

Greek Religion Walter Burkert

Explores 'polis religion' - a leading paradigm in current studies on ancient Greek religion - and shows ways of moving beyond it.

In recent study Greek religion has often dissolved itself into many religions. The eleven original essays here focus both on extremes of the Greek world and on its classical 'centre'. Distinguished scholars examine the earliest traces of religious thought in the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures. Striking similarities are revealed between religious ideas of Greece and of non-Greek Asia. There are special studies of Apollo, Athena, and Dionysiac religion. And new patterns are identified in the archaic and classical thought of Heraclitus, Herodotus and Sophocles.

This handbook offers a comprehensive overview of scholarship in ancient Greek religion, from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods. The handbook lays out the key dimensions of ancient Greek religion, approaches to evidence, and the representations of myths. The chapters reveal to readers the questions about, and the continuities and differences between, religious structures across time and place: including cultural interactions with Egypt, the Near East, theBlack Sea, and Bactria and India.

This major addition to Blackwell's Companions to the Ancient World series covers all aspects of religion in the ancient Greek world from the archaic, through the classical and into the Hellenistic period. Written by a panel of international experts Focuses on religious life as it was experienced by Greek men and women at different times and in different places Features major sections on local religious systems, sacred spaces and ritual, and the divine

Lessons of Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece

Ancient Greek Religion

A Local History of Greek Polytheism

A Companion to Greek Religion

We often think of classical Greek society as a model of rationality and order. Yet as Walter Burkert demonstrates in these influential essays on the history of Greek religion, there were archaic, savage forces surging beneath the outwardly calm face of classical Greece, whose potentially violent and destructive energies, Burkert argues, were harnessed to constructive ends through the interlinked uses of myth and ritual. For example, in a much-cited essay on the Athenian religious festival of the Arrephoria, Burkert uncovers deep connections between this strange nocturnal ritual, in which two virgin girls carried sacred offerings into a cave and later returned with something given to them there, and tribal puberty initiations by linking the festival with the myth of the daughters of Kekrops. Other chapters explore the origins of tragedy in blood sacrifice; the role of myth in the ritual of the new fire on Lemnos; the ties between violence, the Athenian courts, and the annual purification of the divine image; and how failed political propaganda entered the realm of myth at the time of the Persian Wars.

First general critique of the interpretations of animal sacrifice established by Walter Burkert, the late J.-P. Vernant, and Marcel Detienne.

Ancient Greek culture is often described as a miracle, owing little to its neighbors. Walter Burkert argues against a distorted view, toward a more balanced picture. "Under the influence of the Semitic East—from writers, craftsmen, merchants, healers—Greek culture began its unique flowering, soon to assume cultural hegemony in the Mediterranean."

Sacrifice is essential to all religions. Could there be a natural, even biological, reason? Why are sacrifice and numerous other religious rituals and concepts shared by so many different cultures? In this extraordinary book, one of the world's leading authorities on ancient religions explores the possibility of natural religion.

Ancient Victims, Modern Observers

Ancient Art and Ritual

Savage Energies

Epilegomena to the Study of Greek Religion

Archaic and Classical

The tales told of Orpheus are legion. He is said to have been an Argonaut—and to have saved Jason's life. Rivers are reported to have stopped their flow to listen to the sounds of his lyre and his voice. Plato cites his poetry and Herodotus refers to "practices that are called Orphic." Did Orpheus, in fact, exist? His influence on Greek thought is undeniable, but his disciples left little of substance behind them. Indeed, their Orphic precepts have been lost to time. W.K.C. Guthrie attempts to uncover and define Orphism by following its circuitous path through ancient history. He tackles this daunting task with the determination of a detective and the analytical rigor of a classical scholar. He ferries his readers with him on a singular voyage of discovery.

You can still invoke the ancient Hero Theseus into your life! American Hellenist Chris Aldridge reaches back to ancient Greece and brings the story of Theseus alive again for Hellenic Polytheists and ancient Greek enthusiasts alike. Drawing from ancient and modern writings such as Plutarch and Walter Burkert, Chris once again tells the story of the Greek Hero who saved Athens, teaches valuable life lessons for all readers through the legacy of Theseus, and ends with a special prayer to call on the Hero.

