



Religion in the Emergence of Civilization

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This book presents an interdisciplinary study of the role of spirituality and religious ritual in the emergence of complex societies. Involving an eminent group of natural scientists, archaeologists, anthropologists, philosophers, and theologians, this volume examines Catalhoyuk as a case study. A nine-thousand-year old town in central Turkey, Catalhoyuk was first excavated in the 1960s and has since become integral to understanding the symbolic and ritual worlds of the early farmers and village-dwellers in the Middle East. It is thus an ideal location for exploring theories about the role of religion in early settled life. This book provides a unique overview of current debates concerning religion and its historical variations. Through exploration of themes including the integration of the spiritual and the material, the role of belief in religion, the cognitive bases for religion, and religion's social roles, this book situates the results from Catalhoyuk within a broader understanding of the Neolithic in the Middle East.



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