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Food and Transformation in Ancient Mediterranean Literature

Meredith J. C. Warren

New research that transforms how to understand food and eating in literature

Meredith J. C. Warren identifies and defines a new genre in ancient texts that she terms *hierophagy*, a specific type of transformational eating where otherworldly things are consumed. Multiple ancient Mediterranean, Jewish, and Christian texts represent the ramifications of consuming otherworldly food, ramifications that were understood across religious boundaries. Reading ancient texts through the lens of hierophagy helps scholars and students interpret difficult passages in Joseph and Aseneth, 4 Ezra, Revelation 10, and the Persephone myths, among others.

Features:

- Exploration of how ancient literature relies on bending, challenging, inverting, and parodying cultural norms in order to make meaning out of genres
- Analysis of hierophagy as social action that articulates how patterns of communication across texts and cultures emerge and diverge
- A new understanding of previously confounding scenes of literary eating

Meredith J. C. Warren is Lecturer in Biblical and Religious Studies at the University of Sheffield and Director of the Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies. Her previous book is *My Flesh Is Meat Indeed: A Nonsacramental Reading of John 6:51–58* (2015).

Praise for *Food and Transformation in Ancient Mediterranean Literature*

In this brilliant, ground-breaking, and theoretically informed work, Meredith Warren opens up a new area of scholarship. Her careful readings of ancient Jewish and Christian texts deftly demonstrate the importance of the transformative effects of eating both for the authors of ancient texts and for anyone thinking about food practices today.

Candida Moss

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