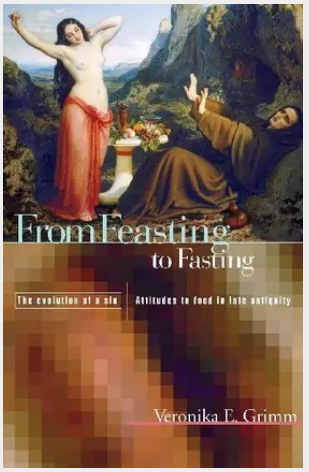
Grimm

From Feasting To Fasting

The Evolution of a Sin

In this highly original study, Veronika Grimm discusses early Christian texts dealing with food, eating and fasting. Modern day eating disorders often equate food with sin and see fasting as an attempt to regain purity, an attitude which can also be observed in early Christian beliefs in the mortification of the flesh. Describing first the historical and social context of Judaism and the Graeco-Roman world, the author then proceeds to analyse Christian attitudes towards food. Descriptions of food found in the Pauline Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, Tertullian or Augustine are compared to contemporary Jewish or Graeco-Roman pagan texts. Thus a particular Christian mode of fasting is elaborated which influences us to the present day; ascetic fasting for the suppression of the sexual urges of the body. Winner of the 1995 Routledge Ancient History Prize

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