



Polytheism and Society at Athens

Robert Parker

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This book is the first attempt that has ever been made to give a comprehensive account of the religious life of ancient Athens. The city's many festivals are discussed in detail, with attention to recent anthropological theory; so too, for instance, are the cults of households and of smaller groups, the role of religious practice and argumentation in public life, the authority of priests, the activities of religious professionals such as seers and priestesses, magic, the place of theatrical representations of the gods within public attitudes to the divine. A long final section considers the sphere of activity of the various gods, and takes Athens as a uniquely detailed test case for the structuralist approach to polytheism. The work is a synchronic, thematically organized complement (though designed to be read independently) to the same author's *Athenian Religion: A History* (O.U.P., 1996).

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