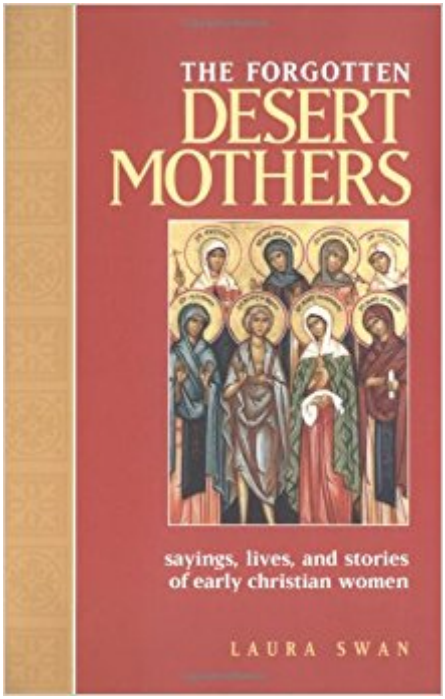
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The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives, And Stories Of Early Christian Women



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Synopsis

An introduction to the Sayings, Lives, stories and spirituality of women in the postbiblical, early Christian movement.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Paulist Press (May 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0809140160

ISBN-13: 978-0809140169

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #253,396 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 inÃ Â Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Monasticism & Asceticism #53 inÃ Â Books > Religion & Spirituality > Worship & Devotion > Monasticism & Asceticism #832 inÃ Â Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > History

Customer Reviews

Despite the very substantial and continuing interest in women's issues in Christianity and the ceaseless stream of publications for, by, and about Christian women, there has been astonishingly little about the early generations of female ascetics the Ammas of the desert. Swan's fine accessible and scholarly work here should help to repair that lack. She includes not only a good overview of the ascetic background but also a fresh translation and commentary on the Ammas' known sayings, an account of lesser-known Ammas, and a calendar of feasts for the Ammas. An excellent starting-place for the study of women in religion, women in the Church, and asceticism, this is highly recommended. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A needed and incredibly insightful resource...Swan has rendered us all an invaluable service. -- Values and Visions Reviews ServiceA valuable addition to religious scholarship, painting a more inclusive picture of early Christianity. -- The Olympian and Tacoma News TribuneIn collecting and telling these stories, Laura Swan has given us a great gift. --Friends JournalThis clear, well-written treasure brings to life the stories and spirituality of women in early Christianity. --Catholic Library WorldYou will find yourself turning to this book often for inspiration. --Spiritual Book News

Ever since I bought it, Laura Swan’s "The Forgotten Desert Mothers: Sayings, Lives and Stories of Early Christian Women" has proved a very interesting read for a person caught up in the mundane life of inner-city Melbourne.Laura’s Swan’s stories of these women from mostly very wealthy backgrounds who turned to the simplest and most stringently ascetic lives never fail to stir my own imagination. The way in which some ammas would go so far as to wear hairshirts and sleep on hair mats is particularly stirring because it suggests to me that these people must have been remarkably devout and had deep emotional ties to God.They stories form, even for someone like myself who has never had the self-discipline to be a religious practitioner of any kind, stories that have a true beauty in their simplicity and the manner in which the desert ammas would not only teach numerous disciples but also help the numerous very poor people of their time. The way in which many widows become ammas is particularly fascinating for someone of my generation.There are also a great many interesting sidelights on how the desert ammas communicated with much better-known theologians such as Jerome, plus a good deal of interesting stories of how the ammas resisted persecution by anti-Christian forces in the first three centuries of Christianity.Swan, a Benedictine nun, also offers detailed, easy-to-read analyses of both the sayings of the desert ammas and what the ammas offer as an alternative to today’s stressful, fast-paced life.All in all, this is an impressive book with very surprising information that will add a great deal to your knowledge of early Christianity or serve perfectly as a purely inspirational work (as with myself).

This was a nice follow up on the book the Sayings of the Desert Fathers. I enjoyed the book and the speed at which I received it.

I dropped one star only because this book covers a lot of territory other than the Ammas of the desert.. That said, it is superior to some of the books I’ve seen on the male desert hermits in the African desert. For those about whom we have some biographical information, it is all supplied in a narrative. This includes biographical sketches of those for whom we have no quotes.There is also a chapter on five non-hermetic deaconesses, most of whom lived in ’Asia Minor. The next chapter includes long sections on six women who were ascetic teachers, but not hermits. The most famous of these was Macrina the younger. The next was Marcella of Rome, also relatively well known in her time, as a founder of monasteries.This is not a scholarly book per se, and it is quite easy to read, but for those doing research, there are notes on sources tucked away in the back of the book. The author, a nun / scholar gives her personal take on the study of the Ammas and asceticism, and why

this lifestyle may attract people today. This section gives a better picture of the monastic / ascetic life than the quotes and biographies. If it is the lifestyle which interests you, then I would promote this to five stars.

Simple, clear and to the point.

First book I have read on the Desert Mothers and it will not be my last. very interesting and informative.

Thanks

Only book available which really covers the desert Ammas.

The Desert Mothers opened a whole new world for our women's study group. They were amazed and thrilled that the Desert Mothers existed and at all that they did. In this continuing age of masculine over feminine in so many churches, our women were refreshed and encouraged to carry on their ministries and identified with the Mothers.

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