"A milestone, not only in the field of classics but in the wider field of the history of religion. . . . It will find a place alongside the works of Jane Ellen Harrison, Sir James George Frazer, Claude Levi-Strauss, and van Gennepp."—Wendy Flaherty, Divinity School, University of Chicago "This book is a professional classic, an absolute must for any serious student of Greek religion."—Albert Henrichs, Harvard University

Greek ReligionArchaic and ClassicalJohn Wiley & Sons

Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism

Ritual and Communication in the Graeco-Roman World

What Is a God?

Greek and Roman Animal Sacrifice

Religions of the Ancient Greeks

At the distant beginning of Western civilization, according to European tradition, Greece stands as an insular, isolated, near-miracle of burgeoning culture. This book traverses the ancient world's three great centers of cultural exchange—Babylonian Nineveh, Egyptian Memphis, and Iranian Persepolis—to situate classical Greece in its proper historical place, at the Western margin of a more comprehensive Near Eastern-Aegean cultural community that emerged in the Bronze Age and expanded westward in the first millennium B.C. In concise and inviting fashion, Walter Burkert lays out the essential evidence for this ongoing reinterpretation of Greek culture. In particular, he points to the critical role of the development of writing in the ancient Near East, from the achievement of cuneiform in the Bronze Age to the rise of the alphabet after 1000 B.C. From the invention and diffusion of alphabetic writing, a series of cultural encounters between "Oriental" and Greek followed. Burkert details how the Assyrian influences of Phoenician and Anatolian intermediaries, the emerging fascination with Egypt, and the Persian conquests in Ionia make themselves felt in the poetry of Homer and his gods, in the mythic foundations of Greek cults, and in the first steps toward philosophy. A journey through the fluid borderlines of the Near East and Europe, with new and shifting perspectives on the cultural exchanges these produced, this book offers a clear view of the multicultural field upon which the Greek heritage that formed Western civilization first appeared.

The foremost historian of Greek religion provides the first comprehensive, comparative study of a little-known aspect of ancient religious beliefs and practices. Secret mystery cults flourished within the larger culture of the public religion of Greece and Rome for roughly a thousand years. This book is neither a history nor a survey but a comparative phenomenology, concentrating on five major cults. In defining the mysteries and describing their rituals, membership, organization, and dissemination, Walter Burkert displays the remarkable erudition we have come to expect of him; he also shows great sensitivity and sympathy in interpreting the experiences and motivations of the devotees.

Provides undergraduate students with a vibrant account of the religious world of ancient Greece, now in its third edition Ancient Greek Religion offers a detailed yet accessible introduction to the beliefs, myths, rituals, and deities of Greek religion. Author Jon D. Mikalson provides a vivid depiction of Greek religious practice in Athens, Delphi, and Olympia during the Classical period and in select other cities during the Hellenistic period. This reader-friendly textbook explains basic concepts of Greek polytheism, describes major deities and cults, and discusses various aspects of Greek religious life in the context of the city-state, the village, the family, and the individual. The revised third edition features new contributions by Andrej and Ivana Petrovic. It has two new chapters: one highlighting Roman, Christian, and modern scholars' approaches to Greek religion and one identifying the types of sources used to understand and reconstruct ancient Greek religion. This edition also expands discussion of magic and personal practices and includes an updated and expanded bibliography for each chapter. This popular textbook: Offers thorough coverage of major Greek gods, heroes, myths, and cults Presents translations of ancient texts to promote reflection and discussion Features a glossary of recurring Greek terms and a wealth of high-quality color maps, images, figures, and illustrations Describes Greek religious practice from the perspectives of different worshippers, such as priests, slaves, family members, and public officials Discusses various interpretations of the gods and the afterlife, the nature of piety and impiety, and the larger social and political context of ancient Greece Ancient Greek Religion, Third Edition, remains the ideal introductory textbook for undergraduate courses including Greek Civilization, Greek Religion, Greek and Roman Religion, Ancient Religions, and Greek History. It is also an excellent source of reference for graduate students, instructors, and scholars studying religious life in Classical Greece.

This is the first major synthesis of Greek religion to appear for a generation. A clearly structured and readable survey for classical scholars and students, it will also be generally welcomed as the best modern account of any polytheistic religious system. The text builds up an impressive and coherent picture of the current state of knowledge about the religion of the ancient Greeks.

Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion

The Seer in Ancient Greece

Philosophy and Salvation in Greek Religion

Animals in Ancient Greek Religion

Smoke Signals for the Gods

This book provides the first systematic study of the role of animals in different areas of the ancient Greek religious experience, including in myth and ritual, the literary and the material evidence, the real and the imaginary. An international team of renowned contributors shows that animals had a sustained presence not only in the traditionally well-researched cultural practice of blood sacrifice but across the full spectrum of ancient Greek religious beliefs and practices. Animals played a role in divination, epiphany, ritual healing, the setting up of dedications, the writing of binding spells, and the instigation of other "magical" means. Taken together, the individual contributions to this book illustrate that ancient Greek religion constituted a triangular symbolic system encompassing not just gods and humans, but also animals as a third player and point of reference. Animals in Ancient Greek Religion will be of interest to students and scholars of Greek religion, Greek myth, and ancient religion more broadly, as well as for anyone interested in human/animal relations in the ancient world.

Klassisches Altertum - Ritual - Kult - Gesellschaft

Ancient Greeks and Romans often turned to magic to achieve personal goals. Magical rites were seen as a route for direct access to the gods, for material gains as well as spiritual satisfaction. In this survey of magical beliefs and practices from the sixth century B.C.E. through late antiquity, Fritz Graf sheds new light on ancient religion. Graf explores the important types of magic in Greco-Roman antiquity, describing rites and explaining the theory behind them. And he characterizes the ancient magician: his training and initiation, social status, and presumed connections with the divine world. With trenchant analysis of underlying conceptions and vivid account of illustrative cases, Graf gives a full picture of the practice of magic and its implications. He concludes with an evaluation of the relation of magic to religion.

Discusses the concept of myth, looks at the traditions of Greek ritual, and considers specific Greek myths

Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity

The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife

Orpheus and Greek Religion

The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion

Civic Rites

A survey of the religious beliefs of ancient Greece covers sacrifices, libations, purification, gods, heroes, the priesthood, oracles, festivals, and the afterlife

This book provides the first comprehensive and detailed study of the deities and cults of the important Greek island-state of Aigina from the Geometric to Classical periods (800-400 BCE).

Original and comprehensive, Magic in the Ancient Greek World takes the reader inside both the social imagination and the ritual reality that made magic possible in ancient Greece. Explores the widespread use of spells, drugs, curse tablets, and figurines, and the practitioners of magic in the ancient world Uncovers how magic worked. Was it down to mere superstition? Did the subject need to believe in order for it to have an effect? Focuses on detailed case studies of individual types of magic Examines the central role of magic in Greek life

Burkert, Girard, and Smith hold important and contradictory theories about the nature and origin of ritual sacrifice, and the role violence plays in religion and culture. These papers and conversations derive from a conference that pursued the possibility and utility of a general theory of religion and culture, especially one based on violence. The special value of this volume is the conversations as such—the real record of working scholars engaged with one another's theories, as they make and meet challenges, and move and maneuver. Girard and Burkert present different versions of the same conviction: that a single theory can account for ritual and its social function, a theory that posits original acts of group violence. Smith sharply questions both the possibility and the utility of such a general theory. Among the highlights of this stimulating interchange of ideas is a searching criticism of Girard's theory of generative scapegoating, which he answers with clarity and conviction, and a challenging of Burkert's theory of the origin of sacrifice in the hunt by Smith's argument, posed as a jeu d'esprit, that sacrifice originates with the domestication of animals.

Magic in the Ancient World

Magic in the Ancient Greek World

Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture

The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth

Democracy and Religion in Ancient Athens

Belief in the afterlife is still very much alive in Western civilisation, even though the truth of its existence is no longer universally accepted. Surprisingly, however, heaven, hell and the immortal soul were all ideas which arrived relatively late in the ancient world. Originally Greece and Israel - the cultures that gave us Christianity - had only the vaguest ideas of an afterlife. So where did these concepts come from and why did they develop? In this fascinating, learned, but highly readable book, Jan N. Bremmer - one of the foremost authorities on ancient religion - takes a fresh look at the major developments in the Western imagination of the afterlife, from the ancient Greeks to the modern near-death experience.

For this first English edition of his distinguished study of Pythagoreanism, Weisheit und Wissenschaft: Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos, und Platon, Walter Burkert has carefully revised text and notes, taking account of additional literature on the subject which appeared between 1962 and 1969. By a thorough critical sifting of all the available evidence, the author lays a new foundation for the understanding of ancient Pythagoreanism and in particular of the relationship within it of "lore" and "science." He shows that in the twilight zone when the Greeks were discovering the rational interpretation of the world and quantitative natural science, Pythagoras represented not the origin of the new, but the survival or revival of ancient, pre-scientific lore or wisdom, based on superhuman authority and expressed in ritual obligation.

