Panthée presents a collective reflection relating to the changes affecting the Graeco-Roman Empire and its religious landscapes. Leading specialists construct a picture of practices and conceptual frames, which, in their diversity and inter-action, model a religious universe whose complexity will help understand our modern globalising world. - Panthée propose une réflexion sur les mutations qui ont affecté l'Empire gréco-romain et ont remodelé ses paysages religieux. Les meilleurs spécialistes construisent un tableau des pratiques et des cadres de pensée qui dessinent les contours d'un univers religieux dont la complexité aide à penser le monde moderne de la globalisation.

This book examines the experiences and interconnections of the Reformations, principally in Denmark-Norway and Britain and Ireland (but with an eye to the broader Scandinavian landscape as well), and also discusses instances of similarities between the Reformations in both realms. The volume features a comprehensive introduction, and provides a broad survey of the beginnings and progress of the Catholic and Protestant Reformations in Northern Europe, while also highlighting themes of comparison that are common to all of the bloc under consideration, which will be of interest to Reformation scholars across this geographical region. This book contains 15 essays on the philosophy, theology and reception of Pierre Bayle, who...
is now generally regarded as one of the key authors of the early Enlightenment. This collection of essays considers the place of magic in the modern world, first by exploring the ways in which modernity has been defined in explicit opposition to magic and superstition, and then by illuminating how modern proponents of magic have worked to legitimize their practices through an overt embrace of evolving forms such as esotericism and supernaturalism. Taking a two-track approach, this book explores the complex dynamics of the construction of the modern self and its relation to the modern preoccupation with magic. Essays examine how modern “rational” consciousness is generated and maintained and how proponents of both magical and scientific traditions rationalize evidence to fit accepted orthodoxy. This book also describes how people unsatisfied with the norms of modern subjectivity embrace various forms of magic—and the methods these modern practitioners use to legitimate magic in the modern world. A compelling assessment of magic from the early modern period to today, Magic in the Modern World shows how, despite the dominant culture’s emphatic denial of their validity, older forms of magic persist and develop while new forms of magic continue to emerge. In addition to the editors, contributors include Egil Asprem, Erik Davis, Megan Goodwin, Dan Harms, Adam Jortner, and Benedek Láng. A new history that overturns the received wisdom that science displaced magic in Enlightenment Britain--named a Best Book of 2020 by the Financial Times In early modern Britain, belief in prophecies, omens, ghosts, apparitions and fairies was commonplace. Among both educated and ordinary people the absolute existence of a spiritual world was taken for granted. Yet in the eighteenth century such certainties were swept away. Credit for this great change is usually given to science - and in particular to the scientists of the Royal Society. But
is this justified? Michael Hunter argues that those pioneering the change in attitude were not scientists but freethinkers. While some scientists defended the reality of supernatural phenomena, these sceptical humanists drew on ancient authors to mount a critique both of orthodox religion and, by extension, of magic and other forms of superstition. Even if the religious heterodoxy of such men tarnished their reputation and postponed the general acceptance of anti-magical views, slowly change did come about. When it did, this owed less to the testing of magic than to the growth of confidence in a stable world in which magic no longer had a place.

Throughout its long history, Japan had no concept of what we call “religion.” There was no corresponding Japanese word, nor anything close to its meaning. But when American warships appeared off the coast of Japan in 1853 and forced the Japanese government to sign treaties demanding, among other things, freedom of religion, the country had to contend with this Western idea. In this book, Jason Ananda Josephson reveals how Japanese officials invented religion in Japan and traces the sweeping intellectual, legal, and cultural changes that followed. More than a tale of oppression or hegemony, Josephson’s account demonstrates that the process of articulating religion offered the Japanese state a valuable opportunity. In addition to carving out space for belief in Christianity and certain forms of Buddhism, Japanese officials excluded Shinto from the category. Instead, they enshrined it as a national ideology while relegating the popular practices of indigenous shamans and female mediums to the category of “superstitions”—and thus beyond the sphere of tolerance. Josephson argues that the invention of religion in Japan was a politically charged, boundary-drawing exercise that not only extensively reclassified the inherited materials of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto to
lasting effect, but also reshaped, in subtle but significant ways, our own formulation of the concept of religion today. This ambitious and wide-ranging book contributes an important perspective to broader debates on the nature of religion, the secular, science, and superstition. The three volumes present the current state of international research on Martin Luther’s life and work and the Reformation’s manifold influences on history, churches, politics, culture, philosophy, arts and society up to the 21st century. The work is initiated by the Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII (Bologna) in cooperation with the European network Refo500. This handbook is also available in German.

