Mystery Cults Of The Ancient World

Houses of Hermes
Mystery Cults in Late Antiquity
The Cult of Divine Birth in Ancient Greece
The Atlas of Lost Cults and Mystery Religions
The Cost of Boiotia in Antiquity
Greek Mysteries
Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia
Ancient Religions
The Cosmos in Ancient Greek Religious Experience
Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World
Greek Philosophy and Mystery Cults
Other of the Gods
Mystery Cults in Visual Representation in Graeco-Roman Antiquity
Choreonarratives
Greek Mysteries
Tragedy, Ritual and Money in Ancient Greece
Romanising Oriental Gods
Persephone Rises, 1860–1927
The Mystery Religions
The Mysteries of Artemis of Ephesus
The Ancient Mysteries
The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries
Angels & Demons
The Mithraic Religion and Christianity
The Mysteries of Mithras
The God who Comes
Temple of the World
Mystery Religions in the Ancient World
Hellenistic Mystery Religions
The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire
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Housing the Chosen
The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism
The Sacred Law of Andania
The Cults of the Roman Empire
Ancient Mithraic Cults
Cults and Conspiracies
Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia
Jesus

Houses of Hermes The Mysteries of Mithras presents a revival of this ancient Roman mystery religion, popular from the late second century B.C. Payam Nabarz reveals the history and tenets of Mithraism, its connections to Christianity, Islam, and Freemasonry, and the modern neo-pagan practice of Mithraism today. Included are seven of its initiatory rituals.

Mystery Cults in Late Antiquity This volume sets forth a new explanation of the meaning of the cult of
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Mithraism, tracing its origins not, as commonly held, to the ancient Persian religion, but to ancient astronomy and cosmology.

The Cult of Divine Birth in Ancient Greece

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.

The Atlas of Lost Cults and Mystery Religions

In Vergil’s Aeneid, the poet implies that those who have been initiated into mystery cults enjoy a blessed situation both in life and after death. This collection of essays brings new insight to the study of mystic cults in the ancient world, particularly those that flourished in Magna Graecia (essentially
the area of present-day Southern Italy and Sicily). Implementing a variety of methodologies, the contributors to Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia examine an array of features associated with such "mystery religions" that were concerned with individual salvation through initiation and hidden knowledge rather than civic cults directed toward Olympian deities usually associated with Greek religion. Contributors present contemporary theories of ancient religion, field reports from recent archaeological work, and other frameworks for exploring mystic cults in general and individual deities specifically, with observations about cultural interactions throughout. Topics include Dionysos and Orpheus, the Goddess Cults, Isis in Italy, and Roman Mithras, explored by an international array of scholars including Giulia Sfameni Gasparro ("Aspects of the Cult of Demeter in Magna Graecia") and Alberto Bernabé ("Imago Inferorum Orphica"). The resulting volume illuminates this often misunderstood range of religious phenomena.

The Cost There are those within the Order of Hermes who transmit secrets of magic incomprehensible to outsiders. Pre-eminent among them are the four Mystery Cult Houses, gatherings of magi Initiated into the same Mysteries. This book details the Mystery Cults, including full details of their Inner Mysteries. House Bjornaer venerates animal ancestors, and strives to perfect the form. Their Mysteries enhance the heartbeast, ultimately allowing the magus to unlock mythic forms. House Criamon follow ancient teachings and seek escape from time itself. The many paths that they walk to this end grant powers that can include immortality. House Merinita move among the faeries, ultimately joining them. Their spells can draw on faerie glamour, awaken the fay slumbering around them, or inflict curses on those who break their promises. House Verditius crafts the greatest items, putting a little of themselves into their finest creations. Pride in their creations is often their downfall, and
these magi are terribly prone to the most deadly sin.

