

Mapping Gender In Ancient Religious Discourses

First published in 2014. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

In *Contested Masculinities*, the author argues for the importance of critical consciousness, and attentiveness to the interplay of the biblical text, context and the long, complex, histories of interpretation that play out in the construction of masculinities. Locating his reading of 1 Thessalonians within the thickly textured setting of a postcolonial, post-apartheid South Africa, the author seeks to recontextualize Paul, providing a nuanced understanding of how Paul's letters exercise authority over both the church and the academy. The author maintains that attempts to frame either the biblical text or notions of masculinity as singular and universal perpetuate and reinforce binary formulations (church/academy, global north/global south, colonizer/colonized, male/female) and entrench hierarchies of power. The author re-reads 1 Thessalonians, exploring the fissures that come into view when training a postcolonial and gender-critical lens on the biblical text and delivers a refreshing account that is playful and open and porous, especially as a conversational piece for masculinity, ancient and contemporary.

Over several decades, scholarship in New Testament and early Christianity has drawn attention both to the ways in which ancient Mediterranean conceptions of embodiment, sexual difference, and desire were fundamentally different from modern ones and also to important lines of genealogical connection between the past and the present. The result is that the study of "gender" and "sexuality" in early Christianity has become an increasingly complex undertaking. This is a complexity produced not only by the intricacies of conflicting historical data, but also by historicizing approaches that query the very terms of analysis whereby we inquire into these questions in the first place. Yet at the same time, recent work on these topics has produced a rich and nuanced body of scholarly literature that has contributed substantially to our understanding of early Christian history and also proved relevant to ongoing theological and social debates. The *Oxford Handbook of Gender and Sexuality in the New Testament* provides a roadmap to this lively scholarly landscape, introducing both students and other scholars to the relevant problems, debates, and issues. Leading scholars in the field offer original contributions by way of synthesis, critical interrogation, and proposals for future questions, hypotheses, and research trajectories.

Revised versions of papers given at the conference "Women in the Religious and Intellectual Activity of the Ancient Mediterranean World: an Interdisciplinary and International Conference in Honor of Adela Yarbro Collins" held March 15-17, 2009 at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio and The Ohio State University": *Introd.* p. [1].

While most scholars focus on the character of Cornelius as a model Gentile, Bonnie Flessen argues that Cornelius is also a model male figure for Luke's audience. When analyzed closely, the characterization of Cornelius reveals a multifaceted rhetorical strategy regarding both gender and empire. This strategy lifts up a rather surprising portrait of an exemplary man who represents the Roman Empire and yet nevertheless manifests the virtues of submission, piety, and generosity. Flessen also proposes a hermeneutic of masculinity as a means to exegete Acts and other New Testament texts. This critical lens provides interpreters with

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a way of thinking about gender when female characters are absent or sparse. Although constructs of gender are embedded in texts, interpreters can use recent scholarship on masculinity along with extrabiblical evidence as tools to excavate the contours of the male figure in antiquity.

Description of perspectives on the nature of masculinity, its social and political functions, and methods by which masculinities can be analysed. Each author provides a case study of what 'masculinity' means (or fails to mean) in a specific historical moment. Same essence, same food: nourishment, formation, and education in early Christianity -- The symbolic power of food in the Greco-Roman world -- Mother's milk as ethno-religious essence in ancient Judaism -- Ruminating on Paul's food in the second century -- Animal, vegetable, milk: Origen's dietary system -- Gregory of Nyssa at the breast of the bridegroom -- Milk without growth: Augustine and the limits of formation -- Conclusion

At the heart of the Christian proclamation is the problematic body of Jesus: problematic because His crucified form conveyed shame rather than glory, problematic because Christian communities argued about whether Jesus' body shared in the corruptible and tactile qualities of other human bodies. Jesus' message-bearing body is not the only storytelling body we encounter in early Christian writings. Paul, for example, invited recipients of his letters to read the gospel story in his scarred body. In the second and early third centuries, Christians argued about the perpetual virginity of the body of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and those on both sides of the question saw Mary's body as a meaningful, expressive matrix. Jennifer Glancy argues that ordinary Christians, like others in the Roman Empire, saw all human bodies as expressing such things as social status and gender, honor and abjection. All human bodies were matrices of communication. Glancy draws on a variety of theoretical approaches, particularly the practice-oriented theory of Pierre Bourdieu and the corporal phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, to explore what early Christians understood bodies to communicate. Among the specific examples she considers are those of Jesus, Mary, and Paul, those of the entire class of people held in slavery, and those subjected to torture.