This well-crafted book probes the key dimensions of Africa’s existential predicament. It constitutes an intellectual response to a gnawing “African situation”—the starting point for grasping Africa’s social and religious quest. Beyond split explanations of external versus internal factors (e.g., colonization/slavery vs. leadership/cultural values), this study accounts more comprehensively for emergent issues shaping this situation. The situation reflects a gamut of problems in traditional African religion and material culture, which hitherto defines African communality, polities, and destinies vis-à-vis the cosmos and nature. Thus, African religion and communities, each with its own attendant values, do not operate by critical engagement with larger issues of society and civilization, especially those shaped by the advent of (post-) modernity. Rather, they operate via adaptation. The communal drive for natural and social harmony inevitably produces a preservationist view of culture (“leaving things as they are”). This study takes an integrative approach to religion, society, and civilization; eschews dichotomies; and broadly defines and re-signifies life and wholeness as a true end of Africans’ quest today.
An accurate picture of ancient religious studies: all papers stress historiography, anthropological history, and philology. Topics range from Mesopotamia to Christianism and rabbinic Judaism. The result is to offer an ambitious and comparatist status quaestionis for today.

Ancient religions are usually treated as collective and political phenomena and, apart from a few towering figures, the individual religious agent has fallen out of view. Addressing this gap, the essays in this volume focus on the individual and individuality in ancient Mediterranean religion. Even in antiquity, individual religious action was not determined by traditional norms handed down through families and the larger social context, but rather options were open and choices were made. On the part of the individual, this development is reflected in changes in 'individuation', the parallel process of a gradual full integration into society and the development of self-reflection and of a notion of individual identity. These processes are analysed within the Hellenistic and Imperial periods, down to Christian-dominated late antiquity, in both pagan polytheistic as well as Jewish monotheistic settings. The volume focuses on individuation in everyday religious practices in Phoenicia, various Greek cities, and Rome, and as identified in institutional developments and philosophical reflections on the self as exemplified by the Stoic Seneca.
This book draws on feminist commentary from the disciplines of anthropology, history, law, politics and sociology in order to deal with the phenomenon of modern-day witchcraft. It focuses on the re-emergence of witchcraft beliefs in contemporary society, suggesting that witchcraft accusations and persecution are being used as a marginalisation mechanism of women. The re-emergence of witchcraft beliefs in contemporary society and the prevalence of the violence associated with such beliefs has received little attention within academic literature, yet witchcraft-related violence against women is, progressively, becoming one of the most pervasive forms of violence facing women today. This book addresses this gap in the literature, discussing the return of witchcraft beliefs to contemporary society, whilst assessing the effectiveness of international human rights law in protecting women from witchcraft accusations and persecution.

In the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus of Nazareth makes reference to one of the oldest beliefs in the ancient world--the malignity of an Evil Eye. The Holy Scriptures in their original languages contain no less than twenty-four references to the Evil Eye, although this is obscured by most modern Bible translations. John H. Elliott's Beware the Evil Eye describes this belief and associated practices, its history, its voluminous appearances in ancient cultures, and the
extensive research devoted to it over the centuries in order to unravel this enigma for readers who have never heard of the Evil Eye and its presence in the Bible.

The concept of providence is embedded in the life and theology of the church. Its uses are frequent and varied in understandings of politics, nature, and individual life-stories. Parallels can be discerned in other faiths. In this volume, David Fergusson traces the development of providential ideas at successive periods in church history. These include the early appropriation of Stoic and Platonic ideas, the codification of providence in the Middle Ages, its foregrounding in Reformed theology, and its secular applications in the modern era. Responses to the Lisbon earthquake (1755) provide an instructive case study. Although confidence in divine providence was shaken after 1914, several models were advanced during the twentieth century. Drawing upon this diversity of approaches, Fergusson offers a chastened but constructive account for the contemporary church. Arguing for a polyphonic approach, he aims to distribute providence across all three articles of the faith.

