

## The Other Bible Willis Barnstone

The Gospel of Judas: On a Night with Judas Iscariot presents a fresh translation of the Gospel of Judas, with introduction, commentary, and notes. Originally published with considerable international fanfare in 2006, the Gospel of Judas has prompted a vibrant discussion among scholars and other interested readers about the meaning of the text and the place of Judas Iscariot in the story of Jesus and the history of the church. Meyer, a member of the original research team assembled by the National Geographic Society to edit, translate, and publish the Gospel of Judas and the remaining texts in what is now called Codex Tchacos, here offers an up-to-date and thoroughly accessible translation of the Gospel of Judas, expanded with new fragments of the text and informed by the latest scholarship. He adds reminiscences of the work on the Coptic text when it first was coming to light in 2005 and 2006. This book also includes reflections on the extensive literature, beyond the Gospel of Judas, on the figure of Judas Iscariot, with suggestions for a literary interpretation of Judas--an interpretation that may have a dramatic impact upon our understanding of the role of Judas Iscariot in the story of Jesus's passion. "Marvin Meyer can justly be considered the premier translator of ancient Gnostic writings in North America and one of the world's leading experts on the Gospel of Judas. Now he provides a vivid and compelling translation of this most important text along with an insightful introduction and copious notes. Most intriguing of all, he narrates a theatrical engagement with issues that emerge from recent reflections on the world's most infamous and intriguing "villain," Judas Iscariot. This is intense scholarship and creative imagination at the highest level." -Bart D. Ehrman University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill "Marvin Meyer has a track record of a series of serious academic publications that are both readable and reliable, which distinguished tradition The Gospel of Judas continues on the same high plane." -James M. Robinson Claremont Graduate University "Beginning with the Nag Hammadi library, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Gospel of Judas, we have a trinity of essential holy scriptures that radically enrich and alter our knowledge of Judaism, Christianity, and Gnosticism. Now with his definitive version of Judas and its latest fragments, Marvin Meyer bequeaths the world a benevolent Judas. Meyer provides a crisp literary translation and introduction to the fully annotated Judas text--as well as a surprise: "A Night with Judas Iscariot." In his profoundly funny and thoughtful mystery play, Judas stars as the redemptive figure. Hurrah for this revolutionary book with its poetic enlightenment!" -Willis Barnstone author of The Restored New Testament and The Other Bible "In this book Professor Marvin Meyer shares in a very readable way his thoughtful insights into the Coptic Gospel of Judas--a second-century text essential for our understanding of the first steps of Christianity and the gnostic movements--while providing the key to unveil the symbolic contents of this apocryphal gospel. The epilogue--"A Night with Judas Iscariot"--shows well how ancient texts can be communicated meaningfully to a contemporary audience. This is a strong, powerful book that captivates the reader from the first page to the last." -Madeleine Scopello Correspondant de l'Institut de France "No other recent discovery from Christian antiquity has stirred so much debate as the Gospel of Judas. Does it really rehabilitate Judas, or does it place him in the same role of a villain as the gospels in the New Testament? Does this gospel contain "good news," and if so, to whom, or does it only proclaim bad news to Judas and to all of humankind? So much has been written about this text since its publication in 2006 that one might wonder if something substantially new can be added to the discussion any longer. Marvin Meyer's important new book sh

"Reading the Bible as Literature provides the ideal entry-point to the process of reading, understanding, and assessing what many recognize to be the important and powerful literature of the Bible. Such reading holds potential for helping students understand literature generally and the Bible in itself. The book introduces the tools of literary analysis, including: language

and style, the formal structures of genre (narrative, drama, and poetry), character study, and thematic analysis. The book emphasizes the act of reading itself, focusing upon the whole text as it exists in its current form. It invites an experiential entering into and reliving of the Bible's stories, encourages analytical and holistic reading, explores multiple interpretations, and embraces a power of language originating in the mythological, metaphorical, and symbolic. Above all, the book seeks to return the Bible to the common reader and to build in that reader an appreciation for a collection of ancient, literary texts often trivialized by competing theologies or marginalized by a relentless insistence upon fact, science, and history." -- Back cover.

The people we've come to call gnostics were passionate advocates of the view that salvation comes through knowledge and personal experience, and their passion shines through in the remarkable body of writings they produced over a period of more than a millennium and a half. Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer have created a translation that brings the gnostic voices to us from across the centuries with remarkable power and beauty—beginning with texts from the earliest years of Christianity—including material from the Nag Hammadi library—and continuing all the way up to expressions of gnostic wisdom found within Islam and in the Cathar movement of the Middle Ages. The twenty-one texts included here serve as a compact introduction to Gnosticism and its principal ideas—and they also provide an entrée to the pleasures of gnostic literature in general, representing, as they do, the greatest masterpieces of that tradition.

