Definition of religion. Annotated bibliography. Studies in English on History of religions, Comparative religions

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Bibliography

History of Religions

1. Beyers, Jaco. 2017. "A historical overview of the study of theology of religions." *HTS Theological Studies* no. 73:1–18.
Summary: "A brief overview is given by the editor of the development of the discipline of theology of religions to indicate how in a postmodern era an almost non-foundational approach has become evident. For a Christian understanding of interreligious relations an understanding of the origin of religion (theology of religion) is just as important as a theological evaluation of the relationship between religions (theology of religions). In this first chapter, a historical overview of the way in which Christianity thought about its relationship with other religions (especially with Judaism and Islam) is presented. Over history, three distinct phases can be identified, namely, (1) a Golden Era during which the main theories of interreligious relations were formulated (namely exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism), (2) an impasse during which the traditional theories no longer proved to provide a sufficient framework for understanding the relations (pluralism and particularism are important polarities to be kept in balance, although the balancing act can end in a deadlock) and (3) a third phase which introduces a discussion of New Ventures on interreligious relations. The theories of scholars such as Paul Hedges, Jenny Daggers and David Cheetham are discussed as new ways forward out of the impasse. An overview of past theories is presented, as well as the most recent theories on interreligious relations."

2. Bilaniuk, Pedro B. T. 1994. "The Notion of Religion of the Pre-Christian and Christian Eastern Slavs. VI to XII Centuries " In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990*, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 375–382. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"The religiosity of Eastern Slavs was not modelled on a *phobos-type* of religion; there was no fear of the deity or of nature-forces. There was only reverential awe before deity and before mysterious created reality. It was, at least partially, an *eros-type* of religion, or one based on love, fertility, and posterity. As we shall see, at the centre there was the archetype of "mother," the Great Goddess, and the fertile soil. Eastern Slavic *eros-type* religion is very closely connected with the *agape-type*. This is based on mutual and social love, and ultimately reveals itself as a gens-religion, one based on a solidarity of the members of the clan; it involves also a very strong tie with the deceased members of the clan, or the veneration of ancestors. *Nornos-types* of religion, that is ones based on law, have been relatively little developed among the Eastern Slavs. Law has not played an important part in their culture; they have had few canonists or legal minds. One consequence of the lack of *nomos-type* religion is a kind of idealistic wishful thinking. Consequently, Slavic religiosity is not attached to any strict orthodox form of dogmatic formulae. It displays a high degree of individualism and detachment from any legalistic or canonical decisions.
Therefore, at times, one might observe in some individuals eccentric, or even anarchistic formulations or practices." (p. 376, notes omitted)

3. Biller, Peter. 1985. "Words and the Medieval Notion of "Religion"." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* no. 36:351–369.
[This essay is about John Bossy, *Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim*, (1982)].
"However, the statements Bossy makes about medieval *religio* have nothing to do with sociology or Durkheim, and they compel attention because they are historical statements coming from a practising early modern historian whose work elsewhere has shown remarkable understanding of medieval Christianity.
The first part of what follows is an exposition of what Bossy says and what appear to be the implications.
There is, first, an account of the development of the meaning or meanings of the word *religio*. For the sake of clarity it seems convenient to follow Bossy's schematic layout. *Religio* (I): in the classical and patristic period it meant worship, worshipful attitude. *Religio* (IIa): in the early modern period it came to mean a religion or

religions (Christian religion, Jewish religion, and so on), a system or systems. (Bossy's account of developments after the early modern period is not pursued here.) Central is a contrast between *religio* (I) where, like other key words, it is an attribute or relation and *religio* (HIIa), where it is a thing in itself, a system or systems.(3)
These are two poles in Bossy's scheme. What intervenes between I and IIa, senses of *religio* in the medieval period, is despatched briefly. *Religio's* classical and, slightly developed, patristic sense (worship, worshipful attitude) disappeared in medieval Christianity. With very few exceptions its reference was to monastic and other religious orders, their way of life, and their professed members. Revival of the earlier sense only came with Valla in the fifteenth century, and with later humanists. Thus there was a long hiatus between meanings I and IIa.(4)
Bossy puts forward a suggestion to explain the emergence in the early modern period ofsense IIa, 'a system of faith and worship', one of a variety of 'religions'. What brought about change was the existence in the sixteenth century of a plurality of embattled and embodied faiths, with the impetus thereby given to see one's own way of belief and worship from the outside. The development in meaning of one word, *religio*, was a verbal reflection of this development in ways of seeing and thinking.(5)" (pp. 351-352)
(...)
"Is Bossy's account of the meanings of the word *religio* in the Middle Ages correct? He makes two claims, that the earlier meanings ofreligio (worship, worshipful attitude) died out, to be replaced by the (broadly) monastic sense, and that the extension of it to a 'system of faith and worship', a thing, waited until the sixteenth century. Are these claims correct?" (p. 355)
(...)
"In this area, words and the medieval notion of 'religion', one early modern historian may not be completely accurate in all that he says about the Middle Ages. However, what he says and his method, the approach through words, do seem fruitful in sharpening the view of this area and raising questions (not all at present fully answerable) about it." (p. 369)
(3) In his article, Bossy is concerned with a parallelism between the development of the words *religio* and *societas*. The Iatter's development from soeietas (I) - 'companionship' or 'fellowship' - to societas (IIa) - 'a society' - was also for Bossy a development from a meaning in which *societas* was an 'attribute' to a meaning in which it was an 'entity' or 'thing'. This, and his hint that the development in both words from denoting 'attributes' to denoting 'things' may have been part of a broader change in outlook occurring in the early modern period (ibid., 13), lie beyond the scope of the present discussion.
(4) Ibid, 4.
(5) Ibid, 5.

