

Call for Authors (April 1st, 2023)

(Especially for those who are interested in the topic and wondering what to study next)

Over the past years, I have been attempting to understand the actual accounts of deacons' roles and responsibilities within the early church documents. Previously, there has been no source-based material available. Arguments have relied on traditions dating back to the 16th century, even though the source material has changed significantly through critical editions.

At present, there is one available publication addressing deaconesses: **Ordained Women in the Early Church**, published in 2005 by *Madigan* and *Osiek*. The first extensive attempt to read sources about deacons in a fresh way was *Grossi, Koet, and Geest, eds., Diakonia, Diaconiae, Diaconato: Semantica e storia nei Padri della Chiesa*, XXXVIII Incontro di studiosi dell' antichità cristiana. SEA 117 (Roma: Augustinianum, 2010). Now there is also a collection of articles exclusively in English, **Deacons and Diakonia in Early Christianity** (2018) by *Koet, Murphy, and Ryökäs*, which covers a broader range of material (<https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/en/book/deacons-and-diakonia-in-early-christianity-9783161566462>). A sequel to the latter book, addressing the third and fourth centuries, will be published in 2023 by Mohr Siebeck.

Based on the findings, deacons/deaconesses have served as servant-leaders or in leadership positions in congregations. They have supported bishops, particularly in worship and sacrament administration. They have been responsible for conveying messages within the congregation to and from the bishop, as well as between congregations. They have provided assistance to those in need and have personally helped when possible.

However, the overall picture still needs to be completed. Tens of documents from the first three centuries with information about deacons await analysis, while there are hundreds of such documents from later centuries.

If you have the opportunity to delve into early church documents in their original language within a few years, this might be an offer for you. In five steps, I'll describe what you can do. If you already know some early church language, proceed to step B.

- A. Train yourself in your chosen language (e.g., Syriac, Aramaic, Ge'ez, Greek, Latin).
- B. Read the example studies mentioned below. Observe their methods and presentation styles.
- C. Reserve a research subject from me, such as an available author or published document. You may also form a group of researchers. An up-to-date list of some available documents is below (LINK).
- D. Prepare a well-written English analysis that withstands international expert referee review, explicitly discussing deacons' responsibilities, roles, functions, and division of labour in the document.
- E. Send your completed article to me at ryokas@uef.fi.

There are two possibilities for the pace of progress. If you are a Patristic scholar, it might be possible to include your presentation in the session on the theme at the Oxford Patristics Conference in August 2024 (see <https://www.oxfordpatristics.com>). The article may be published later in their *Studia Patristica*. Act quickly if you consider this a possibility. If this timeline is too fast, there is a slower alternative:

I will attempt to compile the later articles into one (or two) special Diakonian Research Journal (Open Access) issues during the years 2025–2027. The journal publishes a separate online issue once a year, collecting referee-approved articles related to a specific theme. I will serve as the guest editor for this issue. Special issues are not published unless there is sufficient material so publication may be delayed by a few years. The procedure will be agreed upon with each approved article author individually.

I have agreed on this procedure with the Journal's editorial board, and it remains valid unless there are changes in the prerequisites (e.g., funding). If numerous articles are submitted, we may consider publishing them as a book.

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- All issues of the Diakonian Research Journal can be read here: www.journal.fi, and guidelines for authors: <https://journal.fi/dt/about/submissions>.
- For more information: Ryokas@uef.fi and journal editorial office: <https://journal.fi/dt/about/contact>
- A project description can be found on this website: <https://uefconnect.uef.fi/en/group/diets/>

Example studies and articles:

[Bart J. Koet, *The Go-between: Augustine on Deacons*. BSCT 6. Brill, 2019](#)

Barrett-Lennard, *The Canons of Hippolytus and Christian Concern with Illness, Health, and Healing*: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236695396_The_Canons_of_Hippolytus_and_Christian_Concern_with_Illness_Health_and_Healing

Articles in *Deacons and Diakonia in Early Christianity*: <https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/en/book/deacons-and-diakonia-in-early-christianity-9783161566462>, for example:

