

Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader (Controversies in the Study of Religion)

From Bloomsbury Academic

This volume provides a thorough introduction to the major classic and modern writings dealing with religious sacrifice. Collected here are twenty five influential selections, each with a brief introduction addressing the overall framework and assumptions of its author. As they present different theories and examples of sacrifice, these selections also discuss important concepts in religious studies such as the origin of religion, totemism, magic, symbolism, violence, structuralism and ritual performance. Students of comparative religion, ritual studies, the history of religions, the anthropology of religion and theories of religion will particularly value the historical organization and thematic analyses presented in this collection.

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editorial:

Review

"Understanding Sacrifice is a revelatory read! Scholars and students alike will be treated to a telling history of continuous Western speculation on the meaning of sacrifice for over a century. At the same time, these judicious selections reveal the extent to which sacrifice, constituted as a problem, has informed the shape of the academic study of religion. Teachers will find Understanding Sacrifice to be a useful tool to introduce students to the diverse theories generated to explain the nature of religion and to the methodological approaches (psychological, sociological, anthropological, phenomenological, functionalist, structuralist, etc.) that have been applied to the study of religion. This reader is a most welcome volume."

—Gary L. Ebersole, Professor of History & Religious Studies and Director, UMKC Center for Religious Studies

"Finally an anthology of the best classical and contemporary scholarly treatments of religious sacrifice. This is an invaluable resource for all professors, students, and scholars interested in one of the most important subjects in the study of religion."

—Professor Brian K. Smith, University of California, Riverside

"In these skilfully edited excerpts, Jeffrey Carter enables students and general readers to advance both their appreciation of sacrifice and their awareness of modern concealments."

—Professor Bruce Chilton, Amherst College

"Carter's book is the first to my knowledge that brings together a comprehensive collection of the major theories of sacrifice from the last 200 years. The excerpted texts are brief enough to be manageable but long enough to capture the main points in each of the authors' arguments. This is an important volume that will be of great value in the classroom and of general interest to anyone interested in religious studies, anthropology or sociology. I enjoyed reading it."

—Hugh B. Urban, Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Studies, Ohio State University

"...an accessible and thorough introduction to the major writers on this most written about topic. For that he

is to be thanked. Congratulations are due for the manner in which he has produced this volume, his choice of texts to include, and the selections he has made from them....excellent book.... One could ask for little more." –RRT (Reviews in Religion and Theology), 21.1, 2/05

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About the Author

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