This volume brings together international scholars of religion, archaeologists, and scholars of art and architectural history to investigate social, political, and religious life in Roman and early Christian Thessalonike, an important metropolis in the Hellenistic, Roman, and early Christian periods and beyond. This volume is the first broadly interdisciplinary investigation of Roman and early Christian Thessalonike in English and offers new data and new interpretations by scholars of ancient religion and archaeology. The book covers materials usually treated by a broad range of disciplines: New Testament and early Christian literature, art historical materials, urban planning in antiquity, material culture and daily life, and archaeological artifacts from the Roman to the late antique period.

Nonwhite women primarily appear as marginalized voices, if at all, in volumes that address constructions of race/ethnicity and early Christian texts. Employing an intersectional approach, the contributors analyze historical, cultural, literary, and ideological constructions of racial/ethnic identities, which intersect with gender/sexuality class, religion, slavery, and/or power. Given their small numbers in academic biblical studies, this book represents a critical mass of nonwhite women scholars and offers a critique

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of dominant knowledge production. Filling a significant epistemological gap, this seminal text provides provocative, innovative, and critical insights into constructions of race/ethnicity in ancient and modern texts and contexts.

The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender presents an unrivalled overview of the theological study of sexuality and gender. These topics are not merely contentious and pervasive: they have escalated in importance within theology.

Theologians increasingly agree that even the very doctrine of God cannot be contemplated without a prior grappling with each. Featuring 41 newly-commissioned essays, written by some of the foremost scholars in the discipline, this authoritative collection presents and develops the latest thinking in these areas. Divided into eight thematic sections, the Handbook explores: methodological approaches; contributions from neighbouring disciplines; sexuality and gender in the Bible, and in the Christian tradition; controversies within the churches, and within four of the non-Christian faiths; and key concepts and issues. The final, extended section considers theology in relation to married people and families; gay and lesbian people; bisexual people; intersex and transgender people; disabled people; and to friends. This volume is an essential reference for students and scholars, which will also stimulate further research.

Several of the ways and cultures that the Bible privileges or denounces slip by unnoticed. When those--the privileged and the denounced--are not examined, they fade into and hide in the blind spots of the Bible. This collection of essays engages some of the subjects who face dispersion (physical displacement that sparks ideological bias) and othering (ideologies that manifest in social distancing and political displacement). These include, among others, the builders of Babel, Samaritans, Melchizedek, Jezebel, Judith, Gomer, Ruth, slaves, and mothers. In addition to considering the drive to privilege or denounce, the contributors also attend to subjects ignored because the Bible's blind spots are not examined. These include planet Earth, indigenous Australians, Palestinians, Dalits, minjungs, battered women, sexual-abuse victims, religious minorities, mothering men, gays, and foreigners. This collection encourages interchanges and exchanges between dispersion and othering, and between the Bible and context. It flows in the currents of postcolonial and gendered studies, and closes with a script that stages a biblical character at the intersection of the Bible's blind spots and modern readers' passions and commitments.

Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses BRILL

A collection of essays on early Christian, Jewish and Greco-Roman religious discourses in antiquity, focusing on the construction of gender in relationship to broader cultural and religious themes, argumentation and identity formation in the early centuries of the common era.

In Birthing Salvation Anna Rebecca Solevåg shows how childbearing discourse interfaces with salvation discourse in the Pastoral Epistles, the Acts of Andrew and the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas. Issues of gender and class are explored through an intersectional analysis.

This stimulating collection of essays by prominent scholars honors Turid Karlsen Seim. Bodies, Borders, Believers brings together biblical scholars, ecumenical theologians, archeologists, classicists, art historians, and church historians, working side by side to

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probe the past and its receptions in the present. The contributions relate in one way or another to Seim's broad research interests, covering such themes as gender analysis, bodily practices, and ecumenical dialogue. The editors have brought together an international group of scholars, and among the contributors many scholarly traditions, theoretical orientations, and methodological approaches are represented, making this book an interdisciplinary and border-crossing endeavor. A comprehensive bibliography of Seim's work is included.

