



The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature

By Karl Ludwig Schmidt

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KARL LUDWIG SCHMIDT'S classic *Die Stellung der Evangelien der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte* was one of a handful of twentieth-century essays on the New Testament to set the agenda for an entire generation of New Testament scholars. First published in 1923, the text laid out Schmidt's contention that the gospels represent a literary genre that does not derive from others in the ancient world. In portraying the gospels as the written record of an oral tradition rather than as biographical or historical text, the German scholar's powerful argument has commanded attention in Germany for decades. With this translation, Byron R. McCane enables a new generation of English-speaking scholars to engage with Schmidt's classic perspective on an enduring question. In an introduction to the volume, John Riches locates the text among the writings of the form critics, with whom Schmidt allied himself, and relates it to Schmidt's own still untranslated study of the topography and chronology of the gospels. Riches also explores how recent efforts to classify the gospels as ancient biographies have in many ways misread and misrepresented Schmidt's views.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

KARL LUDWIG SCHMIDT (1891-1956) was one of the most distinguished twentieth-century scholars to undertake the literary criticism of the gospels. His works have long been recommended reading for students in biblical studies and divinity school students. BYRON R. McCANE is an associate professor of religion and chair of the Department of Religion at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The director of the Field School of the Sepphoris Acropolis Excavations, McCane lives in Spartanburg. JOHN RICHES is professor of divinity and biblical criticism at the University of Glasgow. He was one of the translators of Rudolf Bultmann's Gospel of John: A Commentary and is the author of *Conflicting Mythologies: Identity Formation in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew*.

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