Contents

	Dedication	viii
	List of Figures	ix
	Acknowledgements	xvi
	Preface	xviii
1	Overview of the Evidence and Methodological Questions	1
	Preliminary Considerations 3	
	Chronology 3	
	Geographical and Physical Context, Media, and Materials 5	
	Subjects: Characters and Contents 10	
	Artistic Style and Technique 15	
	Workshops and Clients 19	
	The Myth of Early Christian Aniconism 22	
	Pagan Prototypes: Syncretism or Adaptation? 25	
	Text and Image 31	
	Conclusion 34	
2	Early Christian Symbols	43
	Birds 44	
	Doves 45	
	Peacocks 45	
	The Phoenix 47	
	Anchors and Boats 47	
	Grapevines and Vintaging 49	
	Fish and Fishers 52	
	The Banquet 56	
	Praying Figures 62	
	The Shepherd and His Flock 65	
	Conclusion 72	

3 Biblical Stories in Early Christian Art

The Prominence of Hebrew Scripture Subjects 86

A Jewish Source Hypothesis 87

Prayers for the Dead as the Key to the Iconography 88

The Social Context as Underlying the Subject Selection 89

Visual Exegesis, Part 1: Prophecy and Fulfilment 90

The Hospitality of Abraham 91

The Three Hebrew Youths 95

The Jonah Cycle 100

Visual Exegesis, Part 2: Sacramental Symbolism 104

Moses Parting the Sea and Striking the Rock 105

The Woman at the Well 110

Conclusion 113

4 From Christ the Miracle Worker and Teacher to Christ the King and Lawgiver

120

Jesus as Wonderworker, Divine Healer, and Life Restorer 121

Jesus the Wonderworker 122

Jesus the Magician? 126

Jesus's Staff 128

Jesus the Divine Healer 131

The Imposition of Hands 131

The Diminutive Recipients 133

Jesus the Revivifier 136

Jesus the Teacher 138

The Enthroned God 141

The Adoration of the Magi 144

Jesus Entering Jerusalem 146

Jesus Giving the Law 148

Conclusion 154

5 Depicting the Divine: Jesus and the Holy Trinity

160

Prototypes for an Image of Christ 161

Orpheus 161

Helios/Sol Invictus 165

The Bearded God 169

Variations on a Theme 170

The Christological Implications of Jesus's Depictions 175

The Trinity—God the Father and the Holy Spirit 180

The Symbolic Trinity 181

The Manus Dei and the Dove 183

Conclusion 194 6 Jesus's Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension 200 Cross Shapes 203 Possible Early Cross Figures 203 Papyrus Staurograms 205 Earliest Crucifixion Depictions 205 The Alexamenos Graffito 206 Gems With Crucifixion Scenes 207 Fourth-Century Passion Sarcophagi 210 Fifth-Century Crucifixion Images 214 Examples From the Sixth Century and Later 218 Pilgrimage Tokens 221 Reliquaries 222 Depictions of Jesus's Resurrection 223 Images of the Ascension 230 Conclusion 233 239 Bibliography 259 Index of Subjects Index of Modern Authors (excluding footnotes) 264 265 Index of Ancient Authors

The Anthropomorphic Trinity 184

The True Image 191

From Narrative Scenes to Holy Portraits 187