Boiotia in Antiquity Human beings have believed in conspiracies presumably as long as there have been groups of at least three people in which one was convinced that the other two were plotting against him or her. In that sense one might look back as far as Eve and the serpent to find the world’s first conspiracy. Whereas recent generations have tended to find their conspiracies in politics and government, the past often sought its mysteries in religious cults or associations. In ancient Rome, for example, the senate tried to prohibit the cult of Isis lest its euphoric excesses undermine public morality and political stability. And during the Middle Ages, many rulers feared such powerful and mysterious religious orders as the Knights Templar. Fascination with the arcane is a driving force in this comprehensive survey of conspiracy fiction. Theodore Ziolkowski traces the evolution of cults, orders, lodges, secret societies, and conspiracies through various literary manifestations—drama, romance, epic, novel, opera—down to the thrillers of the twenty-first century. Arguing that the lure of the arcane throughout the ages has remained a constant factor of human fascination, Ziolkowski demonstrates that the content of conspiracy has shifted from religion by way of philosophy and social theory to politics. In the process, he reveals, the underlying mythic pattern was gradually co-opted for the subversive ends of conspiracy. Cults and Conspiracies considers Euripides’s Bacchae, Andreae’s Chymical Wedding, Mozart’s The Magic Flute, and Eco’s Foucault’s Pendulum, among other seminal works. Mimicking the genre’s quest-driven narrative arc, the reader searches for the significance of conspiracy fiction and is rewarded with the author’s cogent reflections in the final chapter. After much investigation, Ziolkowski reinforces Umberto Eco’s notion that the most powerful secret, the magnetic center of conspiracy fiction, is in fact “a secret
Greek Mysteries In Vergil's Aeneid, the poet implies that those who have been initiated into mystery cults enjoy a blessed situation both in life and after death. This collection of essays brings new insight to the study of mystic cults in the ancient world, particularly those that flourished in Magna Graecia (essentially the area of present-day Southern Italy and Sicily). Implementing a variety of methodologies, the contributors to Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia examine an array of features associated with such "mystery religions" that were concerned with individual salvation through initiation and hidden knowledge rather than civic cults directed toward Olympian deities usually associated with Greek religion. Contributors present contemporary theories of ancient religion, field reports from recent archaeological work, and other frameworks for exploring mystic cults in general and individual deities specifically, with observations about cultural interactions throughout. Topics include Dionysos and Orpheus, the Goddess Cults, Isis in Italy, and Roman Mithras, explored by an international array of scholars including Giulia Sfameni Gasparro ("Aspects of the Cult of Demeter in Magna Graecia") and Alberto Bernabé ("Imago Inferorum Orphica"). The resulting volume illuminates this often misunderstood range of religious phenomena.

Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia This book fills a gap in the study of mystery cults in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Focusing on the visual language surrounding these cults, it aims to understand how images depict mysteries in different cults: Dionysus, Mithras, Mother of the Gods, and Isiac cults.

Ancient Religions A study of the religious system of Mithraism, one of the 'mystery cults' popular in the Roman Empire contemporary with early Christianity.
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Mithraism is described from the point of view of the initiate engaging with its rich repertoire of symbols and practices.

The Cosmos in Ancient Greek Religious Experience

Despite the prominence of ancient temples in the landscape of Egypt, books about them are surprisingly rare; this new and essential publication from a prominent Czech scholar answers the need for a study that goes beyond temple architecture to examine the spiritual, economic and political aspects of these specific institutions and the dominant roles they played. Miroslav Verner presents a deeper and more complex study of major ancient Egyptian religious centers, their principal temples, their rise and decline, their religious doctrines, cults, rituals, feasts, and mysteries. Also discussed are the various categories of priests, the organization of the priesthood, and its daily services and customs. Each chapter offers the reader essential and up-to-date information about temple complexes and the history of their archaeological exploration, in the context of the spiritual dimension and cultural legacy of ancient Egypt.

Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World

Written by an international team of acknowledged experts, this excellent book studies a wide range of contributions and showcases new research on the archaeology, ritual and history of Greek mystery cults. With a lack of written evidence that exists for the mysteries, archaeology has proved central to explaining their significance and this volume is key to understanding a phenomenon central to Greek religion and society.

Greek Philosophy and Mystery Cults

The murder of a world-famous physicist raises fears that the Illuminati are operating again after centuries of silence, and religion professor Robert Langdon is
called in to assist with the case.

Mother of the Gods The contributions to this book offer a broad vision of the relationships that were established between Greek Philosophy and the Mystery Cults. The authors centre their attention on such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoic and the Neoplatonist philosophers, who used – and in some cases criticised – doctrinal elements from Mystery Cults, adapting them to their own thinking. Thus, the volume provides a new approach to some of the most renowned Greek philosophers, highlighting the influence that Mystery Cults, such as Orphism, Dionysianism, or the Eleusinian rites, had on the formation of fundamental aspects of their thinking. Given its interdisciplinary character, this book will appeal to a broad academic readership interested in the origin of Hellenic thinking and culture. It will be especially useful for those eager for a deeper approach to two fundamental domains that attract the attention of many Antiquity scholars: Greek philosophy and religion.

Mystery Cults in Visual Representation in Graeco-Roman Antiquity This book is about the multiplicity of gods and religions that characterized the Roman world before Constantine. It was not the noble gods such as Jove, Apollo and Diana, who were crucial to the lives of the common people in the empire, but gods of an altogether more earthly, earth level, whose rituals and observances may now seem bizarre. As well as being of wide general interest, this book will appeal to students of the Roman Empire and of the history of religion.

