



# **The Social Setting of the Ministry as Reflected in the Writings of Hermas, Clement and Ignatius (Studies in Christianity and Judaism)**

*Harry O. Maier*

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Focussing on three first- and early-second-century documents (the Shepherd of Hermas, 1 Clement and the Ignatian epistles), this work contributes to a growing body of literature concerned with the social setting of early Christianity. Maier argues that the development of structures of leadership in the early Christian church is best accounted for by reference to the hospitality, patronage, and leadership of wealthy hosts who invited local Christian groups to meet in their homes. Sociological models and types are employed to analyze the tensions that arose from excesses of patronage and leadership by the well-to-do.

Recognizing the socio-economic setting of these conflicts corrects the interpretation of early Christian conflicts over the ministry as purely theological and doctrinal.

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