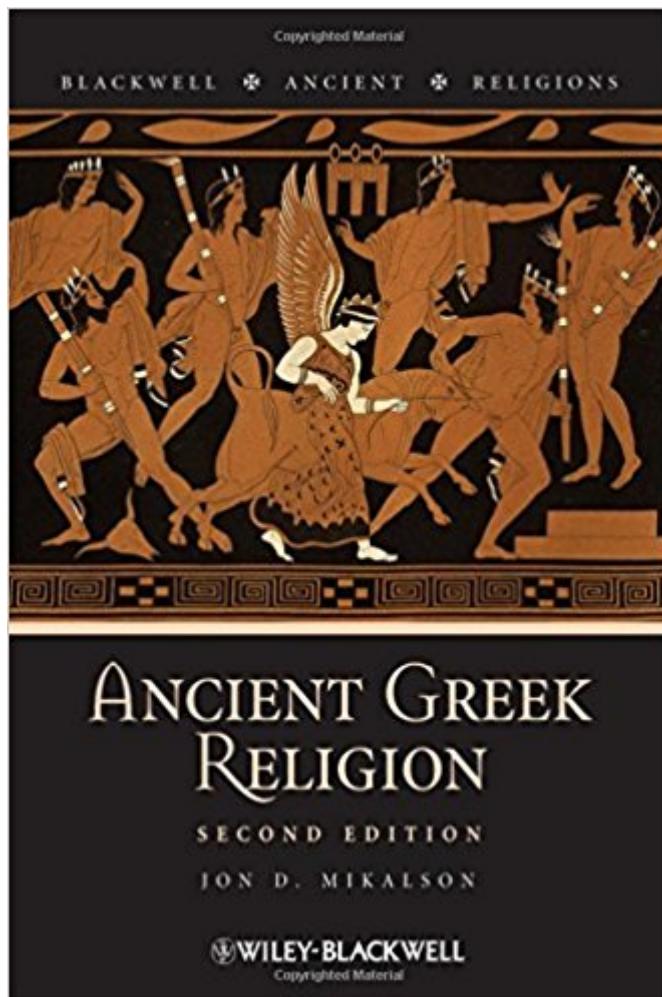


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Ancient Greek Religion



Synopsis

Ancient Greek Religion provides an introduction to the fundamental beliefs, practices, and major deities of Greek religion. Focuses on Athens in the classical period. Includes detailed discussion of Greek gods and heroes, myth and cult, and vivid descriptions of Greek religion as it was practiced. Ancient texts are presented in boxes to promote thought and discussion, and abundant illustrations help readers visualize the rich and varied religious life of ancient Greece. Revised edition includes additional boxed texts and bibliography, an 8-page color plate section, a new discussion of the nature of Greek *o*piety, and a new chapter on Greek Religion and Greek Culture.

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Customer Reviews

Praise for the first edition: "A brilliant general synthesis covering the Greek world over the period of 'classical' Athens ... [Mikalson's] book is a model of how it should be done." BBC History Magazine "A first introduction to ancient Greek religion, which encompasses hundreds of deities of several different types, and varied widely over nearly two thousand years and thousands of large and small Greek city-states." Reference and Research Book News "Clearly written and organised, it will be appreciated by students." Antiquity "It is well written, very accurate, and communicative." Australian Religion Studies Review A Choice Outstanding Academic Title of the Year

This thoroughly updated new edition offers a vivid, engagingly written and beautifully illustrated introduction to the major phenomena of Greek religion from a leading authority in the field. • Daniel Ogden, Professor of Ancient History, University of Exeter, editor of *A Companion to Greek Religion*

(Blackwell 2007) à œAn excellent introductory text, even more user-friendly in its second edition, augmented by color plates, updated bibliography, and a new chapter exploring how religion influenced Greek culture as a whole. • Charles C. Chiasson, The University of Texas at Arlington

Ancient Greek Religion by Jon D. Mikalson is the best book I have found for people just beginning their journey in Greek Religion studies. Its language is very simple and conveys subjects in a very interesting way, you'll want to read what comes next, which is something that many books on Greek Religion seem to miss. It covers sanctuaries and their primary components, come cults and a few myths as well as religious practices (ideas and interpretations are left aside) at both state, family and individual levels. It focus primarily in Athens, except for the cult of Dionysus at Thebes, Apollo at Delphi and Zeus at Olympia, and sometimes the author doesn't make it clear that he is referring to Athens, which may give people just beginning the wrong idea (for instance, in the family chapter he doesn't say that he is describing Athenian families and their practices and that, for example, at Sparta both family organization and practice was quite different). This is however a minor problem for an introductory book, which obviously focus on what is most widely known and discussed. It is also interesting that it has a chapter on religion in the Hellenistic period, something lacking from most books. However it fails to provide information on the Archaic, Dark and Bronze Age, which means it gives no clue to origin. However, since this is an introductory book, with a simple and understandable language, good structuring and, in my opinion, a good though not perfect selection of subjects, I think you should start by this. And if you are not starting, it still is an interesting reading and helps us getting back to the basics and organize information a lot better. Good for both scholars, people interested in the subject and modern practitioners of Hellenismos. Five stars!

A good textbook, well formatted and well researched. It is extremely approachable with a wide knowledge based. I highly suggest this book. My only regrets were that it didn't go as "in-depth" as I would have liked, and it seemed to be lacking in appendices and indexes.

An excellent scholarly source on the Ancient Greek Religion. As a practitioner of Hellenismos, I found this book to be very interesting. Mr. Mikalson is a highly engaging writer, even with such a dense topic; the way he writes will certainly keep you reading. This book is on par with Burkert's "Greek Religion," though it is better written, so that even someone who is just beginning to delve into the topic can understand it all.

Jon D. Mikalson's Ancient Greek Religion is an adequate introduction to the subject, but would perhaps be more accurately titled Classical Greek Religion, as this period is the main focus of the book, with a brief look at Hellenistic religion at the end. Also, for those looking primarily for religious practices outside of Athens, it is best to look elsewhere, as this Greek city-state is the central model for this work. Mikalson is easy to read and understand as he speaks specifically to an audience unfamiliar with the concepts dealt with. His organization is well-plotted and covers the basics of the sanctuary, the functional quality of polytheism, the mystery cults, and how religion was played out in the spheres of the city-state, the family/village and the individual. However, though the book covers nearly all important aspects clearly, it does not do so in depth, but it will whet the reader's appetite and prepare for further study.

All around it is a good text. It is a good covering of the subject, even for non-Classists. It covers the general layout of temples, aspects of cult as well as some in depth looks at particular deities, rituals and places. It reads well and isn't too dense for people with only a casual interest.

For me this book was a valuable source for information on the more obscure or relatively unknown aspects of cults, without being too scholarly. It's an easily digested book and is worth the purchase!

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