4. Bossy, John. 1982. "Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim." *Past & Present* no. 95:3–18.
"*Religio* (3) in classical Latin is a sense of duty or reverence for sacred things; derivatively, some object which inspires this frame of mind; thence a cult, or worship in general. Essentially, it is a feeling, a frame of mind; thought good by Cicero, who contrasted it with superstition, and bad by Lucretius, who contrasted it with nature-piety. In early Christianity it meant worship, a worshipful attitude; it could be true, that is correct, or false, as in Augustine, *De vera religione* (*On True Worship*). In medieval Christianity this usage disappeared. With very few exceptions, the word was only used to describe different sorts of monastic or similar rule, and the way of life pursued under them: the "religious" were, as in subsequent Catholic usage, those who pursued such a life. The word, and its earlier meaning, were revived by fifteenth-century humanists from Lorenzo Valla to Erasmus, partly as a piece of characteristic linguistic antiquarianism, partly as a means of undermining the foundations of the "religious" life in the previous sense, or of traditional Christianity in general. Machiavelli used it, with one or two satirical

exceptions, in the classical sense of scrupulosity plus cult, and where he needed something more concrete wrote "sect"; humanists who thought more of Christianity and less of ritual than he did used it to mean a truly reverent, worshipful or pious attitude to God.(4) It was usually used with *vera* or *Christiana*."
(3) For the history of the word and its derivatives, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York, 1964), pp. 19 ff.; more fully in Michel Despland, *La religion en Occident* (Montreal and Paris, I979); cf. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1973 edn.), p. 88.
(4) Despland, *Religion en Occident,* pp. 132 ff., 185-9; *The Discourses of Niccolo Machiavelli*, trans. Leslie J. Walker, 2 vols. (London, 1975 edn.), i, pp. 240 ff., 363-4, 373, 459.

5. Braun, Willi. 2025. "Response: Religion as a Category of Study." In *Religious Inventions: Ancient Mediterranean Practice and the Study of Religion*, edited by Arnal, William and Vearncombe, Erin K., 88–97. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
"Modern religion is a precipitate of the secularization of higher learning, which took place in the early modern period. Religion, it is claimed, cannot be used without qualification as the sum designation for what early Christians believed and practised. Doing so risks inventing unwarranted equivalencies between now and then and, more insidiously, drawing genealogical lines between an imagined original Christianity (*Urchristentum*) and modern Christianities – with many resulting iniquities (see John Kloppenborg's chapter in this volume). And so biblical scholars are in the main not interested in the study of religion writ large.
All this is true, but it does not mean that religion should not be used as a designation or as a name given to a range of human practices in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, nor does it mean, especially, that biblical studies are not religious studies. Although biblical studies predate, and thus are ancestral to, the general study of religion, this is not an argument for the isolation of biblical studies from religious studies, nor from the humanities and social sciences in the modern university. On the contrary, the synergy between the two fields has been well documented.(4) (p. 88)
(4) For example, Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion and Bible," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 1 (2009), 5–27.
References
John S. Kloppenborg, *Second-Century Constructions of Christianity*, pp. 36-68.

6. Bremmer, Jan. 1998. "'Religion', 'Ritual' and the Opposition 'Sacred vs. Profane'. Notes towards a Terminological 'Genealogy'." In *Ansichten Griechischer Rituale. Geburtstags-symposium für Walter Burkert, Castelen Bei Basel, 15. - 18. märz 1996*, edited by Graf, Fritz, 9–32. Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner.
"In the time of Cicero, Lucretius and Vergil(7), *religio* was not equivalent to our notion of 'religion' but contained a strong ritualistic aspect and was often connected with active worship according to the rules. This meaning was still prevalent in early Christian Latin. It was Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* 4.28), who first started to stress the tie between God and man as expressed in *religio* and therefore preferred an etymological connection with religare(8). In Augustine the idea of worship remained as strong as ever, but the opposition between Christians and pagans now allowed him to speak of a *religio Christiana* and of the contrast between a *vera* and a *falsa religio*. It is from this stage of the word that we can understand its medieval development(9)." (p. 10)
(7) 7 J. Salem, "Comment traduire *religio* chez Lucrèce? Notes sur la constitution d'un vocabulaire philosophique latin ä l'époque de Cicéron et Lucrece", *Et. Class*. 62 (1994) 3 - 26.
(8) Feil 1986, 60-64; C. A. Spada, "L'uso di *religio* e *religiones* nella polemica antipagana di Lattanzio", in: Bianchi 1994, 459-463.
(9) For the early Church see L. Koep, "'Religio' und 'Ritus' als Problem des frühen Christentums", JbAC [Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum] 5 (1962) 43-59; P.

Stockmeier, Glaube und Religion in der frühen Kirche (Freiburg i. Br. usw. 1972); Feil 1986, 50-82; M. Sachot, "Comment le christianisme est-il devenu *religio*?", *Rev. des Sciences Religieuses* 59 (1985) 95-118; id., "*Religio/Superstitio*. Histoire d'une subversion et d'un retournement", *Rev.Hist. Rel*. 208 (1991) 355-394.
(...)
"Important changes took place during and shortly after the Reformation, when the simple plurality of faiths greatly stimulated reflection on the phenomenon of religion. In the sixteenth century *religio Christiana* still means 'Christian religion', that is, the correct mode of Christian piety. But the ongoing religious wars and polemics gradually led to an objectification: *religio* started to assume the meaning of a set of doctrines, which could be true or false. From there, the development led in the first half of the seventeenth century to 'the Christian religion' and, subsequently, to 'Religion', perhaps first in Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583—1648). This development has recently been traced in various details and its major lines are now clear(12)." (p. 11)
(12) Despland 1979, 167-325 (16th and 17th century); J. Bossey, "Some Elementary Forms of Dürkheim", *Past & Present* 95 (1982) 3-18, esp. 4-8 ; J. Samuel Preus, *Explaining Religion. Criticism from Bodin to Freud* (New Haven/London 1987) 23-39: "The Deist Option: Herbert of Cherbury" (on Edward Herbert, 1583-1648); E. Feil, "From the Classical *Religio* to the Modern Religion. Elements of a Transformation between 1550 and 1650", in: M. Despland/G. Vallée (eds.), Religion in History. *The Word, the Idea, the Reality* (Waterloo, Ont. 1992) 31-43, an otherwise disappointing collection.
References
Bianchi, U. (ed.): *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research*. Selected Proc. of the XVIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, Rome, 3rd-8th September, 1990, Storia delle religioni 8, Roma 1994.
Despland, M.: *La religion en Occident*, Montreal 1979
Feil, E.: *Religio. Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs vom Frühchristentum bis zur Reformation*, Forsch, z. Kirchen und Dogmengesch. 36, Göttingen 1986.

