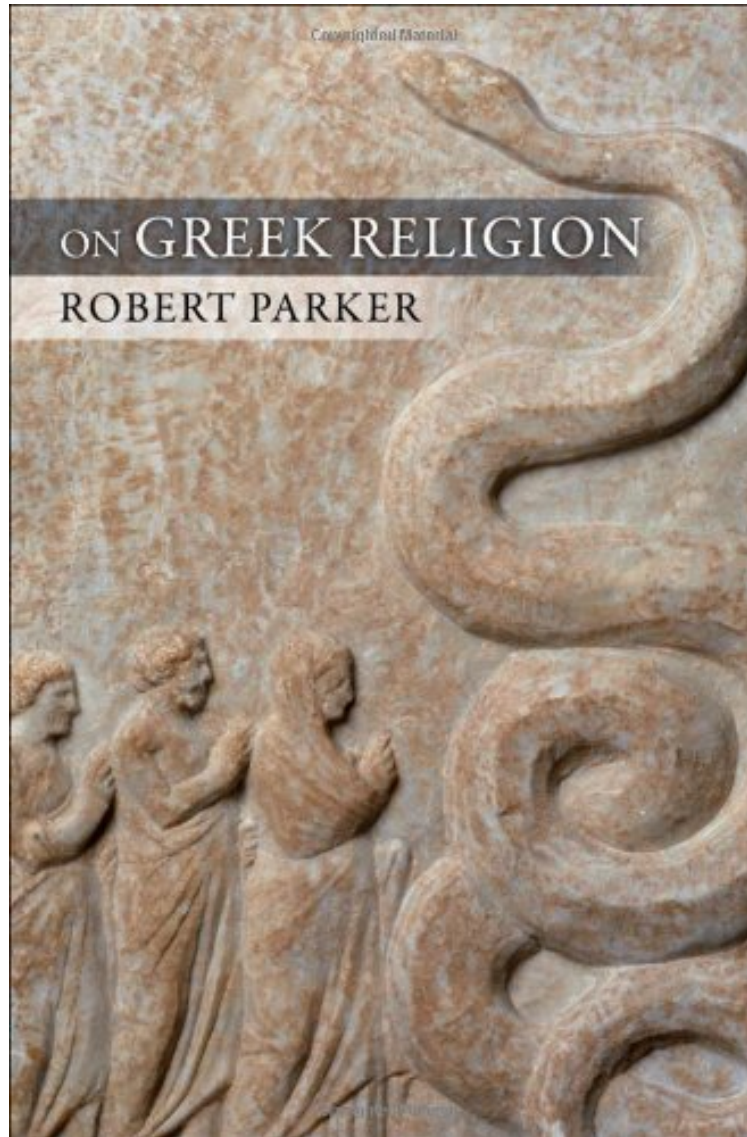


(Read free) On Greek Religion (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology)

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Robert Parker

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#1410126 in Books Cornell University Press 2011-02-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.10 x .90 x 6.10l, .95 #File Name: 0801477352328 pages | File size: 61.Mb

Robert Parker : On Greek Religion (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Greek Religion (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Difficult rating this book for reasons noted below...By Patrick Garner Robert Parker walks an uneven line with this book. Sometimes he's pitching to his academic cohorts and sometimes to lay people, while leaning predominately towards his university colleagues. The tone is that of persuasion, caution and hedging. Consequently, the text is heavily footnoted, often without context and/or

obscurely. On a positive note, Parker discusses contemporary thought and highlights recent archeological findings to bolster his discussion. Yet, he leaves me repeatedly uneasy when he clearly interprets Greek religious worship using contemporary values. On several occasions contemporary Christianity is overtly used as a measure of the primitiveness of certain Greek practices. To my constant annoyance, Parker tends on a regular basis in this book to judge archaic Greek worship using descriptors that reflect his personal bias. Why was I disturbed by this approach? I expect objective information from an academic. I do not expect a seasoned professor to apply contemporary mores to weigh/interpret the merits of a 2500 year old culture that even Parker admits lies in distant obscurity. The classic Greek world will always be buried somewhat in a maddening impenetrability. Regardless, Parker's willingness to judge the merit of archaic Greek belief weakens the book--and his conclusions suffer in the process. This aside, much of the information is fresh and comprehensive. Parker arranges his subject headings skillfully. I read the book thoroughly, and then reread sections a second time before deciding to write this review. So... in sum the book is worthwhile but could have been far finer if the author had avoided conclusions colored by our own cultural values. That approach is always slippery. Values constantly change. When they are applied to a long lost culture that we will never fully understand--as they are in this case--such impositions undercut any subsequent analysis. Would I buy this book again? Yes, as much of the discussion covers areas that are relatively new. Parker himself is an interesting guide once you know with whom you journey.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Nicholas Molinari
Highly recommended.
0 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Great read...
By Hector M. Lugo
Interesting insights into a people who not only founded western civilization, but continue to play a part to this day.