This innovative book presents a detailed examination of Christian origins through a careful assessment of common features and differences found between the many Christian denominations, such as, the role of Jesus as the Son of God, salvation through the belief in Jesus' death and resurrection, and the interpretation of the Christian scriptures. Readers will trace these issues back to their original first century context by exploring the Scriptures, the history of the period, and the development of the Jesus story found in the New Testament. A different portrait of Jesus emerges that departs from the traditional ideal of Jesus found in mainstream Christianity. Discover just how far Christianity has strayed from the Jesus of history.

While other "Bible" catalogs are available, this comprehensive reference book is destined to become the standard in the field. Chamberlin's one-volume work traces the publication history of multiple editions of "Bible" translations and offers valuable descriptive annotations. The catalog not only includes complete Bibles, but also Old and New Testaments, partial texts, commentaries that include translations, children's "Bibles," Apocryphal writings, and the "Koran," as well. Other bibliographies are usually limited to editions commonly found in academic libraries, but Chamberlin's guide also includes Bibles found in private collections. Overall, this catalogue contains more than five times as many entries of different English translations as two other "Bible" bibliographies, those by Hill and Herbert, combined. The entries are grouped in 151 categories, and within each category entries are listed in chronological order. The accompanying annotations identify the translator and provide an overview of the contents of each work. The detailed indexes make this bibliography a convenient tool for researchers. Bible scholars, collectors, and rare book dealers will find this catalogue a necessary addition to their libraries.

With poems selected and translated by one of the preeminent translators of our day, this bilingual collection of 112 sonnets by six Spanish-language masters of the form ranges in time from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries and includes the works of poets from Spanish America as well as poets native to Spain. Willis Barnstone's selection of sonnets and the extensive historical and biographical background he supplies serve as a compelling survey of Spanish-language poetry that should be of interest both to lovers of poetry in general and to scholars of Spanish-language literature in particular. Following an introductory examination of

the arrival of the sonnet in Spain and of that nation's poetry up to Francisco de Quevedo, Barnstone takes up his six masters in chronological turn, preceding each with an essay that not only presents the sonneteer under discussion but also continues the carefully delineated history of Spanish-language poetry. Consistently engaging and informative and never dull or pedantic, these essays stand alone as appreciations—in the finest sense of that word—of some of the greatest poets ever to write. It is, however, Barnstone's subtle, musical, clear, and concise translations that form the heart of this collection. As Barnstone himself says, "In many ways all my life has been some kind of preparation for this volume."

In this poetic and historically sensitive new translation of the four Gospels and Revelation (Apocalypse), award-winning poet, translator, and scholar Willis Barnstone returns the bedrock of Christianity to its origins as an outgrowth of Judaism.

Examines the uses and misuses of archeological evidence in the study of Biblical events and life in Bible times, and describes research on the Exodus, the early kings, Jesus, ancient women, synagogues, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Bar Kockba.

The Other Bible presents a rare opportunity to discover the poetic and narrative riches of the early, ancient holy texts of Judeo-Christian literature that were excluded from the official canon of the Old and New Testaments, and to read firsthand their visionary discourses on the nature of God, humanity, the spiritual life, the world around us, and infinite worlds beyond.

An exploration of the canonical and non-canonical (and often little-known) early Christian encounters with the risen Christ.

"A learned, sprightly meditation on translation or literary 'transformation' . . . full of splendid examples, particularly from sacred literature, and repeatedly shows how much original genius is necessary to the true re-creation of any work."—Richard Wilbur (for *The Poetics of Translation*)  
The alphabet according to Willis Barnstone: B is for Between, I for Independence, S for Strictures . . . ABC of Translation is a series of poems that explore issues of translation and spirituality. Punctuated by Barnstone's powerful dry-ink paintings. Willis Barnstone is a Guggenheim fellow, poet, scholar, and memoirist. His books include *The Poetics of Translation*, *The Other Bible*, and *The New Covenant*.

