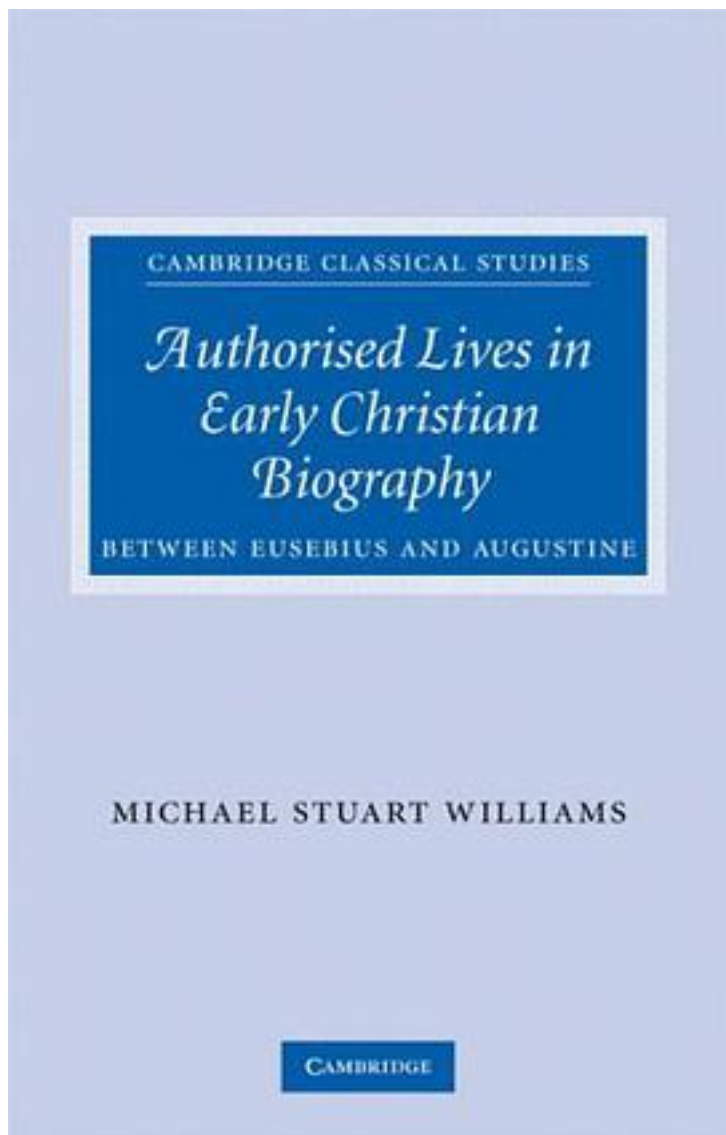


Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography



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What was distinctive about Christian biography in late antiquity? In this 2008 book, Dr Williams examines a range of biographies of prominent Christians written in the fourth and fifth centuries, and suggests that they share a purpose and function which sets them apart from their non-Christian equivalents. This was an age in which the lives of saints first emerged as a literary phenomenon, and a broad perspective on this developing genre is complemented by close readings of more problematic works such as Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine* and the *Confessions* of Augustine of Hippo. In including such idiosyncratic examples, the aim is to provide a definition of Christian biography which extends beyond mere hagiography, and which expresses an understanding of the world and the place of individuals within it. It was a world in which lives might be authored by Christians, but could be authorised only by God.

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