7. Buchholz, Peter. 1994. "Aspects of Recent Research in Pagan Germanic and Scandinavian Religion." In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990*, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 383–394. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"This short stuvey is intended as an orientation in a very complex and controversial field where serious research has been going on since Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835).
My survey deals with pre-Christian religion or religions in Scandinavia (including North Germany, especially Schleswig-Holstein) from the Iron Age (ca 500 B.C.) up to medieval times. The Old Icelandic/Old Norse texts were written/recorded from the 12th century to the 15th. I spoke of religions because there was probably no single uniform pagan Scandinavian religion in the sense "religion" has acquired in Christianity or Islam.
The decision to exclude the Bronze Age is based on the most probable dating of linguistic phenomena that are thought to be characteristic for the Germanic languages.
There is evidence for religious similarities in the areas where Germanic dialects were probably spoken. Such phenomena include the names of some gods, e.g. those contained in the designations for the days of the week. There may, however, also have been *some* religious continuity from Late Bronze to Early Iron Age(1)." (p. 383)
(1) Cf. e.g. Hilda R.E. Davidson, *Scandinavian Mythology*, rev. ed. Feltham: Newnes 1982; Jan de Vries, Allgermanische Religionsgeschichte I-II. Berlin: W. de Gruyter 21956-57 [1970); Edgar C. Polome, Germanic Religion and the Indo-European Heritage. Mankind Quarterly 26, 1985, 19-55; id. Geemanic Religion., in

The Encyclopedia of Religion, New York 1987, Vol. 5, 521-536; Marianne Gorman, *Nordiskt och keltiskt. Sydskandinavisk religion onder yngre bronsalder och keltisk järnälder*, Diss. Lund 1987.

8. Byrne, Peter. 1989. *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion: The Legacy of Deism*. New York: Routledge.
"The concept of natural religion is not a unitary notion. Of the many senses of the phrase 'natural religion' to be found in philosophical thought four will occupy our attention as we trace the emergence of the concept of religion. Three can be brought out by considering the oppositions or distinctions in which 'natural religion' or the allied 'natural theology' can figure. These oppositions are: (1) natural religion (theology) versus revealed religion (theology); (2) natural theology versus civil and mythic theology; (3) natural religion versus supernatural religion. The fourth sense of 'natural religion' to be treated does not fit so easily into a pair of opposites, being used to refer to a natural human religiousness. All these modes of natural religion (theology) will be explored in sections of this chapter. In this section the first sense and contrast wi)) be discussed." (p. 1)
(...)
"During the course of this study we have located the legacy of deism primarily in its contribution to the development of the concept of religion, and through that to the development of the study of religion. We have argued that it stands at the head of a movement of thought which is a vital influence on the emergence of the historical and global study of religions. Its chief contribution to that movement. is its assertion and defence (by way of its promotion of the concept of natural religion) of the historical, natural, and universal character of religion. The previous chapter illustrates how this assertion and defence were important in the writings of the nineteenth-century pioneers of the history and anthropology of religion. We must now offer some comment on the question of how far this legacy of deism still plays a role in the contemporary study of religion." (p. 207)

9. Dubuisson, Daniel. 2019. *The Invention of Religions*. Sheffield: Equinox.
Original edition: *L'invention des religions*, Paris: Éditions du CNRS 2019., translation by Martha Cunningham.
"Part One proposes two objectives. On the one hand, it intends to recall the history of Christian notions, but especially that of the notion of religion, with its simultaneous controversies and turbulence.
This constitutes an indispensable chapter, since too often we project retroactively upon the distant past what amounts to *post facto* clarity, since these were not our convictions at the time.
On the other hand, it will allow for the discovery of the topics that haw been circumscribed via the main questions of specialists since the mid-nineteenth century — that is, since the appearance of the History of Religions as an academic discipline. (Note that using capital letters here allows me to distinguish the academic discipline from the simple succession of historical facts.) This creation was characterized, as is proper, by the establishing of university chairs, specialized journals, and scholarly collections. For indeed, one must never assume that questions, especially in the social sciences, arise in and of themselves from how we view their importance (which is often merely the product of a retrospective illusion, tainted with ethnocentrism). In reality, these questions are always the result of a historical process, often long and complex, that has imposed itself upon the conscience of its contemporaries. That is why it will be necessary' to examine the aporias, impasses, and contradictions that the History of Religions, as an academic discipline anchored in European and Christian cultural compost, has navigated through up to now — that is, up to the appearance of this radical movement that has so profoundly secularized (or neutralized, if preferable) the study of religions. Strengthened by this preliminary support, the first three chapters of Part Two are devoted to the presentation of the theses, authors, and methods - but also the institutions and controversies — that today form the main substance of the vast current of Critical Studies of Religion (henceforth, Critical Studies).