This book uses a previously overlooked Neo-Latin treatise, Cicero Illustratus, to provide insight into the status and function of the Ciceronian tradition at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and consequently to more broadly illuminate
the fate of that tradition in the early Enlightenment. Cicero Illustratus itself is the first subject for inquiry, mined for what its deliberately erudite and colorfully polemical passages of scholarly stratagems reveal about Ciceronian scholarship and the motives for exploring it within the context of early Enlightenment thought. It also includes an analysis of the role played by the Ciceronian tradition in the broader political and radical movements that existed in the Enlightenment, with particular attention paid to Cicero’s unexpectedly prominent position in major political and philosophical Republican and Erastian works. The subject of this book together with the conclusions reached will provide scholars and students with crucial new material relating to the classical tradition, the history of scholarship, and the intellectual history of the early Enlightenment.

In the Path of the Moon offers a collection of essays concerning Babylonian celestial divination. It investigates various aspects of cuneiform celestial omens, horoscopes, and astronomy and their wide-ranging influences on later Hellenistic science and philosophy.

Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe brings together a rich selection of essays which represent the most important historical research on religion, magic and superstition in early modern Europe. Each essay makes a significant contribution to the history of magic and religion in its own right, while together
they demonstrate how debates over the topic have evolved over time, providing invaluable intellectual, historical, and socio-political context for readers approaching the subject for the first time. The essays are organised around five key themes and areas of controversy. Part One tackles superstition; Part Two, the tension between miracles and magic; Part Three, ghosts and apparitions; Part Four, witchcraft and witch trials; and Part Five, the gradual disintegration of the 'magical universe' in the face of scientific, religious and practical opposition. Each part is prefaced by an introduction that provides an outline of the historiography and engages with recent scholarship and debate, setting the context for the essays that follow and providing a foundation for further study. This collection is an invaluable toolkit for students of early modern Europe, providing both a focused overview and a springboard for broader thinking about the underlying continuities and discontinuities that make the study of magic and superstition a perennially fascinating topic.

The Symptom and the Subject takes an in-depth look at how the physical body first emerged in the West as both an object of knowledge and a mysterious part of the self. Beginning with Homer, moving through classical-era medical treatises, and closing with studies of early ethical philosophy and Euripidean tragedy, this book rewrites the traditional story of the rise of body-soul dualism in ancient
Greece. Brooke Holmes demonstrates that as the body (sôma) became a subject of physical inquiry, it decisively changed ancient Greek ideas about the meaning of suffering, the soul, and human nature. By undertaking a new examination of biological and medical evidence from the sixth through fourth centuries BCE, Holmes argues that it was in large part through changing interpretations of symptoms that people began to perceive the physical body with the senses and the mind. Once attributed primarily to social agents like gods and daemons, symptoms began to be explained by physicians in terms of the physical substances hidden inside the person. Imagining a daemonic space inside the person but largely below the threshold of feeling, these physicians helped to radically transform what it meant for human beings to be vulnerable, and ushered in a new ethics centered on the responsibility of taking care of the self. The Symptom and the Subject highlights with fresh importance how classical Greek discoveries made possible new and deeply influential ways of thinking about the human subject.

"The author's readings of early Christian martyr texts suggest that Christians found the suffering self a useful discourse by which to construct their identities, distinguish their teachings, refute antagonistic claims, and retain believers. The author shows that in these texts, suffering is not embraced as an identity but
presented as a problem to be solved. Pain is the experience of those who live apart from God. The author demonstrates that in the moments at issue in martyr texts—trial, torture, and death—the Christian self is decidedly not a sufferer. God's intervention miraculously transforms the physical experience. The torture that should hurt heals instead; the body that should be fragmented is, instead, made whole. The author concludes that in a world of sufferers, Christian martyrs serve as promises of another world where there is—existentially and not merely metaphorically—no pain"—Provided by publisher.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus of Nazareth makes reference to one of the oldest beliefs in the ancient world—the malignity of an Evil Eye. The Holy Scriptures in their original languages contain no less than twenty-four references to the Evil Eye, although this is obscured by most modern Bible translations. John H. Elliott's Beware the Evil Eye describes this belief and associated practices, its history, its voluminous appearances in ancient cultures, and the extensive research devoted to it over the centuries in order to unravel this enigma for readers who have never heard of the Evil Eye and its presence in the Bible. This is the first of a four-volume work on the Evil Eye.

Exercices d’histoire des religions is a collection of nineteen studies by Philippe Borgeaud, showcasing his many reflections on the categories and tools used to describe and compare such evanescent concepts as “religions”, “myths” and “rituals”. Exercices d’histoire des religions rassemble dix-neuf articles de Philippe Borgeaud, illustrant sa réflexion sur les outils
et catégories employés pour décrire et comparer des concepts aussi évanescents que les « religions », les « mythes » ou les « rituels ».

