



# Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East

*Douglas R. Edwards*

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# Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East

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## **Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East** Douglas R. Edwards

This book contributes to the small but growing literature on the interaction between religion and power in antiquity. Edwards focusses on the eastern "Greek" provinces in the first and second centuries A.D.--the period during which Christianity, Judaism, and numerous other religions and cults exploded across the Roman Empire. His purpose is to show how the local elite classes appropriated and manipulated mythic and religious images and practices to establish and consolidate their social, political, and economic power.

Edwards considers both archaeological and literary evidence. He examines coins, epigraphs, statuary, building complexes, mosaics, and paintings from across Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine looking for evidence of sponsorship by local elites and the meaning of such sponsorship. On the literary side, Edwards selects one representative figure from each of the three major religio-cultural traditions: the Greek writer, Chariton of Aphrodisias; the Jewish historian, Josephus; and the Christian evangelist, the author of Luke Acts. He illustrates how each writer's use of religion reflects the interaction of local elite groups with the "web of power" that existed in political, cultural, and social spheres of the Roman Empire.

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