

Lietzmann, Hans

Hans Karl Alexander Lietzmann (b. 1875, Düsseldorf; d. 1942, Locarno) was a German Protestant NT scholar, church historian, and Christian archaeologist. He studied Protestant theology and classical philology in Jena and Bonn, where he was heavily influenced by classical philologist and religious historian Hermann Usener and by NT scholar Eduard Grafe. Under Grafe's supervision, Lietzmann completed his doctorate in 1896. He also earned his university teaching qualification (*Habilitation*) from Bonn in 1900 in the history of the early church and patristics, as well as in the history of text and canon of the Greek Bible. In 1905 he was appointed associate professor in Jena and later became full professor in 1908. In 1924 he succeeded Adolf von Harnack in Berlin where he rose to become one of the most influential theologians and academic politicians of the Weimar Republic and of the Third Reich. As a member of the Confessing Church, Lietzmann maintained a critical distance from the Nazi regime, but he retained personal loyalties with students and colleagues who were close to the regime (for example, Hans-Georg Opitz and Emanuel Hirsch). As a result, he initially underestimated the dangers stemming from National Socialism. Later he firmly stood up for persecuted colleagues.

Lietzmann made significant contributions in the areas of NT exegesis, the history of early Christianity, and Christian archaeology. He founded the commentary series *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, which focused on philological and historical-critical work on the Bible and in which he himself authored interpretations of several of Paul's letters in the series. During his time in Jena, he developed interests in the history of liturgy and in archaeology. Lietzmann's *opus magnum*, *Geschichte der Alten Kirche*, remained unfinished owing to his early death. His work on creeds, the history of church architecture, and of liturgy, as well as on popular piety, were not only highly innovative for his time with regard to methodology, but they also testify to his great artistry in presentation. Lietzmann was concerned with broadening the field of church history beyond the history of theology in order to gauge the wide range of religious phenomena and experiences in early Christianity. This concern has also had a marked and lasting effect which can be seen in the works of his students Kurt Aland and Wilhelm Schneemelcher.

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