



bulletin

British Association for the Study of Religions



129: November 2016

contents

EDITORIAL	2
NEWS, ETC	3
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS	7
FEATURES	
FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT	12
ADVICE FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS	15
TEACHING MATTERS	17
CONFERENCES	
BASR 2016	19
EASR 2016	21
CESNUR	25
YWYS 2016	26
BOOK REVIEWS	
ADOGAME	29
PARTRIDGE	30
BERG-SØRENSEN	31
DAY & LOVHEIM	33
RECENT PUBLICATIONS	37
OBITUARY	40

WWW.BASR.AC.UK

ABOUT THE BASR

The British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) was founded in 1954. It is a member association of the International Association for the History of Religions (founded 1950) and of the European Association for the Study of Religions (founded 2001). The object of BASR is to promote the academic study of religion/s, understood as the historical, social, theoretical, critical and comparative study of religion/s through the interdisciplinary collaboration of all scholars whose research is defined in this way. BASR is not a forum for confessional, apologetic, or similar concerns. BASR pursues its aims principally through an annual conference and general meeting, a regular Bulletin, and a Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions. Membership of BASR is open to all scholars normally resident in the United Kingdom.

All correspondence concerning the BASR should be sent to:

Dr Stephen E. Gregg,
Department of Religion and Philosophy,
MC234 Millennium City Building,
University of Wolverhampton,
Wulfruna Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1LY

COMMITTEE

President and Chair

Dr Steven Sutcliffe - S.Sutcliffe@ed.ac.uk

Secretary

Dr Stephen Gregg - s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk

Treasurer

Christopher R Cotter - c.cotter@lancaster.ac.uk

Teaching & Learning

Dr Dominic Corrywright - dcorrywright@brookes.ac.uk

JBASR Coordinating Editor

Dr Suzanne Owen - suzowen@gmail.com

Bulletin Editor

Dr David G Roberson - d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk

All rights reserved. Edition, selection, arrangement and original material © BASR 2016. The rights of the original authors are reserved by those individuals and are not affected by the above copyright.



editorial

Welcome to issue 129 of the BASR Bulletin. It truly is an honour to be shepherding this publication at such an exciting time for the BASR - and, in different ways, the World. I write this as America faces the ramifications of its historic decision, but the UK is hardly in less of a volatile situation, nor the rest of Europe. But whatever happens, religion is increasingly a part of public discourse - perhaps surprisingly for those of us brought up and trained in the secularisation thesis. Yet curiously, when these conversations happen in the media, we academics are still largely ignored - something that that was forcefully addressed in Martin Stringer's keynote at this year's conference. Perhaps measured commentary is not what is wanted at present. Nevertheless, it is needed.

Although the 2016 conference may have been low-key after recent EASR and IAHR conferences, it was very eventful in terms of the BASR and its role - academic, educationally and politically. We launched the new Teaching Fellowship (see page 6) and this issue is the first to feature our rewritten manifesto, as voted upon at the conference, and which appears in the marginalia of the first page. This places us even more in solidarity with the scientific and non-confessional position of the IAHR and other bodies - something which, if recent attempts to establish a competing European association are to be taken at face value, should not be taken for granted.

We are also continuing to make strident moves to streamline, modernise and professionalise our branding, Internet presence and publications. As well as the improved look of the Bulletin, the BASR's journal DISKUS will be re-launched imminently as the Journal of the British Association for the Study of Religions (JBASR), which will remain an open-access journal with no fees for authors, something the committee feel very strongly about in the light of the uncertainty surrounding the future of Open Access, changes to publisher's relationships with authors and the REF 2020. Nor are the changes to the Bulletin and the websites mere lip-service to technological advances. Making the Bulletin electronic has saved the BASR a thousand pounds in the first year. That's two bursaries to support talented students in a time of dramatic cuts to funding; more than enough to pay for the Teaching Fellowship. We have also made the Bulletin free to read - because let's face it, no-one will join the BASR to get the Bulletin, but you never know, someone might read the Bulletin and want to join the BASR. That's my hope, anyway.

All in all, these things are intended to remind others of how important the work of the BASR is, perhaps more than ever.

David G. Robertson, 14/11/2016



www.facebook.com/groups/490163257661189/



twitter.com/TheBASR

news, etc

EASR CONFERENCE 2016

The Belgian Association for the Study of Religions (BABEL) and the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Leuven have the pleasure to invite you to participate in the EASR 2017 Annual Conference, which will be at the same time a Special Conference of the IAHR. The conference will take place 18-21 September 2017 at Leuven. For more details and practical information, see the website: <http://www.easr2017.com>

that the EASR will waive fees for two RSP reporters at future conferences.

