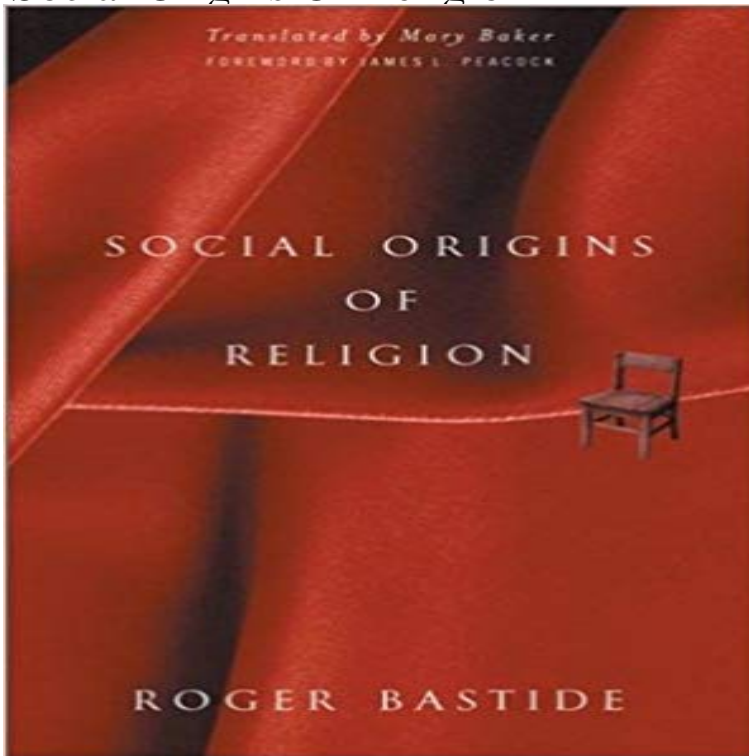


Social Origins Of Religion



With its original publication in 1935, this classic work established the theoretical and practical foundations for a global sociology of religion. Delineating the transition from the grand theories of religion that characterized the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the narrower, fieldwork-based focus that followed, Roger Bastide's comprehensive survey of religion was instrumental in turning the study of religion toward ethnography; as such, this book, an early attempt to understand the broad social contexts of religion, inaugurated a golden era of religious anthropology. A pioneer, along with Claude Lévi-Strauss, of structural anthropology, Bastide combines foundational elements of that nascent approach with ethnopsychiatry. *Social Origins of Religion* carries out the tasks of defining religion, giving the notions of rites and representation radically new roles in social science, and studying religions as systems. Bastide brings rigor to the field by analyzing theories of the sacred, the origin of religion, social elements of religious life, religious systems, and religious change. He casts doubt on some of the more fanciful and immoderate contributions in the field, opting instead for a meticulously descriptive approach that nevertheless does not discount the value of spiritual aspects of religion. Of major importance in its time and in our own, *Social Origins of Religion* goes beyond historical interest to revive and extend our thinking about religion in a comparative panhuman framework—a framework of critical pertinence in a world reshaped by the forces of globalism and fundamentalism. Roger Bastide (1898-1974) was professor at the University of São Paulo and the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, received the Légion d'honneur, and was awarded a chair at the Sorbonne. Bastide wrote more than eight hundred articles and

thirty books, many of them still in print. Mary Baker is a professional translator whose previous translations include *The Existence of the External World* by Jean-Rene Vernes (2001) and *Claude Levi-Strauss and the Making of Structural Anthropology* by Marcel Henaff (Minnesota, 1998).

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