

Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia - Reading List

THURSTON Herbert S J : The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism (1952)
A remarkable objective account of psycho - somatic and other material
effects of mystical experience.

WHITMAN J H M : The Mystical Life. An Outline of its Nature and
Teachings from the Evidence of Direct Experience (1961)
Many of the cases on which the author builds his interpretation are drawn
from the records of psychical research.

Historical and Critical Studies of Mysticism

BULLETT Gerald: The English Mystics (1950)
From the Medieval period to Blake and Wordsworth

BUTLER Dom C : Western Mysticism (1922 frequently reprinted)
One of the best studies of Medieval Christian mysticism.

COLEMAN T W : English Mystics of the Fourteenth Century (1938)

COX Michael : Mysticism, the Direct Experience of God. (1983)
Concerned almost exclusively with Christian mysticism.

GRAEF Hilda : The Story of Mysticism (1966)
An excellent survey of Christian mysticism down to the 16th century.

INGE W R : Christian Mysticism (1899 frequently reprinted).
A comprehensive survey including Platinism and Nature Mysticism.

JONES R M : Studies in Mystical Religion (1909 later reprints exist)
A classical study that considers early Protestant mysticism in great depth

NICHOLSON R A : The Mystics of Islam (1914)
A concise yet scholarly introduction (Re-issued 1963)

OTTO Rudolf: Mysticism East and West. A comparative Analysis of the
Nature of Mysticism (1932)
Principally concerned with Sankra and Meister Eckhart.

PARRINDER G : Mysticism in the World's Religions (1976)

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SCHIMMEL Annemarie : Mystical Dimensions of Islam (1976)

A detailed study of Sufi mysticism.

SCHIMMEL D T : Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist (1957)

An interesting comparison, but flawed by the author's treatment of Eckhart as a typical Christian mystic.

ZAEHNER R C : Hindu and Muslim Mysticism (1960)

A scholarly (although controversial) comparative study.

Mystical Texts and Commentaries.

1) Anthologies

KINGSLAND W (Ed): An Anthology of Mysticism and Mystical Philosophy

(1927) A world - wide selection arranged under topical headings.

NICHOLSON D H S & LEE A H E (Ed): The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse. (1916 many reprints)

REINHOLD H A (Ed): The Spear of Gold. Revelations of the Mystics (1947)

Almost exclusively Christian and predominantly Catholic.

VAN OVER R (Ed): Eastern Mysticism. a comprehensive Anthology of fundamental Writings (1977) 2 volumes.

2) Individual Mystics

NOTE : - The works of many of the western mystics, both famous and less well known, have been published in modern English translations, with scholarly introductions and notes, in the series **Classics of Western Spirituality. A Library of Great Spiritual Masters** (published in Britain by SPCK)

BOEHME Jacob: The way to Christ (trans J J Stoudt) (1947)

The most readable of Boehme's many works. Most of his major works were reprinted from 17th century English translation between 1909 and 1924.

STOUDT J J : Sunrise to Eternity. A study of Jacob Boehme's Life and Thought (1957). The best modern work on Boehme.

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COLLEDGE Eric (Ed): The Medieval Mystics of England (1962)

Selections from Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich and others.
Many of their works are available in Penguin editions.

DINYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE: The Divine Names and Mystical Theology.
(Trans C E ROLT) (1920).

The most influential of early Christian mystics.

ECKHART Meister Sermons and Triprelises. Translated and edited by
M O'c Walshé (1979 - 87) 3 volumes.

FREMANTLE Anne (Ed) The Protestant Mystics (1964)

Extracts from sixty - seven religious and secular mystics

JEFFERIES Richard: The Story of my Heart. (Edited by S J Looker) (1947)
The Nature Mystic par excellence.

St. JOHN OF THE CROSS: Complete Works (translated by E Allison
Peers) (1953) 3 volumes.

St. TERESA OF AVILA: The Complete Works (translated by E Allison
Peers) (1947) excludes her letters.

PEERS E ALLISON: Studies of the Spanish Mystics (Second edition 1951 -
1960) 3 volumes.

