Inventing Superstition From The Hippocratics To The Christians By Martin Dale B Harvard University Press 2007 Paperback Paperback | 8564a32cac637eb46b14b83335c521f9

Witchcraft Accusations and Persecutions as a Mechanism for the Marginalisation of Women

This book offers a reconstruction and interpretation of banishment in the final era of a unified Roman Empire, 284-476 CE. Author Daniel Washburn argues that exile was both a penalty and a symbol. It applied to those who committed a misstep or crossed the wrong person; it also stood as a marker of affliction or failure. Like other punishments, it articulated and cemented the power asymmetry between the punisher and the punished. Distinctively, it maneuvered the body of the banished in order to tell that tale. The process of banishment also operated as a form of negotiation between the party that exiled and the one banished. In so doing, the punishment offered the possibility for pardon, an event that glorified the pardoner and signaled submissiveness on the part of the restored. In its sources, this work employs evidence from legal as well as literary materials to forge a complete picture of exile. To harvest all possible information from the period, it considers elements from the arenas of the early church and the Roman Empire. Methodologically, it situates ancient Christianity within the Roman world, while remaining sensitive to the distinct views and roles held by late antique bishops. While banishment played a major role in the history of the Later Empire, no work of scholarship has treated it as a topic in its own right.

This book examines the experiences and interconnections of the Reformation, principally in Denmark-Norway and Britain and Ireland (but with an eye to the broader Scandinavian landscape as well), and also discusses instances of similarities between the Reformation in both realms. The volume features a comprehensive introduction, and provides a broad survey of the beginnings and progress of the Catholic and Protestant Reformations in Northern Europe, while also highlighting themes of comparison that are common to all of the bloc under consideration, which will be of interest to Reformation scholars across this geographical region.

Van alle onderwerpen die in de antropologie worden bestudeerd is er geen enkel dat aanleiding heeft gegeven tot zoveel tegenstrijdige verklaringen en conflictierende interpretaties als het fenomeen 'religie'. In dit chronologisch opgevatte overzicht "Denken over religie" behandelt V. a. de reeksen van de Oudheid en Rechtvaardiging onder de anciliaanse werken van de klassieke Oudheid. Dit effectualiteit van de filosofie van de discipline, de belangrijkste denkers die een bijdrage hebben geleverd aan het begrijpen van religie als menselijk fenomeen. In Deel 1 "Van X enopha"en tot Robertson Smith" presenteert de auteur op een heldere en toegankelijke manier de belangrijkste denkers van de klassieke Oudheid tot ruwweg 1860.

This volume in honour of Jan N. Bremmer consists of a variety of contributions offering a broad spectrum of original ideas and innovative approaches in the history of religions both past and present, thus reflecting the nature of the scholarship of Bremmer himself.

De woorden integratie, discriminatie, xenofobie, allochtonen en autochtonen vullen bijna dagelijks de kranten. Dat het Griekse en Romeinse woorden zijn die verwijzen naar een zeer oude vreemdelingenproblematiek is minder bekend. V. reem volk begint bij de elitaire samenleving van de homerische helden en eindigt in de latere Romeinse oudheid. In een voor deze nieuwe uitgave speciaal geschreven epiloog laat Fik Meijer opnieuw zien hoe verrassend actueel oude geschiedenis kan zijn, en welke lessen we kunnen leren uit het verleden.

Rabbinc midrash of late antiquity and the early medieval period visualized Egypt and presented Egyptian religious concepts and icons. Midrash is analyzed in a cross-cultural perspective utilizing insights from the discipline of Egyptology. Topics: the Greco-Roman Nile god, Isis, Serapis and other gods, festivals, mummy portraits, funeral customs, the Egyptian language, Pharaohs, Cleopatra, A lexandria, the divine eye. The hermeneutical role of Egyptian cultural icons in midrash is explored.

This books draws on feminist commentary from the disciplines of anthropology, history, law, politics and sociology in order to deal with the phenomenon of modern-day witchcraft. It focuses on the re-
emergence of witchcraft beliefs in contemporary society, suggesting that witchcraft accusations and persecution are being used as a marginalisation mechanism of women. The re-emergence of witchcraft beliefs in contemporary society and the prevalence of the violence associated with such beliefs has received little attention within academic literature, yet witchcraft-related violence against women is, progressively, becoming one of the most pervasive forms of violence facing women today. This book addresses this gap in the literature, discussing the return of witchcraft beliefs to contemporary society, whilst assessing the effectiveness of international human rights law in protecting women from witchcraft accusations and persecution.

Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity is the first major study in English of the 'heretic' Jovinian and the Jovinianist controversy. David G. Hunter examines early Christian views on marriage and celibacy in the first three centuries and the development of an anti-heretical tradition. He provides a thorough analysis of the responses of Jovinian's main opponents, including Pope Siricius, Ambrose, Jerome, Pelagius, and Augustine. In the course of his discussion Hunter sheds new light on the origins of Christian asceticism, the rise of clerical celibacy, the development of Marian doctrine, and the formation of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in early Christianity.

Exercices d’histoire des religions is a collection of nineteen studies by Philippe Borgeaud, showcasing his many reflections on the categories and tools used to describe and compare such evanescent concepts as "religions", "myths" and "rituals". Exercices d’histoire des religions rassemble dix-neuf articles de Philippe Borgeaud, illustrant sa réflexion sur les outils et catégories employés pour décrire et comparer des concepts aussi évanescents que les « religions », les « mythes » ou les « rituels ».

Throughout its long history, Japan had no concept of what we call "religion." There was no corresponding Japanese word, nor anything close to its meaning. But when American warships appeared off the coast of Japan in 1853 and forced the Japanese government to sign treaties demanding, among other things, freedom of religion, the country had to contend with this Western idea. In this book, Jason A. Nanda Josephson reveals how Japanese officials invented religion in Japan and traces the sweeping intellectual, legal, and cultural changes that followed. More than a tale of oppression or hegemony, Josephson’s account demonstrates that the process of articulating religion offered the Japanese state a valuable opportunity. In addition to carving out space for belief in Christianity and certain forms of Buddhism, Japanese officials excluded Shinto from the category. Instead, they enshrined it as a national ideology while relegating the popular practices of indigenous shamans and female mediums to the category of “superstitions”—and thus beyond the sphere of tolerance. Josephson argues that the invention of religion in Japan was a politically charged, boundary-drawing exercise that not only extensively reclassified the inherited materials of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto to lasting effect, but also reshaped, in subtle but significant ways, our own formulation of the concept of religion today. This book is wide-ranging and provides an important perspective to broader debates on the nature of religion, the secular, science, and superstition.

A new history that overturns the received wisdom that science displaced magic in Enlightenment Britain—named a Best Book of 2020 by the Financial Times In early modern Britain, belief in prophecies, omens, ghosts, apparitions and fairies was commonplace. A mong both educated and ordinary people the absolute existence of a spiritual world was taken for granted. Yet in the eighteenth century such certainties were swept away. Credit for this great change is usually given to science - and in particular to the scientists of the Royal Society. But is this justified? Michael Hunter argues that those pioneering the change in attitude were not scientist but freethinkers. While some scientists defended the reality of supernatural phenomena, these sceptical humanists drew on ancient authors to mount a critique both of orthodox religion and, by extension, of magic and other forms of superstition. Even if the religious heterodoxy of such men tarnished their reputation and postponed the general acceptance of anti-magical views, slowly change did come about. When it did, this owed less to the testing of magic than to the growth of confidence in a stable world in which magic no longer placed a place.

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. A ddressing 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.

Does martyrdom hurt? The obvious answer to this question is “yes.” L. Stephanie Cobb, asserts, however, that early Christian martyr texts respond to this question with an emphatic “no!” Divine Deliverance examines the original martyr texts of the second through fifth centuries, concluding that these narratives in fact seek to demonstrate the Christian martyrs’ imperviousness to pain. For these martyrs, God was present with, and within, the martyrs, delivering them from pain. These martyrs’ claims not to feel pain define and redefine Christianity in the ancient world: whereas Christians did not deny the reality of their subjection to state violence, they argued that they were not ultimately vulnerable to its painful effects.