"Civic Rites clearly demonstrates the complete interdependence of religion and democracy in Athens, illustrating just how much the ancient Athenians' view of the relationship between these powerful forces differs from that in twenty-first century, Western democracies. Evans has provided a systematic, thorough, and lively treatment, liberating readers from modern expectations and offering a new window onto Athenian society."--Loren J. Samons, author of What's Wrong with Democracy? From Athenian Practice to American Worship "It is a double task the author has undertaken: to demonstrate the interdependence, nay, integration of politics and religion in the high days of 'democratic' Athens and to bring this special form of 'democracy' home to a contemporary non-specialist public. She brilliantly succeeds in both, presenting a clear and poignant narrative with graphic details. Civic Rites is a novel and fascinating course through a seemingly well-known field."--Walter Burkert, author of Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth "In equal measures intelligent, accessible, and well-informed, this book provides a contemporary introduction to classical Athenian religious practices and their manifold cultural significance. Evans interweaves overviews of political, economic, and social history with engaging descriptions of several major Attic rites. This book will interest specialists while providing students with an illuminating pathway into the familiar yet alien world of ancient Greek religion."--Deborah Boedeker, Brown University "With vivid, elegant writing and compelling imagination, Nancy Evans recreates the complex interaction of religion and politics in the ancient Athenian Democracy. Deftly interweaving chapters on cult and on political developments, she shows the general reader an Athens that is stranger to modern sensibilities than we often realize, and yet one from which we can learn many things about democratic life. A wonderful achievement."--Martha Nussbaum, author of The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy

The rich and splendid culture of the ancient Greeks has often been described as emerging like a miracle from a genius of its own, owing practically nothing to its neighbors. Walter Burkert offers a decisive argument against that distorted view, replacing it with a balanced picture of the archaic period "in which, under the influence of the Semitic East, Greek culture began its unique flowering, soon to assume cultural hegemony in the Mediterranean". Burkert focuses on the "orientalizing" century 750-650 B.C., the period of Assyrian conquest, Phoenician commerce, and Greek exploration of both East and West, when not only eastern skills archaeological, textual, and historical evidence, he demonstrates that eastern models significantly affected Greek literature and religion in the Homeric age.

The Formation of Greek Religion at the Close of the Dark Ages

Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation

Creation of the Sacred

Theseus: His Life, Mysteries and Virtues

Mythology

Designed to serve as a religious companion to the Greek classics.

This 1999 book describes the religious life of the Greeks from the archaic to the Roman periods.

Drawing on a wealth of sources, Smoke Signals for the Gods provides a complete picture of ancient animal sacrifice.

Ever since Vlastos' "Theology and Philosophy in Early Greek Thought," scholars have known that a consideration of ancient philosophy without attention to its theological, cosmological and soteriological dimensions remains one-sided. Yet, philosophers continue to discuss thinkers such as Parmenides and Plato without knowledge of their debt to the archaic religious traditions. Perhaps our own religious prejudices allow us to see only a "polis religion" in Greek religion, while our modern philosophical openness and emphasis on reason induce us to rehabilitate ancient philosophy by what we consider the highest standard of knowledge: proper argumentation. Yet, it is possible to see ancient philosophy as operating according to a different system of meaning, a different "logic." Such a different sense of logic operates in myth and other narratives, where the argument is neither completely illogical nor rational in the positivist sense. The articles in this volume undertake a critical engagement with this unspoken legacy of Greek religion. The aim of the volume as a whole is to show how, beyond the formalities and fallacies of arguments, something more profound is at stake in ancient philosophy: the salvation of the philosopher-initiate.

Homo Necans

The Orientalizing Revolution

Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis

Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic Through Roman Periods

Rethinking Greek Religion

"The seer (mantis), an expert in the art of divination, operated in ancient Greek society through a combination of charismatic inspiration and diverse skills ranging from examining the livers of sacrificed animals to spirit possession. Unlike the palm readers and mediums who exist on the fringe of modern society, many seers were highly paid, well respected, educated members of the elite who played an essential role in the conduct of daily life, political decisions, and military campaigns. Armies, for example, never went anywhere without one. This engaging book, the only comprehensive study of this fascinating figure, enters into the socioreligious world of ancient Greece to explore what seers did, why they were so widely employed, and how their craft served as a viable and useful social practice." -- Publisher's description.

Violent Origins

Ancient Mystery Cults

Gods, People and the Land of Aigina, 800-400 BCE.

Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual

Greek Religion