JOBS AND AWARDS

The 2016 International Book Prize (Religion, General) was awarded to *The Bible in Music. A Dictionary of Songs, Works and More* by Siobhan Dowling Long and John F A Sawyer (Rowman and Littlefield 2015) <http://www.internationalbookawards.com/2016presrelease.html>

THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROJECT

The Religious Studies Project is pleased to announce that it is now sponsored by the IAHR and the NAASR, as well as the BASR, who have been their sponsors since shortly after their founding in 2012. The money will be used to further their reach internationally, in particular to increase the involvement of scholars from the non-Anglophone world, as well to assure that the podcast continues to remain a free resource for many years to come. This is further encouraged by the agreement at the EASR conference in Helsinki,

Prof Douglas Davies was recently made an Honorary Vice-President of The Cremation Society of Great Britain (an essentially non-academic charity) for his work on cremation and death studies.

Denise Cush was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Theology from the University of Uppsala in January 2016, and Honorary Lifetime membership of the Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education in October 2016. I will also be a member of the Commission on Religious Education reporting in 2018.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

News Items	Up to 150 words
Conference Reports	500-1500 words
Conference Announcements	Not more than a single page
Book Reviews	700-1000 words
Features	Around 1000 words
Members' Recent Publications	Maximum 5 items

PLEASE SEND ALL MATERIAL FOR INCLUSION TO d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk
DEADLINE FOR THE MAY 2017 ISSUE IS **31 APRIL 2017**

REPORT ON THE TRS-UK AGM, 23 SEPTEMBER 2016, KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

TRS-UK, formerly AUDTRS (Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies), held its AGM in the former chapel of the Maughan Library, King's College London between 11.30 and 16.30. Its current president is Professor Jolyon Mitchell of the University of Edinburgh. TRS-UK secretary, Professor David Clough of the University of Chester, was unable to attend but the treasurer Dr Sue Yore of York St John University was present.

Around forty people attended a very full and interesting day. BASR was well-represented by several members. The AGM itself was held at 13.30 but the day also included three panels with speakers, followed by questions and discussion. The morning panel, 'Building Bridges between TRS in Schools and Universities', included panellists from educational and university associations concerned with the teaching of religion or religious education, including BASR member Wendy Dossett of the University of Chester speaking for the SHAP working group on world religions in education, Dr Bob Bowie speaking on behalf of the AULRE network for learning, teaching and research in religion and education, Dr Mark Chater representing the Culham-St Gabriel's Trust for religious education, Rudi Lockhart representing the RE Council of England and Wales and Daniel Hugill, speaking on behalf of the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE). The second panel, 'The Past, Present and Future of Publishing in TRS and implications for Impact', consisted of editors from Blackwell, OUP and IB Tauris and gave an informative overview of their perspectives with special attention to monographs but (despite the panel title) little direct discussion of impact. The final panel, 'Bridge-Building Between Learned Societies in TRS and the Futures of TRS in the UK' consisted in BASR president Dr Steven Sutcliffe, BNTS (British New Testament Society) president Professor John Barclay and SST (Society for Systematic Theology) president Professor Karen Kilby. Each spoke about the recent history and general orientation of their society, and this triggered a wider series of brief reports from the floor by representatives of other societies such as the Society of Old Testament Studies (SOTS), the British Association of Jewish Studies (BAJS) and the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group (SOCREL) which had just voted to affiliate with TRS-UK. For BASR, Steve Sutcliffe explained our

support of the EASR executive committee's critical response to a proposal to set up a new 'European Academy of Religion', and also spoke briefly about our initiative for a small research project on the history of BASR in the wider context of RS.

There was concern about historically low recruitment of undergraduate numbers: for example, a briefing paper prepared and circulated by Dr Rachel Muers of the University of Leeds showed that 1100 TRS students were recruited in 2014 compared with 3175 in Human Geography, 7285 in Media Studies and 9685 in History, to cite a few broadly comparable disciplines. However, it was pointed out that students learn about religion in other subject areas, and this was something to think about in terms of TRS making a contribution in those areas. At the same time there appears to be growing interest in religion in schools in England and Wales. For example, A level RS candidates have risen significantly in recent years (from around 11,000 in 2003 to 25,000 in 2015), two recent reports had raised the profile of the subject in schools (RE for Real, Dinham and Shaw 2015, and A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools, Clarke and Woodhead 2015) and the Religious Education Council for England and Wales was beginning a two year commission on religious education which will report in late 2018.

The AGM itself included discussion on ways of promoting TRS across the UK (although there was little hard information available about TRS in Scotland and Northern Ireland) including an update on the 'Why Study TRS?' brochure. The question of 'what can TRS-UK do?' arose, with suggestions of providing vision and advocacy, maintaining academic standards in TRS, public relations and acting as a professional network. Dr Sue Yore, the treasurer, reported on the finances. A question arose asking what to do if departments were unable to pay the membership fee. The response was that they could still be included in the network. Towards the end, Dr Jeremy Kidwell of the University of Birmingham was elected as the new treasurer.

