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A study of animal sacrifice within Greek paganism, Judaism, and Christianity during the period of their interaction between about 100 BC and AD 200. After a vivid account of the realities of sacrifice in the Greek East and in the Jerusalem Temple (up to AD 70), Maria-Zoe Petropoulou explores the attitudes of early Christians towards this practice. Contrary to other studies in this area, she demonstrates that the process by which

Christianity finally separated its own cultic code from the strong tradition of animal sacrifice was a slow and difficult one. Petropoulou places special emphasis on the fact that Christians gave completely new meanings to the term 'sacrifice'. She also explores the question why, if animal sacrifice was of prime importance in the eastern Mediterranean at this time, Christians should ultimately have rejected it. We often think of classical Greek society as a model of rationality and order. Yet as Walter Burkert demonstrates in these influential essays on the history of Greek religion, there were archaic, savage forces surging beneath the outwardly calm face of classical Greece, whose potentially violent and destructive energies, Burkert argues, were harnessed to constructive ends through the interlinked uses of myth and ritual. For example, in a much-cited essay on the Athenian religious festival of the Arrephoria, Burkert uncovers deep connections between this strange nocturnal ritual, in which two virgin girls carried sacred offerings into a cave and later returned with something given to them there, and tribal puberty initiations by linking the festival with the myth of the daughters of Kekrops. Other chapters explore the origins of tragedy in blood sacrifice; the role of myth in the ritual of the new fire on Lemnos; the ties between violence, the Athenian courts, and the annual purification of the divine image; and how failed political propaganda entered the realm of myth at the time of the Persian Wars. Numerous ancient texts describe human sacrifices and other forms of ritual killing: in 480 BC Themistocles sacrifices three Persian captives to Dionysus; human scapegoats called pharmakoi are expelled yearly

from Greek cities, and according to some authors they are killed; Locrin girls are hunted down and slain by the Trojans; on Mt Lykaion children are sacrificed and consumed by the worshippers; and many other texts report human sacrifices performed regularly in the cult of the gods or during emergencies such as war and plague. Archaeologists have frequently proposed human sacrifice as an explanation for their discoveries: from Minoan Crete children's bones with knife-cut marks, the skeleton of a youth lying on a platform with a bronze blade resting on his chest, skeletons, sometimes bound, in the dromoi of Mycenaean and Cypriot chamber tombs; and dual man-woman burials, where it is suggested that the woman was slain or took her own life at the man's funeral. If the archaeologists' interpretations and the claims in the ancient sources are accepted, they present a bloody and violent picture of the religious life of the ancient Greeks, from the Bronze Age well into historical times. But the author expresses caution. In many cases alternative, if less sensational, explanations of the archaeological are possible; and it can often be shown that human sacrifices in the literary texts are mythical or that late authors confused mythical details with actual practices. Whether the evidence is accepted or not, this study offers a fascinating glimpse into the religious thought of the ancient Greeks and into changing modern conceptions of their religious behaviour. This second volume of a two-part collection of studies on inconsistencies in Greek and Roman religion focuses on the ambiguities in myth and ritual of transition and reversal. Violence has always played a part in the religious imagination, from symbols and myths

to legendary battles, from colossal wars to the theater of terrorism. The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence surveys intersections between religion and violence throughout history and around the world. The forty original essays in this volume include overviews of major religious traditions, showing how violence is justified within the literary and theological foundations of the tradition, how it is used symbolically and in ritual practice, and how social acts of violence and warfare have been justified by religious ideas. The essays also examine patterns and themes relating to religious violence, such as sacrifice and martyrdom, which are explored in cross-disciplinary or regional analyses; and offer major analytic approaches, from literary to social scientific studies. The contributors to this volume--innovative thinkers who are forging new directions in theory and analysis related to religion and violence--provide novel insights into this important field of studies. By mapping out the whole field of religion and violence, The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence will prove an authoritative source for students and scholars for years to come. This commentary on the 6th book of the Iliad concentrates on the interpretation of two episodes which have received a great deal of scholarly attention: the encounter between Diomedes and Glaukos, which surprisingly ends with an exchange of weapons and not a duel, and the series of scenes 'Hector in Troy', which reveal the hero's conflicting roles as defender of the city and father of his family. Explores 'polis religion' - a leading paradigm in current studies on ancient Greek religion - and shows ways of moving beyond it. This volume consists of

