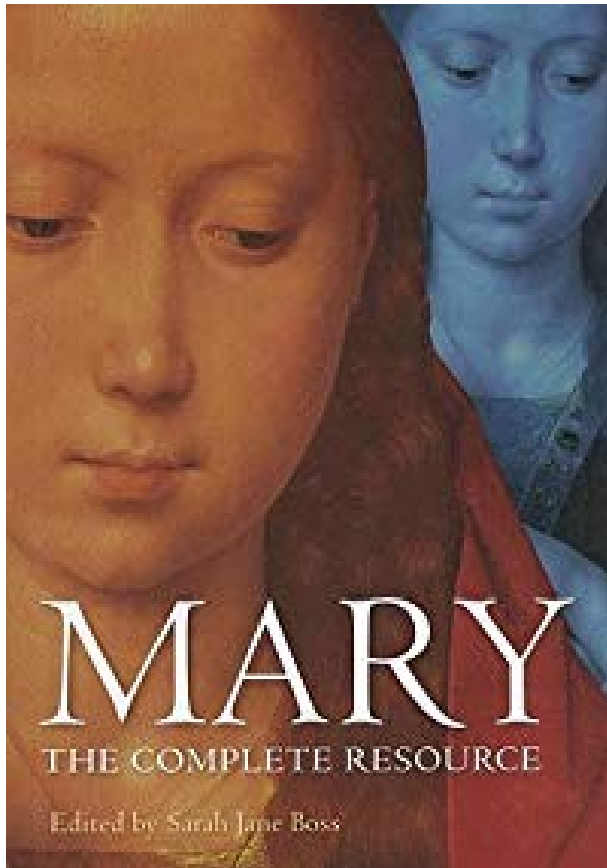


# Mary: The Complete Resource



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The Virgin Mary is a ubiquitous but enigmatic presence in Christian history and culture. The tradition about Mary forms a vast and multi-layered aspect of Western history, culture and spirituality. It is not just in the Catholic tradition that Mary has become a particular focus of study and interest. Mary has also become a crucial interest for Christians outside this tradition (Protestant, Anglican) as a path to ecumenical understanding. This Handbook is intended as a reference for the student or scholar seeking knowledge of the history and contemporary practice of the cult of the Virgin Mary. It provides new essays that give overviews of particular areas of study - both historical and thematic - together with texts from primary sources and important scholarly articles, some of which appear in English for the first time. The book is divided into five Parts. Part One looks at the Virgin Mary in Earliest Christianity, Part Two focuses on the Middle Ages - the period in which the Virgin's cult developed to its greatest extent. Part Three deals with Mariology, or theological doctrines surrounding the Virgin, such as the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception. Part Four considers traditions of devotion to Mary, including the development of the rosary and Marian apparitions. Part Five examines the image of Mary in Art, Literature, and Film.