(...)
A fourth chapter follows immediately, containing three internally related contributions, devoted respectively to "colonialism and cultural imperialism," the "invention" of two Oriental religions (Hinduism and Shinto), and, finally, the emergence of approximately ten World Religions over the course of the nineteenth century.
Finally, in Part Three, some of the paradoxes, lacunae, and aponas of this current will be examined, as have already been collected during its brief existence, but also the fruitful paths that it has opened up for the future. In under 30 years, and while the History of Religions tended to doze in the shade of the powers who guard the defenders of *religion*(9) and The Sacred (Rudolf Otto, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Joachim Wach, Mircea Eliade), the current has made use of a large number of ideas, theses, and arguments that themselves are far from having passed through the crucible of meta-cnticism.
Once they have gone through this test, they will probably provide the material for major future paradigms, much needed by the discipline in order to be recast and able to pursue renewal." (pp. 2-3)
(9) Written in italics, the word "religion" allows me to designate "religion par excellence" — that is, the Christian religion as it defines itself as well as its idealized, essentialized prototype.

10. Feil, Ernst. 1992. "From the Classical *Religio* to the Modern Religion: Elements of a Transformation between 1550 and 1650." In *Religion in History: The Word, the Idea, the Reality / La religion dans l'histoire. Le mot, 1'idée, la réalité*, edited by Despland, Michel and Vallée, Gérard, 31–43. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
"As far as conclusions are concerned, the main difference between me and Michel Despland is that I find, up to the middle of the sixteenth century, which is as far as my first volume goes, an astonishingly strong attachment to a classical and Roman concept of *religio*. I am therefore unable to discover different understandings of *religio* in the more than thousand-year history of the concept up to this point. Religio means the careful and even fearful fulfilment of all that man owes to God or to the gods. In this sense, *religio* means something very neccessary to man. It is by no means that which very generally lies at the bottom of all different opinions and persuasions, but on the contrary, something very concrete. It involves the careful enacting of rituals before political and military action, as well as, in fear and trembling, attending to every sacrifice and to other demands, handed down from the past to be passed on to future generations. Therefore, I will use the Latin word *religio* without translating it whenever it occurs in the original Latin text and meaning.
We can add, completely within this framework of meaning, that quite early (according to my research, already in the 7th century) *religio* became a designation for the communities of those people who dedicated their whole lives to the scrupulous and withdrawn service of God, the *religiosi*, which gave rise, of course, to the English expression "religious" for one belonging to such an order (R 76f.)." (p. 32)
References
R = *Religio*. Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs vom Fruhchristentum bis ztir Reformation (= Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 36), Gottingen 1986.

11. ———. 1999. "'Religio' and 'religion' in the 18th century: The contrasting views of Wolff and Edelmann." In *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts and Contests*, edited by Platvoet, Jan G. and Molendijk, Arie L., 125–148. Leiden: Brill.
"The initial aim of my research project was to clarify the relationships between 'faith-reason-religion'. It would, I hoped, contribute to the current attempts at examining the basis of social and political realities, which are often related to 'religion' (cf. 'civil religion').

I soon realised that the history of the meaning of 'religion' was particularly unclear and I assumed that I would quickly find the needed clarity when I embarked on a study of the history of the term *religio* from early Christianity onwards. Having published the first(20) and the second parts(21) of my study, I am now trying to explore the period up to 1830. Because my studies have shown that there was no continuous development in the meaning of the word 'religion' from the classical Roman and Christian religio to modern, specifically Protestant 'religion', my concern now is to discover how this transformation, or change, in the meaning of the term actually occurred.
On the basis of the results which this project has delivered so far, the views of two authors on 'religion' will now be presented, to wit those of Christian Wolff and Johann Christian Edelmann. If I am not mistaken, it is precisely these two scholars who occupied such prominent positions in terms of our problem, in the first half of the 18th century. This contribution will be concluded by presenting some conclusions that may justifiably be drawn from my analyses of Wolff's and Edelmann's views on 'religion'." (pp. 129-130)
(20) Feil 1986.
(21) Feil 1997.
References
Feil, E. 1986, Religio: *Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriff vom Frühchristentum bis zur Reformation*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (= Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte, 36)
--~ 1997, Religio II: *Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriff zwischen Reformation und Rationalismus (ca. 1540-1620)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (= Forschungen zur Kirchen- und ogmengeschichte, 70).
---, forthcoming/a, Religio III. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. [Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffs im 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert. 2001]
--~, forthcoming/b, Religio IV Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. [Die Geschichte eines neuzeitlichen Grundbegriffsim 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert. 2007]

12. Harrison, Peter. 1990. *Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
"That there exist in the world such entities as 'the religions' is an uncontroversial claim. There may be discussion about whether the beliefs and practices which are said to constitute the various religions are legitimate or 'true', but few would deny that these systems exist. So too, the term 'religion', as a generic description of what the plural 'religions' are about, is part of everyday discourse and is used with some precision by scholars. However, it was not always so. The concepts 'religion' and 'the religions', as we presently understand them, emerged quite late in Western thought, during the Enlightenment. Between them, these two notions provided a new framework for classifying particular aspects of human life. The task of this study is a twofold one: first, to examine the emergence of the twin concepts 'religion' and 'the religions'; and second, to give an account of the new science of religion which they made possible." (p. 1)
(...)
"It remains only to indicate something of the plan of this book. After a brief examination of the backgrounds of Enlightenment ideas of religion, we shall move, in the second chapter, to a consideration of the rise of the idea of religion in theological controversy. Two countervailing tendencies will be examined: Calvinism, in which 'genuine religion' is construed as 'saving knowledge', and Platonism, in which 'religion' is deemed to be 'natural'.
In the third chapter we shall see how in a creative combination these two tendencies, the so-called deists modified 'religion' to make it a natural object constituted primarily by propositional knowledge. These two chapters thus describe how religious ideas of religion were secularised. In the final two chapters, we see how the history of 'religion', once thought to be exhausted in biblical accounts of idolatry

and apostacy, came to be credited with its own, non-sacred or natural history. Thus, just as the theology of 'religion' was secularised, so the sacred history of 'religion', became simply the history of 'the religions'.
We turn now to antecedents - the reformers, Renaissance Platonists, and classical atheists who were important precursors of, respectively, the seventeenth-century Calvinists, the English Platonists, and the 'deists'." (p. 4)

13. Hudosn, Wayne. 2005. "The Enlightenment Critique of 'Religion'." *Australian eJournal of Theology* no. 5:1–12.
Abstract: "This paper offers a more positive interpretation of the Enlightenment critique of religion. By rereading the contributions of individual thinkers such as Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, and Marx, it suggests respects in which the Enlightenment critique of religion may be relevant to future organisations of human spirituality."

