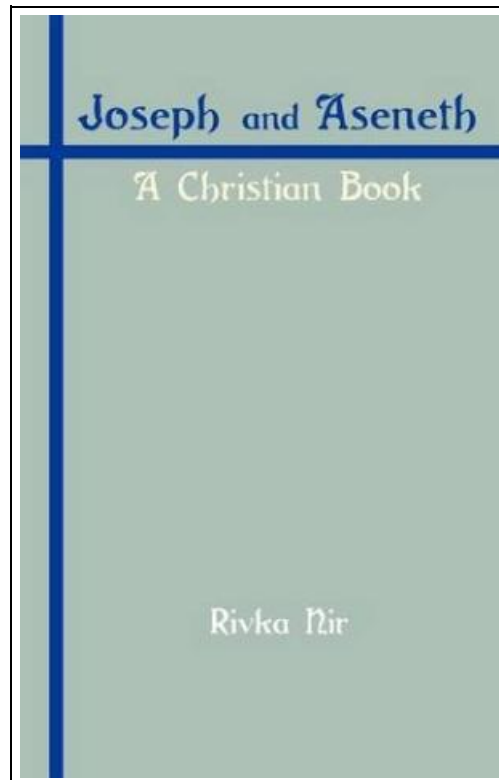


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JOSEPH AND ASENETH: A CHRISTIAN BOOK (HARDBACK)



Sheffield Phoenix Press, United Kingdom, 2012. Hardback. Condition: New. New.. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. Joseph and Aseneth, a book of the Old Testament Pseud-epigrapha, is a love story about the biblical Joseph and his Egyptian wife Aseneth which, in richly symbolic language, tells how the idol worshipper Aseneth was converted to belief in the one God. In recent decades, it has featured prominently in discussions of Second Temple Judaism as a testimony to a Hellenistic diaspora Judaism that neither observed the rules of conversion to Judaism (giyyur) nor cared much for the laws of the Torah. Rivka Nir offers a completely different understanding. Joseph and Aseneth, she argues, teaches us nothing about Second Temple Judaism. Rather, its vocabulary, ideas, symbols and structure become fully comprehensible only when viewed against the background of Syriac Christianity of the third and fourth century. In this setting, Aseneth and Joseph are symbolic and typological images: Aseneth symbolizes the church, Joseph is a prototype of Christ, and their marriage is a symbolic representation of the eternal marriage between Christ and the church. Aseneth's religious transformation should be understood as conversion to Christianity, an example for polytheists to follow. Turning our attention to the central role virginity plays in the story, Nir addresses the problematic scene of the honeycomb and the bees, reading it as a call to those joining the church to take a vow of virginity and resolve to lead a life of sexual abstinence. Through Nir's detailed analysis of the symbols and metaphors of Joseph and Aseneth in a Christian context, the book coalesces into a tightly integrated and meaningful whole, on both the theological and the symbolic levels.



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