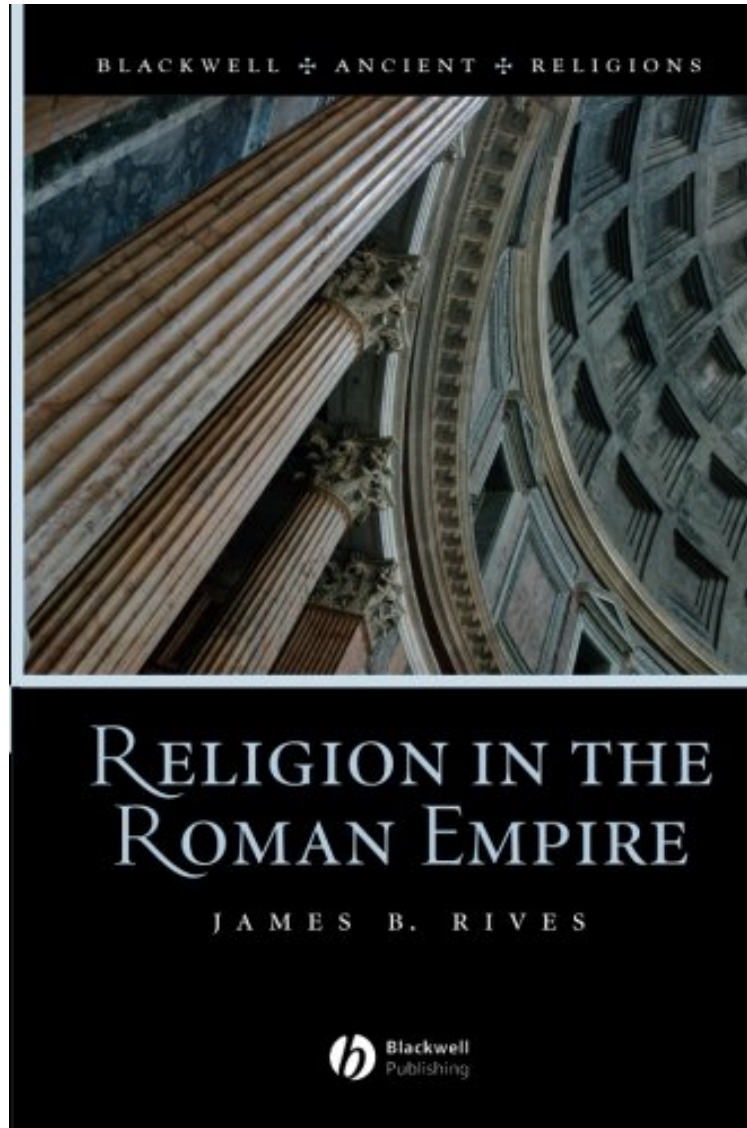


Religion in the Roman Empire

James B. Rives

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James B. Rives : Religion in the Roman Empire before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Religion in the Roman Empire:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well written, open-ended exploration of Roman religion By Christopher R. Travers This book is no ordinary introduction to the study of Roman religion. Instead James Rives takes the approach of presenting problems to the study of the topic, plus apparent differences to modern approaches to religion. Often he will present conflicting schools of thought as a way of setting the reader off on a quest to find the truth. Additionally, chapter 2 in this book is quite valuable for the information it presents on outlines of various known

religious traditions in various areas of the Roman Empire. This chapter makes it possible for people to begin to ascertain the Semitic influence on Anatolia, for example, or the overall theological structure of non-Jewish Semitic cultures within the Roman Empire. This itself provides a window into comparative religion that I haven't finished digesting yet. The book is otherwise organized into chapters discussing various challenges, problems, or topics concerning Roman religion. Each chapter largely stands on its own, and what cross-referencing does occur does not necessarily follow a linear form. This is refreshing because one is left with a sense that this is an incomplete study which seeks to help define some approaches rather than put the author's understanding forward as the single, correct viewpoint. Finally I'd note that there were many times when the author suggested that specific practices might be seen as unusual or strange today and I could immediately think of close modern equivalents. I think the author's view here is that these equivalents are somehow less religious but I'm not quite so sure. At any rate, if one thing could be added, it would be a chapter on the the problem that such continuities pose to the study of the topic. All in all, this is a very well done book and I'd highly recommend it.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Mr. D. Brown
Covers the subject thoroughly and clearly; not a book for the dilettante but rewarding for the serious historian
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very helpful
By J. Davis
Excellent resource! Very well written

This book provides an engaging, systematic introduction to religion in the Roman empire. Covers both mainstream Graeco-Roman religion and regional religious traditions, from Egypt to Western Europe Examines the shared assumptions and underlying dynamics that characterized religious life as a whole Draws on a wide range of primary material, both textual and visual, from literary works, inscriptions and monuments Offers insight into the religious world in which contemporary rabbinic Judaism and Christianity both had their origin

"This is just what Rives's volume does best: to show us where we stand in a thought-provoking manner that invites further questions about "religion" in the Roman empire." (Phoenix, 2011) "The section openings are often carefully and helpfully linked to preceding arguments, within and across chapters." (Journal of Religion, 2009) "the book is important as an attempt to create a textbook in an area normally left to an appendix because the problems are all too forbidding" (Greece and Rome, Vol 55 No. 2 2008) "This is the best available introduction to religion in the Roman world, and will be indispensable for classroom use and in library collections." (Choice A Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2007) "A dense and stimulating overview of Roman religion." (Bryn Mawr s) "A concise, readable, stimulating, and adroitly organised introduction to a vast cumbersome topic." (Scholia s) "Rives deftly engages the reader with the Roman world, and succeeds magnificently in making sense of its seemingly baffling variety of religious life." Simon Price, University of Oxford

From the Back Cover
This book provides an engaging, systematic introduction to religion in the Roman Empire. It explores mainstream Graeco-Roman religion, as well as the diverse regional religions within the empire, from the millennia-old traditions of Egypt to the Celtic traditions of Western Europe. The author describes the distinctive features of religion in the Roman world and examines the shared assumptions and underlying dynamics that characterized religious life as a whole. By drawing on a wide range of primary material, including literary works, inscriptions, and monuments, he allows readers to engage with original sources directly and provides unique insight into the religious world in which contemporary rabbinic Judaism and Christianity both had their origins.