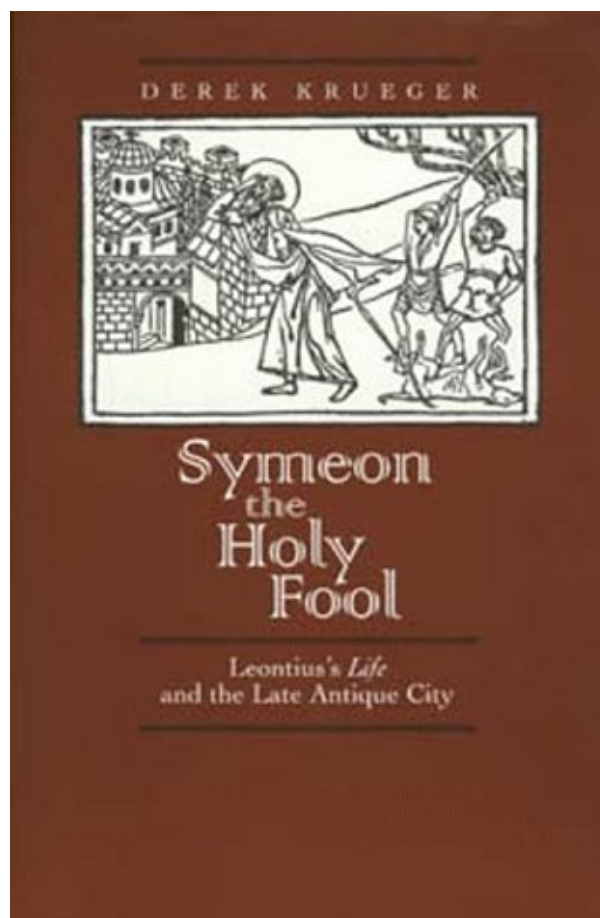


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Symeon
the
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Leontius's Life
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SYMEON THE HOLY FOOL: LEONTIUS'S LIFE AND THE LATE ANTIQUE CITY (TRANSFORMATION OF THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE) BY DEREK KRUEGER PDF

This first English translation of Leontius of Neapolis's *Life of Symeon the Fool* brings to life one of the most colorful of early Christian saints. In this study of a major hagiographer at work, Krueger fleshes out a broad picture of the religious, intellectual, and social environment in which the *Life* was created and opens a window onto the Christian religious imagination at the end of Late Antiquity. He explores the concept of holy folly by relating Symeon's life to the gospels, to earlier hagiography, and to anecdotes about Diogenes the Cynic.

The *Life* is one of the strangest works of the Late Antique hagiography. Symeon seemed a bizarre choice for sanctification, since it was through very peculiar antics that he converted heretics and reformed sinners. Symeon acted like a fool, walked about naked, ate enormous quantities of beans, and defecated in the streets. When he arrived in Emesa, Symeon tied a dead dog he found on a dunghill to his belt and entered the city gate, dragging the dog behind him. Krueger presents a provocative interpretation of how these bizarre antics came to be instructive examples to everyday Christians.

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great inspiration for a new Christianity

By A Customer

This book about the wise-fool saint Symeon was so inspirational to me that I've made a deeply personal vow to religiously observe July 21st by spreading all manner of golden chaos and absurdem as possibly befits and behoves me and my oceanic cult --Ark Spurting Blood; which observes the Dominator shipwreck as a religious object cast out from the oceans stomach and which we consider to be possibly a great transporter of and for the flesh, and blood, and spirit of Saint Symeon when he arrived on the West coast (after ascension) to convert the Chumash natives-- who in return converted him to the Jimson weed Burning Wheel. A fine book ; that will truly bring forth the real inspiration of what Christ in his swarm wisdom was trying to get across to the ignorant hordes and disciples-- who in little moderation, got misled through their lack of insight and veneration for truths outside their fears of insects and animals.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Just reading and learning about this odd fellow

By Dan E. Nicholas

Just reading and learning about this odd fellow, St. Simeon of Emesa, Holy Fool. Would love to get a copy of The Real Deal book here, out of print for some time.