Choreonarratives The architecture of ancient religious spaces has the potential to offer a deeper understanding of the religious groups who used the spaces and the activities they performed there. However, the large corpus of recent scholarship has
for the most part overlooked architecture. This book investigates the spatial and architectural settings of mystery cults and religious assemblies from the eighth century BC to the fourth century AD and shows how architecture can illuminate the contents and societal functions of ancient religions. It examines deities whose cults included mysteries and/or were served by religious associations in the ancient world. Chapters treat the old Greek mystery cults of Demeter in Eleusis and the Great Gods in Samothrace as well as those of Dionysos, and the ‘foreign’ deities Isis/Serapis, Cybele/Attis, and Mithras. The book also treats religions and cults that did not include mysteries but were served by special religious groups, such as those belonging to the Syrio-Phoenician gods, the Jewish god in the diaspora, and the Christian god. The last section of the book combines the typological results from the first section on architecture with the presentation of the cultic functions of religious groups in the second section. This comparative analysis seeks to understand the social and spatial context for the activities of cults with a main focus on the Hellenistic and Roman periods, in particular through distinguishing the differences and similarities in the use of specific room-types.

Greek Mysteries A collection of papers - revised or previously unpublished - about the history, institutions, and literature of Boiotia, by a leading expert on the region.

Tragedy, Ritual and Money in Ancient Greece Describes five ancient approaches to life, shows artifacts for a variety of early religions, and discusses each one’s beliefs and rituals.

Romanising Oriental Gods Explores mysterious religious cults of ancient Greece and Rome, discussing the deity that each group worshiped, the initiation ceremonies, and how the cults' practices influenced early
Persephone Rises, 1860–1927 Phillips was born in Madison, Indiana. After graduating high school Phillips entered Asbury College following which he degree from College of New Jersey in 1887. After completing his education, Phillips worked as a newspaper reporter in Cincinnati, Ohio before moving on to New York City where he was employed as a columnist and editor with the New York World until 1902. In his spare time, he wrote a novel, The Great God Success that was published in 1901. The book sold well enough that his royalty income was sufficient enough to allow him to work as a freelance journalist while dedicating himself to writing fiction. Writing articles for various prominent magazines, he began to develop a reputation as a competent investigative journalist. Considered a progressive, Phillips' novels often commented on social issues of the day and frequently chronicled events based on his real-life journalistic experiences.

The Mystery-Religions 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.

The Mysteries of Artemis of Ephesos Choreonarratives rethinks dance’s potential for narrating stories and explores new intersections between perspectives of
classicists, dance scholars, and dance artists. Discussions of ancient and modern examples enlighten dance’s capacity to represent storyworlds, rewrite traditional narratives, and inspire new ones.

The Ancient Mysteries Over the course of the nineteenth century, the figure of Persephone rapidly evolved from what was essentially a decorative metaphor into a living goddess who embodied the most spiritual aspects of ancient Greek religion. In the first comprehensive survey of the Persephone myth in English and American literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Margot Louis explores the transformation of the goddess to provide not only a basis for understanding how the study of ancient history informed the creation of a new spirituality but for comprehending the deep and bitter tensions surrounding gender that interacted with this process. Beginning with an overview of the most influential ancient texts on Persephone and references to Persephone in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Romantic period writing, Louis shows that the earliest theories of matriarchy and patriarchal marriage emerged in the 1860s alongside the first English poems to explore Persephone’s story. As scholars began to focus on the chthonic Mystery cults, and particularly on the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone, poets and novelists explored the divisions between mother and daughter occasioned by patriarchal marriage. Issues of fertility and ritual resonate in Thomas Hardy’s Tess of the d’Urbervilles and Willa Cather’s My Antonia, while the first advance of a neo-pagan spirituality, as well as early feminist critiques of male mythography and of the Persephone myth, emerge in Modernist poems and fictions from 1908 to 1927. Informed by the latest research and theoretical work on myth, Margot Louis's fascinating study shows the development of Victorian mythography in a new light; offers original takes on Victorian representations of gender and values; exposes how
differently male and female Modernists dealt with issues of myth, ritual, and ancient spirituality; and uncovers how deeply the study of ancient spirituality is entwined with controversies about gender.

