Ancient Gnosticism
Traditions and Literature

Birger A. Pearson

Authoritative answers to the questions: Who were the gnostics? What did they believe?

SELLING POINTS
• A brief and accessible introduction to Gnosticism
• Includes black & white illustrations, maps, timeline and bibliography
• Introduces the reader to the chief surviving literary sources, as well as movements and figures

Scholarly and public interest has recently focused intently on ancient gnostics and Gnosticism. Yet even as public interest is attracted to this esoteric religion, scholars have debated its origins, its relationship to Judaism and Christianity, and even whether one distinctive and separate gnostic “religion” ever existed. Birger Pearson’s expert introduction brings the reader into the debate.

Directly addressing the nettling questions of origins and definition, Pearson situates the advent of Gnosticism within the Greco-Roman religious world and critically appraises our sources. With illustrations, maps, timeline, and bibliography, Pearson’s volume facilitates the pursuit of gnosis, at least historically, by general readers, students and scholars alike.

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