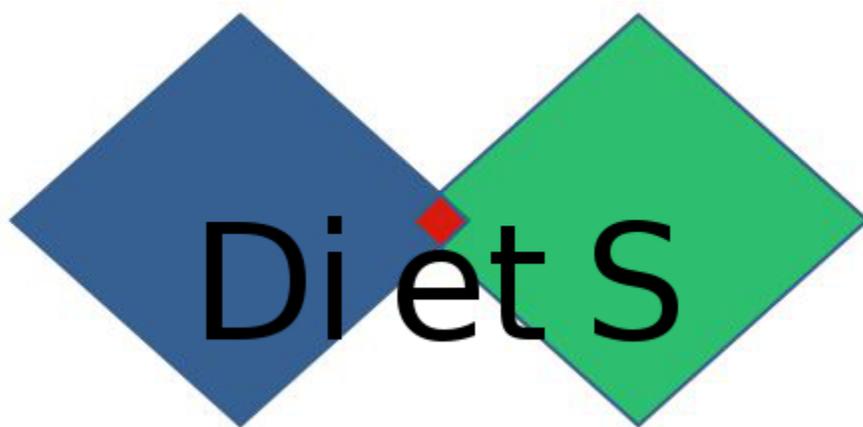


DietS - Home



The original form of Parish Social Work

A project about the understanding of the deacons and assistance of those in need of help

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The aim of the project DietS¹

The latest discussion about *diakonia* has been stimulated by the results of language analysis made for example by John N. Collins (1990, 2014) and Anni Hentschel (2006/2013). Although we know about the lexical meanings of the *diak*-family, we haven't yet used much of this knowledge on the functions of the parish's life (Goeder 2006, Collins 2012b).²

The aim of this meta-project is to collect high-level scientific re-interpretations, organize them and stimulate re-interpretations of the ancient (2nd to 7th c.) sources concerning *diakonia*. Doing this will trace and reveal correct interpretations and clear misinterpretations. This, in turn, helps to create possibilities for re-interpretations of *diakonia*, not the least in ecumenical discussions about the ministry of a deacon/deaconess. Therefore, in the context of discussing *diakonia*, this project is also analyzing the ministry and the functions of a deacon/deaconess and the ways in which the Christians helped each other during the first centuries. Therefore the name: **Diakonia et parish Social work = DietS**.

The main way to fulfill this aim is to distribute information (via internet pages, mails, meetings, etc.) and in this way to help researcher and other projects to cooperate. This can also lead to new research projects about persons/topics which are not analyzed yet. Some other ways may also emerge.

On this page, I will collect information about topics, which uses the ancient sources in a similar way or in ways which are aware of the ways which John N. Collins in his book shows. This page will not collect discussions about deacons and helping but concentrates on interpretations and analysis of interpretations of the ancient sources in their original language.

The leader of the project: [Dr. Esko Ryökäs](#)

1 The name "DietS": We need diets because we need to know, what we are eating and have eaten (about Deacons and Social work). – Click [Presentations](#) to go to the visualizations of the aims below. The project started on March 15th, 2013. About the other background of this project, click [here](#).

2 More about the present situation [here](#).

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Structure of the main project

1 Background

- *Collins*
- *Hentschel*
- *Janhonen etc.*

useful texts

- *Diakonische Konturen. DWI 2003*
- *Reininger 1999*
- *Goeder 2006*
- *Collins 2009*
- *Koet 2009*
- *Latvus 2017*

my activities

- *Ryökäs 2014a (about RGG-dictionaries)*

2 Preconstantinian era

2.0 New testament

2.1 Apostolic Fathers

2.2 Early Fathers

- *Justin Martyr*
- *Aristides*
- *Tertullian*
- *Clement of Alexandria*
- *Origen*
- *Eusebios of Caesarea*
- *Irenaeus*
- *Hippolytos*
- *Cyprian*

2.3 Church orders

- *Didascalia*
- *Apostolic Constitutions*

2.4 Analyses of frequency

useful texts

- *Diaconia, diaconiae, diaconato (2010)*
- *Collins 2012a/b*
- *Latvus 2017*

my activities

- "Orthodoxia 51", 43–68, 2010. (about Apost. Fathers)
- *Ryökäs - Voitila 2013 about the deacons as letter carrier*
- *Supervised doctoral student about diakonia in Apostolic Constitutions*
- *Forthcoming: an analysis about frequencies of deacon's activities by fathers*
- *Deacons and Diakonia (Ed., 2018, WUNT, more [here](#))*