Religious individuality is not restricted to modernity. This book offers a new reading of the ancient sources in order to find indications for the spectrum of religious practices and intensified forms of such practices only occasionally denouced as ‘superstition’. Authors from Cicero in the first century BC to the law codes of the fourth century AD share the assumption that authentic and binding
communication between individuals and gods is possible and widespread, even if problematic in the case of divination or the confrontation with images of the divine. A change in practices and assumptions throughout the imperial period becomes visible. It might be characterised as 'individualisation' and informed the Roman law of religions. The basic constellation - to give freedom of religion and to regulate religion at the same time - resonates even into modern bodies of law and is important for juridical conflicts today.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus of Nazareth makes reference to one of the oldest beliefs in the ancient world - the malignity of an Evil Eye. The Holy Scriptures in their original languages contain no less than twenty-four references to the Evil Eye, although this is obscured by most modern Bible translations. John H. Elliott's Beware the Evil Eye describes this belief and associated practices, its history, its voluminous appearances in ancient cultures, and the extensive research devoted to it over the centuries in order to unravel this enigma for readers who have never heard of the Evil Eye and its presence in the Bible. This is the first of a four-volume work on the Evil Eye.

The concept of providence is embedded in the life and theology of the church. Its uses are frequent and varied in understandings of politics, nature, and individual life-stories. Parallels can be discerned in other faiths. In this volume, David Ferguson traces the development of providential ideas at successive periods in church history. These include the early appropriation of Stoic and Platonic ideas, the codification of providence in the Middle Ages, its foregrounding in Reformed theology, and its secular applications in the modern era. Responses to the Lisbon earthquake (1755) provide an instructive case study. A thorough confidence in divine providence was shaken after 1914, several models were advanced during the twentieth century. Drawing upon this diversity of approaches, Ferguson offers a chastened but constructive account for the contemporary church. Arguing for a polyphonic approach, he aims to distribute providence across all three articles of the faith.

This volume explores the intricate idenitarian formation and negotiations of early encounters of the Abrahamic religions. Its aim is to understand the ever-presening challenges arising from polemical inter-religious encounters by analyzing the dynamics of apologetic debate, the negotiation and formation of boundaries of belonging, and the argumentative thrust for persuasion and conversion.

This book contains 15 essays on the philosophy, theology and reception of Pierre Bayle, who is now generally regarded as one of the key authors of the early Enlightenment.

Characters in the Second Gospel are analysed and an in-depth look at different approaches currently employed by scholars working with literary and reader-oriented methods of analysis is provided. The first section consists of essays on method/theory, and the second consists of seven exegetical character studies using a literary or reader-oriented method. All contributors work from a literary, narrative-critical, reader-oriented, or related methodology. The book summarizes the state of the discussion and examines obstacles to arriving at a comprehensive theory of character in the Second Gospel. Specific contributions include analyses of the representation of women, God, Jesus, Satan, Gentiles, and the Roman authorities of Mark's Gospel. This work is both an exploration of theories of character, and a study in the application of those theories.

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 A nubis, 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 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 assimilated 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.

The Demon in the Political Thought of Eusebius of Caesarea explores how Eusebius of Caesarea's ideas about demons interacted with and helped to shape his thought on other topics, particularly political topics. Hazel Johannessen builds on and complements recent work on early Christian and early modern demonology. Eusebius' political thought has long drawn the attention of scholars who have identified in some of his works the foundations of later Byzantine theories of kingship. However, Eusebius' political thought has not previously been examined in the light of his views on demons. Moreover, despite frequent references to demons throughout many of Eusebius' works, there has been no comprehensive study of Eusebius' views on demons, until now, as expressed throughout a range of his works. The originality of this study lies both in an initial examination of Eusebius' views on demons and their place in his cosmology, and in the application of the insights derived from this to consideration of his political thought. As a result of this new perspective, Johannessen challenges scholars' traditional characterization of Eusebius as a triumphal optimist. Instead, she draws attention to his concerns about a continuing demonic threat, capable of disrupting humankind's salvation, and presents Eusebius as a more cautious figure than the one familiar to late antique scholarship.
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Interest in the middle ages is at an all time high at the moment, thanks in part to "The Da Vinci Code." Never has there been a moment more propitious for a study of our misconceptions of the Middle Ages than now. Ranging across religion, art, and science, Misconceptions about the Middle Ages unravels some of the many misinterpretations that have evolved concerning the medieval period, including: the church war science art society With an impressive international array of contributions, the book will be essential reading for students and scholars involved with medieval religion, history, and culture.

Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe brings together a rich selection of essays which represent the most important historical research on religion, magic and superstition in early modern Europe. Each essay makes a significant contribution to the history of magic and religion in its own right, while together they demonstrate how debates over the topic have evolved over time, providing invaluable intellectual, historical, and socio-political context for readers approaching the subject for the first time. The essays are organised around five key themes and areas of controversy. Part One tackles superstition; Part Two, the tension between miracles and magic; Part Three, ghosts and apparitions; Part Four, witchcraft and witch trials; and Part Five, the gradual disintegration of the 'magical universe' in the face of scientific, religious and practical opposition. Each part is prefaced by an introduction that provides an outline of the historiography and engages with recent scholarship and debate, setting the context for the essays that follow and providing a foundation for further study. This collection is an invaluable toolkit for students of early modern Europe, providing both a focused overview and a springboard for broader thinking about the underlying continuities and discontinuities that make the study of magic and superstition a perennially fascinating topic.

An examination of Constantine the Great's legislation and government

The three volumes present the current state of international research on Martin Luther's life and work and the Reformation's manifold influences on history, churches, politics, culture, philosophy, arts and society up to the 21st century. The work is initiated by the Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII (Bologna) in cooperation with the European network Refo500. This handbook is also available in German.

Introduction -- On stupidity -- On superstition -- On spite -- Conclusion.

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This well-crafted book probes the key dimensions of Africa’s existential predicament. It constitutes an intellectual response to a gnawing “African situation”—the starting point for grasping Africa’s social and religious quest. Beyond split explanations of external versus internal factors (e.g., colonization/slavery vs. leadership/cultural values), this study accounts more comprehensively for emergent issues shaping this situation. The situation reflects a gamut of problems in traditional African religion and material culture, which hitherto defines African communality, politics, and destinies vis-à-vis the cosmos and nature. Thus, African religion and communities, each with its own attendant values, do not operate by critical engagement with larger issues of society and civilization, especially those shaped by the advent of (post-) modernity. Rather, they operate via adaptation. The communal drive for natural and social harmony inevitably produces a preservationist view of culture (“leaving things as they are”). This study takes an integrative approach to religion, society, and civilization; eschews dichotomies; and broadly defines and re-signifies life and wholeness as a true end of Africans’ quest today.

Early Christians frequently used metaphors about slavery, calling themselves slaves of God and Christ and referring to their leaders as slave representatives of Christ. Most biblical scholars have insisted that this language would have been distasteful to potential converts in the Greco-Roman world, and they have wondered why early Christians such as Paul used the image of slavery to portray salvation. In this book Dale B. Martin addresses the issue by examining the social history and rhetorical and theological conventions of the times. The first half of the book draws on a variety of historical sources—inscriptions, novels, speeches, dream-hanbooks, and agricultural manuals—to portray the complexity of slavery in the early Roman empire. Concentrating on middle-level, managerial slaves, Martin shows how slavery sometimes functioned as a means of upward social mobility and as a form of status-association for those slaves who were agents of members of the upper class. For this reason, say Martin, “slavery of Christ,” brought the Christian convert a degree of symbolic status and lent the Christian leader a certain kind of derived authority. The second half of the book traces the Greco-Roman use of political rhetoric that spoke about populist leaders as “enslaved” to their followers, especially to members of the lower class. This provides the context for Paul’s claim, in 1 Corinthians 9, that he has enslaved himself to “all”—that is, to those very people he is supposed to lead as an apostle. Martin thus interprets this statement to mean that Paul identifies himself with the interests of persons with lower status in the Corinthian church, calling on those with higher status to imitate his self-debasement in order to further the interests of those below them on the social scale.