- Mowczko, What did Phoebe's position and ministry as *διάκονος* of the church at Cenchrea involve?: https://www.academia.edu/44908507/What_did_Phoebe_s_position_and_ministry_as_διάκονος_of_the_church_at_Cenchrea_involve
- Cook, Pliny's Tortured ministræ: https://www.academia.edu/38236301/PlinysTortured_ministrae_pdf
- Seppälä, Deacons in Acts of Thomas and Related Early Syriac Literature: https://www.academia.edu/44667946/Diacons_in_Acts_of_Thomas_and_Related_Early_Syriac_Literature
- Voitila, Deacons in the Texts Contemporary with the New Testament (Philo of Alexandria and Josephus): https://www.academia.edu/38334728/Diacons_in_the_Texts_Contemporary_with_the_New_Testament_Philof_Alexandria_and_Josephus

List of some available documents:

In the following list, there are authors whose body of work is likely to provide a comprehensive view of their understanding of the role and function of deacons. This list has been compiled based on the "Thesaurus Linguae Graeca" and includes the names as they appear there, along with the provided authorship dates. Texts with a minimum of 6 occurrences of the word *διακονος* have been included. If there are fewer occurrences, this is noted.

It is possible that an analysis could also be conducted on other Greek-language materials from the early Church, such as the records from ecumenical councils [also see the articles in SEA 117]. Additionally, this list contains only examples from Greek-language sources; there is an abundance of material available in other languages, including Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and Ge'ez.

If you are aware of a similar analysis that has already been published for any of the materials mentioned below, please provide information about it.

- DIO CHRYSOSTOMUS (A.D. 1-2) [only 5 cases]
- LUCIANUS (A.D. 2)
- Aelius ARISTIDES Rhet. (A.D. 2)
- ATHENAEUS Soph. (A.D. 2-3)
- ALEXANDER Phil. (A.D. 2-3)
- HIPPOLYTUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 3) [only 5 cases]
- VITAE SANCTORUM EUSTATHII, THESPESII ET ANATOLII Hagiogr. (post A.D. 3/4)
- THEMISTIUS Phil. et Rhet. (A.D. 4)
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS Theol. (A.D. 4) [also see the article in SEA 117]
- SOPATER Rhet. (A.D. 4)
- BASILIUS Caesariensis Theol. (A.D. 4) [also see the article in SEA 117]
- APOLLINARIS Theol. (A.D. 4)
- DIDYMUS CAECUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 4)
- Pseudo-MACARIUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 4)
- LIBANIUS Rhet. et Soph. (A.D. 4)
- GELASIUS Caesarensis Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 4)
- SERAPION Thmuitanus Theol. (A.D. 4) [only 5 cases]
- SEVERIANUS Orat. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 4)
- VITAE SANCTORUM GURIAE, SAMONAE ET ABIBI Hagiogr. (post A.D. 4)
- VITAE ET MIRACULA SANCTORUM COSMAE ET DAMIANI Hagiogr. (ante A.D. 4) [only 5 cases]
- VITAE SANCTORUM ACEPSIMAE, IOSEPHI ET AEITHALAE Hagiogr. (post A.D. 4) [only 5 cases]
- VITAE SANCTORUM HERMYLI ET STRATONICI Hagiogr. (post A.D. 4)
- VITAE SANCTORUM MULIERUM XL ET AMMONIS Hagiogr. (post A.D. 4)
- SOCRATES Scholasticus Hist. (A.D. 4-5)
- PALLADIUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 4-5)
- THEODORETUS Scr. Eccl. et Theol. (A.D. 4-5)
- CYRILLUS Alexandrinus Theol. (A.D. 4-5) [also see the article in SEA 117]
- PHILO CARPASIANUS Hymnograph. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 4-5) [only 5 cases]
- SCRIPTA ANONYMA IN JOANNEM CHRYSOSTOMUM Hagiogr. et Orat. (A.D. 4-11)
- Joannes STOBAEUS Phil. (A.D. 5) [only 5 cases]
- Salaminius Hermias SOZOMENUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5)

