

Title:

Musical Assemblies: How Early Christian Music Functioned as a Rhetorical Topos, a Mechanism of Recruitment, and a Fundamental Marker of an Emerging Christian Identity

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Abstract (summary):

This dissertation examines the various ways in which early Christ-followers incorporated music into their religious discourse and ritual practice. Scholars have primarily focused on two particular areas of inquiry: the cultural and religious 'origins' of early Christian music and the history of music within the context of church liturgy. Music, however, played a much greater role within Christian assemblies than simply existing as part of religious liturgy. I contend that music helped shape an emerging Christian identity within early Christ-following assemblies and collective singing became a vital component in defining in-group and out-group boundaries. Early Christian writings also demonstrate that hymn compositions were used as pedagogical tools, rhetorical devices, and mechanisms of recruitment to attract new members. I begin by examining Greco-Roman and Jewish primary source materials that reference or describe the nature of musical practice in antiquity in order to contextualize my study of musical references in early Christian texts. The next section utilizes recent developments in cognitive science to illustrate the importance of collective singing in establishing a group identity, creating cohesive social bonds, and evoking particular emotional responses. I apply this methodological approach, along with a socio-historical lens, to a variety of early Christian texts in order to argue that collective singing functioned as a critical medium in which early Christian authorities formulated their identity and defined the boundaries of 'correct' and 'incorrect' religious thought and practice. The melodies and lyrics used by some assemblies functioned as a rhetorical medium to denounce out-group theologies and practices while simultaneously operating as an instrument of recruitment. This study concludes that collective singing played a previously unidentified role in the success of early Christianity as a social movement through mechanisms of identity formation, social bonding, and recruitment of new members.

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7.4 The Function of a Topos – Supplement on the Topoi of the Rhetoric. 8. Style: How to Say Things with Words. 8.1 The Virtue of Style. 8.2 Aristotelian Metaphors. According to ancient testimonies, Aristotle wrote an early dialogue on rhetoric entitled 'Grullos', in which he put forward the argument that rhetoric cannot be an art (technê); and since this is precisely the position of Plato's Gorgias, the lost dialogue Grullos has traditionally been regarded as a sign of Aristotle's (alleged) early Platonism. But the evidence for the position of this dialogue is too tenuous to support such strong conclusions: it also could have been a 'dialectical' dialogue, which listed the pros and cons of the thesis that rhetoric is an art. Congratulations to Professor Jade Weimer who successfully defended her dissertation, "Musical Assemblies: How Early Christian music functioned as a Rhetorical Topos, a Mechanism of Recruitment, and a Fundamental Marker of an Emerging Christian Identity," in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto! Dr. Kenneth MacKendrick. <http://news.umanitoba.ca/religion-prof-explains-our-love-of-star-wars/>. Department of Religion 328 Fletcher Argue Building University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Canada Phone: 204-474-9516 Fax: 204-474-7601 religion@umanitoba.ca. Christian iconography. Item Preview. [remove-circle](#). [Share or Embed This Item](#). [EMBED](#). [texts](#). Christian iconography. by. André Grabar. Publication date 1968. Topics. Art, Early Christian, Christian art and symbolism. Publisher. Princeton University Press.

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