The Roman author Pliny the Younger characterizes Christianity as “contagious superstition”; two centuries later the Christian writer Eusebius vigorously denounces Greek and Roman religions as vain and impotent “superstitions.” The term of abuse is the same, yet the two writers suggest entirely different things by “superstition.” Dale Martin provides the first detailed genealogy of the idea of superstition, its history over eight centuries, from classical Greece to the Christianized Roman Empire of the fourth century C.E. With illuminating reference to the writings of philosophers, historians, and medical teachers he demonstrates that the concept of superstition was invented by Greek intellectuals to condemn popular religious practices and beliefs, especially the belief that gods or other superhuman beings would harm people or cause disease. Tracing the social, political, and cultural influences that informed classical thinking about piety and superstition, nature and the divine, “Inventing Superstition” exposes the manipulation of the label of superstition in arguments between Greek and Roman intellectuals on the one hand and Christians on the other, and the purposeful alteration of the idea by Neoplatonic philosophers and Christian apologists in late antiquity. “Inventing Superstition” weaves a powerfully coherent argument that will transform our understanding of religion in Greek and Roman culture and the wider ancient Mediterranean world.

This book challenges the status quo of studies in literature and religion by returning to “experience” as a bridge between theory and practice. Essays focus on keywords of religious experience and demonstrate their applications in drama, fiction, and poetry. Each chapter explores the broad significance of its keyword as a category of psychological and social behavior and tracks its unique articulation by individual authors, including Conrad, Beecher Stowe and Melville. Together, the chapters construct a critical foundation for studying literature not only from the perspectives of theology and historicism but from the ways that literary experience reflects, reinforces, and sometimes challenges religious experience.

The primary aim of this volume is to synthesize the two fields of disability studies and biblical studies. It illustrates how academic or critical biblical scholarship has shown that many texts involving disability in the Bible is much more nuanced than a casual reading or isolated proof text reading may indicate.

Do you touch wood for luck, or avoid hotel rooms on floor thirteen? Would you cross the path of a black cat, or step under a ladder? Is breaking a mirror just an expensive waste of glass, or something rather more sinister? Despite the dominance of science in today’s world, superstitious beliefs—both traditional and new—remain surprisingly popular. A recent survey of adults in the United States found that 33 percent believed that finding a penny was good luck, and 23 percent believed that the number seven was lucky. Where did these superstitions come from, and why do they persist today? This Very Short Introduction explores the nature and surprising history of superstition from antiquity to the present. For two millennia, superstition was a label derivatively applied to foreign religions and unacceptable religious practices, and its primary purpose was to separate groups and assert religious and social authority. After the Enlightenment, the superstition label was still used to define
groups, but the new dividing line was between reason and unreason. Today, despite our apparent sophistication and technological advances, superstitious belief and behaviour remain widespread, and highly educated people are not immune. Stuart Vyse takes an exciting look at the varieties of popular superstitious beliefs today and the psychological reasons behind their continued existence, as well as the likely future course of superstition in our increasingly connected world. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Superstitions are commonplace in the modern world. Mostly, however, they evoke innocuous images of people reading their horoscopes or avoiding black cats. Certain religious practices might also come to mind—praying to St. Christopher or lighting candles for the dead. Benign as they might seem today, such practices were not always perceived that way. In medieval Europe superstitions were considered serious offenses, violations of essential precepts of Christian doctrine or immutable natural laws. But how and why did this come to be? In Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies, Michael D. Bailey explores the thorny concept of superstition as it was understood and debated in the Middle Ages. Bailey begins by tracing Christian thinking about superstition from the patristic period through the early and high Middle Ages. He then turns to the later Middle Ages, a period that witnessed an outpouring of writings devoted to superstition—tracts and treatises with titles such as De superstitionibus and Contra vitia superstitionum. Most were written by theologians and other academics based in Europe’s universities and courts, men who were increasingly anxious about the proliferation of suspect beliefs and practices, from elite ritual magic to common healing charms, from astrological divination to the observance of signs and omens. As Bailey shows, however, authorities were far more sophisticated in their reasoning than one might suspect, using accusations of superstition in a calculated way to control the boundaries of legitimate religion and acceptable science. This in turn would lay the conceptual groundwork for future discussions of religion, science, and magic in the early modern world. Indeed, by revealing the extent to which early modern thinkers took up old questions about the operation of natural properties and forces using the vocabulary of science rather than of belief, Bailey exposes the powerful but in many ways false dichotomy between the "superstitious" Middle Ages and "rational" European modernity.