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Language for God in Patristic Tradition: Wrestling with Biblical Anthropomorphism

Mark Sheridan

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Language for God in Patristic Tradition: Wrestling with Biblical Anthropomorphism

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Language for God in Patristic Tradition: Wrestling with Biblical Anthropomorphism Mark Sheridan Criticism of myth in the Bible is not a modern problem. Its roots go back to the earliest Christian theologians, and before them, to ancient Greek and Jewish thinkers. The dilemma posed by texts that ascribe human characteristics and emotions to the divine is a perennial problem, and we have much to learn from the ancient attempts to address it. Mark Sheridan provides a theological and historical analysis of the patristic interpretation of Scripture's anthropomorphic and anthropopathic language for God. Rather than reject the Bible as mere stories, ancient Jewish and Christian theologians read these texts allegorically or theologically in order to discover the truth contained within them. They recognized that an edifying and appropriate interpretation of these stories required that one start from the understanding that "God is not a human being" (Num 23:19). Sheridan brings the patristic tradition into conversation with modern interpreters to show the abiding significance of its theological interpretation for today. *Language for God in Patristic Tradition* is a landmark resource for students of ancient Christian theology. Wide-ranging in scope and accessible in its analysis, it demonstrates that those engaged in theological interpretation of Scripture have much to gain from studying their forebears in the faith.

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