

Jeff Jay

The Tragic in Mark

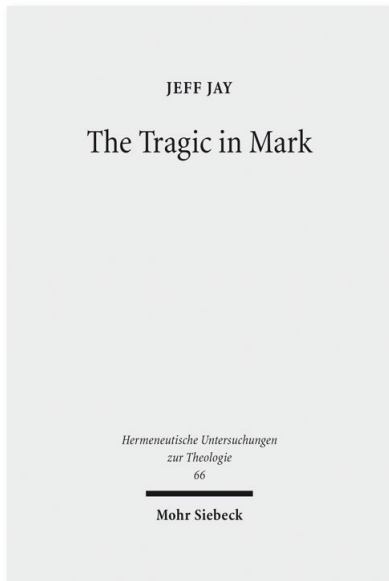
A Literary-Historical Interpretation

[The Tragic in Mark]

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In narratives of tragic drama's history the Judeo-Christian tradition is commonly portrayed as hostile to tragic drama both as an art form and sensibility or vision of life. With an emphasis on divine grace and justice, theorists argue, Jewish and Christian writers completely eschew anything approaching genuine tragedy. However, Jeff Jay demonstrates that in the earliest years of Christian literary activity Mark produced a narrative that is »tragic,« for it strongly elicits several of tragedy's recurring motifs and moods, as well as a highly theatrical atmosphere and a poignant sense of inexorability that drives Jesus onwards to the fateful passion. Theorists who frame the history of tragedy in overly restrictive, even at times reductive, ways thus minimize tragedy's actual impact throughout the centuries and overlook its influence over several early Jewish writers and the author of the Gospel of Mark, all of whom wrote when tragedy was purportedly »dead.«

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