



## The Christians as the Romans Saw Them

Review Author[s]:  
Robert A. Kaster

*The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Jul., 1985), 449.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-4189%28198507%2965%3A3%3C449%3ATCATRS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N>

*The Journal of Religion* is currently published by The University of Chicago Press.

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/ucpress.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

---

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

KEE, HOWARD. *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983. xi + 320 pp.

Professor Kee's book consists of essays on various topics in sociology and the history of religions, partly related through concern for miracle. The scope does not allow much detailed investigation into individual miracles, and the first sixty pages on errors in history of religions methods (partly repeated at the end) do not always concern the miraculous. On the other hand, accounts of the works of various gods—the historical “essence”—are interesting if often familiar. (It was not the pagan Dio Cassius, however, but Eusebius who ascribed a miracle to Christian prayers [p. 76, repeated p. 183].)

One misses Jonathan Smith in a chapter called “When the Golden Bough Breaks,” while the comparison of Mircea Eliade with Frazer seems farfetched (pp. 24–26; again p. 290). It is not highly appropriate to say of Dieter Betz, attacked for a few statements of 1961, that he “was well-advised not to examine the evidence” (p. 297). And where is my own *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (Amsterdam, 1952)?

ROBERT M. GRANT, *University of Chicago*.

WILKEN, ROBERT L. *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984. xix + 214 pp. \$17.95.

The title of this well-made and intelligent book is self-explanatory, once one realizes that “the term *Romans* . . . refers to the Roman Empire and its inhabitants” (p. xvii) and so embraces both Greek and Latin speakers (Galen, Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, as well as the younger Pliny), and once one understands that the “Romans” whose views survive in greatest detail saw the Christians, not neutrally, but as a problem. The book is addressed to the general reader and is meant to show that early Christianity's self-image and development was inevitably and importantly affected by the perceptions of non-Christians. Wilken succeeds admirably: the general reader will be well served by the clear and engaging exposition; and even specialists should welcome having this material brought together and find the book useful as a classroom text. There are some slips (e.g., on p. 9 Pompey [died 48 B.C.E.] is credited with “the reorganization of the empire . . . in 27 B.C.E.”; more substantively, the account of Julian's school law [p. 173] is flawed in several important respects), but they are few and do not detract from the book's worth. Above all, Wilken writes without condescension or animus: he understands and (unlike some of his predecessors in this field) respects his subjects, as men of good faith who made sense in their own world.

ROBERT A. KASTER, *University of Chicago*.

VAN ENGEN, JOHN H. *Rupert of Deutz*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983. xx + 402 pp. \$35.00.

Rupert of Deutz (ca. 1075–1129) was by far the most prolific writer of his day. A Benedictine, he combined the contemplative life of an apocalyptic visionary