



Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy

the late Geoffrey de Ste. Croix

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This volume brings together seven seminal papers by the great radical historian Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, who died in 2000, on early Christian topics, with a special focus on persecution and martyrdom. Christian martyrdom is a topic which conjures up ready images of inhumane persecutors confronted by Christian heroes who perish for the instant but win the long-term battle for reputation. In five of these essays Ste. Croix scrutinizes the evidence to reveal the significant role of Christians themselves, first as volunteer martyrs and later, after the triumph of Christianity in the early fourth century, as organizers of much more effective persecutions. A sixth essay pursues the question of the control of Christianity through a comprehensive study of the context for one of the Church's most important and divisive doctrinal decisions, at the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451); the key role of the emperor and his senior secular officials is revealed, contrary to the prevailing interpretation of Church historians. Finally the attitudes of the early Church towards property and slavery are reviewed, to show the divide between the Gospel message and actual practice.

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