In this last work, Kenan Osborne addresses the intersection between new scientific insights into the origin of the human species and the growing awareness of a multicultural and multi-religious world with our contemporary understanding of God. After a review of current presentations of Trinitarian theology, he analyzes in detail the biblical record for the names of God and develops a cogent description of the thinking about God in the first six centuries. Complementing his 2015 volume *The Infinity of God and A Finite World, A Franciscan Approach*, this present work challenges theologians and believers in two distinct ways: Do the terms "Father" and "Son" have any essential meaning for divinity? From a human standpoint, God is essentially neither a "Father" nor a "Son." Nor do these two words have some exclusive meaning when they refer to divinity. What then do we mean when we talk about God? Second, in many theological textbooks, the term "infinite" is considered as an "attribute" of God. Infinity is in no way an attribute, even a divine attribute. It is rather an essential description of God, as the Franciscan philosophical theologian John Duns Scotus argues. And if this is so, can we really understand God, or are all our views and descriptions of an infinite God partial insights into a transcendent infinite God who embraces all human creatures from the beginning of homo sapiens sapiens to the present?

Willis Barnstone is a literature in himself: poet, translator, interpreter, in one year he can range from Jesus to Sappho and Borges with calm authority and good humour. He re-translates the New Testament in a version Harold Bloom describes as a superb act of restoration'. *Mexico in My Heart* is the essential Barnstone, drawing on fourteen collections, poetry from six decades of writing and from several continents, together with a significant number of new poems published for the first time.

"I am absolutely in awe of your book. It is an extraordinarily important work. It will, I humbly suggest, change many lives." -- Joseph W. Dunn, Jr., Editor, A.R.E. Press \*\*\* "I believe Awakening the Soul (Book 3) is the key to the 12th Step" (of Alcoholics Anonymous) - Susana K., Oregon \*\*\* "We all agree on the brilliance of this work." -- Lisa Hagan, literary agent, Paraview, Inc.

DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK IF YOU OWN THE "Trilogy" or ATS: Book 2, its primary source. (This, the fifth book in the Awakening The Soul series, is the story of the discovery of the suppression of almost all the traits of our spiritual nature by those who should have been protecting and enhancing them. By the time you get to the end of this book, you will understand what Western Religions have done to the world. This realization grew to the point where it became obvious this most vital information needed a wider, more immediate audience for greater exposure than just to those actively seeking spiritual awakening. These historically-documented truths, many presented here for the first time, are something every contemporary Christian, Jew and Muslim should know.)

This is the first book-length treatment in English of the Nag Hammadi text, The Thunder: Perfect Mind - a poem of 'I am' statements that has garnered a strong following in mainstream culture. This book offers a fresh, current translation (with detailed Coptic annotations) and ten chapters of introductory analysis of the text.

THE GNOSTIC BIBLE is by far the most comprehensive compilation of gnostic texts ever published - and the first aimed at rendering the texts in poetic, readable prose. The gnostics were religious thinkers engaged in the quest for wisdom and knowledge, and they proclaimed a salvation to be found through mystical knowledge and intuition. As the Gospel of Thomas puts it, "Know what is in front of your face and what is hidden from you will be disclosed. There is nothing hidden from you that will not be revealed." Dating from the first to the thirteen centuries, these gnostic texts represent Jewish, Christian, Hemitic, Mandaean, Manichaean, Islamic and Cathar forms of gnostic spirituality, and they derive from Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, the Middle East, Syria, Iraq, China, France and elsewhere. These texts show that gnosticism was a world religion that sought truths in a wide variety of religious traditions and expressed those truths in powerful and provocative mystical poetry and prose. The impact of gnosticism upon other religions of the world was considerable, and the influence of gnosticism continues to the present day. This volume represents the first time that such a diverse collection of gnostic texts is published in a single volume and some of the texts are translated into English for the first time here. The texts are accompanied by introductions and notes and additional study aids describe gnosticism, elucidate gnostic terms and suggest further readings.

"The vividness and beauty of the language emerge in a fresh way . . . with evocative simplicity." --Robert Alter, professor emeritus of Hebrew and comparative literature, University of California, Berkeley

Divine Heiress explores the vital role of the Virgin Mary in the cultural and religious life of Constantinople in late antiquity. It shows how she was transformed from a humble Jewish maiden into a divine figure and supernatural protector of Constantinople. Vasiliki Limberis examines the cult of Mary in the context of the religious culture of the Mediterranean world and the imperial Christianity of the Roman Empire. The author looks at all the evidence for the cult but pays particular attention to the early hymns to the virgin. These hymns preserved the strong indigenous goddess traditions of Demeter/Persephone, Isis, Hecate and Athena. By studying them the author places the

cult of Mary in its historical and cultural context.

