

101 Essential Readings in the Study of Religion

- Assmann J., *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (1992)
- Bachtin M., *Tvorčestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaja kul'tura srednevekov'ja i Renessansa* (1965)
- Bateson G., *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972)
- Bell C., *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992)
- Bellah R., *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (2001)
- Benveniste É., *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (1969)
- Bernal M., *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (1987-2006)
- Bernand & Gruzinski, *De l'idolâtrie. Une archéologie des sciences religieuses* (1988)
- Billeter F., *Études sur Tchouang-Tseu* (2004)
- Boas F., *Primitive Art* (1927)
- Borgeaud P., *Aux origines de l'histoire des religions* (2004)
- Boyarin D., *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (1999)
- Boyer P., *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (2001)
- Brelich A., *Paidés e Parthenoi* (1969)
- Brown P., *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (1981)
- Burkert W., *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (1998)
- Caillois R., *Les jeux et les hommes. Le masque et le vertige* (1958)
- Canetti E., *Masse und Macht* (1960)
- Cassirer E., *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (1923)
- Certeau M. de, *L'écriture de l'histoire* (1975)
- Crossan J.D., *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (1991)
- Culianu I.P., *Éros et magie à la Renaissance, 1484* (1984)
- Daube D., *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (1956)
- De Martino E., *Il mondo magico. Prolegomeni a una storia del magismo* (1948)
- Descola P., *Par-delà nature et culture* (2005)
- Detienne M., *L'invention de la mythologie* (1981)
- Dodds E.R., *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951)
- Doniger W., *Other Peoples' Myths: The Cave of Echoes* (1989)
- Douglas M., *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966)
- Dumézil G., *Mythe et épopée* (1968-73)
- Dumont L., *Homo Hierarchicus. Essai sur le système des castes* (1966)
- Durkheim É., *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912)
- Eisler R., *Man into Wolf. An Anthropological Interpretation of Sadism, Masochism and Lycanthropy* (1951)
- Eliade M., *Traité d'histoire des religions* (1949)
- Evans-Pritchard E., *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (1937)
- Frazer J.G., *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (1906-15)
- Freud S., *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion* (1939)

- Frobenius L., *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* (1933)
- Fustel de Coulanges N.D., *La cité antique* (1864)
- Geertz C., *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973)
- Ginzburg C., *Storia notturna. Una decifrazione del sabba* (1989)
- Girard R., *La violence et le sacré* (1972)
- Gombrich R.F., *What the Buddha Thought* (2009)
- Goody J., *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (1977)
- Granet M., *La pensée chinoise* (1934)
- Grimes R., *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (2013)
- Halbwachs M., *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925)
- Hazard P., *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680-1715* (1935)
- Héritier F., *Masculin-Féminin I. La Pensée de la différence* (1996)
- Holdrege B., *Veda and Torah: Transcending the Textuality of Scripture* (1995)
- Hollier D., *Le Collège de sociologie, 1937-1939* (1979)
- Huizinga J., *Homo Ludens* (1938)
- Innis H., *Empire and Communications* (1951)
- James W., *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)
- Jolles A., *Einfache Formen* (1930)
- Jung & Kerényi, *Einführung in das Wesen der Mythologie* (1940-41)
- Kantorowicz E., *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (1957)
- Lakoff & Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980)
- Lanternari V., *Movimenti religiosi di liberazione e salvezza* (1965)
- Latour B., *Face à Gaïa. Huit conférences sur le nouveau régime climatique* (2015)
- Léroi-Gourhan A., *Le geste et la parole* (1964-65)
- Lévi-Strauss C., *Anthropologie structurale* (1958) & *La Pensée sauvage* (1962)
- Lincoln B., *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (1989)
- Lotman J.M., *Vnutri misljaščich mirov. Čelovek, tekst, semiosfera, kult'ura* (1990)
- Mair V.H., *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and Its Indian Genesis* (1988)
- Malinowski B., *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922)
- Mauss M., *Sociologie et anthropologie* (1950)
- Momigliano A., *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (1975)
- Müller F.M., *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (1882)
- Nock A.D., *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (1933)
- Onians R.B., *The Origins of European Thought: About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate* (1954)
- Pettazzoni R., *Saggi di storia delle religioni e di mitologia* (1946)
- Propp V.J., *Morfologija skazki* (1928)
- Puech H.-C., *En quête de la Gnose* (1978)
- Rappaport R.A., *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (1999)

- Rohde E., *Psyche. Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (1892)
- Rozik E., *The Roots of Theatre: Rethinking Ritual and Other Theories of Origin* (2002)
- Rykwert J., *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form* (1976)
- Sahlins M., *Islands of History* (1976)
- Said E.W., *Orientalism* (1978)
- Santillana & Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill: An Essay Investigating the Origins of Human Knowledge and Its Transmission Through Myth* (1969)
- Scholem G., *Sabbatai Ševi: The Mystical Messiah* (1973)
- Schopen G., *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (1996)
- Schweitzer A., *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* (1906)
- Smith J.Z., *Imagining Religion* (1982) & *Relating Religion* (2004)
- Smith W.C., *What Is Scripture? A Comparative Approach* (1994)
- Stroumsa G.G., *La fin du sacrifice. Mutations religieuses de l'antiquité tardive* (2005)
- Suzuki D.T., *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (1927-34)
- Taubes J., *Die politische Theologie des Paulus* (1993)
- Taylor C.M., *A Secular Age* (2007)
- Tolkien J.R.R., *On Fairy-stories* (1939; 1964)
- Turner V., *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969)
- Usener H.K., *Götternamen. Versuch einer Lehre von der Religiösen Begriffsbildung* (1896)
- Van Gennep A., *Les rites de passage* (1909)
- Wansbrough J., *The Sectarian Milieu: Context and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (1978)
- Warburg A., *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (1929)
- Weber M., *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (1920)
- Whitehouse H., *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission* (2004)
- Wittgenstein L., *Bemerkungen über Frazers „The Golden Bough“* (1931)
- Yu A.C., *Comparative Journeys: Essays on Literature and Religion East and West* (2008)
- Zipes J., *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (2012)

NOTE. There is no need to underline the idiosyncratic and ‘non-canonical’ character of the present list. For one thing, the list does not include early modern milestones in the critical study of religion, such as Michel de Montaigne’s *Apologie de Raymond Sebond* (1588), Baruch Spinoza’s *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670), or Giambattista Vico’s *Scienza Nuova* (1725; 1744), to name but a few. If you are looking for textbooks and anthologies, highly recommended are W. Braun and R.T. McCutcheon (eds.), *Guide to the Study of Religion* (2000); H.G. Kippenberg and K. von Stuckrad, *Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft* (2003); J.J. Kripal (et alii), *Comparing Religions: Coming to Terms* (2014); R.A. Segal, *The Myth and Ritual Theory: An Anthology* (1998); M.A. Stausberg and S. Engler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion* (2016); and M. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (1998). On the very concept of religion, cf. also T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (1993); C.A. Barton and D. Boyarin, *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities* (2016); M. Despland, *La religion en Occident. Évolution des idées et du vécu* (1979); D. Dubuisson, *L’Occident et la religion. Mythes, science et idéologie* (1998); E. Feil, *Religio. Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs* (1986-2001); J.A. Josephson Storm, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (2012); T. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (2005); B. Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (2013); I. Strenski, *Understanding Theories of Religion* (2006; 2015); and S.J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (1990). Last Updated: July 2022.