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## Finney's "The Eerdmans encyclopedia of early Christian art and archaeology" (Book Review)

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# Book Reviews

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Finney, P.C. (Ed.). (2017). *The Eerdmans encyclopedia of early Christian art and archaeology*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1732 pp. \$498.00. ISBN 978080283811

Eerdmans Publishing has released a major work in the area of biblical reference. The anticipated *Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology* is a mammoth three-volume set comprised of 1,455 text entries and 905 illustrations. Leading editor for this project is Paul Corby Finney, professor emeritus of ancient history at the University of Missouri, Saint Louis. Finney was assisted by over 400 contributing scholars from the fields of archaeology, art history, history, epigraphy, and theology. This encyclopedia, specifically designed as an entry-level research tool, contains “entries that are clear, concise, and accessible to readers who have no specialized training in archaeology and the history of art.” The editorial staff has fulfilled this purpose impeccably making it wholly qualified for inclusion in a liberal arts or theological library. The scope of reference materials provided cover a time frame of approximately AD 200–600 and focus on African, Asian, and European architecture, sculpture, painting, mosaic, and portable artifacts.

Customary with encyclopedias, this work is organized alphabetically with Volumes 1 and 2 comprised of A–Z text entries and illustrations, and Volume 3 of supplemental materials in the form of plates and color maps. Integrated into the text-entry volumes is a substantial list of abbreviations and an effective glossary. *The Eerdmans Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Archaeology* does not claim to be a comprehensive work of all early Christian art and archaeology it does however, provide detailed bibliographic information for further study with each entry. This feature adds to the academic credibility of the work and widens the range of use.

While recommended, the major obstacle facing libraries in acquiring this encyclopedia is its sizable price tag. At around \$500 it may prove to be cost prohibitive for some.

## Reviewer

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