Mary Magdalene was the principle witness of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as told in the Christian gospels: the grief-stricken scarlet woman at the foot of the cross, clutching her jar of ointment, her hair loose like that of the maenads. Yet by the sixth century, Mary, once called the Tower, had fallen into disrepute as a sinner and prostitute. Mary was never a martyr, but tradition has her exiled to a solitary cave, where she was not a threat to the established church until she emerged after the rediscovery of the heretical Gnostic texts. In these, Mary Magdalene is the beloved companion of Jesus, the disciple who "knew the all." As with her predecessor Eve, she bears the sin of desiring knowledge and is condemned for it. The question of whether Mary Magdalene can be identified with Mary of Bethany has become merely another means of reducing her authority. In the gospels, Jesus said that his anointer should be remembered for all generations, yet she remains maligned and undefended-until now. This expanded edition of *The Gnostic Bible* includes the Gospel of Judas—the recently discovered and translated gnostic text that was an instant best seller on its original appearance in 2006—in its most accessible translation yet. Also included are such important and topical texts as the Gospel of Mary Magdalene and the Gospel of Thomas. Religious thinkers engaged in the quest for wisdom and knowledge, the gnostics proclaimed that salvation could be found through mystical knowledge and intuition. Dating from the first to the thirteenth centuries, the texts in *The Gnostic Bible* represent Jewish, Christian, Hermetic, Mandaean, Manichaean, Islamic, and Cathar forms of gnostic spirituality, and they derive from Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, the Middle East, Syria, Iraq, China, France, and elsewhere.

A poet, translator and religious scholar reveals the original words spoken by Jesus, as depicted by Mark, Matthew, Luke and John and shows how lyrical and richly described they were, before being lost in numerous re-translations.

Sappho's thrilling lyric verse has been unremittingly popular for more than 2,600 years—certainly a record for poetry of any kind—and love for her art only increases as time goes on. Though her extant work consists only of a collection of fragments and a handful of complete poems, her mystique endures to be discovered anew by each generation, and to inspire new efforts at bringing the spirit of her Greek words faithfully into English. In the past, translators have taken two basic approaches to Sappho: either very literally translating only the words in the fragments, or taking the liberty of reconstructing the missing parts. Willis Barnstone has taken a middle course, in which he remains faithful to the words of the fragments, only very judiciously filling in a word or phrase in cases where the meaning is obvious. This edition includes extensive notes and a special section of "Testimonia": appreciations of Sappho in the words of ancient writers from Plato to Plutarch. Also included are a glossary of all the figures mentioned in the poems, and suggestions for further reading.

*The Other Bible* Harper San Francisco

*The Book of Unknowing* meditates on John's confrontation with the incandescent Jesus, a figure of our desire for immortality. Guiding us through the Gospel's coming to grips with Jesus, the poet David Sten Herrstrom prefers sparking the imagination to arguing a thesis, as he explores John's own obsessions, such as image (light), symbol (water), sign (water to wine), shapeliness (symmetry), loves (Peter, Mary's), and above all, words (the Word, the body of Jesus). The result is a heady, literary engagement not

afraid of wit and paradox. For anyone who loves literature or whose business is interpretation--ministers and teachers--this book blossoms with fresh revelations about the many voices of Jesus living in the House of the Interpreter and interacting with another interpreter (Nicodemus), as well as about John the interpreter who continually pauses to explain Jesus' motives, metaphors, and the meaning of his death. This meditation on John's Gospel takes the goat's leaping approach to the craggy language of John and Jesus rather than the methodical rock climber's. And along the way, to help him find footholds on the how and why of John's strategies, the author calls on other poets, from William Blake to Emily Dickinson and Miguel de Unamuno. The result: a poet's rather than a preacher's, theologian's, or scholar's reading of John's book, one which crosses the borders of disciplines. Throughout *The Book of Unknowing*, David Herrstrom is unsettled and exhilarated by the peculiar orneriness and fragrance of John's book, by its strange particulars that grab him by the throat and call lives into question. As William Blake has said, "Exuberance is Beauty," and this is an exuberant book.

