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 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.

Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284-476 CE

This book examines the experiences and interconnections of the Reformations, 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 Reformations 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.

The Land of the Body

This landmark contribution to ongoing debates about perceptions of the Jews in antiquity examines the attitudes of Greek writers of the Hellenistic period toward the Jewish people. Among the leading Greek intellectuals who devoted special attention to the Jews were Theophrastus (the successor of Aristotle), Hecataeus of Abdera (the father of "scientific" ethnography), and Apollonius Molon (probably the greatest rhetorician of the Hellenistic world). Bezalel Bar-Kochva examines the references of these writers and others to the Jews in light of their literary output and personal background; their religious, social, and political views; their literary and stylistic methods; ethnographic stereotypes current at the time; and more.

The Decline of Magic

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

Northern European Reformations

In Revisioning John Chrysostom, Chris de Wet and Wendy Mayer harness a new wave of scholarship on the life and works of John Chrysostom (c. 350-407 CE), which applies new theoretical lenses and reconsiders his debt to classical paideia.

The Gospel of Judas

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 ».

The Radicalization of Cicero

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 ».

In the Path of the Moon offers a collection of essays concerning Babylonian celestial divination. It investigates various aspects of cuneiform celestial
omens, horoscopes, and astronomy and their wide-ranging influences on later Hellenistic science and philosophy.

A Companion to Isidore of Seville

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.

Spaces in Late Antiquity

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. Among 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 scientists 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 had a place.

Oscar Wilde in Context

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 Ananda 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 ambitious and wide-ranging book contributes an important perspective to broader debates on the nature of religion, the secular, science, and superstition.

**Inventing Superstition**

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.

**The Justice of Constantine**

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.

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

Martin Luther

An examination of Constantine the Great's legislation and government

Beware the Evil Eye, 4-Volume Set

An exploration of the theology of divine providence that is both critical and constructive in its outcomes.

The Providence of God

Places and spaces are key factors in how individuals and groups construct their identities. Identity theories have emphasised that the construction of an identity does not follow abstract and universal processes but is also deeply rooted in specific historical, cultural, social and material environments. The essays in this volume explore how various groups in Late Antiquity rooted their identity in special places that were imbued with meanings derived from history and tradition. In Part I, essays explore the tension between the Classical heritage in public, especially urban spaces, in the form of ancient artwork and civic celebrations and the Church's appropriation of that space through doctrinal disputes and rival public performances. Parts II and III investigate how particular locations expressed, and formed, the theological and social identities of Christian and Jewish groups by bringing together fresh insights from the archaeological and textual evidence. Together the essays here demonstrate how the use and interpretation of shared spaces contributed to the self-identity of specific groups in Late Antiquity and in so doing issued challenges, and caused conflict, with other social and religious groups.

At the Temple Gates

A standard work in nineteen chapters from leading international scholars on bishop Isidore of Seville (d. 636), addressing the contexts in which the seventh-century bishop lived and worked, exploring his key works and activities, and finally considering his later reception.

The Image of the Jews in Greek Literature

Panthée presents a collective reflection relating to the changes affecting the Graeco-Roman Empire and its religious landscapes. Leading specialists construct a picture of practices and conceptual frames, which, in their diversity and inter-action, model a religious universe whose complexity will help understand our modern globalising world. - Panthée propose une réflexion sur les mutations qui ont affecté l'Empire gréco-romain et ont remodelé ses paysages religieux. Les meilleurs spécialistes construisent un tableau des pratiques et des cadres de pensée qui dessinent les contours d'un univers religieux dont la complexité aide à penser le monde moderne de la globalisation.

Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies
A Companion to Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Greece and Rome brings a fresh perspective to the study of these disciplines in the ancient world, with 60 chapters examining these topics from a variety of critical and technical perspectives. Brings a fresh perspective to the study of science, technology, and medicine in the ancient world, with 60 chapters examining these topics from a variety of critical and technical perspectives. Begins coverage in 600 BCE and includes sections on the later Roman Empire and beyond, featuring discussion of the transmission and reception of these ideas into the Renaissance. Investigates key disciplines, concepts, and movements in ancient science, technology, and medicine within the historical, cultural, and philosophical contexts of Greek and Roman society. Organizes its content into two halves: the first focuses on mathematical and natural sciences; the second focuses on cultural applications and interdisciplinary themes. 2 Volumes

In the Path of the Moon

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.

Thought Under Threat

Covering the Hellenistic and Imperial periods in both pagan polytheistic as well as Jewish monotheistic settings, this edited collection focuses on individuation in everyday religious practices across the ancient Mediterranean as identified in institutional developments and philosophical reflections on the self.

Paul Against the Idols

This book presents the first extended study of the representation of Egypt in the writings of Philo of Alexandria. Philo is a crucial witness, not only to the experiences of the Jews of Alexandria, but to the world of early Roman Egypt in general. As historians of Roman Alexandria and Egypt are well aware, we have access to very few voices from inside the country in this era; Philo is the best we have. As a commentator on Jewish Scripture, Philo is also one of the most valuable sources for the interpretation of Egypt in the Pentateuch. He not only writes very extensively on this subject, but he does so in ways that are remarkable for their originality when compared with the surviving literature of ancient Judaism. In this book, Sarah Pearce tries to understand Philo in relation to the wider context in which he lived and worked. Key areas for investigation include: defining the 'Egyptian' in
Philo's world; Philo's treatment of the Egypt of the Pentateuch as a symbol of 'the land of the body'; Philo's emphasis on Egyptian inhospitableness; and his treatment of Egyptian religion, focusing on Nile veneration and animal worship.

**Exercices d'histoire des religions**

This volume explores the intricate identarian formation and negotiations of early encounters of the Abrahamic religions. Its aim is to understand the ever-prespiring 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.

**Demons, Angels, and Writing in Ancient Judaism**

An accurate picture of ancient religious studies: all papers stress historiography, anthropological history, and philology. Topics range from Mesopotamia to Christianism and rabbinic Judaism. The result is to offer an ambitious and comparatist status quaestionis for today.

**Misconceptions About the Middle Ages**

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.

"It is the Spirit that Gives Life"

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. The four volumes cover the ancient world from Sumer to the Middle Ages.

**Revisioning John Chrysostom**

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 denounced 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.

A Companion to Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Greece and Rome, 2 Volume Set

The Symptom and the Subject takes an in-depth look at how the physical body first emerged in the West as both an object of knowledge and a mysterious part of the self. Beginning with Homer, moving through classical-era medical treatises, and closing with studies of early ethical philosophy and Euripidean tragedy, this book rewrites the traditional story of the rise of body-soul dualism in ancient Greece. Brooke Holmes demonstrates that as the body (sōma) became a subject of physical inquiry, it decisively changed ancient Greek ideas about the meaning of suffering, the soul, and human nature. By undertaking a new examination of biological and medical evidence from the sixth through fourth centuries BCE, Holmes argues that it was in large part through changing interpretations of symptoms that people began to perceive the physical body with the senses and the mind. Once attributed primarily to social agents like gods and daemons, symptoms began to be explained by physicians in terms of the physical substances hidden inside the person. Imagining a daemonic space inside the person but largely below the threshold of feeling, these physicians helped to radically transform what it meant for human beings to be vulnerable, and ushered in a new ethics centered on the responsibility of taking care of the self. The Symptom and the Subject highlights with fresh importance how classical Greek discoveries made possible new and deeply influential ways of thinking about the human subject.

The Invention of Religion in Japan

This book 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.

Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity

Since Origen and Chrysostom, John's Gospel has been valued as the most spiritual among the New Testament writings. Although Origen recognizes the Stoic character of John's statement that God is pneuma (4:24), an examination of the gospel in light of Stoic physics has not yet been carried out. Instead the Johannine spirit has been absorbed into the Word and lost its distinct character as physical mediator between the divine and humane spheres. Combining her insight into Stoic physics and ancient physiology, the author situates her thesis in the major discussions of modern Johannine scholarship and demonstrates new solutions to well-known problems.
Egyptian Cultural Icons in Midrash

The story of Paul's visit to the city of Athens with its speech delivered before the Areopagus council is one of the best-known and most-celebrated passages of the Acts of the Apostles. Being the only complete example of an apostolic address to "pure pagans" recorded, it has consistently attracted the attention of historians, biblical scholars, theologians, missionarieds, apologists, artists, and believers over the centuries. Interpretations of the pericope are many and variegated, with opinions ranging from deeming the speech to be a foreign body in the New Testament to acclaiming it as the ideal model of translation of the Christian kerygma into a foreign idiom. At the heart of the debate is whether the various parts of the speech must be understood as Hellenistic or biblical in nature—or both. Paul Against the Idols defends and develops an integrated contextual study of the episode. Reading the story in its Lukan theological, intertextual, narrative, linguistic, and historical context enables an interpretation that accounts for its apparent ambivalence. This book thus contributes to the ongoing hermeneutical and exegetical scholarly discussions surrounding this locus classicus and suggests ways in which it can contribute to a Christian theology of religions and missiology.

Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Graeco-Roman Empire

A new explanation of the beginnings of Jewish angelology and demonology, drawing on non-canonical writings and Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls.

Slavery as Salvation

This book uses a previously overlooked Neo-Latin treatise, Cicero Illustratus, to provide insight into the status and function of the Ciceronian tradition at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and consequently to more broadly illuminate the fate of that tradition in the early Enlightenment. Cicero Illustratus itself is the first subject for inquiry, mined for what its deliberately erudite and colorfully polemical passages of scholarly stratagems reveal about Ciceronian scholarship and the motives for exploring it within the context of early Enlightenment thought. It also includes an analysis of the role played by the Ciceronian tradition in the broader political and radical movements that existed in the Enlightenment, with particular attention paid to Cicero's unexpectedly prominent position in major political and philosophical Republican and Erastian works. The subject of this book together with the conclusions reached will provide scholars and students with crucial new material relating to the classical tradition, the history of scholarship, and the intellectual history of the early Enlightenment.

Superstition: A Very Short Introduction

Rabbinic 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, Alexandria, the divine eye. The hermeneutical role of Egyptian cultural icons in midrash is explored.

Religious Deviance in the Roman World
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 derisively applied to foreign religions and unacceptable religious practices, and its primary purpose was used 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.

Manières de penser dans l’Antiquité méditerranéenne et orientale

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.

Religious Polemics and Encounters in Late Antiquity

Oscar Wilde was a courageous individualist whose path-breaking life and work were shaped in the crucible of his time and place, deeply marked by the controversies of his era. This collection of concise and illuminating articles reveals the complex relationship between Wilde’s work and ideas and contemporary contexts including Victorian feminism, aestheticism and socialism. Chapters investigate how Wilde’s writing was both a resistance to and quotation of Victorian master narratives and genre codes. From performance history to film and operatic adaptations, the ongoing influence and reception of Wilde’s story and work is explored, proposing not one but many Oscar Wildes. To approach the meaning of Wilde as an artist and historical figure, the book emphasises not only his ability to imagine new worlds, but also his bond to the turbulent cultural and historical landscape around him - the context within which his life and art took shape.

Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), Le Philosophe de Rotterdam: Philosophy, Religion and Reception

“Appendix A” (p. [134]-187) contains the Coptic text of the Gospel of Judas as transcribed from the Codex Tchacos, with English translation on facing pages.

The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean
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-handbooks, 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-by-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.

Beware the Evil Eye Volume 1

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.

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