14. Hultkrantz, Ake. 1994. "The Notion of Religion in the Research of North American Indian Religions." In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990*, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 207–214. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"The gap between the western view of religion and the American Indian must not be exaggerated. The methods of the history of religions have been successfully applied to African, Asiatic and Oceanian religions with a tribal social structure; it is difficult to see why North American religions could not also be handled with the same types of method. Furthermore, Roger Keesing considers that the magnitude in difference between other people's experienced and cognized worlds and our own is·a question that remains open. The anthropological researcher is, due to his or her tendency to focus upon the most exotic cultural materials and theoretical dispositions, ready "to produce, and reinforce, a view of other people's worlds as more radically different from one another and our own than they are"(25). At the same time it must be conceded that American Indian scholars, ·who realize their religion more in ritual behaviour than in theoretical doctrines, feel that there is a distance behveen this religion and, for instance, the Protestant creed."
(...)
"\Ve may conclude that, as a rule, scholars of religion are more anxious to preserve the concept of religion in one form or another(27). It is at the same time clear that they recognize that in the Indian conceptual world religion cannot be separated from other aspects of culture, although it holds its own quality.
It is my contention that only a concept of religion that refers to the supernatural world - or a reality of another dimension - is worthwhile. There is among Indians certainly no conceptual unity of religious phenomena, but their common supernatural quality distinguishes them for the observer. Such an understanding of religion may be a convenient starting-point for religio-historical work in the North American Indian field." (pp. 212-213)
(25) Roger M. Keesing, *Exotic Readings of Cultural Texts*, Current Anthropology 30 (4),1989, 459-479, here 469.
(27) There are exceptions of course as the Islamist Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

15. Judge, Edwin A. 1989. "The Beginning of Religious History." *The Journal of Religious History* no. 15:394–412.
Reprinted as Chapter 1 in E. A. Judge, *Jerusalem and Athens: Cultural Transformation in Late Antiquity. Essays Selected and Edited by Alanna Nobbs*, Tübinge; Mohr Siebeck 2010, pp. 11-31.
"In his Foreword to the opening number of *The Journal of Religious History*, Bruce Mansfield did not attempt to define 'religion'.
(...)
"It is hardly an accident that the *Journal* has settled down to cater for the modern West more than for Antiquity or the Orient. The phenomenon of 'religion', and therefore of "religious history", as we must understand it from the modern point of view, is not something universal in human experience.

Rather it is one of the distinctive marks of the history of the West, and only then of the whole modern world in its westernising mode. When we ordinarily speak of 'religion' now – for example when asked to identify ourselves on a census form – we refer to an institutionalised set of beliefs and practices, supporting a general framework of life, which may mark us off in a social sense from those involved in other sets. Religious identity, whether inherited or acquired, residual or even rejected, implies an alternative commitment to that of others living in the same community." (pp. 11-12 of the reprint)
(...)
"The general *supplicatio* of Decius in AD 250 [*} represents a clear-cut pivot in the historic transformation of 'religion'. Far from supplying an unquestioned, comfortable endorsement of the established order any more, the old Roman *religio* was being drawn into a political battleground by the new counter-culture, which was to usurp its name. In the following century, and most conspicuously under champions such as Porphyry and Julian, the classical 'religious' and philosophical traditions were themselves drawn together to form a new 'religion' of the modern type – the personal life commitment of those who still hoped to save the old order from dismantling by the churches. Porphyry and Julian had both had close personal contact with the Christianity they rejected, and understood well the intellectual sources of its disturbing social activism.(66)" (p. 30)
[*] The edict by the Roman emperor Decius mandating that everyone in the empire wa offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving (*supplicatio*) to the gods.
(66) E. A. Judge, 'Christian Innovation and its Contemporary Observers', in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (eds B. F. Croke and Alanna Emmett (now Nobbs), Sydney 1983) 13–29, now ch. 17 below. The idea of a shift in the meaning of the term 'religion' in the third century is well discussed by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York 1962).

16. Kim, Sung-Hae. 1994. "The Concept of Religion from the Perspective of the Basic Structure of Chinese Religious Tradition." In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990*, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 247–260. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"Conclusion
We began our discussion with the fact that the term *tsung-chiao* carries a western connotation of religion which brings out either reaction against it or a tendency of limiting its area into a marginalized zone of Chinese tradition. However, I am not proposing here to change this term into another one. As I mentioned before, the literal meaning of *tsung-chiao* as "the primary teaching" is acceptable. Moreover, this term has one hundred years of history and by now is firmly established in ordinary vocabulary. What I am appealing here is that we have to enlarge our concept of religion in the light of Chinese vision of the ultimate which is to a large extent East-Asian reality as well." (p. 257)
(...)
"When we enlarge the concept of religion as encompassing human life as a whole in connection with its ultimate reference, value, or concern, we do not have to search religion only from folk tradition or marginalized areas of Chinese culture. Concretely this means that when a historian of religion wants to teach or write on Chinese religion, he/she should attain a balanced understanding of Chinese tradition as a whole, including both intellectual and popular traditions and their interpenetration. Whether one approaches periodically or thematically he/she should introduce the people's world view, its development, and their religious practices with the final focus on how all these are connected and evaluated by the ultimate reference in their culture and period." (pp. 258-259)