Unlike those who are expected to place their hand on its cover and make an oath, the Bible does not tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The biblical authors only told theirs. Even the women actually named are remarkably silent, making it easy to believe whatever has been said about their lives throughout the ages. The biblical story of Eve impacts modern society on both a conscious and subconscious level. Are you aware that the authors of the Garden of Eden creation narrative were greatly influenced by the Persians in the fifth century BCE--maybe even taking the basic story from them? Did you know Adam had a wife prior to Eve, the equality-demanding Lilith? Do you think it is possible for a single mother to have populated this planet? It is well past the time for all of this to be common knowledge. "Infamous Eve" includes many legends, stories, and folktales--even that of Eve also being the snake in the Garden of Eden--but first May Sinclair delves into the genetically induced response that has been handed down as a physical, emotional, and psychological inheritance to modern people. She rips open the seams of the historical records to see the weave of the religious, economic, and political threads that have endlessly rolled out the same pattern of notions about Eve and her daughters.

The Legends of many cultures claim that the world was once destroyed in a cataclysmic flood. Many cultures also claim that someday the world will again be destroyed in a similar fashion. In the Bible we are told that the disciples once asked Jesus if there would be a warning sign prior to this destructive event. He said that there would indeed a sign. Jesus said that whatever was happening in the Days of Noah will happen again before the end of this age. The Bible has only a few verses about Noah's Flood. So we are forced to turn to the ancient flood legends of over 350 other cultures to learn more about this prophecy. But Noah's days did not end with the flood, he lived for many years afterward. He saw the creation of a tower in Babylon. This is interesting because the Freemasons claim that their Order originated here. Here is the most thorough examination of Freemasonry ever undertaken, using their own texts, to solve the Days of Noah prophecy.

Gnosticism was a wide-ranging religious movement of the first millennium CE—with earlier antecedents and later flourishings—whose adherents sought salvation through knowledge and personal religious experience. Gnostic writings offer striking

perspectives on both early Christian and non-Christian thought. For example, some gnostic texts suggest that god should be celebrated as both mother and father, and that self-knowledge is the supreme path to the divine. Only in the past fifty years has it become clear how far the gnostic influence spread in ancient and medieval religions—and what a marvelous body of scriptures it produced. The selections gathered here, in poetic, readable translation, represent Jewish, Christian, Hermetic, Mandaean, Manichaeic, Islamic, and Cathar expressions of gnostic spirituality. Their regions of origin include Egypt, the Greco-Roman world, the Middle East, Syria, Iraq, China, and France. Also included are introductions, notes, an extensive glossary, and a wealth of suggestions for further reading.

Awakening The Soul: The Trilogy includes ATS: Book One: Proof of Our Spiritual Nature, which itemizes more than 80 characteristics of our spiritual nature, many very familiar, and explains 10 of them in depth; ATS: Book 2: Our Suppressed Spiritual Nature, which explains why we are so out of touch with our spiritual nature, primarily through suppression of those traits by religions, primarily Christianity, and ATS Book 3: Restoring Your Spiritual Nature contains detailed channeled instructions to restore immediate awareness of your spiritual nature, which has proven highly successful in doing just that.

In this volume, eminent poet, scholar and translator Willis Barnstone explores the history and theory of literary translations as an art form. Arguing that literary translation goes beyond the transfer of linguistic information, Barnstone emphasizes that the translation contains as much imaginative originality as the source text.

This book is in the personal growth and spiritual self-help category. It is all about the ills of religious dogma and how a believer in God can be freed from it. More often than not, when fervent believers become disenchanted with their religious group, chucking it all is the response. These disillusionments usually have very justifiable reasons, but because of the believer's lack of knowledge, feelings of guilt, and the pressure from faithful peers, the separation is traumatic. However, this life-changing period can be turned into a rewarding spiritual experience and this is where this book comes in. It analyzes religious dogma, how it begins, what perpetuates it, and demonstrates how dogma is the result of man-made religious procedures that in time become God. The outcome of all the analysis is a path for the troubled believer to embrace a new and spiritual walk with God, one not imposed by others.

Many Christians have told me to quit being so nit-picking and let by-gone be be-gones, that what happened in the past was then, and now is now and things have changed. But, that is not true. Christians still read from their so-called NEW testament that is full of Jew-bashing, so subliminal that most Christians overlook it. It is not my desire to claim Christianity is wrong and that you should not believe in your god – but I want people to think. Perhaps what you have been led to believe is wrong? Think... Why is it wrong for a Christian to deny the divinity of Jesus yet why do Christians turn their blind eye to Christians Missionaries trying to convert Jews against the basic tenants of Judaism? Why is it that most all pictures of the different characters in Christianity have a sun-disk above their heads? The Church made its own “spin” on this calling them halos, but didn't the Church change Sabbath to Sunday, the day of the sun? Who actually wrote the Christian bible that Christians all over the world swear it? The Church admits they really don't know for sure and only guessed. Did Jesus write anything in

the NEW testament, or was his thoughts written by men who thought they knew? Why did it take 2,000 years before the Pope acknowledged the Christian hatred towards Jews and the need for Christians to repent? Why all of a sudden were the Church wrong and the Jews right?