LAW WILLIAM: Selected Mystical Writings (Edited by S Hobhouse) (1948)

RUMI JALAL ud-jin: Mathnawi manawi (Edited and translated by R A
Nicholson) (1926 - 1934) 3 volumes

The Principal work of the greatest of the Sufi mystics.

RUYSBROECK Jan Van: The Spiritual Espousals. (Translated by Eric
Colledge) (1952)

After Eckhart, the most important of the Rhineland mystics.

TRAHERNE Thomas: Centuries, Poems and Thanksgivings
(Edited by H M Margoliouth) (1958) 2 volumes.

The greatest English mystics of the 17th century.

ANONYMOUS: The Cloud of Unknowing: (Translated into modern English by Clifton Wolters)(1961)
A sympathetic translation of this delightful work.

NOTE. This selection represents only the smallest fraction of mystical writings that exist in English text or translation. It is also heavily weighted towards Christian texts, and especially those of the English mystics - because they are written in English and thus convey more closely and clearly the experience of the mystic concerned. Many of the critical works listed above also contain bibliographical details of the writings of other religious mystics (Christian and non - Christian, Nature mystics, secular mystics, and mystical poets - all of whom can be read with profit.

The following papers have been printed in the 'Metropolitan College Transactions' :-

Jacob Boehme by R W Frater A Langdon Coburn 1959

Quo Vadis - A Further Essay on Mysticism by V W Fr. C W Cresswell 1970

To the Mountain and the Hill by V W Frater C W Cresswell 1972.

BOOKS ON THE TAROT

NOTES

The Tarot is commonly seen by the public as nothing more than one means among many for divination, providing guidance to solve personal problems, or as a means of analysing character. But the pictorial symbols of the Tarot comprise an epitome of the various strands of the Western Hermetic Tradition, and like the imagery of alchemy, they can be interpreted in a variety of ways. For the Rosicrucian they are, perhaps, best treated as keys to the spiritual philosophy that is the Secret Tradition of the West, although the following list is not confined to books that approach the Tarot solely from this point of view. Some of these books can be found in the High Council library.

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General Works on the Tarot

KAPLAN Stuart: The Encyclopaedia of Tarot. (New York 1978 - 1989) A detailed three volume description of almost every recorded Tarot pack, with commentaries on the cards and a very extensive bibliography. It does not contain interpretations of the cards - either philosophical or divinatory.

JENSEN K Frank(ed): Manteia. A Newsletter of the mantric arts. (Roskilde, Denmark, 1989 to date)

The only journal of its kind, and although not concerned exclusively with the Tarot, by far the greater part of the text - which is profusely illustrated - is devoted to describing and evaluating new Tarot packs and books on the Tarot.

Descriptive and Historical Studies.

CAVENDISH Richard: The Tarot (1975)

One of the most accessible and readable of modern popular studies, it also contains fewer errors of fact than do most comparable works.

DUMMET Michael: The Game of Tarot from Ferrara to Salt Lake City (1980)

A comprehensive, well - illustrated history of the Tarot primarily as a game and vigorously rejects the idea that its prime function is either esoteric or divinatory.

MARTEAU Paul: Le Tarot de Marseille (Paris 1949)

A valuable work concerned only with the traditional designs. It contains a set of the cards pasted on to the text.

MOAKLEY Gertrude: The Tarot Cards painted by Bonifacio Bembo for the Visconti - Sforza Family. An Iconographic and Historical Study. (New York 1966).

A detailed study of the most important of the early Tarot packs.

VAN RINJBERK Gerald: Le Tarot - Histoire, Iconographie, Esoterisme. (Lyon 1947)

An important work with a degree of objectivity rarely found in works sympathetic to occultism. There is, alas, no English translation.

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Interpretations of the Tarot

NOTE : -The number of books claiming to explain and interpret the Tarot is legion - and the vast majority of them have little or no value. Those listed here are representative of the wide range of possible approaches to the subject.

BLAKELEY John D : The Mystical Tower of the Tarot. (1974)

A scholarly but sympathetic study that argues for an eastern, and specifically Sufi, origin for the cards.

