

## Bibliography

### Greco-Roman Religious Background to the NT

#### Part I:

Bibliography of 44 Graeco-Roman Religion studies published in  
the English language of the past ten years.

Jeffrey W. Hargis, *Against the Christians : the rise of early anti-Christian polemic* (New York ; 1999). 172 p SERIES Patristic studies ; vol. 1

Maurizio Bettini, *Antropologia e cultura romana. English] Anthropology and Roman culture: kinship, time, images of the soul / Maurizio Bettini ; translated by John Van Sickle.* (Baltimore : 1991). xiv, 334 p. : ill. SERIES Ancient society and history

Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman and Simon Price, in association with Christopher Rowland, eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire : pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford, 1999). x, 315 p.

Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Authority and the sacred : aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman world* (Cambridge , 1995). xiii, 91 p.

Robert Doran, *Birth of a worldview : early Christianity in its Jewish and Pagan context* (Boulder, 1995). ix, 183 p. : map SERIES Explorations

Emil Bock, [Casaren und Apostel. English] *Caesars and apostles : Hellenism, Rome and Judaism* [translated by Maria St. Goar]. (Edinburgh, 1998). 368 p. : ill.

Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the rhetoric of empire : the development of Christian discourse* ( Berkeley , 1991). xv, 261 p. : ill. SERIES Sather classical lectures ; v. 55

Robert Turcan, . [Cultes orientaux dans le monde romain. English] *The cults of the Roman Empire*; translated by Antonia Nevill. (Oxford, 1996). xiii, 399 p. : ill., map

SERIES The ancient world

Eugene N. Lane, ed., *Cybele, Attis and related cults : essays in memory of M.J.*

*Vermaseren* (Leiden , 1996). ix, 441 p. : ill., maps SERIES Religions in the Graeco-Roman world, ISSN 0927-7633 ; v. 131

Jon Davies, *Death, burial, and rebirth in the religions of antiquity* (London, 1999). xiii, 246 p. : ill.

SERIES Religion in the first Christian centuries

Kathryn Argetsinger, . *Dies natales : self, patron, and city in Roman religion* (1990.) iv, 164 p.

David R. Cartlidge & David L. Dungan, eds. *Documents for the study of the Gospels* (Rev. and enl. ed. Minneapolis, 1994). xiii, 298 p.

Gabriella. Gustafsson, *Evocation deorum : historical and mythical interpretations of ritualised conquests in the expansion of ancient Rome* (Uppsala , 2000). 167 p. : ill.  
SERIES Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Historia religionum, ISSN 0439- 2132 ; 16

Alan E. Bernstein, *The formation of hell : death and retribution in the ancient and early Christian worlds.* (Ithaca , 1993). xiii, 392 p.

Jeffrey L. Seif, *The evolution of a revolution : reflections on ancient Christianity in its Judaistic, Hellenistic and Romanistic expressions* (Lanham, , 1994). 184 p.

Carolyn Osiek, & David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament world: households and house churches* (1st ed. Louisville,1997). x, 329 p. : ill.

SERIES The family, religion, and culture

Thomas Macy Finn, *From death to rebirth : ritual and conversion in antiquity* (New York ; Mahwah, N.J. : Paulist Press, 1997). v, 286 p.

Ariadne Staples, *From Good Goddess to vestal virgins : sex and category in Roman religion* (London , 1998). x, 207 p.

David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, Wayne A. Meeks., eds., *Greeks, Romans, and Christians : essays in honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (Minneapolis ,1990). xv, 404 p. : ill.

Ittai Gradel, *Heavenly honours : Roman emperor worship, Caesar to Constantine.*(Oxford : Clarendon, 1999). 300 p. : ill.