Religious individuality is not restricted to modernity. This book offers a new reading of the ancient sources in order to find indications for the spectrum of religious practices and intensified forms of such practices only occasionally denounced as 'superstition'. Authors from Cicero in the first century BC to the law codes of the fourth century AD share the assumption that authentic and binding communication between individuals and gods is possible and widespread, even if problematic in the case of divination or the confrontation with images of the divine. A change in practices and assumptions throughout the imperial period becomes visible. It might be characterised as 'individualisation' and informed the Roman law of religions. The basic constellation - to give freedom of religion and to regulate religion at the same time - resonates even into modern bodies of law and is important for juridical conflicts today.

Interest in the middle ages is at an all time high at the moment, thanks in part to "The Da Vinci Code." Never has there been a moment more propitious for a study of our misconceptions of the Middle Ages than now. Ranging across religion, art, and science, Misconceptions about the Middle Ages unravels some of the many misinterpretations that have evolved concerning the medieval period, including: the church war science art society With an impressive international array of contributions, the book will be essential reading for students and scholars involved with medieval religion, history, and culture.


Inventing Superstition
Harvard University Press
A study of the 'heretic' Jovinian and the Jovinianist controversy, this work examines early Christian views on marriage and celibacy in the first three centuries and the development of an anti-heretical tradition. It provides an analysis of the responses of Jovinian's main opponents. A standard work in nineteen chapters from leading international scholars on bishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636), addressing the contexts in which the seventh-century bishop lived and worked, exploring his key works and activities, and finally considering his later reception.

This book offers a reconstruction and interpretation of banishment in the final era of a unified Roman Empire, 284-476 CE. Author Daniel Washburn argues that exile was both a penalty and a symbol. It applied to those who committed a misstep or crossed the wrong person; it also stood as a marker of affliction or failure. Like other punishments, it articulated and cemented the power asymmetry between the punisher and the punished. Distinctively, it maneuvered the body of the banished in order to tell that tale. The process of banishment also operated as a form of negotiation between the party that exiled and the one banished. In so doing, the punishment offered the possibility for pardon, an event that glorified the pardoner and signaled submissiveness on the part of the restored. In its sources, this work employs evidence from legal as well as literary materials to forge a complete picture of exile. To harvest all possible information from the period, it considers elements from the arenas of the early church and the Roman Empire. Methodologically, it situates ancient Christianity within the Roman world, while remaining sensitive to the distinct views and roles held by late antique bishops. While banishment played a major role in the history of the Later Empire, no work of scholarship has treated it as a topic in its own right.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus of Nazareth makes reference to one of the oldest beliefs in
the ancient world—the malignity of an Evil Eye. The Holy Scriptures in their original languages contain no less than twenty-four references to the Evil Eye, although this is obscured by most modern Bible translations. John H. Elliott’s Beware the Evil Eye describes this belief and associated practices, its history, its voluminous appearances in ancient cultures, and the extensive research devoted to it over the centuries in order to unravel this enigma for readers who have never heard of the Evil Eye and its presence in the Bible. The four volumes cover the ancient world from Sumer to the Middle Ages.

Characters in the Second Gospel are analysed and an in-depth look at different approaches currently employed by scholars working with literary and reader-oriented methods of analysis is provided. The first section consists of essays on method/theory, and the second consists of seven exegetical character studies using a literary or reader-oriented method. All contributors work from a literary, narrative-critical, reader-oriented, or related methodology. The book summarizes the state of the discussion and examines obstacles to arriving at a comprehensive theory of character in the Second Gospel. Specific contributions include analyses of the representation of women, God, Jesus, Satan, Gentiles, and the Roman authorities of Mark’s Gospel. This work is both an exploration of theories of character, and a study in the application of those theories.

This volume explores the intricate identarian formation and negotiations of early encounters of the Abrahamic religions. Its aim is to understand the ever-pressing challenges arising from polemical inter-religious encounters by analyzing the dynamics of apologetic debate, the negotiation and formation of boundaries of belonging, and the argumentative thrust for persuasion and conversion.
The primary aim of this volume is to synthesize the two fields of disability studies and biblical studies. It illustrates how academic or critical biblical scholarship has shown that many texts involving disability in the Bible is much more nuanced than a casual reading or isolated proof texting may indicate.