The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries 2021 Reprint of the 1925 Edition. Facsimile of the original edition and not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. This book is generally considered the most useful single work in English on the subject and provides a solid background in the various forms of religious experience that are grouped together under the term Mystery-Religious. Mystery religion were any of various secret cults of the Greco-Roman world that offered to individuals religious experiences not provided by the official public religions. They originated in tribal ceremonies that were performed by peoples in many parts of the world. Whereas in these tribal communities almost every member of the clan or the village was initiated, initiation in Greece became a matter of personal choice. The mystery religions reached their peak of popularity in the first three centuries a.d. Their origin, however, goes back to the earlier centuries of Greek history. The main characterization of these religions is the secrecy associated with the particulars of the initiation and the ritual practice, which was never revealed to outsiders. The most famous mysteries of Greco-Roman antiquity were the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were of considerable antiquity and predated the Greek Dark Ages. The mystery schools flourished in Late Antiquity. Contents: Orientation: the historical crises of the Graeco-Roman world in their bearing upon the mystery-religions and Christianity -- What is a mystery-religion? -- The three stages of a mystery -- The appeal of the mystery-religions (a) -- The appeal of the mystery-religions (b) -- The defects of the mysteries and their ultimate failure -- The victory of Christianity.
Angels & Demons Mysticism and esotericism are two intimately related strands of the Western tradition. Despite their close connections, however, scholars tend to treat them separately. Whereas the study of Western mysticism enjoys a long and established history, Western esotericism is a young field. The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism examines both of these traditions together. The volume demonstrates that the roots of esotericism almost always lead back to mystical traditions, while the work of mystics was bound up with esoteric or occult preoccupations. It also shows why mysticism and esotericism must be examined together if either is to be understood fully.

Including contributions by leading scholars, this volume features essays on such topics as alchemy, astrology, magic, Neoplatonism, Kabbalism, Renaissance Hermetism, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, numerology, Christian theosophy, spiritualism, and much more. This handbook serves as both a capstone of contemporary scholarship and a cornerstone of future research.

The Mystery-Religions and Christianity Richard Seaford is one of the most original and provocative classicists of his age. This volume brings together a wide range of papers written with a single focus. Several are pioneering explorations of the tragic evocation and representation of rites of passage: mystic initiation, the wedding, and death ritual. Two papers focus on the shaping power of mystic initiation in two famous passages in the New Testament. The other key factor in the historical context of tragedy is the recent monetisation of Athens. One paper explores the presence of money in Greek tragedy, another the shaping influence of money on Wagner's Ring and on his Aeschylean model. Other papers reveal the influence of ritual and money on representations of the inner self, and on Greek and Indian philosophy. A final piece finds in Greek tragedy horror at the destructive unlimitedness of money that is still central to our
postmodern world.

The Mysteries of Mithras The Atlas of Lost Cults and Mystery Religions examines extraordinary cults and spiritual practices, some lost in the mists of time, others having transformed and evolved to form the basis of mystical practices still current today. A wide range of traditions are explored, from the mysterious snake worshipping goddesses of the ancient Minoans to the Cathars of medieval France, believed by some to be the protectors of the Holy Grail. The book will examine the practices of the Celtic Druids which have inspired present day Pagan and Wiccan traditions, and the wild Dionysian rites of ancient Greece. Lavish artwork reconstructions will show the temple precincts and mystical practices of selected cults and religions.

The God who Comes Worshiped throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, the "Mother of the Gods" was known by a variety of names. Among peoples of Asia Minor, where her cult first began, she often shared the names of local mountains. The Greeks commonly called her Cybele, the name given to her by the Phrygians of Asia Minor, and identified her with their own mother goddesses Rhea, Gaia, and Demeter. The Romans adopted her worship at the end of the Second Punic War and called her Mater Magna, Great Mother. Her cult became one of the three most important mystery cults in the Roman Empire, along with those of Mithras and Isis. And as Christianity took hold in the Roman world, ritual elements of her cult were incorporated into the burgeoning cult of the Virgin Mary. In Mother of the Gods, Philippe Borgeaud traces the journey of this divine figure through Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome between the sixth century B.C. and the fourth century A.D. He examines how the Mother of the Gods was integrated into specific cultures, what she represented to those who worshiped her, and how she was used as a symbol in art, myth, and even
politics. The Mother of the Gods was often seen as a dualistic figure: ancestral and foreign, aristocratic and disreputable, nurturing and dangerous. Borgeaud's challenging and nuanced portrait opens new windows on the ancient world's sophisticated religious beliefs and shifting cultural identities.

Temple of the World Religious beliefs and practices, which permeated all aspects of life in antiquity, traveled well-worn routes throughout the Mediterranean: itinerant charismatic practitioners peddled their skills as healers, purifiers, cursers, and initiators; and vessels decorated with illustrations of myths traveled with them. This collection of essays, drawn from the groundbreaking reference work Religion in the Ancient World, offers an expansive, comparative perspective on this complex spiritual world.