Early Christian Dress is the first full-length monograph on the subject of dress in early Christianity. It pays attention to the ways in which dress expressed and shaped Christian identity, the role dress played in Christians' rivalries with pagan neighbours, and especially to the ways in which notions of gender were culled and revised in the process. Although many scholars have argued that gender in late antiquity was a performed and embodied category, few have paid attention to the ways in which dress and physical appearances were implicated in the understanding of femininity and masculinity. This study addresses that gap, revealing the amount of sartorial work necessary to secure stable gender categories in the worlds of early Imperial pagans and late ancient Christians. This study analyzes several vigorous discussions and debates that arose over Christian women's dress. It examines how Christians interpreted their dress—especially the dress of female ascetics—as evidence of Christianity's advanced morality and piety, a morality and piety that was coded "masculine." Yet even Christian leaders who championed ascetic women's ability to achieve a degree of virility in terms of their virtue and spiritual status were troubled when ascetics' dress threatened to materially dissolve gender categories, difference, and hierarchies. In the end, the study enables us to gain a broader view of how gender was constructed, perceived, and contested in early Christianity.

In Jesus and the Chaos of History, James Crossley looks at the way the earliest traditions about Jesus interacted with a context of social upheaval and the ways in which this historical chaos of the early first century led to a range of ideas which were taken up, modified, ignored, and reinterpreted in the movement that followed. Crossley examines how the earliest Palestinian tradition intersected with social upheaval and historical change and how accidental, purposeful, discontinuous, contradictory, and implicit meanings in the developments of ideas appeared in the movement that followed. He considers the ways seemingly egalitarian and countercultural ideas co-exist with ideas of dominance and power and how human reactions to socio-economic inequalities can end up mimicking dominant power. In this case, the book analyzes how a Galilean "protest" movement laid the foundations for its own brand of imperial rule. This evaluation is carried out in detailed studies on the kingdom of God and "Christology," "sinners" and purity, and gender and revolution.

The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religions provides a comprehensive overview of the academic study of religions. Written by an international team of leading scholars, its fifty-one chapters are divided thematically into seven sections. The first section addresses five major conceptual aspects of research on religion. Part two surveys eleven main frameworks of analysis, interpretation, and explanation of religion. Reflecting recent turns in the humanities and social sciences, part three considers eight forms of the expression of religion. Part four provides a discussion of the ways

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societies and religions, or religious organizations, are shaped by different forms of allocation of resources (i.e., economy). Other chapters in this section consider law, the media, nature, medicine, politics, science, sports, and tourism. Part five reviews important developments, distinctions, and arguments for each of the selected topics. The study of religion addresses religion as a historical phenomenon and part six looks at seven historical processes. Religion is studied in various ways by many disciplines, and this Handbook shows that the study of religion is an academic discipline in its own right. The disciplinary profile of this volume is reflected in part seven, which considers the history of the discipline and its relevance. Each chapter in the Handbook references at least two different religions to provide fresh and innovative perspectives on key issues in the field. This authoritative collection will advance the state of the discipline and is an invaluable reference for students and scholars.

At once brave and athletic, virtuous and modest, female martyrs in the second and third centuries were depicted as self-possessed gladiators who at the same time exhibited the quintessentially "womanly" qualities of modesty, fertility, and beauty. L. Stephanie Cobb explores the double embodiment of "male" and "female" gender ideals in these figures, connecting them to Greco-Roman virtues and the construction of Christian group identities. Both male and female martyrs conducted their battles in the amphitheater, a masculine environment that enabled the divine combatants to showcase their strength, virility, and volition. These Christian martyr accounts also illustrated masculinity through the language of justice, resistance to persuasion, and—more subtly but most effectively—the juxtaposition of "unmanly" individuals (usually slaves, the old, or the young) with those at the height of male maturity and accomplishment (such as the governor or the proconsul). Imbuing female martyrs with the same strengths as their male counterparts served a vital function in Christian communities. Faced with the possibility of persecution, Christians sought to inspire both men and women to be braver than pagan and Jewish men. Yet within the community itself, traditional gender roles had to be maintained, and despite the call to be manly, Christian women were expected to remain womanly in relation to the men of their faith. Complicating our understanding of the social freedoms enjoyed by early Christian women, Cobb's investigation reveals the dual function of gendered language in martyr texts and its importance in laying claim to social power.

