



Picturing Paul in Empire: Imperial Image, Text and Persuasion in Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles

Harry O. Maier

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Pauline Christianity sprang to life in a world of imperial imagery. In the streets and at the thoroughfares, in the market places and on its public buildings and monuments, and especially on its coins the Roman Empire's imperial iconographers displayed imagery that aimed to persuade the Empire's diverse and mostly illiterate inhabitants that Rome had a divinely appointed right to rule the world and to be honoured and celebrated for its dominion.

Harry O. Maier places the later, often contested, letters and theology associated with Paul in the social and political context of the Roman Empire's visual culture of politics and persuasion to show how followers of the apostle visualized the reign of Christ in ways consistent with central themes of imperial iconography. They drew on the Empire's picture language to celebrate the dominion and victory of the divine Son, Jesus, to persuade their audiences to honour his dominion with praise and thanksgiving.

Key to this imperial embrace were Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles. Yet these letters remain neglected territory in consideration of engagement with and reflection of imperial political ideals and goals amongst Paul and his followers. This book fills a gap in scholarly work on Paul and Empire by taking up each contested letter in turn to investigate how several of its main themes reflect motifs found in imperial images.

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