



**Essays on Religion and the Ancient World, Volume
2: Selected and edited, with an Introduction,
Bibliography of Nock's writings, and Indexes, by
Zeph Stewart**

Arthur Darby Nock

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Throughout his career Arthur Darby Nock (1902-1963) made unique and lasting contributions to classical scholarship and the history of religion, especially to the study of ancient religion, magic, and the relation of paganism to early Christianity and Judaism. Nock's genius showed itself early: endowed with a prodigious memory and an unerring linguistic skill, he combined speed and accuracy in reading and a delight in the discovery, ordering and establishment of facts. At the age of twenty he was made annual reviewer of Latin literature for *The Year's Work in Classical Studies*; and at twenty-four he produced an important edition of a fourth-century Greek text, Sallustius *On the Gods and the Universe*, which included a translation and a masterly introduction.

At twenty-seven, having come to the United States from England the year before, Nock was appointed Frothingham Professor of the History of Religion at Harvard University. In his early thirties he wrote two books, *Conversion*--an imaginative and exacting study of religious currents in the Hellenistic and Roman world--and *St. Paul*.

Mainly, however, A. D. Nock poured his immense learning into articles and reviews, which heretofore have been scattered through many different journals. Representing a formidable range of learning, these essays deal for the most part with historical evidence (from all sources, including papyri, inscriptions, and coins) of the beliefs, superstitions, and religious practices of ordinary people. Nock saw the essence of religion not only in philosophy or theology, but in piety and cult, in the practices and the expressions of the common man. His unusual combination of genius and common sense allowed him to treat the actual manifestations of religious sentiment without condescension.

For this edition of Arthur Darby Nock's writings, Zeph Stewart has garnered a substantial selection of Nock's most important essays and has indexed and cross-referenced them as well.

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