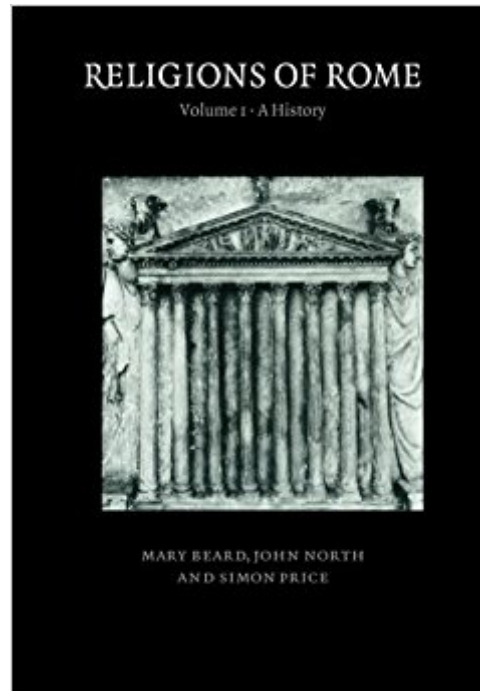




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Religions Of Rome: Volume 1: A History



Synopsis

This book offers a radical new survey of more than a thousand years of religious life in Rome, from the foundation of the city to its rise to world empire and its conversion to Christianity. It sets religion in its full cultural context, between the primitive hamlet of the eighth century BC and the cosmopolitan, multicultural society of the first centuries of the Christian era.

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Customer Reviews

"Finally, someone has written a readable history of the complex subject of Roman Religion. Beard, North and Price, professors from Cambridge, University College London and Oxford respectively, bring a wealth of expertise to the project, but their approach is, in their own terms 'radical'. Throughout, this book is authoritative, well organized, interesting and eminently readable. It is highly recommended as a background to the important subject of religion as it is manifested in numismatic imagery." Wayne G. Sayles, *The Celator*"Religions of Rome is a major work from a major press that will likely be widely read and cited for years to come. Often, it is worthy of such a status." *The Journal of Religion*"A handsome, impressively illustrated two-volume set..." *Lingua Franca*

This book offers a radical new survey of more than a thousand years of religious life at Rome, from the foundation of the city to its rise to world empire and its conversion to Christianity. It sets religion in its full cultural context, between the primitive hamlet of the eighth century BC and the cosmopolitan, multicultural society of the first centuries of the Christian era. The companion volume, *Religions of Rome 2: A Sourcebook*, sets out a wide range of documents, richly illustrating the

religious life in the Roman world.

This is a very worthy tome on the cultural history of religious life in ancient Rome. I suspect the target market comprises academics and university students of ancient history - and it is perhaps for this reason that I found the text dry, though informative and, no doubt, reliable. This is a valuable addition to my library (if it can be called thus) on ancient Roman religion. I do not give it 5 stars because I would have preferred more discussion on the individual Gods themselves (dealt with within their own topic areas).

Volume 2 is more interesting. This volume is overwhelmed with footnotes.

A solid text dealing with the religions of ancient Rome. Beginning with the early cults during the period of monarchy, then republic and empire; Beard, North and Price take an easy to follow and informative route that seeks to examine the religions and cults of Rome and its citizens. With iconographies included, the reader is able to see how the many districts within the empire both adored and loathed the religious institutions of the empire. From the earliest cult imports to pagan giants which were ultimately strangled by emperors dedicated to Christian belief, Religions of Rome is a worthwhile purchase.

The perfect match to the source book this book is also a winner, exploring the diversity and intricacies of Roman religion.

This book is detailed enough to make it a good read. Well, of course, there is another volume. The book begins with Early Rome and ends with the Christian emperors, in terms of the Religion of Rome, that is.

thank you

"Religions of Rome, Volume 1: A History" presents a millennium of Roman religion, following the place and practice of religion in Roman society from the primitive village to the Christian capitol, the 5th century BC to the 5th century AD. This is an impressive collaborative effort by Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Pierce. The prose is dense with information but always interesting and articulate. The authors provide a fascinating window on how religion and its place in society adapted over

many centuries and, therefore, valuable insight on how religion functions in human societies, not just ancient Rome. They only occasionally quote a primary source, as primary sources are found in "Religions of Rome, Volume 2: A Sourcebook" and are referenced in footnotes by chapter number in bold font, so readers can easily locate the document in Volume 2. The history is arranged chronologically into eight chapters: Roman religion before the 2nd century BC, changes brought about by Rome's becoming the dominant power in the Mediterranean in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, religion of the late republic in a state of reputed decline, Augustan reforms and the religion of the early Empire, the boundaries of acceptable practice of religion in three centuries of Imperial Rome, alternative cults in the principate, the dissemination of Roman religion outside of Rome in towns with Roman status and without, and the relationship between paganism and Christianity in Rome of the 4th and 5th centuries AD. There are no accounts of Roman religion written before the 1st century BC, so early Roman religion is somewhat conjectural. The authors don't offer much detail of the particulars of religious ritual. Their focus is on how religion related to Roman society as a whole, the social and political role it played. I found the chapter on acceptable practice particularly insightful, as it describes the ever-changing concepts of what is "religio" versus "superstitio" and religion's role in the evolving view of "Roman-ness", or Roman identity. The co-existence of traditional religion and various foreign cults, including Judaism and Christianity, in the Empire is discussed in some detail and is also especially interesting. The politics surrounding the Christianization of Rome and Christian theological disputes are not treated in detail. Emphasis is on the degrees and ways in which Christianity and paganism co-existed in Christian Rome.

There is plenty of beef in this book. When one looks at the recent religions of Rome, one can easily overlook the older religions. The newer religions are logical evolutions of the older. Attis and Cybele are obvious models for Jesus and Mary. The older Mithraeums were obvious locations for the newer cathedrals. Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun.

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