12 essays published by the author between the years 1997-2007, a thirteenth paper read at a conference in 2006, and a long introduction prepared specifically for the collection. All of the essays deal with epistemological issues attendant on conceptualizing and defining religion, understanding what is likely to be involved in studying and discussing beliefs, and attempting to explain religion and religions by drawing on the contemporary cognitive and evolutionary sciences. First Published in 1999. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company. At the distant beginning of Western civilization, according to European tradition, Greece stands as an insular, isolated, near-miracle of burgeoning culture. This book traverses the ancient world's three great centers of cultural exchange--Babylonian Nineveh, Egyptian Memphis, and Iranian Persepolis--to situate classical Greece in its proper historical place, at the Western margin of a more comprehensive Near Eastern-Aegean cultural community that emerged in the Bronze Age and expanded westward in the first millennium B.C. In concise and inviting fashion, Walter Burkert lays out the essential evidence for this ongoing reinterpretation of Greek culture. In particular, he points to the critical role of the development of writing in the ancient Near East, from the achievement of cuneiform in the Bronze Age to the rise of the alphabet after 1000 B.C. From the invention and diffusion of alphabetic writing, a series of cultural encounters between "Oriental" and Greek followed. Burkert details how the Assyrian influences of Phoenician and Anatolian intermediaries, the emerging fascination with Egypt, and the

Persian conquests in Ionia make themselves felt in the poetry of Homer and his gods, in the mythic foundations of Greek cults, and in the first steps toward philosophy. A journey through the fluid borderlines of the Near East and Europe, with new and shifting perspectives on the cultural exchanges these produced, this book offers a clear view of the multicultural field upon which the Greek heritage that formed Western civilization first appeared. The mystical, ecstatic religions of the Greco-Roman culture, direct threats to the newer Judeo-Christian movements, were obliterated. Here is a thorough description of the Eleusian mysteries, and traces of cultural conflicts at the root of Kosher law and. No comic author from the ancient world features the gods as often as Lucian of Samosata, yet the meaning of his works remain contested. He is either seen as undermining the gods and criticizing religion through his humor, or as not engaging with religion at all, featuring the gods as literary characters. His humor was traditionally viewed as a symptom of decreased religiosity, but that model of religious decline in the second century CE has been invalidated by ancient historians. Understanding these works now requires understanding what it means to imagine as laughing and laughable gods who are worshipped in everyday cult. In *Lucian's Laughing Gods*, author Inger N. I. Kuin argues that in ancient Greek thought, comedic depictions of divinities were not necessarily desacralizing. In religion, laughter was accommodated to such an extent as to actually be constituent of some ritual practices, and the gods were imagined either to reciprocate or push back against human laughter—they were never deflated by it.

Lucian uses the gods as comic characters, but in doing so, he does not automatically negate their power. Instead, with his depiction of the gods and of how they relate to humans—frivolous, insecure, callous—Lucian challenges the dominant theologies of his day as he refuses to interpret the gods as ethical models. This book contextualizes Lucian's comedic performances in the intellectual life of the second century CE Roman East broadly, including philosophy, early Christian thought, and popular culture (dance, fables, standard jokes, etc.). His texts are analyzed as providing a window onto non-elite attitudes and experiences, and methodologies from religious studies and the sociology of religion are used to conceptualize Lucian's engagement with the religiosity of his contemporaries. This book is about the representation of gods (both as characters and as a subject for discourse) in two tragedies by Euripides: *Heracles* and *Hippolytus*. Its goal is to establish a framework for the reading of Greek tragedy and for the analysis of the various ways in which the gods of the Greek religion appear in tragic drama, and to apply it to the aforementioned plays. In this work we contend that such a framework should transcend the usual dichotomy made between a "religious" and a "non-religious" reading of Greek tragedy, and more specifically of Euripidean tragedy. This dichotomy contains in itself a cultural assumption, that is, the possibility of establishing a clear-cut distinction between a domain of religious discourse and an autonomous, profane sphere in which the representations of gods would assume a different value and meaning. There is nothing in the discursive structures of Classical Greece that allows us to posit

