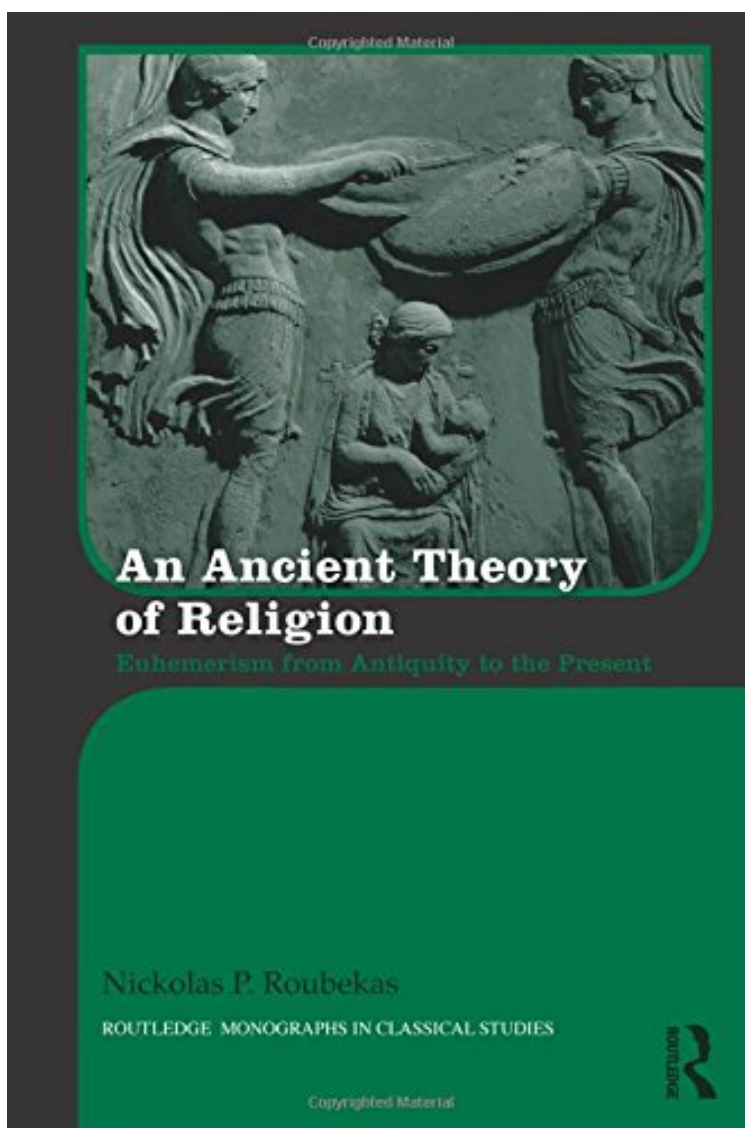


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An Ancient Theory of Religion: Euhemerism from Antiquity to the Present (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies)

Nickolas P. Roubekas

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Classical Studies):

An Ancient Theory of Religion examines a theory of religion put forward by Euhemerus of Messene (late 4th to early 3rd century BCE) in his lost work *Sacred Inscription*, and shows not only how and why euhemerism came about but also how it was and still is used. By studying the utilization of the theory in different periods from the Graeco-Roman world to Late Antiquity, and from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century, this book explores the reception of the theory in diverse literary works. In so doing, it also unpacks the different adoptions and misrepresentations of Euhemerus's work according to the diverse agendas of the authors and scholars who have employed his theory. In the process, certain questions are raised: What did Euhemerus actually claim? How has his theory of the origins of belief in gods been used? How can modern scholarship approach and interpret his take on religion? When referring to euhemerism, whose version are we employing? *An Ancient Theory of Religion* assumes no prior knowledge of euhemerism and will be of interest to scholars working in classical reception, religious studies, and early Christian studies.

Nickolas Roubekas rediscovers the long shadow cast by Euhemerus of Messene over the history of conceptualizing the divine from Hellenistic times to the present. While building on classical studies on Euhemerus and his reception, Roubekas presents scholarship on religion with a timely appropriation of Euhemerus and the discourse he elicited on the origins of gods and the divine for the contemporary study of religion. This study of Euhemerus provides the necessary groundwork for retrieving the discursive processes of manufacturing divinity that lie at the foundation of the history of European Christianity. - Professor Gerhard van den Heever, University of South Africa
About the Author: Nickolas P. Roubekas is a postdoctoral research fellow at the School of Ancient Languages and Text Studies, North-West University, South Africa. He received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the Aristotle University, Greece, and held research and teaching positions at the University of South Africa and the University of Aberdeen, UK.