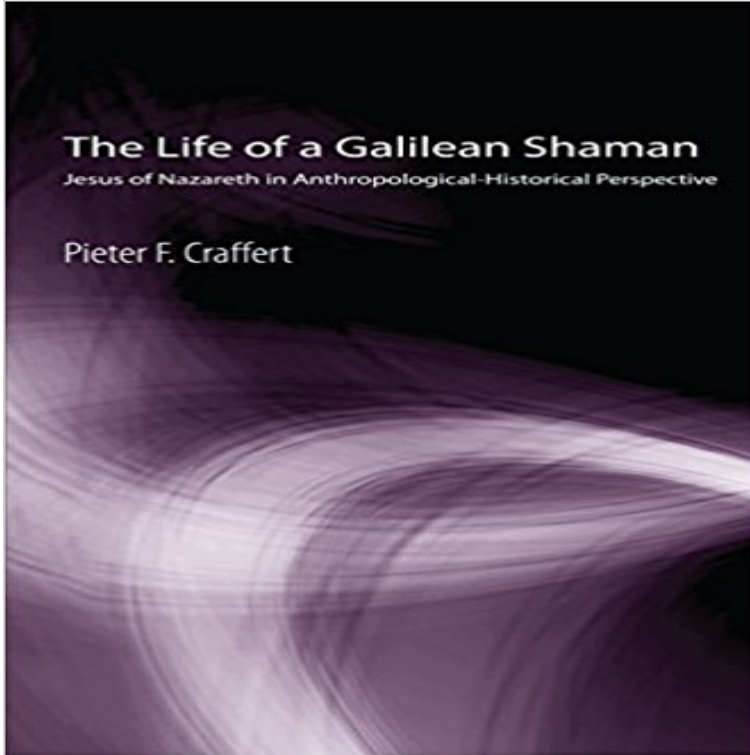


The Life of a Galilean Shaman: Jesus of Nazareth in Anthropological-Historical Perspective (Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean Context)



Description: Historical Jesus research remains trapped in the positivistic historiographical framework from which it emerged more than a hundred and fifty years ago. This is confirmed by the nested assumptions shared by the majority of researchers. These include the idea that a historical figure could not have been like the Gospel portrayals and consequently the Gospels have developed in a linear and layered fashion from the authentic kernels to the elaborated literary constructions as they are known today. The aim of historical Jesus research, therefore, is to identify the authentic material from which the historical figure as a social type underneath the overlay is constructed.

Anthropological historiography offers an alternative framework for dealing with Jesus of Nazareth as a social personage fully embedded in a first-century Mediterranean worldview and the Gospels as cultural artifacts related to this figure.

The shamanic complex can account for the cultural processes and dynamics related to his social personage. This cross-cultural model represents a religious pattern that refers to a family of features for describing those religious entrepreneurs who, based on regular Altered State of Consciousness experiences, perform a specific set of social functions in their communities. This model accounts for the wide spectrum of the data ascribed to Jesus of Nazareth while it offers a coherent framework for constructing the historical Jesus as a social personage embedded in his worldview. As a Galilean shamanic figure Jesus typically performed healings and exorcisms, he controlled the spirits while he also acted as prophet, teacher and mediator of divine knowledge.

Endorsements: In this book, Craffert uses the metaphor of traveling to describe the task he has undertaken. Given the existence of the two prevailing pathways leading into contemporary historical Jesus study, Craffert leaves the century-and-a-half old

Schweitzer Street (Schweitzerstrasse) and Wrede Road (Wredebahn) to do some bundubashing (South African: to travel off road through remote and rough terrain) to get to the social personage of Jesus the Galilean. His critique of prevailing historical Jesus study is insightful and incisive, while his description of Jesus as first-century Galilean shaman is masterful and accomplished. His rationale for and realization of a work of anthropological history is quite on the mark, enabling a reader to have an encounter with a first-century, Galilean shamanic Jesus that should produce an appropriate culture shock in those unused to the radically different cultural and social landscape of Mediterranean antiquity. --Bruce J. Malina, author of *The New Testament World* Just when it seems that all has been said about the historical Jesus, Pieter Craffert offers a genuine paradigm shift in method and insights growing out of an anthropological-historical perspective. His interpretation of the public figure of Jesus using the social-type of a shaman opens up a new world view and encourages the inclusion of texts, events, and activities usually dismissed from discussions of the historical Jesus. His originality is matched by his meticulous research and the clarity he brings to a complex problem. This is a must-read for anyone interested in the historical Jesus, but especially for those who enjoy a genuinely new approach to an old problem. --William R. Herzog II, author of *Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God* [This book] has the rare quality that it helps us to think otherwise about the Historical Jesus. We understand persons with the help of some category or model that suggests to us what they were like. The problem with categories used about Jesus is that they are either too distant historically to provide meaning to modern readers, or to modern to help us grasp the disturbing otherness about Jesus. Crafferts use of shaman as a social model for Jesus makes sense of the otherness of Jesus in our own w

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