17. Larson, Gerald James. 1994. "Is South Asian *yoga* "Philosophy", "Religion", Borth or Neither?" In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of*

Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 261–270. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"Conclusion
I have been expressing what might be called an Indian axiomatic in largely negative terms, namely, the absence of categorial separations between mind and body, reason and experience, formal and applied logic, divine and human, and birth and rebirth. I chose this approach deliberately, inasmuch as what we usually mean by "religion'.' and "philosophy" in academic environments since the Enlightenment in our work as historians of religion presupposes precisely these separations. Yet in the South Asian environment, at least, within Yoga traditions (which are symptomatic to a large extent of South Asian thought generally), these separations are simply absent (at least as important categorial separations). South Asian thinking or cognizing, to move now to a positive formulation, (a) posits the presence of a contentless consciousness that functions within a reductive materialist ontology of thought and extension (in the realist systems; or, within *māyā, sŭnyatā*, and so forth, within the non-realist traditions); (b) claims that the process of knowing is deeply embedded in material reality (or *māyā* for the Advaita Vedāntins or *sŭnyatā*. for the Madhyamika Buddhists) and, hence, is finally and always a phenomenology of error or ignorance-or put somewhat differently, there is no cognitively determinate way to describe ultimate truth; (c) focusses its attention on cultivating meditative cognitions that are true, or, if you will, awarenesses (*samādhi-s*) that are veridical, rather than sentences or propositions, which latter have nospecial status apart from other awarenesses; (d) conceives of the divine or deity in a highly polymorphous and plastic manner which is not finally separate from human being or any other kind of being - in other words, God or the gods are never transcendent in the European theological sense; and (e) defines human being as "dividual" (to use Marriott's well-known idiom)-in other words, the human is as polymorphous and plastic as the divine, so that the human being is construed not only in a larger synchronic and transactional social environment (the caste system, and so forth) but is also construed as one in a series of diachronic and iterative rebirths - what one might characterize as a fundamental South Asian intuition of the vulnerability or fluidarity of personal identity within a cosmic ecology of recursive transactions.
(...)
To answer the question of my title: ls South Asian yoga "Philosophy", "Religion ", Both or Neither? My answer is obviously "both", with the important proviso that the problem in our studies is not "yoga" but. rather, what we mean by "religion" and "philosophy" in our ongoing comparative research." (pp. 269-270)

18. Lindberg, Anette. 2009. "The Concept of Religion in Current Studies of Scandinavian Pre-Christian Religion." *Temenos* no. 45:85–119.
Abstract: "In recent Swedish studies of Scandinavian pre-Christian religion of the late Iron Age, various scholars have questioned the utility of the concept of religion in this field. According to these scholars, the concept of religion obscures the specific character of religions of the small-scale non-literate societies of the pre-Christian Age. In the article, I critically examine suggestions that we abandon the academic concept of religion and replace it with an emic concept, or a concept derived from an emic context. I further argue that this strategy implies an inappropriate dualistic opposition between Scandinavian pre-Christian religion and so-called world religions. I conclude with a critical evaluation of problematic formulations of religious change and variation, presented by the same scholars who criticize the use of the academic category of religion. I try to draw attention to certain problematic implications of these demands. I conclude that we should continue to employ the concept of religion in connection with the religious worlds of pre-Christian societies. The strategy proposed by these scholars may turn out to be merely one more way of imposing misconceptions on this period."

19. Mach, Michael. 1994. "Philo's "Philosophical" Turn to "Religion"." In *The Notion of "Religion" in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of*

the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 403–413. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.
"Returning to our question: What caused Philo to use these Platonic and Stoic philosophical elements to build up his own theory? Although there are some biblical traditions about the divine wisdom which is to be found in the heavenly court or with certain people as David or some of the prophets, those texts had a different kind of wisdom in mind than Philo' s. He is not simply explaining the religion of his ancestors, as has been often noted, but looks towards something new, unknown at least within Jewish religious tradition. For him the important thing is knowledge of God. This problem, it seems, did not arise in the land of Israel in Philo's days. In the religious literature of the time - that came down to us, God's existence was taken for granted without further questioning. The problem there was formulated as God's impact on history and man's appropriate reaction to it.
But Greek philosophy helped Philo to formulate his view of religion: First, because the problem of cognition had been disputed there already for a long time. Secondly, the transcendence of the truly Existent was already, as it seems, beyond discussion, at least in the Platonic tradition (and this is one of those instances where Philo quotes Plato directly). But at the end of this (theoretical) ascent Philo does not strive for the intellectual vision, but for an experience of the divine." (p. 412, two notes omitted)

20. Masuzawa, Tomoko. 2005. *The Invention of World Religions; Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
"This book concerns a particular aspect of the formation of modern European identity, a fairly recent history of how Europe came to self-consciousness: Europe as a harbinger of universal history, as a prototype of unity amid plurality.
The book finds its central question in the following historical fact. For many centuries Europeans had a well-established convention for categorizing the peoples of the world into four parts, rather unequal in size and uneven in specificity, namely, Christians, Jews, Mohammedans (as Muslims were commonly called then), and the rest. The last part, the rest, comprised those variously known as heathens, pagans, idolaters, or sometimes polytheists. This conventional ordering began to lose its ruling authority in the first half of the nineteenth century, and in the early decades of the twentieth, there suddenly appeared an entirely new system, namely, a list of roughly ten to a dozen “world religions”; the list was often accompanied by an indeterminate number of other, minor traditions. This new system of counting the religions of the world replaced the old hierarchy of nations—that is, “nations” in the archaic sense of the term, not yet construed as nation-states—and the new system has since turned into a convention, which is still regnant today. The list has not been significantly altered or seriously challenged in the past hundred years. This book is an investigation into what happened in the nineteenth century to produce this change." (*Preface*, p. XI)

21. Molnár, K. Attila. 2002. "The construction of the notion of religion in early modern Europe." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* no. 14:47–60.
Abstract: "This article traces the construction and use of the notion of "religion" in early modem Europe.
The argument is that the concept of "religion" evolved from the medieval ideas of *universitas fidealismcconscientious*A look at the writings of Machiavelli and Bodin as well as the ideas of the English Latitudinarians, reveals that they used the word without reference to theological content and with indifference to theological differences, but, instead, to convey ideas of a common morality for the building of a civil society and a functional statehood."