- ISIDORUS PELUSIOTA Epist. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5)
- HESYCHIUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5)
- MARCUS Diaconus Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5)
- NILUS Ancyranus Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5)
- VITAE SANCTI AMPHILOCHII EPISCOPI ICONIENSIS Hagiogr. (post A.D. 5)
- VITAE SANCTI MARTINI TURONENSIS Hagiogr. (post A.D. 5)
- PROCOPIUS Rhet. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5-6)
- Flavius JUSTINIANUS Imperator Theol. (A.D. 5-6)
- Theodorus ANAGNOSTES Hist. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 5-6)
- VITAE SANCTAE MATRONAE PERGENSIS Hagiogr. (post A.D. 5-6)
- NOMOCANON Eccl. et Jurisprud. (A.D. 6-7)
- NOVELLAE ET CHRYSOBULLA IMPERATORUM POST JUSTINIANUM (A.D. 6-13)
- EVAGRIUS Scholasticus Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6) [only 5 cases]
- BARSANUPIUS et JOANNES Epist. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6)
- Pseudo-CAESARIUS (A.D. 6)
- CYRILLUS Biogr. (A.D. 6)
- JOANNES III Scholasticus Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6)
- ATHANASIUS Scholasticus Nomograph. et Rhet. (A.D. 6)
- JOANNES JEJUNATOR Scr. Eccl. et Theol. (A.D. 6)
- ANASTASIUS I Patriarcha Antiochenus Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6) [only 5 cases]
- OLYMPIODORUS Phil. (A.D. 6)
- Joannes MOSCHUS Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6-7)
- EUSTRATIUS Presbyter Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6-7)
- MAXIMUS CONFESSOR Theol. (A.D. 6-7)
- SOPHRONIUS Hagiogr. et Scr. Eccl. (A.D. 6-7)
- VITAE SYMEONIS STYLITAE JUNIORIS Hagiogr. (A.D. 6-10)

Published/Reserved Source text:

(The text on the left, possibly followed by source information and provided within parentheses.)

- Pliny, Ep. Tra. 10.96.7–8 (Cook, D&D1)
- Ignatius of Antioch (Koet, D&D1)
- Clement of Alexandria (Collins, D&D1)
- First Clement (Koet, D&D1)
- Shepherd of Hermas (Grundeken, D&D1)
- Didache (Jefford, D&D1)
- Justin (Foster, D&D1)
- Irenaeus (Foster, D&D1)
- Acts of Thomas (Seppälä, D&D1)
- Tertullian (Laato, D&D1)
- Passio Perpetuae (Koet, D&D1)
- Philo of Alexandria (Voitila, D&D1)
- Josephus (Voitila, D&D1)
- Origen (Ramelli, D&D2)
- Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History (Cornillon, D&D2)

- Early Church in Egypt (Huebner, D&D2)
- Athanasius (Costache, D&D2)
- Gregory of Nazianzus (Matz, D&D2)
- Epiphanius of Salamis (Verheyden, D&D2)
- John Chrysostom (Müller, Grieser, D&D2)
- Theodore of Mopsuestia (Mira, D&D2)
- Cyril of Jerusalem (Huovinen, D&D2)
- Evagrius of Pontus (Salminen, D&D2)
- Ephrem the Syrian (Rouwhorst, D&D2)
- Deacons in the Desert (Seppälä, D&D2)
- Cyprian of Carthago (Murphy, D&D2)
- Lawrence (Eijk, D&D2)
- Ambrose of Milan (Cvetkovic, D&D2)
- Jerome (Koet, D&D2)
- Augustine (Eguiarte, D&D2)
- Gregory the Great (Smeets, D&D2)
- Testamentum Domini (White, D&D2)
- Council of Elvira (Boddens Hosang, D&D2)
- Didascalia Apostolorum (Kearns, D&D2)
- Cappadocian Church Orders (Stewart, D&D2)
- Apostolic Constitutions (Pylvänäinen, D&D2)
- Imperial Constitutions, 4th century (Mentxaka, D&D2)
- Caesarius of Arles (Schembra, SEA 117)
- Deaconess Radegundis (Burgsmüller, SEA 117)
- Canons of Hippolytus (Barrett-Lennard, JBCS 13)