BUTLER Bill: The Definitive Tarot. (1975)

A compendium of the designs and interpretations of both major and minor arcana from the best - known and most widely used Tarot packs.

CASE Paul Foster: The Tarot A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages (New York 1947).

The most popular work of the most influential of American writers on the tarot. Case derived his interpretations from the golden Dawn tradition.

CASE Paul Foster: The Book of Tokens. 22 Meditations on the Ageless Wisdom. (Washington 1934).

A more intuitive and reflective work than the preceding title. Later reprints exist of both works issued by B.O.T.A. (Brotherhood of Adytum).

CROWLEY Aleister : The Book of Thoth. A short Essay on the Tarot of the Egyptians. (1944 frequently reprinted).

The Tarot designs for this book (by Lady Frieda Harris) have been extremely popular and have helped to ensure Crowley's unhealthy vision of the Tarot has influenced many modern 'occult' interpretations. It is useful as a guide to what to avoid.

DOUGLAS Alfred : The Tarot, The Origins, Meaning and Uses of the Cards. (New York 1972) Concerned largely with the Tarot as a divinatory tool.

LEVI Eliphas : The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum interpreted by the Tarot Trumps. Translated from manuscripts and edited by W Wynn Westcott (1896 modern reprint exists).

A key work for understanding attitudes to the Tarot at the time of the 'Occult Revival'.

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MATHERS S L M : The Sorcerer and his Apprentice. Unknown Hermetic Writings of S L MacGregor Mathers and J W Brodie - Innes.

Edited and Introduced by R A Gilbert (1983).

Includes papers by both men that reflect views on the Tarot held within the Golden dawn.

MAXWELL Joseph: The Tarot. (1975).

A translation from the French and Valuable as an indication of the European approach to the Tarot divination.

NICHOLS Sallie: Jung and Tarot. An Archetypal Journey. (York Beach, Maine, USA 1980 and reprints)

An examination of Jung's psychological approach to the major arcana.

OUSPENSKY P D : The Symbolism of the Tarot. Philosophy of Occultism in Pictures and Numbers (St Petersburg 1913).

The Tarot as interpreted by the Ouspensky/Gurdjieff tradition. There is a modern reprint with illustrations from the Waite Tarot (1985), and the text is also reproduced in Ouspensky's 'New Model of the Universe'

PAPUS (Gerard ENCAUSSE): Absolute Key to Occult Science, The Tarot of the Bohemians. The most ancient Book in the World, for the use of Initiates Trans. by A P Morton. Second edition revised, with preface by A E Waite (1910). Later reprints exist. The French occult tradition *par excellence*.

REGARDIE Israel: The Golden Dawn. An account of the Teachings, Rites and Ceremonies of the Order of the Golden Dawn. (Chicago 1937 - 1940) 4 volumes reprinted.

The role of the Tarot in the workings of the Golden Dawn is described in detail and the texts of the ceremonies - which include a great deal of Tarot interpretation - are given in full.

SADHU Mouni: The Tarot. A contemporary course of the Quintessence of Hermetic Occultism. (1962).

A comprehensive study and analysis of western occultism through the Tarot.

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SHEPHARD John : The Tarot Trumps. Cosmos in Miniature. The Structure and Symbolism of the Twenty - Two Tarot Trump Cards. (1985).
An excellent scholarly work that sets the Tarot in its Renaissance context.

THIERENS A E : The General Book of the Tarot, containing the Astrological Key to the Tarot - System, published for the first time. With an Introduction by A E Waite. (1928).

A slight work but important, in Waite's opinion, for the interpretation of the Hanged Man.

WAITE Arthur Edward: The Pictorial key to the Tarot, being Fragments of a Secret Tradition under the Veil of Divination. (1911). Later reprints exist.
The most influential of English esoteric works on the Tarot and the analysis most in harmony with the Rosicrucian tradition.

WIRTH Oswald: Le Tarot, des Images du Moyen Age. (Paris 1927 reprints)
- A history and interpretation that acts as a counterpoint to the ideas of Papus. It is to be regretted that no English translation has yet been published.

