



Religious Worlds of the Laity in Late Antique Gaul

Lisa Kaaren Bailey

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Christianity in the late antique world was not imposed but embraced, and the laity were not passive members of their religion but had a central role in its creation. This volume explores the role of the laity in Gaul, bringing together the fields of history, archaeology and theology.

First, this book follows the ways in which clergy and monks tried to shape and manufacture lay religious experience. They had themselves constructed the category of 'the laity', which served as a negative counterpart to their self-definition. Lay religious experience was thus shaped in part by this need to create difference between categories. The book then focuses on how the laity experienced their religion, how they interpreted it and how their decisions shaped the nature of the Church and of their faith. This part of the study pays careful attention to the diversity of the laity in this period, their religious environments, ritual engagement, behaviours, knowledge and beliefs.

The first volume to examine laity in this period in Gaul – a key region for thinking about the transition from Roman rule to post-Roman society – *The Religious Worlds of the Laity in Late Antique Gaul* fills an important gap in current literature.

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