The unanimous feeling was that it was very useful to hold the TRS-UK AGM within a wider day of panels and discussion, and it was proposed to follow this pattern next year. Professor Mitchell and the TRS-UK committee were warmly thanked for their hard work in organising the event.

Suzanne Owen, Leeds Trinity University
Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh

Researcher on the History of BASR in the context of Religious Studies in the UK

Introduction

The BASR Executive Committee seeks to appoint a freelance researcher to conduct a pilot research project on the oral and documentary history of the British Association for the Study of Religions. The researcher will work under the guidance of the executive committee and will be required to report in person to the AGM and to contribute to a plenary panel on the history of BASR/Religious Studies in the UK at the annual conference in Chester in September 2017.

The project would suit a post-doctoral or early career researcher with sound knowledge of the field of Religious Studies who has experience in qualitative methodologies (ideally including interviewing) and in document analysis and archival work. The researcher must be a member of BASR.

The researcher will receive an honorarium in return for their research. We envisage that the work will amount to around 175 hours but this will be discussed and confirmed with the successful applicant. Expenses will also be available to cover necessary travel around the UK.

Remit of the research and required outcomes

The remit is to produce an outline history of BASR (est. 1954). BASR has published a regular Bulletin for over 60 years (since 2015 in electronic format) and its members and office bearers have included leading scholars in the national and international study of religions. BASR has hosted one IAHR conference (1975) and two EASR conferences (2001, 2013).

We envisage that the research will draw on three main primary sources:

1. Oral History interviews with senior figures (active and retired, to be identified) within the UK Religious Studies community
2. BASR publications: BASR Bulletin 1954-2015 (archived in Bodleian library, Oxford), Diskus journal (1993-2015), BASR Occasional Papers
3. Additional archives to be identified, to include the Ninian Smart archive at Lancaster University

The research will produce two outputs:

1. an internal publication to provide a short documentary history of BASR for members' information and the Association's record, to be written and compiled by the researcher under the supervision of the BASR executive committee.
2. one peer-reviewed journal article, to be co-written with one or more members of the Executive Committee, to explore one or more central historical and/or disciplinary issues(s) arising from the research.

Honorarium

£3500: to be paid in three instalments – upon appointment (£1000), after conclusion of field and archive visits (£1000), on delivery of draft outputs (£1500).

Travel expenses: up to £1500 will be available against receipts

Travel expenses will be provided in addition to meet BASR Executive Committee representatives for one orientation meeting at the start of project, and (with conference accommodation included also) to attend Chester in 2017 to report to the AGM and contribute to a panel on the history of RS in the UK.

Timescale

Deadline for application: 12 noon, January 16, 2017

Research period: start date by agreement with BASR Executive, but no later than April 1 2017; completion date of research activity no later than December 31 2017.

The successful applicant will be required to meet with one or more members of the Executive committee at the outset of the project to draw up a scheme of research aims and activity, to include names of oral history interviewees, a working schedule of questions for interviews, and a realistic schedule of time management for visiting archival sources. The interview procedure will go through a university level ethics review.

Two outputs: to be completed in final draft, ready for printing and journal submission respectively, no later than April 1 2018

How to Apply

Please send a short letter of interest plus CV and 2 referees by 12 noon January 16 to Dr Stephen Gregg, BASR Honorary Secretary: S.Gregg@wlv.ac.uk

British Association for the Study of Religions Teaching Fellowship

BASR Executive proposes a new Fellowship for Teaching and Learning for members of the Association.

1. Teaching Fellowship to be £300 plus a funded place at BASR Annual conference.
2. Teaching Fellowship to be instigated for an initial period of 3 years before review by BASR executive committee.
3. A single Fellowship to be made annually
4. Applications or nominations to be sent to BASR Executive Secretary (application form on BASR website)
5. Eligibility – BASR members of over 1 year standing
6. Deadline for applications or nominations 1st May in each Academic year
7. Applications to be submitted in any format up to a maximum of equivalent 3000 words

The foci of applications to meet the criteria of excellence, innovation and transformation of the student learning experience in the study of Religions. Applications may include some, but not necessarily all of the following examples areas of excellence and types of evidence.

Examples of areas of excellence are:

- impact, national and local, on enhancing pedagogic practice in Religious Studies
- publications and cutting edge research on teaching and learning in RS
- creative teaching projects for specific modules or across a course
- organisation and evidence for field work, study trips
- innovative course design enabling flexible and distributed learning
- transformative projects with profound experiential learning outcomes
- individual excellence in teaching and learning,
- effective collaborations

Examples of Types of Evidence:

- Metrics – course evaluations; impact data
- Publications and products
- Citation and reference by other scholars
- Links to public social media
- Reference by colleague

Fellowship holders Responsibilities:

1. To present a report at the September conference
2. To write a short article for the 'Teaching Matters' section of the Bulletin for either Nov or May of year following receipt of Fellowship.