something of the kind. The elements that appear to us as questioning the traditional representations of gods in Greek tragedy can be seen from this perspective. The foremost historian of Greek religion provides the first comprehensive, comparative study of a little-known aspect of ancient religious beliefs and practices. Secret mystery cults flourished within the larger culture of the public religion of Greece and Rome for roughly a thousand years. This book is neither a history nor a survey but a comparative phenomenology, concentrating on five major cults. In defining the mysteries and describing their rituals, membership, organization, and dissemination, Walter Burkert displays the remarkable erudition we have come to expect of him; he also shows great sensitivity and sympathy in interpreting the experiences and motivations of the devotees. This book is the scholarly & fully annotated edition of the award-winning *The Illustrated To Think Like God*. *To Think Like God* focuses on the emergence of philosophy as a speculative science, tracing its origins to the Greek colonies of Southern Italy, from the late 6th century to mid-5th century B.C. Special attention is paid to the sage Pythagoras and his movement, the poet Xenophanes of Colophon, and the lawmaker Parmenides of Elea. In their own ways, each thinker held that true insight, whether as wisdom or certainty, belonged not to mortal human beings but to the gods. The Pythagoreans sought to approach this otherworldly knowledge by studying numerical relationships, believing them to govern the universe, and that those who know the number of a thing know its true nature. Yet their quest was a hopeless one, bogged

down by cultism, numerology, political conspiracies, bloody uprisings, and exile. Above all, number did not turn out as the most reliable of mediums; it was certainly not a key to the realm of the divine. Thus, their contributions to philosophy's inception, while much better-publicized, was not the most significant. That particular role was reserved for an unusual challenge and the elaborate reaction it provoked. For this first English edition of his distinguished study of Pythagoreanism, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft: Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos, und Platon*, Walter Burkert has carefully revised text and notes, taking account of additional literature on the subject which appeared between 1962 and 1969. By a thorough critical sifting of all the available evidence, the author lays a new foundation for the understanding of ancient Pythagoreanism and in particular of the relationship within it of "lore" and "science." He shows that in the twilight zone when the Greeks were discovering the rational interpretation of the world and quantitative natural science, Pythagoras represented not the origin of the new, but the survival or revival of ancient, pre-scientific lore or wisdom, based on superhuman authority and expressed in ritual obligation. The Presocratics were the founding fathers of the Western philosophical tradition, and the first masters of rational thought. This volume provides a comprehensive and precise exposition of their arguments, and offers a rigorous assessment of their contribution to philosophical thought. The author describes his time as chief counsel to the Knapp Commission, which investigated police corruption in New York City. 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. Sacrifice is essential to all religions. Could there be a natural, even biological, reason? Why are sacrifice and numerous other religious rituals and concepts shared by so many different cultures? In this extraordinary book, one of the world's leading authorities on ancient religions explores the possibility of natural religion. This is the first book-length treatment of supplication, an important social practice in ancient Mediterranean civilizations. Despite the importance of supplication, it has received little attention, and no previous study has explored so many aspects of the practice. Naiden investigates the varied gestures made by the

supplicants, the types of requests they make, the arguments used in defense of their requests, and the role of the supplicandus, who evaluates and decides whether to fulfill the requests. Varied and abundant sources invite comparison between the societies of Greece and Rome and also among literary genres. Additionally, Naiden formulates an analysis of the ritual in its legal and political contexts. In constructing this rich and thorough study, Naiden considered over 800 acts of supplication from Greek, Hebrew, and Roman literature, art, and scientific sources. 30 illustrations and a map of the relevant locations accompany the text. Die Beiträge des Autorenkolloquiums am Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld (Nov. 2007) setzen sich intensiv mit Walter Burkert und seinem Werk auseinander. Der international hoch angesehene Gräzist hat in seinen Epoche machenden Studien, die um die Ursprünge menschlichen Zusammenlebens in Riten, um Opfer, Schuld und grausame Todesszenarien kreisen, Fragestellungen der biologischen Verhaltensforschung aufgenommen und über die Altertums- und Religionswissenschaften hinaus eine große intellektuelle Wirkung entfaltet. This volume provides a guide to research in the field of Greek Myth, introducing the main questions, theories and methods related to the study of Greek Myth today. The author points out, with critical reappraisal, the key themes and ideas in recent scholarship and makes suggestions for future lines of study. Aimed at students and scholars in Classics, it will also be of interest to larger audiences in the Humanities. At the distant beginning of Western civilization, according to European