Contributions in this volume demonstrate how, across the ancient Mediterranean and over hundreds of years, women's rituals intersected with the political, economic, cultural, or religious spheres of their communities in a way that has only recently started to gain sustained academic attention. The volume aims to tease out a number of different approaches and contexts, and to expand existing studies of women in the ancient world as well as scholarship on religious and social history. The contributors face a famously difficult task: ancient authors rarely recorded aspects of women's lives,

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including their songs, prophecies, and prayers. Many of the objects women made and used in ritual were perishable and have not survived; certain kinds of ritual objects (lowly undecorated pots, for example) tend not even to be recorded in archaeological reports. However, the broad range of contributions in this volume demonstrates the multiplicity of materials that can be used as evidence – including inscriptions, textiles, ceramics, figurative art, and written sources – and the range of methodologies that can be used, from analysis of texts, images, and material evidence to cognitive and comparative approaches.

The first Christians operated with a hierarchical model of sexual difference common to the ancient Mediterranean, with women considered to be lesser versions of men. Yet sexual difference was not completely stable as a conceptual category across the spectrum of formative Christian thinking. Rather, early Christians found ways to exercise theological creativity and to think differently from one another as they probed the enigma of sexually differentiated bodies. In *Specters of Paul*, Benjamin H. Dunning explores this variety in second- and third-century Christian thought with particular attention to the ways the legacy of the apostle Paul fueled, shaped, and also constrained approaches to the issue. Paul articulates his vision of what it means to be human primarily by situating human beings between two poles: creation (Adam) and resurrection (Christ). But within this framework, where does one place the figure of Eve—and the difference that her female body represents? Dunning demonstrates that this dilemma impacted a range of Christian thinkers in the centuries immediately following the apostle, including Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullian of Carthage, and authors from the Nag Hammadi corpus. While each of these thinkers attempts to give the difference of the feminine a coherent place within a Pauline typological framework, Dunning shows that they all fail to deliver fully on the coherence that they promise. Instead, sexual difference haunts the Pauline discourse of identity and sameness as the difference that can be neither fully assimilated nor fully ejected—a conclusion with important implications not only for early Christian history but also for feminist and queer philosophy and theology.

In "Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture," Stanley Porter and Andrew Pitts assemble an international team of scholars whose work has focused on reconstructing the social matrix for earliest Christianity through the use of Greco-Roman materials and literary forms. Each essay moves forward the current understanding of how primitive Christianity situated itself in relation to evolving Hellenistic culture. Some essays focus on configuring the social context for the origins of the Jesus movement and beyond, while others assess the literary relation between early Christian and Greco-Roman texts.

The importance of martyrdom for the spread of Christianity in the first centuries of the Common Era is a question of enduring interest. In this innovative new study, Candida Moss offers a radically new history of martyrdom in the first and

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second centuries that challenges traditional understandings of the spread of Christianity and rethinks the nature of Christian martyrdom itself. *Martyrdom*, Moss shows, was not a single idea, theology, or practice: there were diverse perspectives and understandings of what it meant to die for Christ. Beginning with an overview of ancient Greek, Roman, and Jewish ideas about death, Moss demonstrates that there were many cultural contexts within which early Christian views of martyrdom were very much at home. She then shows how distinctive and diverging theologies of martyrdom emerged in different ancient congregations. In the process she reexamines the authenticity of early Christian stories about martyrs and calls into question the dominant scholarly narrative about the spread of martyrdom in the ancient world.

Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity reconsiders the religious history of the late Roman Empire, focusing on the shifting position of dissenting religious groups - conventionally called "pagans" and "heretics". The period from the mid-fourth century until the mid-fifth century CE witnessed a significant transformation of late Roman society and a gradual shift from the world of polytheistic religions into the Christian Empire. This book challenges the many straightforward melodramatic narratives of the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, still prevalent both in academic research and in popular non-fiction works. *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity* demonstrates that the narrative is much more nuanced than the simple Christian triumph over the classical world. It looks at everyday life, economic aspects, day-to-day practices, and conflicts of interest in the relations of religious groups. *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity* addresses two aspects: rhetoric and realities, and consequently, delves into the interplay between the manifest ideologies and daily life found in late antique sources. It is a detailed analysis of selected themes and a close reading of selected texts, tracing key elements and developments in the treatment of dissident religious groups. The book focuses on specific themes, such as the limits of imperial legislation and ecclesiastical control, the end of sacrifices, and the label of magic. *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity* examines the ways in which dissident religious groups were construed as religious outsiders, but also explores local rituals and beliefs in late Roman society as creative applications and expressions of the infinite range of human inventiveness.

Are We Not Men? offers an innovative approach to gender and embodiment in the Hebrew Bible, revealing the male body as a source of persistent difficulty for the Hebrew prophets. Drawing together key moments in prophetic embodiment, Graybill demonstrates that the prophetic body is a queer body, and its very instability makes possible new understandings of biblical masculinity. Prophecy disrupts the performance of masculinity and demands new ways of inhabiting the body and negotiating gender. Graybill explores prophetic masculinity through critical readings of a number of prophetic bodies, including Isaiah, Moses, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In addition to close readings of the biblical

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texts, this account engages with modern intertexts drawn from philosophy, psychoanalysis, and horror films: Isaiah meets the poetry of Anne Carson; Hosea is seen through the lens of possession films and feminist film theory; Jeremiah intersects with psychoanalytic discourses of hysteria; and Ezekiel encounters Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. Graybill also offers a careful analysis of the body of Moses. Her methods highlight unexpected features of the biblical texts, and illuminate the peculiar intersections of masculinity, prophecy, and the body in and beyond the Hebrew Bible. This assembly of prophets, bodies, and readings makes clear that attending to prophecy and to prophetic masculinity is an important task for queer reading. Biblical prophecy engenders new forms of masculinity and embodiment; *Are We Not Men?* offers a valuable map of this still-uncharted terrain.

This book examines slavery and gender through a feminist reading of narratives including female slaves in the Gospel of Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, and early Christian texts. Through the literary theory of Mikhail Bakhtin, the voices of three enslaved female characters—the female slave who questions Peter in Luke 22, Rhoda in Acts 12, and the prophesying slave of Acts 16—are placed into dialogue with female slaves found in the Apocryphal Acts, ancient novels, classical texts, and images of enslaved women on funerary monuments. Although ancients typically distrusted the words of slaves, Christy Cobb argues that female slaves in Luke-Acts speak truth to power, even though their gender and status suggest that they cannot. In this Bakhtinian reading, female slaves become truth-tellers and their words confirm aspects of Lukan theology. This exegetical, theoretical, and interdisciplinary book is a substantial contribution to conversations about women and slaves in Luke-Acts and early Christian literature.

New Testament scholars typically assume that the men who pervade the pages of Luke's two volumes are models of an implied "manliness." Scholars rarely question how Lukan men measure up to ancient masculine mores, even though masculinity is increasingly becoming a topic of inquiry in the field of New Testament and its related disciplines. Drawing especially from gender-critical work in classics, Brittany Wilson addresses this lacuna by examining key male characters in Luke-Acts in relation to constructions of masculinity in the Greco-Roman world. Of all Luke's male characters, Wilson maintains that four in particular problematize elite masculine norms: namely, Zechariah (the father of John the Baptist), the Ethiopian eunuch, Paul, and, above all, Jesus. She further explains that these men do not protect their bodily boundaries nor do they embody corporeal control, two interrelated male gender norms. Indeed, Zechariah loses his ability to speak, the Ethiopian eunuch is castrated, Paul loses his ability to see, and Jesus is put to death on the cross. With these bodily "violations," Wilson argues, Luke points to the all-powerful nature of God and in the process reconfigures--or refigures--men's own claims to power. Luke, however, not only refigures the so-called prerogative of male power, but he refigures the parameters of power itself. According to Luke, God provides an alternative construal of power in the figure of Jesus and thus redefines what it means to be masculine. Thus, for Luke, "real" men look manifestly unmanly. Wilson's findings in *Unmanly Men* will shatter long-held assumptions in scholarly circles and beyond about