3 Early middle ages

3.1 East

- *Athanasius of Alexandria*
- *Epiphanius of Salamis*
- *The Cappadocian Fathers*
- *Sozomenus*
- *John Chrysostom*

3.2 West

- *Ambrose*
- *Saint Jerome / Hieronymus*
- *Augustine of Hippo*
- *Leo the Great*
- *Gregory the Great*

3.3 Councils and Church Orders

- *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*
- *Canons*

3.4 Analyses of frequency

3.5 The Buildings called Diaconi

a

useful texts

- Barrett-Lennart, *JECH* 13, 2005, 137–164.
- *Diaconia, diaconiae, diaconato* (2010)
- *Latvus* 2017
- *Doctoral Thesis* (still unpubl., contact me if you need this)

my activities

- "Diakonian tutkimus", 2/2011, 145–163. (about buildings)
- *Diakonit ja saarna* (Deacons and the sermon). *Diakonian tutkimus* 1: 36-53.

4 Reformers (of 16th c.) and Tridentium

4.1 Luther

4.2 Calvin

4.3 Buzer

4.4 Tridentium

useful texts

- Many articles by Kari Latvus

my activities

- Supervising doctoral thesis about deacons by Luther
- "Diakonian tutkimus", 2/2011, 145–163. (about Luther and diaconia)
- "Diaconia", a presentation on IDZ/IDC/CID 22.10.2015 (Rome): Ryökäs 2015b

5 The Fathers of 19th century

5.1 Fliedner

5.2 Wichern

5.3 Löhe

5.4 Local Teachers

useful texts

my activities

- *Supervising Doctoral thesis about understanding of deacons during the latest 50 years in Finland*
- *About Fliedner: Diakonische Einblicke, DWI, 2011, 49–71.*

6 The way of Reading the Old Texts

- *local analyses*

useful texts

- *Wendland Project, look at Dietzel 2013*

my activities

- *"Diakonian väärinymmärryksen lyhyt historia", 2009.*
- *About Paul Philippi in TRE: Ryökäs 2015.*
- *Forthcoming a book about books written in Finnish (publishing 2019)*

[1 Background] [2 Preconstantinian era] [3 Early middle ages] [4 Reformers (of 16th c.) and Tridentium] [5 The Fathers of 19th century] [6 The way of Reading the Old Texts]

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Topics *done* and *to do*

This project is starting. Some activities have been done.

✓ [Some examples can be seen here.](#)

e.g., Seminar Idealismista realismiin, 22-23.9.2014 (Joensuu)

A proposal for HERA was written (spring 2015), but without effort

Symposium [What Did Deacons Do?](#), 22-23.9.2015 (Joensuu)

- a charitable role of a deacon was surely not the main theme on the papers presented at this symposium

Symposium [What Did Deacons Do 2017?](#), 13-15.9.2017 (Joensuu)

- an analyze of many fathers show clear, a charitable role of a deacon was surely not the main theme on the papers

Symposium [What Did Deacons Do 2020?](#), mid-May (Joensuu)

- more information on the web page

▼ [One example can be seen here.](#)

We have recently published a book about the two first centuries (WUNT).

We are planning a second volume, too.

This project needs the cooperation of many writers, because of its volume. Now it is essential to collect information about "status quo": what do we know now. This means: what do we know after the introduction of the new paradigm by John N. Collins. This phase may take some years. After that, we can start to analyze deeper that material, which has not been investigated yet.

To start, we need:

- find out those who have written / are writing about *diakonia* in the early church
- collect a book or series of books like Madigan-Osiek 2005 but about the deacons ("where something is written"). We started this with *Deacons and Diakonia 2018*.
- collect a similar knowledge about the Parish Social Work in the Early Church
- find out what has already been written
- deal the research objects to several researchers, in co-operation

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Results so far

It seems that many books and articles of 19th and 20th century want to see its specific (charitative) way of Deacon's service as the only possible (Collins, Dietzel, Ryökäs 2011 [about Fliedner], Latvus 2017).

It seems to be easy to give a charitable understanding to deacon's ministry, even on the highest level of scientific presentation of the 1980s, against sources (Ryökäs 2015).

The deacons work as a humble service seems to be an invention of the 1930s, not earlier (Ryökäs 2014a).

In 4th Century and Egypt had the deacons almost nothing to do with the sick persons (Barrett-Lennart)

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Would you like to comment on this project or see your Project on this page? Do you know any analysis of *diakonia* which uses the knowledge we have after the book of Collins (1990)? Please, write to me (esko.ryokas@uef.fi), and I'll put your text below, or, if you are a confluence user, write a comment below!

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