22. Pearson, Birger A. 1994. "Is Gnosticism a Religion?" In *The Notion of “Religion” in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVI Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (I.A.H.R.), Rome, 3rd–8th September, 1990*, edited by Bianchi, Ugo, 105–114. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider.

"My own view is that Gnosticism can be viewed as a distinct historical phenomenon; indeed, in its developed form, asa religion in its own right comparable to "Judaism" (Ἰουδαϊσμός 2 Macc 2:21) and "Christianity" (Χριστιανισμός: Ignatius Magn. l 0.1; *Phld*. 6.1; *Rom*. 3.3). (5) The term "Gnosticism", in this view (6) is just another word for "the Gnostic religion", () of vvhich the Mandaeans (="Gnostics") (8) are a special instance, still surviving in the marshlands of Iraq and Iran. (9)
In developing this argument I first want to refer to my colleague Ninian Smart's discussion of what are the concrete characteristics of "a religion." In his most recent treatment of this issue he sets forth seven "dimensions" of a religion. (10) They are (not in his order):
1. doctrinal/philosophical (beliefs, etc.)
2. mythic/narrative ("story")
3. practical/ritual (cult, etc.)
4. experiential/emotional (mysticism, etc.)
5. ethical/legal (norms of behavior)
6. social/institutional (organizational structure)
7. material (iconography, etc.) (11)

I find these categories applicable to a discussion of the Gnostic religion, and I have therefore chosen to organize my analysis of Gnosticism according to Smart's paradigm. For my source material I utilize, tacitly or explicitly, the primary Gnostic evidence, especially the Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi. (12) Limitations of space require me to restrict my discussion to the most essential points." (pp. 105-106)
(5) l argued this point briefly in the Introduction to my recent book, *Gnoslicism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990, 6-9. The present paper is a development of this argument in greater detail.
(6) For a criticism of the use of this term in scholarship see Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis. The Nature and History of Gnosticism*. trans. R. McL. Wilson; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark / San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983, 56.
(7) Cf. Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity*, 2nd ed., Boston: Beacon, 1%3.
(8) Mandaic (E. Aramaic) *manda* =γνῶσις, "knowledge".
(9) On the Mandaeans see esp. Rudolph, *Gnosis*. 343-66, and literature cited there.
(10) Ninian Smart, *The World's Religions. Old Traditions and Modern Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.10-21.
(11) This dimension has been added since his previous discussion of the issue. See e.g. his discussion of six dimensions of a religion in *Worldviews: Cross Cultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1983, 7-8.

23. Preus, J. Samuel. 1992. "The Reified Heart in Seventeenth-century Religion." In *Religion in History: The Word, the Idea, the Reality / La religion dans l'histoire. Le mot, 1'idée, la réalité*, edited by Despland, Michel and Vallée, Gérard, 45–56. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
"My focus here is English Puritans of the seventeenth century, although I think this line of inquiry could be extended to parallel inward-oriented or pietistic movements elsewhere in Europe. More particularly, I shall focus on the Puritans in their use of the Bible, because there one can watch this process —this reification of interiority —developing, exemplified in the works of Baxter and Bunyan but evidenced in thousands of seventeenth-century sermons, pamphlets and books. I am interested in discovering how, at this time and place, the great Protestant experiment of reforming individuals, as well as social and religious life in general, on the basis of a book —how that theory worked in actual use —in the lives of devout and literate Protestants — of whom there were suprisingly many at this time! In other words, my focus here is not hermeneutics, but the more unequivocally religious act of divination (cf. J. Z. Smith, and Loewe and Blacker)." (p. 46, anote omitted)
(...)
"Thus we see the term "religion" rising of necessity to describe an increasingly complex world, beginning with the internal religious rivalry among Christians (as a result of which rival forms of Christianity are referred to as "religion [s]"); added to

it the growing realization that Christianity is only one among the world's religions, or possibly, one among the universe's! Bunyan's colourful recognition of this new reality (new at least to the ordinary layperson) is expressed thus: "Everyone doth think his own Religion rightest, both Jews, and Moors, and Pagans; and how if all our Faith, and Christ, and Scriptures, should be but a think-so too?" (Bunyan 1962:31).
Reification has nothing necessarily to do with alienation from religious life, with an outsider's perspective, or with attention only to externals. In fact, it is a fundamental mistake to drive a wedge between "inner" and "outer," as though the essential subject matter for the study of religion is the inner life, while externals are peripheral. This dualism accurately reflects a certain kind of theology, of course, but it radically falsifies the data of religion,(19) and tends to inject normative considerations prematurely into the study of the facts." (p. 51, two notes omitted)
References
Bunyan, John. 1962. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666). Edited by Roger Sharrock. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