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gendered interpretations of the New Testament, and how they can be used to understand the roles of the Bible's key characters. Through the close study of texts, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* examines the overlapping emphases and themes of two cosmopolitan and multiethnic cultural identities emerging in the early centuries CE – a trans-empire alliance of the Elite and the "Christians." Exploring the cultural representations of these social identities, Judith Perkins shows that they converge around an array of shared themes: violence, the body, prisons, courts, and time. Locating Christian representations within their historical context and in dialogue with other contemporary representations, it asks why do Christian representations share certain emphases? To what do they respond, and to whom might they appeal? For example, does the increasing Christian emphasis on a fully material human resurrection in the early centuries, respond to the evolution of a harsher and more status based judicial system? Judith Perkins argues that Christians were so successful in suppressing their social identity as inhabitants of the Roman Empire, that historical documents and testimony have been sequestered as "Christian" rather than recognized as evidence for the social dynamics enacted during the period, Her discussion offers a stimulating survey of interest to students of ancient narrative, cultural studies and gender.

This new textbook outlines a gender-critical perspective on the New Testament and other early Christian writings.

Exploring the interface between the Bible and film offers exciting opportunities for both biblical scholars and moviegoers alike. The eleven contributors to this provocative and wide-ranging collection deal critically and creatively both with films about the Bible and biblical characters, including the recent controversial *The Passion of the Christ*, and with a wide range of contemporary films in which biblical themes play a significant, and sometimes surprising, role. Originally published as issue 1-2 of Volume 14 (2006) of Brill's journal *Biblical Interpretation*.

This volume extends the insights of queer theory in order to unsettle or "queer" our understandings of "religion," "science," and the relationship between them. It asks how queer religion, science, and philosophy can and/or should be as a way to continue our conversations and explorations of the world in which we live.

This collection brings together a wide range of essays on themes related to sexuality and gender, written by William R. G. Loader, who has published widely on attitudes towards sexuality in early Jewish and Christian literature. The essays explore connections and make comparisons among the ancient texts, seeking to understand them in the light of their religious and cultural contexts, providing summaries, and pursuing key themes, from subtle changes in the Septuagint, to the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and the New Testament.

In his sixth satire, Juvenal speculates about how Roman wives busy themselves while their husbands are away, namely, by entertaining a revolving door of exotic visitors who include a eunuch of the eastern goddess Bellona, an impersonator of Egyptian Anubis, a Judean priestess, and Chaldean astrologers. From these self-proclaimed religious specialists women solicit services ranging from dream interpretation to the coercion of lovers. Juvenal's catalogue suggests the popularity of such "freelance" experts at the turn of the second century and their familiarity to his audience, whom he could expect to get the joke. Heidi Wendt

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investigates the backdrop of this enthusiasm for the religion of freelance experts by examining their rise during the first two centuries of the Roman Empire. Unlike civic priests and temple personnel, freelance experts had to generate their own authority and legitimacy, often through demonstrations of skill and learning in the streets, in marketplaces, and at the temple gates, among other locations in the Roman world. Wendt argues that these professionals participated in a highly competitive form of religious activity that intersected with multiple areas of specialty, particularly philosophy and medicine. Over the course of the imperial period freelance experts grew increasingly influential, more diverse with respect to their skills and methods, and more assorted in the ethnic coding of their practices. Wendt argues that this context engendered many of the innovative forms of religion that flourished in the second and third centuries, including phenomena linked with Persian Mithras, the Egyptian gods, and the Judean Christ. The evidence for freelance experts in religion is abundant, but scholars of ancient Mediterranean religion have only recently begun to appreciate their impact on the empire's changing religious landscape. *At the Temple Gates* integrates studies of Judaism, Christianity, mystery cults, astrology, magic, and philosophy to paint a colorful portrait of religious expertise in early Rome. As the first major encyclopedia of its kind, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Gender Studies (OEBGS)* is the go-to source for scholars and students undertaking original research in the field. Extending the work of nineteenth and twentieth century feminist scholarship and more recent queer studies, the *Encyclopedia* seeks to advance the scholarly conversation by systematically exploring the ways in which gender is constructed in the diverse texts, cultures, and readers that constitute "the world of the Bible." With contributions from leading scholars in gender and biblical studies as well as contemporary gender theorists, classicists, archaeologists, and ancient historians, this comprehensive reference work reflects the diverse and interdisciplinary nature of the field and traces both historical and modern conceptions of gender and sexuality in the Bible. The two-volume *Encyclopedia* contains more than 160 entries ranging in length from 1,000 to 10,000 words. Each entry includes bibliographic references and suggestions for further reading, as well as a topical outline and index to aid in research. The *OEBGS* builds upon the pioneering work of biblically focused gender theorists to help guide and encourage further gendered discussions of the Bible.