Richard Lindsay Gordon, *Image and value in the Graeco-Roman world : studies in Mithraism and religious art* (Aldershot, 1996). 1 v. (various pagings): ill. ; 23 cm.  
SERIES Collected studies series ; CS551

H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman religion* (Leiden, 1990-1993). 2 v.olumes

SERIES Studies in Greek and Roman religion, ISSN 0169-9512 ; v. 6

Sarolta A. Takacs, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman world* (Leiden , 1995). xiv, 235 p.  
SERIES Religions in the Graeco-Roman world, ISSN 0927-7633 ; v. 124

Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak, eds., *The Jews among pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London,1994). xvii, 198 p. : ill., maps

- D. C. Feeney, *Literature and religion at Rome : cultures, contexts, and beliefs* (New York , 1998). xii, 161 p. SERIES Roman literature and its contexts
- Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and paganism in early Christianity* (Edinburgh: 2000). 144 p.
- Wendy Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman antiquity : a sourcebook* (London: 1999). x, 274 p.
- A. D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in late antiquity: a sourcebook* (London, 2000). xxi, 328 p. : ill., map
- David StonePotter, *Prophets and emperors : human and divine authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge, 1994). viii, 281 p. : ill., map.  
SERIES Revealing antiquity ; 7
- Alan H. Sommerstein, ed., *Religion and superstition in Latin literature* (Bari ; 1996) 80 p.
- SERIES Nottingham Classical Literature Studies ; v. 3
- Edward Bispham and Christopher Smith, ed., *Religion in archaic and republican Rome and Italy : evidence and experience* (Edinburgh , 2000). xiv, 199 p. : ill.  
SERIES New perspectives on the ancient world ; 2
- Hans-Josef Klauck, [Religiose Umwelt des Urchristentums. English] *The religious context of early Christianity : a guide to Graeco -Roman religions*; translated by Brian McNeil. (Edinburgh, 2000). xxvii, 516 p. SERIES Studies of the New Testament and its world
- Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": an argument for dismantling a dubious category* (Princeton, 1996).
- J. A. North, *Roman religion* (Oxford: Published for the Classical Association [by] Oxford University Press, 2000.) 99 p. .
- Guy MacLean Rogers, *The sacred identity of Ephesos : foundation myths of a Roman city* (London , 1991). xviii, 209 p.: ill.
- Alan Watson, *The state, law, and religion: pagan Rome* (Athens, Ga., 1992.) xv 136 p.
- Stephen Benko, *The virgin goddess : studies in the pagan and Christian roots of Mariology* (Leiden , 1993). vi, 293 p., [8] p. of plates : ill. . SERIES Studies in the history of religions, ISSN 0169-8834 ; v. 59
- Priscilla and Rebecca Patten, *The world of the early Church : a companion to the New Testament* (Lewiston, N.Y. : E. Mellen Press, 1991). 263 p.

Keith Hopkins, *A world full of gods : the strange triumph of Christianity* (1st Free Press ed. , 2000). x, 402 p., [16] p. of plates : ill. ;

John Granger Cook, *The interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman paganism* (Tubingen, 2000). xvi, 385 p. SERIES Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, ISSN 1436-3003 = Studies and texts in antiquity and Christianity ; 3

Ken Dowden, *Religion and the Romans* (London , 1995). viii, 102 p. : ill. SERIES Classical world series

Ramsay MacMullen and Eugene N. Lane, eds., *Paganism and Christianity, 100-425 C.E. : a sourcebook* (Minneapolis 1992). xiv, 296 p. ; 23 cm.

Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery divine : on the comparison of early Christianities and the religions of late antiquity* (Chicago , 1990). xiii, 145 p. SERIES Jordan lectures in comparative religion ; 14 Chicago studies in the history of Judaism

An added bonus: Teach the course and research your Lord's Prayer book at the same time (see below)

James H. Charlesworth, with Mark Harding and Mark Kiley, eds., *The Lord's Prayer and other prayer texts from the Greco-Roman era* (Valley Forge, Pa. :Trinity Press International, 1994). ix, 292 p. ; 23 cm.

