



The Religion of Numa

Jesse Benedict Carter

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Pyrrhus Press specializes in bringing books long out of date back to life, allowing today's readers access to yesterday's treasures.

Carter's book is a quick but concise look at some of the religious beliefs and practices of the Ancient Romans. From the preface:

"This little book tries to tell the story of the religious life of the Romans from the time when their history begins for us until the close of the reign of Augustus. Each of its five essays deals with a distinct period and is in a sense complete in itself; but the dramatic development inherent in the whole forbids their separation save as acts or chapters. In spite of modern interest in the study of religion, Roman religion has been in general relegated to specialists in ancient history and classics. This is not surprising for Roman religion is not prepossessing in appearance, but though it is at first sight incomparably less attractive than Greek religion, it is, if properly understood, fully as interesting, nay, even more so. In Mr. W. Warde Fowler's Roman Festivals however the subject was presented in all its attractiveness, and if the present book shall serve[Pg viii] as a simple introduction to his larger work, its purpose will have been fulfilled.

No one can write of Roman religion without being almost inestimably indebted to Georg Wissowa whose *Religion und Cultus der Römer* is the best systematic presentation of the subject. It was the author's privilege to be Wissowa's pupil, and much that is in this book is directly owing to him, and even the ideas that are new, if there are any good ones, are only the bread which he cast upon the waters returning to him after many days.

The careful student of the history of the Romans cannot doubt the psychological reality of their religion, no matter what his personal metaphysics may be. It is the author's hope that these essays may have a human interest because he has tried to emphasise this reality and to present the Romans as men of like passions to ourselves, in spite of all differences of time and race."

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