In *Jesus and Other Men*, Susanna Asikainen explores the masculinities of Jesus and other male characters and the ideal femininities in the Synoptic Gospels.

In antiquity, the Mediterranean region was linked by sea and land routes that facilitated the spread of religious beliefs and practices among the civilizations of the ancient world. *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions* provides an introduction to the major religions of this area and explores current research regarding the similarities and differences among them. The period covered is from the prehistoric period to late antiquity, that is, ca.4000 BCE to 600 CE. The first nine essays in the volume provide an overview of the characteristics and historical developments of the major religions of the region, including those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria-Canaan, Israel, Anatolia, Iran, Greece, Rome and early Christianity. The last five essays deal with key topics in current research on these religions, including violence, identity, the body, gender and visuality, taking an

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explicitly comparative approach and presenting recent theoretical and methodological advances in contemporary scholarship. *Purity, Community, and Ritual in Early Christian Literature* investigates the meaning of purity, purification, defilement, and disgust for Christian writers, readers, and listeners from the first to third centuries. Anthropological and sociological work over the past decades have demonstrated how purity and defilement rituals, practices, and discourses harness the power of a raw emotion in order to shape and manipulate cultural structures. Moshe Blidstein builds on such theories to explain how early Christian writers drew on ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions on purity and defilement, using them to create new types of community, form Christian identity, and articulate the relationship between body, sin, and ritual. Blidstein discusses early Christian purity issues under several headings: dietary law, death defilement, purity of the heart, defilement of outsiders, and purity of the community. Analysis of the motivations shaping the development of each area of discourse reveals two major considerations: polemical and substantive. Thus, Christian writing on dietary law and death defilement is essentially polemical, constructing Christian identity by marking the purity practices and beliefs of others as false. Concerning the subjects of baptism, eucharist, and penance, however, the discourse turns inwards and becomes more substantive, seeking to create and maintain theories of ritual and human nature coherent with the theological principles of the new religion.

This book explores the power of sight for ancient rabbis across the realms of divinity, sexuality, idolatry and rabbinic subjectivity. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Materiality* provides a thoughtfully organized, inclusive, and vibrant project of the multiple ways in which religion and materiality intersect. The contributions explore the way that religion is shaped by, and has shaped, the material world, embedding beliefs, doctrines, and texts into social and cultural contexts of production, circulation, and consumption. The Companion not only contains scholarly essays but has an accompanying website to demonstrate the work of performers, architects, and expressive artists, ranging from musicians and dancers to religious practitioners. These examples offer specific illustrations of the interplay of religion and materiality in everyday life. The project is organized from a comparative perspective, highlighting examples and case studies from traditions originating in both East and West. To summarize, the volume: Brings together the leading figures, theories and ideas in the field in a systematic and comprehensive way Offers an interdisciplinary approach drawing together religious studies, anthropology, archaeology, history, sociology, geography, the cognitive sciences, ecology, and media studies Takes a comparative perspective, covering all the major faith traditions

The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion is a major resource for courses in Religious Studies. It begins by explaining the most important methodological approaches to religion, including psychology, philosophy, anthropology and comparative study, before moving on to explore a wide variety of critical issues, such as gender, science, fundamentalism, ritual, and new religious movements. Written by renowned international specialists, this new edition: includes eight new chapters, including post-structuralism, religion and economics, religion and the environment, religion and popular culture, and sacred space surveys the history of religious studies and the key disciplinary approaches explains why the study of religion is relevant in today's world highlights contemporary issues such as globalization, diaspora and politics includes annotated reading lists, a glossary and

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summaries of key points to assist student learning.

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