On the subject of the Lord's Prayer manuscript. I was wondering if you were considering the inclusion of the Roman Word Squares believed by many to be anagrams or acrostics of the Lord's Prayer. Also any mention of the Basilica of the Lord's Prayer in Israel?

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## II. More specific bibliography with comments.

James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (IVP: 1999). a book review of it:  
<http://www.bookreviews.org/Reviews/0830815899.html>

it was a little weak on the technical side (it wasn't designed to be technical).

Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000).

The best text. There are three problems with this text: Klauck ignores Philo, Klauck has some outdated perspectives especially regarding the mysteries, and the book is about \$50.

Simon Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

A convenient paperback. Includes a brief discussion of Christianity at the end of the book. about \$20.

Louise B. Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*, trans. Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Concentrates on classical Athens but provides a good sense of ancient Greek religion. Also for about \$20.

John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).

There's not really a good basic work for Roman religion that's suitable for Introductory level teaching. It is now outdated but still useful. His chapter on sacrifice is rather weak and so is his chapter on the mysteries.

Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

Too advanced and too far off the mark for introductory level.

Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Roman Religion*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Vol. 1 is an historical intro. Vol. 2 would be highly useful for your own perusal as it contains primary sources (including photos).

Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

Specifically on the mysteries. Quite good and relatively inexpensive. Burkert, like so many others, does tend to view the mysteries through Christian or at least post-Christian lenses. Some mysteries developed and maintained a sense of community; most were just simply a ritual one went through.

Marvin W. Meyer, ed. *The Ancient Mysteries: A Sourcebook* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, a division of HarperCollins, 1987).

Quite good and relatively inexpensive.

John Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (or something like that) (Oxford).

The paperback edition is \$20 and might make a good recommended text. Lots of wonderful primary source material in the form of tablets and ostraca containing curses, binding spells, etc.

Georg Luck, *Magika Hiera*

It is a collection of primary sources relating to ancient magic.

Off the top of my head, the Priene inscription that celebrates Augustus' birthday and describes him as "savior of the world" is fundamental for understanding the emperor cult. I think this inscription is in Beard, North, and Price, vol. 2. Additionally, Plato's Euthyphro discusses sacrifice at some length set as a discussion between Euthyphro and Socrates. Skim the volume *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*. You'll find fictional narratives containing discussions of sacrifice, processions, and magic. As background to Acts 17, I've shown a map of the Athenian agora in the time of Paul highlighting the various shrines and temples. My students were impressed by the sheer "amount of religiosity" contained in such a small area. Check Abingdon's *Hellenistic Commentary on the New Testament*. It lists New Testament texts in canonical order with parallels from Hellenistic literature. Many times the parallels are religious texts or deal in some way with Greco-Roman religion. There's a Fortress text by Cartledge and Duncan,

*Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, which does much the same for the gospels. Fortress also publishes Ramsey MacMullen's *Paganism and Christianity: 110-425 ce* which is a collection of primary source documents. I'll post some more primary sources later.

One of the most important elements, often overlooked, is the importance of ritual in general, and sacrifice in particular, in Greco-Roman religion. Greco-Roman religion was not so much what one believed as what rituals one participated in. This is important for understanding the idol meat issue in Corinth and the seeming participation of some Christians in Asia Minor in the imperial cult as reflected in Revelation's "Letters to the Seven Churches."

On the whole, I think I'd organize my syllabus according to the themes in Klauck's book but rely on Schaid and Pantell, Price's *Greek Religions*, and Ferguson's *Roman Religion*. As recommended texts I would use Gager's *Curse Tablets*, Luck's *Arcana Mundi*, and Meyer's *The Ancient Mysteries*. That way you could emphasize two topics and provide resources for student papers. Another possible recommended text would be Simon Price's (listed as S. R. F. Price for this book) *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). I would supplement the books with primary source materials in a course packet, on reserve, or photocopied. If at all possible, use slides.

Hope this is helpful and not too confusing.

Lynn

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