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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Acknowledgments -- Contents -- List of Tables -- Abbreviations -- Introduction -- 1. The aim and theoretical framework of this monograph -- 2. Conceptual blending in biblical exegesis -- 3. The cultural background of the image of the church as a flock -- 4. A taxonomy of blends which constitute the image of the church as a flock in early Christian discourse -- 5. THE FLOCK OF THE CHURCH IS THE FLOCK OF ISRAEL (FCFI) -- 6. SHEPHERDS ARE THE SHEPHERD (SAS) -- 7. The THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FLOCK (CGF) blend in the New Testament and shepherding imagery in The Shepherd of Hermas -- 8. The CGF blend as a conceptual instrument in early church life and practice -- 9. The THE CHURCH IS GOD'S FLOCK blend as a conceptual instrument in early church liturgy and theology -- Conclusion -- Appendix -- Bibliography -- Index of Subjects -- Index of Ancient and Medieval Sources -- Index of Biblical Sources and Pseudepigrapha
Sommario/riassunto	Cognitive linguists and biblical and patristic scholars have recently given more attention to the presence of conceptual blends in early Christian texts, yet there has been so far no comprehensive study of the general role of conceptual blending as a generator of novel meanings in early Christianity as a religious system with its own identity. This monograph points in that direction and is a cognitive linguistic exploration of pastoral metaphors in a wide range of patristic texts, presenting them as variants of THE CHURCH IS A FLOCK network.

Such metaphors or blends, rooted in the Bible, were used by Patristic writers to conceptualize a great number of particular notions that were constitutive for the early church, including the responsibilities of the clergy and the laity, morality and penance, church unity, baptism and soteriology. This study shows how these blends became indispensable building blocks of a new religious system and explains the role of conceptual blending in this process. The book is addressed to biblical and patristic scholars interested in a new, unifying perspective for various strands of early Christian thought and to cognitive linguists interested in the role of conceptual integration in religious language.
