

1. Record Nr.	UNISA996248037103316
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Titolo	Virgins of God : the making of asceticism in late antiquity / / Susanna Elm
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Oxford ; , : Oxford University Press, , 2023 1994
ISBN	1-383-00532-X 0-19-159163-7 9786610763993 1-280-76399-X
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xvii, 443 p.) : maps ;
Collana	Oxford classical monographs Oxford scholarship online
Disciplina	271/.9/0009015
Soggetti	Asceticism - History - Early church, ca. 30-600 Monasticism and religious orders for women - Turkey - History Monasticism and religious orders for women - Egypt - History Women in Christianity - History - Early church, ca. 30-600
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Previously issued in print: 1994.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Sommario/riassunto	Situated in a period that witnessed the genesis of institutions fundamental to this day, this study offers a comprehensive look at how Ancient Christian women initiated ascetic ways of living, and how these practices were then institutionalized.