

John Granger Cook

Roman Attitudes Toward the Christians

From Claudius to Hadrian

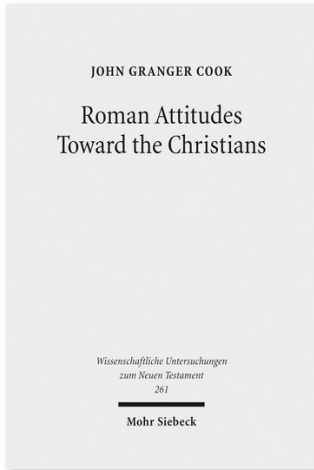
[Die Einstellungen der Römer gegenüber den Christen. Von Claudius bis Hadrian]

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John Granger Cook investigates the earliest interactions between Roman authorities and Christians. The events in Claudius' time surrounding »Chrestos« and possible Jewish Christians are fascinating but obscure. The persecutions of Nero and Trajan may be crucial for interpreting certain texts of the New Testament, including the Gospel of Mark, 1 Peter, and the Apocalypse. Scholars have become increasingly skeptical of a persecution of the Christians during Domitian's rule, and the evidence is not strong. The rescript of Hadrian did little to change Trajan's policy with regard to the Christians. Although the texts provide no evidence for a general law against the Christians (probably no such law existed until the time of Decius), they do give some indication of the way magistrates characterized (»constructed«) Christians: to Nero and his prefects the Christians were arsonists and harbored intense hatred of the human race; to Pliny and Trajan they were people who did not »supplicate our gods.«

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