In the mean time, a good place to look for thoughts on St. Simeon of Emesa and other the Holy Fools of the Eastern Church would be Bp. Kallistos Ware and his The Inner Kingdom: Volume 1 of the Collected Works by Kallistos Ware (Aug 1, 2000) or Abba, a collection of articles done recently in Bp. Ware's honor and for his 30 plus years of service at Oxford teaching about the Eastern Church. So, look to those two works with a chapter each on Holy Fools. Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West (Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia) by Andrew Louth, Dimitri E. Conomos, Kallistos Ware and John Behr (Feb 6, 2003). In Abba you'll find an article by a student of Ware's on St. Simeon of Emesa and other great and holy fools. In Bp. Ware's work you'll get to know what it is like to be the intellectual pope of the Eastern Church, a bishop a monk/priest a professor and at the same time a "student of fools". Got to like that.

In the mean time, if you're reading this and would like to send me a copy of this book if you have one? I'll make you famous with the fools of heaven with my prayers. Until then, I'll just read various clips online or the text on Google books, a trove out of print books. This one is a couple decades old.

In the tale of St. Simeon I love the part where after praying and living the ascetic life for 29 years in the desert near the Dead Sea, this holy man tries to talk his friend and fellow monk, St. John of Edessa, to join him in his new mission. The Simeon plan received in a vision is to leave the quiet of the desert and a life of prayer to go to the bustle and hustle of town in order to "mock the world". And so he let his freak flag fly in this way and made way to the city. Crossing the threshold of the town gate he did so while dragging the carcass dead dog on a rope behind him. The youth of town joined in and beat him with sticks and a few stones. Thus performance art was born. The next day, being holy, he of course went to church. But he went to church to:

- a) pinch out some candles, extinguishing the flame
- b) throw nuts at the back of the heads of some ladies
- c) tip over the pastry tables at the back of church on his way out.

Hmmm. Not going to go down well with the Greek ladies in the kitchen who do all that baking for festival.

And yet he did ordinary saint type things. He fed the poor and healed the blind. But this healing he did with the standard ecclesiastical tool of a mess of cooked sausage, link by link, tossed over his shoulder like a cleric's stole. He carry a pot of mustard on his belt along with the links as he munched toured town. During Lent no doubt. Yes, he applied mustard via that sausage to an almost blind man, making his eyes burn with pain until he ran to a real doc in town and and went totally blind along the way. Only later to come back to the fool St. Simeon who healed him, returning to him his sight.

The author Derek Krueger takes us on an absurd rail ride with a strange holy man who according to the record of Leontius, "...walked about naked, ate enormous quantities of beans, and defecated in the streets." Something oddly wonderful here to me about a man not worried at all about what people might think of him. But this was part of his game, not to appear holy or take credit. Who doesn't wish they could see more of this in church life?

This 7th century man man wasn't only an odd fellow but he cared about odd folks and the poor and the blind.

Yet he'd love to go to uptown parties and mock the rich. Got to love this odd chap who very much wanted zero credit for any good deed that might be laid at his feet. I doubt, too, that he'd be found in a pretty black cassock dangling a prayer rope on his wrist in the local supermarket.

Love the wood cut on the cover, of St. Simeon dragging his dead dog, making his grand entrance into Edessa that first day. Most painted icons you see today of this saint put him with two other nice church fellows who share his day on the commemoration calender; all three dressed up church pretty of course. How dumb is that. I like the image on the cover of Krueger's work, the wood cut of the saint dragging his famous dung hill dog, dead as dead can be, youth beating him as he made his way.

St. Simeon the Holy Fool was buried when his time was done; in a boot hill graveyard set aside out of town for the indigent and homeless. Where losers go and nobody cares. Yet he is dear to me in that I was blessed last year to visit Mar Saba their at the edge of the Holy Land; where this blessed and odd man was tonsured as a monk in those early centuries.

God indeed loves the the misfits and some are just better at it than others I think. Because they find the secret of being holy in their oddity. So, there's hope for me. By your prayers, St. Simeon. By your prayers.

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