



The Greek Gods in Modern Scholarship: Interpretation and Belief in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Germany and Britain (Oxford Classical Monographs)

Michael D. Konaris

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The nineteenth century is a key period in the history of the interpretation of the Greek gods. *The Greek Gods in Modern Scholarship* examines how German and British scholars of the time drew on philology, archaeology, comparative mythology, anthropology, or sociology to advance radically different theories on the Greek gods and their origins. For some, they had been personifications of natural elements, for others, they had begun as universal gods like the Christian god, yet for others, they went back to totems or were projections of group unity. The volume discusses the views of both well-known figures like K. O. Muller (1797-1840), or Jane Harrison (1850-1928), and of forgotten, but important, scholars like F. G. Welcker (1784-1868). It explores the underlying assumptions and agendas of the rival theories in the light of their intellectual and cultural context, laying stress on how they were connected to broader contemporary debates over fundamental questions such as the origins and nature of religion, or the relation between Western culture and the 'Orient'. It also considers the impact of theories from this period on twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship on Greek religion and draws implications for the study of the Greek gods today.

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