Do you touch wood for luck, or avoid hotel rooms on floor thirteen? Would you cross the path of a black cat, or step under a ladder? Is breaking a mirror just an expensive waste of glass, or something rather more sinister? Despite the dominance of science in today's world, superstitious beliefs - both traditional and new - remain surprisingly popular. A recent survey of adults in the United States found that 33 percent believed that finding a penny was good luck, and 23 percent believed that the number seven was lucky. Where did these superstitions come from, and why do they persist today? This Very Short Introduction explores the nature and surprising history of superstition from antiquity to the present. For two millennia, superstition was a label derisively applied to foreign religions and unacceptable religious practices, and its primary purpose was used to separate groups and assert religious and social authority. After the Enlightenment, the superstition label was still used to define groups, but the new dividing line was between reason and unreason. Today, despite our apparent sophistication and technological advances, superstitious belief and behaviour remain widespread, and highly educated people are not immune. Stuart Vyse takes an exciting look at the varieties of popular superstitious beliefs today and the psychological reasons behind their continued existence, as well as the likely future course of superstition in our increasingly connected world. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get
ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable. Superstitions are commonplace in the modern world. Mostly, however, they evoke innocuous images of people reading their horoscopes or avoiding black cats. Certain religious practices might also come to mind—praying to St. Christopher or lighting candles for the dead. Benign as they might seem today, such practices were not always perceived that way. In medieval Europe superstitions were considered serious offenses, violations of essential precepts of Christian doctrine or immutable natural laws. But how and why did this come to be? In Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies, Michael D. Bailey explores the thorny concept of superstition as it was understood and debated in the Middle Ages. Bailey begins by tracing Christian thinking about superstition from the patristic period through the early and high Middle Ages. He then turns to the later Middle Ages, a period that witnessed an outpouring of writings devoted to superstition—tracts and treatises with titles such as De superstitionibus and Contra vitia superstitionum. Most were written by theologians and other academics based in Europe’s universities and courts, men who were increasingly anxious about the proliferation of suspect beliefs and practices, from elite ritual magic to common healing charms, from astrological divination to the observance of signs and omens. As Bailey shows, however, authorities were far more sophisticated in their reasoning than one might suspect, using accusations of superstition in a calculated way to control the boundaries of legitimate religion and acceptable science. This in turn would lay the conceptual groundwork for future discussions of religion, science, and magic in the early modern world. Indeed, by revealing the extent to which early modern thinkers took up old questions about the operation of natural properties and forces
using the vocabulary of science rather than of belief, Bailey exposes the powerful but in many ways false dichotomy between the "superstitious" Middle Ages and "rational" European modernity.

The Demonic in the Political Thought of Eusebius of Caesarea explores how Eusebius of Caesarea's ideas about demons interacted with and helped to shape his thought on other topics, particularly political topics. Hazel Johannessen builds on and complements recent work on early Christian and early modern demonology. Eusebius' political thought has long drawn the attention of scholars who have identified in some of his works the foundations of later Byzantine theories of kingship. However, Eusebius' political thought has not previously been examined in the light of his views on demons. Moreover, despite frequent references to demons throughout many of Eusebius' works, there has been no comprehensive study of Eusebius' views on demons, until now, as expressed throughout a range of his works. The originality of this study lies both in an initial examination of Eusebius' views on demons and their place in his cosmology, and in the application of the insights derived from this to consideration of his political thought. As a result of this new perspective, Johannessen challenges scholars' traditional characterization of Eusebius as a triumphal optimist. Instead, she draws attention to his concerns about a continuing demonic threat, capable of disrupting humankind's salvation, and presents Eusebius as a more cautious figure than the one familiar to late antique scholarship.

In Revisioning John Chrysostom, Chris de Wet and Wendy Mayer harness a new wave of scholarship on the life and works of John Chrysostom (c. 350-407 CE), which applies new theoretical lenses and reconsiders his debt to classical paideia.
The Roman author Pliny the Younger characterizes Christianity as "contagious superstition"; two centuries later the Christian writer Eusebius vigorously denounces Greek and Roman religions as vain and impotent "superstitions." The term of abuse is the same, yet the two writers suggest entirely different things by "superstition." Dale Martin provides the first detailed genealogy of the idea of superstition, its history over eight centuries, from classical Greece to the Christianized Roman Empire of the fourth century C.E. With illuminating reference to the writings of philosophers, historians, and medical teachers he demonstrates that the concept of superstition was invented by Greek intellectuals to condemn popular religious practices and beliefs, especially the belief that gods or other superhuman beings would harm people or cause disease. Tracing the social, political, and cultural influences that informed classical thinking about piety and superstition, nature and the divine, "Inventing Superstition" exposes the manipulation of the label of superstition in arguments between Greek and Roman intellectuals on the one hand and Christians on the other, and the purposeful alteration of the idea by Neoplatonic philosophers and Christian apologists in late antiquity. "Inventing Superstition" weaves a powerfully coherent argument that will transform our understanding of religion in Greek and Roman culture and the wider ancient Mediterranean world.