ANONYMOUS : Meditation on the Tarot. A Journey into Christian Hermeticism. (Amity, New York 1985).
A remarkable work of spiritual philosophy that bridges the artificial gap between the Western Hermetic Tradition and Orthodox Christian spirituality

NOTES :-

A Note on Tarot Packs.

The Tarot pack consists of 78 cards, divided between the 22 Trumps of the Major Arcana and 56 cards of the four suits of Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles, but there is no accepted or definitive set of designs and many new packs are designed each year (details of new packs are given in the journal 'Manteia'). It is desirable that anyone seeking to study or use the Tarot should select the pack that appeals most to himself - bearing in mind that some packs depart from traditional symbolism more than others. The most commonly used packs today are the traditional Marseilles Tarot (and derivatives from the Oswald Wirth school); the Waite Tarot (designed by Waite and drawn by Pamela Coleman Smith; Paul Foster Case based on his pack on Waite's designs); and the Crowley Tarot (designed by Frieda Harris).

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The Tarot in Literature

References to the Tarot in T S Elliott's 'The Wasteland' are well-known, as is its influence on the work of W B Yeates (for which see Kathleen RAINES, 'Yeates, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn' [Dublin 1972]). But the Tarot has also inspired prose works, ranging from classics such as Charles WILLIAMS 'The Greater Trumps' (1932) to the less inspired fantasies of Piers ANTHONY's 'Tarot' series (1979 onwards). It is a useful exercise to compare ideas on the Tarot in fiction and in poetry with those of the generally received tradition.

Occasional papers on the Tarot will be found in the Transactions of the Metropolitan College and in publications of other Colleges of the Society.

No 4 in the 'Booklets' series, The Position of the Tarot in the Cabalistic System (price 1.50) finds Frater Cecil Potter placing Trumps on the 'Tree of Life', using and interpreting certain of the Waite designs

FREEMASONRY

Reference Works and General Studies of the Craft

ARS QUATOR CORONATORUM: Translations of Quator Coronati Lodge No 2076.

Since its foundation in 1886 'Q.C' has been recognised as the foremost research lodge in the world and its Transactions are an invaluable source of information on every aspect of masonic history.

COIL H W : Masonic Encyclopaedia (New York 1961, Macoy 1996)
The best comprehensive, single volume reference work currently available

GOULD R F : History and Antiquities of Freemasonry Revised by H Poole (1951). By far the best edition of the standard history of the Craft

HAMILL J M: The Craft, A History of English Freemasonry Wellingborough (1986) An excellent brief survey.

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HAMILL J M & GILBERT R A (Ed): Freemasonry, a Celebration of the Craft (1992).

An illustrated survey that covers both the history and philosophy of Freemasonry.

HUGHAN W J: Origins of the English Rite of Freemasonry. (Leicester 1925) - 3rd edition. A most important study.

JONES B E : Freemason's Guide and Compendium. (Revised 1957). An excellent general introduction although not entirely satisfactory on all aspects of history.

KHOOP D, JONES G P, & HAMER D (Ed):
Early Masonic Catechisms (second edition 1963)
Early Masonic Pamphlets (second edition 1978)

These two works provide access to the majority of manuscript and printed records of Freemasonry up to the early years of the Grand Lodge period. The same authors' other works on Masonic history and early Masonic documents will also repay careful study.

MACKENZIE K R H : The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia (1988) (Reprinted Wellingborough 1987).

Heavily weighted towards the additional degrees and esoteric Freemasonry.

PICK F L & KNIGHT G N :
The Freemason's Pocket Reference Book. (3rd edition Revised by F H Smyth 1983)
The Pocket History of Freemasonry (8th Edition Revised by F H Smyth 1991)
Two excellent compact reference works.

The Collected Prestoian Lectures 1965 - 1996 4 volumes.
The annual lectures cover a wide range of Masonic topics from 1925 on.

WAITE A E : The New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry (1921reprints exist) 2 volumes.
Despite the peculiar arrangement of topics - and the many careless errors of fact - this is a useful counterbalance to the reference works of the 'authentic' school of research.