of course this is about the Christian martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and the 3 men that were all sacrificed

This wonderful work provides you with an immense amount of background material.

I really enjoyed this book. It was filled with a lot of useful information. It was in good condition. God bless

perfectly delivered...excellent

STAMPED ON MY MIND FOREVER-FABULOUS BOOK. TO KNOW OF SUCH STRONG HEROISM OF THESE 2 SAINTS OF GOD MOVED ME TO A MUCH DEEPER WALK WITH GOD. IT MAKES YOU THINK IF YOU HAD THE FAITH TO DIE LIKE THAT. I LOVED IT TOTALLY.

This is one of the most engaging biographies of a person living in ancient times that I have ever encountered. Prof. Salisbury did a thorough job researching the historical context for St. Perpetua. One can tell that she brought all her background and training to bear upon the task. The result is a highly readable and informative account driven by the words of Perpetua herself. Perpetua's death in the great theater at Carthage seems anticlimactic in one sense in that it was inevitable given the circumstances, but no less filled with pathos leading up to that day and after. Salisbury paints a picture of a sort that makes the reader feel like they are walking the path that Perpetua walked. For people of faith, especially, this a dramatic account that draws one in and holds one firmly in its grip until and beyond this young woman's martyrdom. This is a book that students of the early church will want to read again someday. I have recommended it to my students and colleagues.

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