A new edition of our classic, *The Other Bible*, including a new index, new cover, and a new introduction from the author to bring *The Other Bible* up to date. *The Other Bible* gathers in one comprehensive volume ancient, esoteric holy texts from Judeo-Christian tradition that were excluded from the official canon of the Old and New Testaments, including the Gnostic Gospels, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Kabbalah, and several more. *The Other Bible* provides a rare opportunity to discover the poetic and narrative riches of this long-suppressed literature and experience firsthand its visionary discourses on the nature of God, humanity, the spiritual life, the world around us, and infinite worlds beyond this one. This new edition will include a full index and a new introduction from editor Willis Barnstone. The interest in Gnostic texts begun with *The Da Vinci Code* has spread to include many of the other "suppressed" early texts of Judaism and Christianity, and this book contains many of them in one volume.

A new translation and restructuring of the New Testament by the author of *The Gnostic Bible* is based on the Greek volume and draws on Semitic sources to restore its faithful, plain, and lyrical narratives, in a volume that also seeks to identify the Greco-Jewish identity of key biblical figures.

"Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott offer a sustained argument for the monastic provenance of the Nag Hammadi Codices. They examine the arguments for and against a monastic *Sitz im Leben* and defend the view that the Codices were produced and read by Christian monks, most likely Pachomians, in the fourth- and fifth-century monasteries of Upper Egypt.

Eschewing the modern classification of the Nag Hammadi texts as "Gnostic," the authors approach the codices and their ancient owners from the perspective of the diverse monastic culture of late antique Egypt and situate them in the context of the ongoing controversies over extra-canonical literature and the theological legacy of Origen. Through a combination of sources, including idealized hagiographies, travelogues, monastic rules and exhortations, and the more quotidian details revealed in documentary papyri, manuscript collections, and archaeology, monasticism in the Thebaid is brought to life, and the Nag Hammadi codices situated within it. The cartonnage papyri from the leather covers of the codices, which bear witness to the monastic culture of the region, are closely examined, while scribal and codicological features of the codices are analyzed and compared with contemporary manuscripts from Egypt. Special attention is given to the codices' scribal notes and colophons which offer direct evidence of their producers and users. The study ultimately reveals the Nag Hammadi Codices as a collection of books completely at home in the monastic manuscript culture of late antique Egypt."--

This book offers a clear and concise historical overview of the major religious movements of the ancient Mediterranean world existing from the time of the second millennium BCE up until the fourth century CE, including both the Judeo-Christian and pagan religious traditions. Recognizing the significant role of religious institutions in human history and acknowledging the diversity of religious ideas and practices in the ancient Mediterranean world, "religion" is defined as a collection of myths, beliefs, rituals, ethical practices, social institutions and experiences related to the realm of the sacred cosmos. Without focusing too much attention on technicalities and complex vocabulary, the book provides an introductory road map for exploring the vast array of religious data permeating the ancient Mediterranean world. Through an examination of literary and archeological evidence, the book summarizes the fundamental religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Near Eastern world, including the religious traditions of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and Israel. Turning westward, the fascinating world of ancient Greek and Roman religion is considered next. The discussion begins with a description

of Minoan-Mycenaean religion, followed by a consideration of classical Roman and Greek religion. Next, the numerous religious movements that blossomed during Hellenistic-Roman times are discussed. In addition, the fundamental theological contributions of various Greco-Roman philosophical schools of thought, including Orphism, Stoicism, Pythagoreanism, Platonism and Neo-Platonism, are described. Greco-Roman philosophy functioned as a quasi-religious outlook for many, and played a decisive role in the evolution of religion in the classical and Hellenistic period. The theological speculations of the philosophers regarding the nature of God and the soul made a huge impact in religious circles during the classical and Hellenistic era. Moving forward in history from archaic and classical times to the later Hellenistic-Roman period, the old religious order of the past falls by the wayside and a new updated religious paradigm begins to develop throughout the Mediterranean world, with a greater emphasis being placed upon the religious individual and the expression of personal religious feelings. There are several important social and historical reasons for this shift in perspective and these factors are explained in the chapter focusing upon personal religion in Hellenistic times. Since the entire religious topography of the ancient Mediterranean world is rarely outlined in a single volume, this book will be a welcome addition to anyone's library.

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