24. Rüpke, Jörg 2014. *Religion: Antiquity and Its Legacy*. New York: I. B. Tauris.
"What is religion?
One cannot talk about an ancient religion in a scholarly context as something that can be either identified in its own right or found hidden beneath other cultural practices.
(...)
"It is no improvement to substitute the plural ‘religions’ for the singular ‘religion’. (7) This use of ‘religions’ (to be treated in Chapter I) goes even further in suggesting the existence of a plurality of self-contained and neatly separated religious traditions or systems on the model of early modern Christian denominations.(8) By contrast, this book aims to demonstrate both the internal pluralism and the characteristic lack of clear borders of Roman religious practices within their ancient Mediterranean context. The coexistence of private or familial religious loyalties to special groups such as Bacchanalian cults is part of a religious ‘division of labour’, and represents a range of religious options and activities on different social levels. Only the political elite identified such activities as an alternative to a so-called ‘religion of the Roman people’ (Livy 39.13). The conflict resulting from the Bacchanalian affair of 186 BC, when people engaging in a cult of Dionysus/Bacchus were persecuted as a political conspiracy, neatly illustrates how ancient religion could have a history of its own. Such a ‘history of religion’ is an idea that will be looked into further in Chapter II." (pp. 7-8)
(7) Cf. Beard, Mary, John North and Simon Price, Religions of Rome. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1998).
(8) For a history of the term ‘religion’ see Smith, Jonathan Z., ‘Religion, religions, religious’, in C.M. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 269–84.

Comparative religion

1. Cohn, Werner. 1962. "Is Religion Universal? Problems of Definition." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* no. 2:25–33.
"One cannot at this time insist, of course, on the uniqueness of the West in having religious institutions. It might be that other societies have similar or substantially similar arrangements (though I would think this to be rather exceptional). But once the principle of definition by cultural context is accepted, one can note similarities to religion where the full- blown phenomenon does not exist."
(...)

"In this connectioh, it is interesting to notice that many social phenomena which originally were not religious tend toward religion as the environment becomes westernized. Ancient Judaism "lacked a church and therefore would not qualify, but mod- ern Judaism, at least in its synagogue aspects, certainly does. I have also been told that in Japan, under Christian in- fluences, many non-Christian groups de- velop church organizations and begin to behave like religions. The Japanese word for "religion" is of relatively recent origin and has been introduced into the language to deal with this Western influence in Japanese life."(7) A piece of evidence for my feeling that religion in any recognizable sense probably does not exist outside the West is the experience with anthropologists and Orientalists when they have been asked to give the equivalents of the word "religion" in the non-Western languages with which they are familiar. Invariably, they were either unable to furnish a word or concept that involved the four items listed on my table, or they furnished what they thought was a concept of relatively recent invention which had apparently been introduced under Western influences." (pp. 31-32)
(7) *Encyclopaedia Japonica*, vol. 5 (in Japanese), Tokyo, Sanseido, 1911, p. 605. When Japanese Christians sought to Japanize their faith, they formed the "Non-Church Movement." See John F. Howes, "The Non-Church Christian Movement in Japan,". *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Third Series, Volume V (n.d. [1957]), pp. 119-137.

2. ———. 1964. "What is religion? An analysis for cross-cultural comparisons." *Journal of Christian Education* no. 7:116–138.
"The Problem
Religion is a concept in Western culture, and before we can determine whether other cultures have institutions like it, it is necessary to analyse the meaning of the term in our culture."
(...)
"My approach here goes against the grain of most social scientists.
Why impose our ideas of religion, so runs the argument, on other peoples? Why not study their religion when we write about them? When the present point of view was first outlined,(1) a commentator angrily objected, urging in effect that the definition of the term should vary from culture to culture.(2) It is quite clear, of course, that any procedure which uses the same word for different phenomena makes it impossible to know just what it is that we are talking about.
Interpreting other cultures in our language is always beset with difficulties. Social scientists have fortunately come to accept the great diversity of cultures, and understand that what is true in one need not be true in another. Nevertheless, it is still a single culture-the writer's own-through which his understanding and his communication to his audience must take place. To make clear what happened in ancient Palestine, say, to people reading twentieth century English, it is necessary to think in and write good contemporary English. The ancient Hebrew, to be sure, must first be understood in its own context; but then a way must be found to convey as much of the other culture as possible into the language of our own." (pp. 117-118)
(1) Werner Cohn, "Is Religion Universal? Problems of Definition", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. II, No. 1 (FalI, 1962), pp. 25·33.
(2) Samuel Z. Klausner, "Comment", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol II, No, 1 (Fall, 1962), pp. 33·35.

3. Klausner, Samuel Z. 1962. "Comment [on Werner Cohn, *Is Religion Universal? Problems of Definition*]." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* no. 2:33–35.
"In sum, Cohn's warning against generalizing meaning across cultures does not settle the issue as to whether religion is universal. The items our culture includes in religion are not necessarily those in volved in the religious systems of other cultures. Cohn cannot, therefore, say that religion does not exist in other cul tures. Further, his attempt to attribute social scientists' belief in the universality of religion to the influence of ideas is based on a false assumption about Thomistic thought and a misinterpretation of functionalism." (p. 35)

4. Pharo, Lars Kirkhusmo. 2007. "The Concept of “Religion” in Mesoamerican Languages." *Numen* no. 54:28–70.
Abstract: "The article examines whether the indigenous languages in the cultural region called Mesoamerica comprise words corresponding to the European concept of “religion.” In spite of the fact that the highly advanced phonetic (i.e. logosyllabic) writing systems are capable of expressing and recognising abstract representations in the languages, extant pre-Columbian Mesoamerican inscriptions do not contain words which can be rendered as “religion.” Attention has therefore been directed to the descriptions of indigenous languages made by Spanish ethnographer-missionaries in the 16th and 18th centuries. Six indigenous lexemes translated as “religion” in colonial dictionaries, are analysed. It is, however, argued that the native terms for “religion” were in reality constructed by the Spanish ethnographer-missionaries in order to promote evangelisation and the conversion of the indigenous people. Nevertheless, it is not ineffective to operate with “religion” as an etic notion when analysing Mesoamerican cultures. A theory is put forward suggesting that a linguistic/philological examination of a given language offers a strategy for defining “religion” as a cultural analytical category according to Max Weber’s notion of “ideal type".”