Rabbinic midrash of late antiquity and the early medieval period visualized Egypt and presented Egyptian religious concepts and icons. Midrash is analyzed in a cross-cultural perspective utilizing insights from the discipline of Egyptology. Topics: the Greco-Roman Nile god, Isis, Serapis and other gods, festivals, mummy portraits, funeral customs, the Egyptian language, Pharaohs, Cleopatra, Alexandria, the divine eye. The hermeneutical role of Egyptian cultural icons in midrash is explored.
Early Christians frequently used metaphors about slavery, calling themselves slaves of God and Christ and referring to their leaders as slave representatives of Christ. Most biblical scholars have insisted that this language would have been distasteful to potential converts in the Greco-Roman world, and they have wondered why early Christians such as Paul used the image of slavery to portray salvation. In this book Dale B. Martin addresses the issue by examining the social history and rhetorical and theological conventions of the times. The first half of the book draws on a variety of historical sources – inscriptions, novels, speeches, dream-handbooks, and agricultural manuals – to portray the complexity of slavery in the early Roman empire. Concentrating on middle-level, managerial slaves, Martin shows how slavery sometimes functioned as a means of upward social mobility and as a form of status-by-association for those slaves who were agents of members of the upper class. For this reason, say Martin, “slavery of Christ,” brought the Christian convert a degree of symbolic status and lent the Christian leader a certain kind of derived authority. The second half of the book traces the Greco-Roman use of political rhetoric that spoke about populist leaders as “enslaved” to their followers, especially to members of the lower class. This provides the context for Paul’s claim, in 1 Corinthians 9, that he has enslaved himself to “all” – that is, to those very people he is supposed to lead as an apostle. Martin thus interprets this statement to mean that Paul identifies himself with the interests of persons with lower status in the Corinthian church, calling on those with higher status to imitate his self-debasement in order to further the interests of those below them on the social scale.

An examination of Constantine the Great’s legislation and government

This volume in honour of Jan N. Bremmer consists of a variety of contributions offering a broad
spectrum of original ideas and innovative approaches in the history of religions both past and present, thus reflecting the nature of the scholarship of Bremmer himself.

In his sixth satire, Juvenal speculates about how Roman wives busy themselves while their husbands are away, namely, by entertaining a revolving door of exotic visitors who include a eunuch of the eastern goddess Bellona, an impersonator of Egyptian Anubis, a Judean priestess, and Chaldean astrologers. From these self-proclaimed religious specialists women solicit services ranging from dream interpretation to the coercion of lovers. Juvenal's catalogue suggests the popularity of such "freelance" experts at the turn of the second century and their familiarity to his audience, whom he could expect to get the joke. Heidi Wendt investigates the backdrop of this enthusiasm for the religion of freelance experts by examining their rise during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire. Unlike civic priests and temple personnel, freelance experts had to generate their own authority and legitimacy, often through demonstrations of skill and learning in the streets, in marketplaces, and at the temple gates, among other locations in the Roman world. Wendt argues that these professionals participated in a highly competitive form of religious activity that intersected with multiple areas of specialty, particularly philosophy and medicine. Over the course of the imperial period freelance experts grew increasingly influential, more diverse with respect to their skills and methods, and more assorted in the ethnic coding of their practices. Wendt argues that this context engendered many of the innovative forms of religion that flourished in the second and third centuries, including phenomena linked with Persian Mithras, the Egyptian gods, and the Judean Christ. The evidence for freelance experts in religion is abundant, but scholars of ancient Mediterranean religion have only recently begun to appreciate their impact on the empire's
changing religious landscape. At the Temple Gates integrates studies of Judaism, Christianity, mystery cults, astrology, magic, and philosophy to paint a colorful portrait of religious expertise in early Rome.