tradition, Greece stands as an insular, isolated, near-miracle of burgeoning culture. This book traverses the ancient world's three great centers of cultural exchange--Babylonian Nineveh, Egyptian Memphis, and Iranian Persepolis--to situate classical Greece in its proper historical place, at the Western margin of a more comprehensive Near Eastern-Aegean cultural community that emerged in the Bronze Age and expanded westward in the first millennium B.C. In concise and inviting fashion, Walter Burkert lays out the essential evidence for this ongoing reinterpretation of Greek culture. In particular, he points to the critical role of the development of writing in the ancient Near East, from the achievement of cuneiform in the Bronze Age to the rise of the alphabet after 1000 B.C. From the invention and diffusion of alphabetic writing, a series of cultural encounters between "Oriental" and Greek followed. Burkert details how the Assyrian influences of Phoenician and Anatolian intermediaries, the emerging fascination with Egypt, and the Persian conquests in Ionia make themselves felt in the poetry of Homer and his gods, in the mythic foundations of Greek cults, and in the first steps toward philosophy. A journey through the fluid borderlines of the Near East and Europe, with new and shifting perspectives on the cultural exchanges these produced, this book offers a clear view of the multicultural field upon which the Greek heritage that formed Western civilization first appeared. This is the first major synthesis of Greek religion to appear for a generation. A clearly structured and readable survey for classical scholars and students, it will also be generally welcomed as the best modern account of any polytheistic

religious system. The text builds up an impressive and coherent picture of the current state of knowledge about the religion of the ancient Greeks. Fascinating texts written on small gold tablets that were deposited in graves provide a unique source of information about what some Greeks and Romans believed regarding the fate that awaited them after death, and how they could influence it. These texts, dating from the late fifth century BCE to the second century CE, have been part of the scholarly debate on ancient afterlife beliefs since the end of the nineteenth century. Recent finds and analysis of the texts have reshaped our understanding of their purpose and of the perceived afterlife. The tablets belonged to those who had been initiated into the mysteries of Dionysus Bacchius and relied heavily upon myths narrated in poems ascribed to the mythical singer Orpheus. After providing the Greek text and a translation of all the available tablets, the authors analyze their role in the mysteries of Dionysus, and present an outline of the myths concerning the origins of humanity and of the sacred texts that the Greeks ascribed to Orpheus. Related ancient texts are also appended in English translations. Providing the first book-length edition and discussion of these enigmatic texts in English, and their first English translation, this book is essential to the study of ancient Greek religion. A new reconstruction and edition of the *Placita* of Aëtius (ca. 50 CE), arguably the most important work of ancient doxography covering the entire field of natural philosophy. Accompanied by a full commentary, it replaces the seminal edition of Herman Diels (1879). This is an open access title

available under the terms of a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International licence. It is free to read at Oxford Scholarship Online and offered as a free PDF download from OUP and selected open access locations. *Ancient Prophecy: Near Eastern, Biblical, and Greek Perspectives* is the first monograph-length comparative study on prophetic divination in ancient Near Eastern, biblical, and Greek sources. Prophecy is one of the ways humans have believed to become conversant with what is believed to be superhuman knowledge. The prophetic process of communication involves the prophet, her/his audience, and the deity from whom the message allegedly comes from. Martti Nissinen introduces a wealth of ancient sources documenting the prophetic phenomenon around the ancient Eastern Mediterranean, whether cuneiform tablets from Mesopotamia, the Hebrew Bible, Greek inscriptions, or ancient historians. Nissinen provides an up-to-date presentation of textual sources, the number of which has increased substantially in recent times. In addition, the study includes four analytical comparative chapters. The first demonstrates the altered state of consciousness to be one of the central characteristics of the prophets' public behavior. The second discusses the prophets' affiliation with temples, which are the typical venues of the prophetic performance. The third delves into the relationship between prophets and kings, which can be both critical and supportive. The fourth shows gender-inclusiveness to be one of the peculiar features of the prophetic agency, which could be executed by women, men, and genderless persons as well. The ways prophetic divination manifests itself in ancient

sources depend not only on the socio-religious position of the prophets in a given society, but also on the genre and purpose of the sources. Nissinen contends that, even though the view of the ancient prophetic landscape is restricted by the fragmentary and secondary nature of the sources, it is possible to reconstruct essential features of prophetic divination at the socio-religious roots of the Western civilization. The ancient Mysteries have long attracted the interest of scholars, an interest that goes back at least to the time of the Reformation. After a period of interest around the turn of the twentieth century, recent decades have seen an important study of Walter Burkert (1987). Yet his thematic approach makes it hard to see how the actual initiation into the Mysteries took place. To do precisely that is the aim of this book. It gives a 'thick description' of the major Mysteries, not only of the famous Eleusinian Mysteries, but also those located at the interface of Greece and Anatolia: the Mysteries of Samothrace, Imbros and Lemnos as well as those of the Corybants. It then proceeds to look at the Orphic-Bacchic Mysteries, which have become increasingly better understood due to the many discoveries of new texts in the recent times. Having looked at classical Greece we move on to the Roman Empire, where we study not only the lesser Mysteries, which we know especially from Pausanias, but also the new ones of Isis and Mithras. We conclude our book with a discussion of the possible influence of the Mysteries on emerging Christianity. Its detailed references and up-to-date bibliography will make this book indispensable for any scholar interested in the Mysteries and ancient religion, but also