Mystery Religions in the Ancient World Where was Jesus for the first thirty years of his life? Where and what was he taught? Who were his teachers? This fascinating volume offers startling new evidence culled from hard-to-find Vatican texts, theosophical classics, legends and hermetic symbolism to construct radical new picture of Jesus and his times. McCannon postulates that Jesus spent at least seven years in Egypt, a number of years in England, and visited both India and Tibet before beginning his public ministry in Palestine. This is a wide-ranging examination of the direct links and similarities between Jesus' teachings and the teachings of various mystery religions and sects that were popular during his lifetime, including the Essenes, Buddhists, and Druids. McCannon offers compelling evidence that places Jesus' life and mission firmly in the context of the deeper spiritual teachings that came before him.

Hellenistic Mystery Religions 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.

The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire
"A very balanced selection of sources for the study of the ancient so-called mystery religions, starting with Eleusis and ending with mysteries in Judaism and Christianity... No other modern sourcebook exists in this field."— Kurt Rudolph

Mystery Cults of the Ancient World The traditional grand narrative correlating the decline of Graeco-Roman religion with the rise of Christianity has been under pressure for three decades. This book argues that the alternative accounts now emerging significantly underestimate the role of three major cults, of Cybele and Attis, Isis and Serapis, and Mithras. Although their differences are plain, these cults present sufficient common features to justify their being taken typologically as a group. All were selective adaptations of much older cults of the Fertile Crescent. It was their relative sophistication, their combination of the imaginative power of unfamiliar myth with distinctive ritual performance and ethical seriousness, that enabled them both to focus and to articulate a sense of the autonomy of religion from the socio-political order, a sense they shared with Early Christianity. The notion of 'mystery' was central to their ability to navigate the Weberian shift from ritualist to ethical salvation.

Housing the Chosen Greek religion is filled with strange sexual artifacts - stories of mortal women's couplings with gods; rituals like the basilinna's "marriage" to Dionysus; beliefs in the impregnating power of snakes and deities; the unusual birth stories of Pythagoras, Plato, and Alexander; and more. In this
provocative study, Marguerite Rigoglioso suggests such details are remnants of an early Greek cult of divine birth, not unlike that of Egypt. Scouring myth, legend, and history from a female-oriented perspective, she argues that many in the highest echelons of Greek civilization believed non-ordinary conception was the only means possible of bringing forth individuals who could serve as leaders, and that special cadres of virgin priestesses were dedicated to this practice. Her book adds a unique perspective to our understanding of antiquity, and has significant implications for the study of Christianity and other religions in which divine birth claims are central. The book's stunning insights provide fascinating reading for those interested in female-inclusive approaches to ancient religion.

The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism

The Sacred Law of Andania Classic study explores the Eleusinian mysteries of ancient Greece; Asiatic cults of Cybele, the Magna Mater, and Attis; Dionysian groups; Orphics; Egyptian devotees of Isis and Osiris; Mithraism; and others.

The Cults of the Roman Empire DIV Artemis of Ephesos was one of the most widely worshiped deities of the Graeco-Roman World. Her temple, the Artemision, was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and for more than half a millennium people flocked to Ephesos to learn the great secret of the mysteries and sacrifices that were celebrated every year on her birthday. In this work Guy MacLean Rogers sets out the evidence for the celebration of Artemis's mysteries against the background of the remarkable urban development of the city during the Roman Empire and then proposes an entirely new theory about the great secret that was revealed to initiates into Artemis's mysteries. The revelation of that secret helps to
explain not only the success of Artemis's cult and polytheism itself but, more surprisingly, the demise of both and the success of Christianity. Contrary to many anthropological and scientific theories, the history of polytheism, including the celebration of Artemis's mysteries, is best understood as a Darwinian tale of adaptation, competition, and change.

Ancient Mystery Cults Reconstructs ancient rituals in their day/night/season combining them with relevant mythology and astronomical observations to understand the ritual's cosmological links.

Cults and Conspiracies

Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia Written by an international team of acknowledged experts, this excellent book studies a wide range of contributions and showcases new research on the archaeology, ritual and history of Greek mystery cults. With a lack of written evidence that exists for the mysteries, archaeology has proved central to explaining their significance and this volume is key to understanding a phenomenon central to Greek religion and society.

Jesus The inscribed text referred to as the sacred law of Andania contains almost 200 lines of regulations about a mystery festival and the sanctuary in which it took place. This book presents a new edition of the inscription and examines its rules in the wider context of Greek religious law and the management of sacred space. The regulations touch on a range of issues including finance, pollution, and the role of women, so that this study can be used as a handbook on the daily life of Greek religion.