"There is something of a paradox about our access to ancient Greek religion. We know too much, and too little. The materials that bear on it far outreach an individual's capacity to assimilate: so many casual allusions in so many literary texts over more than a millennium, so many direct or indirect references in so many inscriptions from so many places in the Greek world, such an overwhelming abundance of physical remains. But genuinely revealing evidence does not often cluster coherently enough to create a vivid sense of the religious realities of a particular time and place. Amid a vast archipelago of scattered islets of information, only a few are of a size to be habitable." from the Preface

In *On Greek Religion*, Robert Parker offers a provocative and wide-ranging entre into the world of ancient Greek religion, focusing especially on the interpretive challenge of studying a religious system that in many ways remains desperately alien from the vantage point of the twenty-first century. One of the world's leading authorities on ancient Greek religion, Parker raises fundamental methodological questions about the study of this vast subject. Given the abundance of evidence we now have about the nature and practice of religion among the ancient Greeks including literary, historical, and archaeological sources, how can we best exploit that evidence and agree on the central underlying issues? Is it possible to develop a larger, "unified" theoretical framework that allows for coherent discussions among archaeologists, anthropologists, literary scholars, and historians?

In seven thematic chapters, Parker focuses on key themes in Greek religion: the epistemological basis of Greek religion; the relation of ritual to belief; theories of sacrifice; the nature of gods and heroes; the meaning of rituals, festivals, and feasts; and the absence of religious authority. Ranging across the archaic, classical, and Hellenistic periods, he draws on multiple disciplines both within and outside classical studies. He also remains sensitive to varieties of Greek religious experience. Also included are five appendixes in which Parker applies his innovative methodological approach to particular cases, such as the acceptance of new gods and the consultation of oracles. *On Greek Religion* will stir debate for its bold questioning of disciplinary norms and for offering scholars and students new points of departure for future research.

"Although one might expect a mere survey from the title, Parker delivers far more than a beginners' summary. Rather, this book is a probing exploration of the methodological and interpretive difficulties associated with Greek religion from the eighth through the second centuries BCE. . . . This work provides a wealth of insights from one of the leading experts in the field. Summing Up: Highly recommended." *Choice* (October 2011)

"On Greek Religion has all the virtues we have come to appreciate in his writings: a fruitful blend of the factual and theoretical; a simultaneous inclination towards and distrust of categories, schemes, and generalities; scrupulous attention to detail; an awareness of what we do and do not and cannot know about Greek religion; precise and generous but not uncritical discussions of others' views; the integration of literary and epigraphical sources; common sense; and a lively style with touches of whimsy." Jon D. Mikalson, *The Classical Journal* (CAMWS) (Fall 2011)

"This book derives from the Townsend Lectures given by Parker at Cornell in 2008, but its style is not noticeably different from that of Parker's two previous books. . . . Its scope is wider than those two works, both chronologically, dealing with material from the eighth to the second century BC, and geographically, covering the entire Greek world. Its ambition is also greater, in that its seven chapters and five appendixes aim to provide an interpretation of Greek religion as a whole. . . . This is a very important book that everyone working in the field of Greek religion will have to read." Hugh Bowden, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* (November 2012)

"This book is an important step in its author's scholarly journey in the field of ancient Greek religion. This work is outstandingly well-informed, well-written, clever and also very cautious." Vinciane Pirenne-

Delforge, Bryn Mawr Classical (March 2012) "This work, derived from a series of lectures given by the author at Cornell University in 2008, offers a discussion on a series of central questions in the domain of Greek religion.... R. Parker achieves his goal with much maestria in this work, which is proof of an excellent knowledge of Greek religion, both ancient evidence and equal historiography, to which he returns frequently. To enrich his reflections, the author systematically echoes various interpretations of the issues he tackles, thus giving breadth to his analysis. All of these qualities make *On Greek Religion* an indispensable text for specialists in Ancient Greek religion, who will find in it abundant material for reflection." Stphanie Paul, *L'Antiquit Classique* (2013) "[Parker's] vast knowledge of the documentary evidence for Greek religion makes this essay instructive and persuasive while the questions he proposes offer challenging perspectives on the nature of the Greek religious experience. This essay will be useful to scholars of ancient religion seeking to reassess the milestones of scholarship in the field and to explore complex theoretical and theological questions relating to Greek religion." Marie-Claire Beaulieu, Tufts University

About the Author Robert Parker is Wykeham Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, *Athenian Religion: A History*, and *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion*.