for those scholars who work on initiation or esoteric rituals, which were often inspired by the ancient Mysteries. A survey of the religious beliefs of ancient Greece covers sacrifices, libations, purification, gods, heroes, the priesthood, oracles, festivals, and the afterlife. Ancient Greek culture is often described as a miracle, owing little to its neighbors. Walter Burkert argues against a distorted view, toward a more balanced picture. "Under the influence of the Semitic East--from writers, craftsmen, merchants, healers--Greek culture began its unique flowering, soon to assume cultural hegemony in the Mediterranean." Burkert, Girard, and Smith hold important and contradictory theories about the nature and origin of ritual sacrifice, and the role violence plays in religion and culture. These papers and conversations derive from a conference that pursued the possibility and utility of a general theory of religion and culture, especially one based on violence. The special value of this volume is the conversations as such—the real record of working scholars engaged with one another's theories, as they make and meet challenges, and move and maneuver. Girard and Burkert present different versions of the same conviction: that a single theory can account for ritual and its social function, a theory that posits original acts of group violence. Smith sharply questions both the possibility and the utility of such a general theory. Among the highlights of this stimulating interchange of ideas is a searching criticism of Girard's theory of generative scapegoating, which he answers with clarity and conviction, and a challenging of Burkert's theory of the origin of sacrifice in the hunt by Smith's argument, posed as a jeu

d'esprit, that sacrifice originates with the domestication of animals. The rich and splendid culture of the ancient Greeks has often been described as emerging like a miracle from a genius of its own, owing practically nothing to its neighbors. Walter Burkert offers a decisive argument against that distorted view, replacing it with a balanced picture of the archaic period "in which, under the influence of the Semitic East, Greek culture began its unique flowering, soon to assume cultural hegemony in the Mediterranean". Burkert focuses on the "orientalizing" century 750-650 B.C., the period of Assyrian conquest, Phoenician commerce, and Greek exploration of both East and West, when not only eastern skills and images but also the Semitic art of writing were transmitted to Greece. He tracks the migrant craftsmen who brought the Greeks new techniques and designs, the wandering seers and healers teaching magic and medicine, and the important Greek borrowings from Near Eastern poetry and myth. Drawing widely on archaeological, textual, and historical evidence, he demonstrates that eastern models significantly affected Greek literature and religion in the Homeric age. "Tantalizingly rich . . . this is a splendid book."--Greece and Rome "Burkert relegates his learned documentation to the notes and writes in a lively and fluent style. The book is recommended as a major contribution to the interpretation of ancient Greek myth and ritual. The breadth alone of Burkert's learning renders his book indispensable."--Classical Outlook "Impressive. . . founded on a striking knowledge of the complex evidence (literary, epigraphical, archaeological, comparative) for this extensive subject.

Burkert offers a rare combination of exact scholarship with imagination and even humor. A brilliant book, in which . . .the reader can see at every point what is going on in the author's mind--and that is never uninteresting, and rarely unimportant."--Times Literary Supplement "Burkert's work is of such magnitude and depth that it may even contribute to that most difficult of tasks, defining myth, ritual, and religion. . [He] locates his work in the context of culture and the history of ideas, and he is not hesitant to draw on sociology and biology. Consequently his work is of significance for philosophers, historians, and even theologians, as well as for classicists and historians of Greek culture. His hypotheses are courageous and his conclusions are bold; both establish standards for methodology as well as results. "--Religious Studies Review "A milestone, not only in the field of classics but in the wider field of the history of religion. . . . It will find a place alongside the works of Jane Ellen Harrison, Sir James George Frazer, Claude Levi-Strauss, and van Gennep."—Wendy Flaherty, Divinity School, University of Chicago "This book is a professional classic, an absolute must for any serious student of Greek religion."—Albert Henrichs, Harvard University

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