Application:

Applicants will be self-nominated using the form on the BASR website - goo.gl/QqYxYx

**BASR Annual General Meeting –
13.30-15.00 - 06/09/16
University of Wolverhampton**

*British Association for the Study of Religions
Registered Charity Number 801567
(Affiliated to the IAHR and EASR)*

1. Welcome – SS paid tribute to predecessors.
2. Apologies – Bettina Schmidt, Jim Cox, Ursula King, Molly Kady, Douglas Davies.
3. Minutes of the previous AGM – Distributed in Nov bulletin. Proposed (George Chryssides) and seconded (Marion Bowman) as accurate measure of meeting.
4. Matters arising – None that are not covered in the agenda of this AGM.
5. Presidential Address (Steven Sutcliffe) – the President noted how proud he was of the BASR and to be President, as the longest standing association in our subject area. SS noted that he first came to Wolverhampton in 1995 to give first BSR paper and paid tribute to Terry Thomas and to our past Presidents. Thanked whole committee personally. It was a new committee with a busy year and they have strived for continuity – SS thanked SG in this regard. SS foreshadowed new initiatives to be covered in meeting. SS reiterated that BASR is in a strong position – good attendance at conference in challenging funding and time constraints, particularly against funding for single theme and single tradition conferences.
6. Secretary's Report (Stephen Gregg) – SG noted that it had been a quiet year on Secretarial duties; work was focused on transition of banking to new treasurer and then conference organisation as the host. SG Attended AHA meeting in London in March, with focus on REF and TEF, which was cascaded to committee. Hosted two BASR Executive meetings at Wolverhampton. Attended EASR to represent BASR at general Meeting alongside SS. SG has initiated discussion with Equinox regarding BASR Book Series – ongoing conversation on theme within executive. 14 new BASR members and 1 has left. A major revision of membership list is the number one priority with CC in second year in current roles. Granted 8 bursaries for BASR 2016 – a record amount, following 17 applications. SG noted that this was proof that BASR is seen as an effective place for young scholars to become engaged in our wider community.
7. Treasurer's Report (Chris Cotter) – thanked SG for building up financial resources during his tenure as Treasurer; now we must plan to spend them to fulfil our charitable obligations, whilst retaining a sensible reserve. CC went through the annual accounts – a full copy is attached to these minutes. As agreed at last AGM, no one off payments for membership anymore, no cheques and full PayPal and automated system now in place. Expenditure slightly higher than typical year – this is explained by the funding of the Religious Studies project to go to the EASR, but this will not be the case going forwards as they have ongoing funding with the support of the EASR now. There were also one-off DOI costs for setup and new annual charge for the Journal. CC noted that the digital-only bulletin has saved £1000 per year. Kent conference made a modest profit of £170. Dominic Corrywright asked about conference costs – CC replied that ongoing caution will be needed, with

regard to rising costs in all institutions.

8. JBASR Co-ordinating Editor's Report (Suzanne Owen) – SO noted renaming of the journal – DISKUS was felt to be outdated and not subject-specific. Committee wished to keep things simple, hence JBASR. SO noted that the searchable aspect of the online platform was to be improved and that the edition from the Kent conference would be out very soon. SO wants chairs of panels to lead on proposing papers for articles or panels for themed editions, and highlighted that she was open to guest edited editions and invited people to come forwards. SO was coordinating the revamping of the international editorial board. SO stressed the importance of Open Access in the current REF climate. SS confirmed DISKUS will be archived and accessible.

9. Bulletin Editor's Report (David Robertson) – lots of changes in last year or two – electronic format has worked well; colour and hyperlinks now used extensively. No radical changes planned for now following recent digital upgrade. DR urged members to write articles or to offer series of articles, or just ideas for them. DR noted that Teaching and Learning issues, conference reports and departmental news were particularly welcome. DC asked about analytics of readership on open access bulletin - DG responded by stating that this would be introduced in collaboration with the new Web Officer, Claire Wanless.

10. Website and Social Media (Claire Wanless) – CW introduced by SS. CW introduced herself and highlighted social media importance and need to develop profile. New twitter feed – please follow. Welcomed suggestions for development.

11. Religious Studies Project (David Robertson & Chris Cotter) – now sponsored by IAHR as well as BASR – truly international reach now. Taken over Implicit Religion – more critical approach, new vision and editorial direction. Guest editing welcome.

12. Teaching and Learning (Dominic Corrywright) – Teaching Matters in bulletin continues, but need more people to write it for variety. TEF to be addressed in new column soon. DC showed membership website. DC noted that T&L section working well, but wiki section had to be removed after a bot-attack. DC urged members to use and upload or link T&L RS info to CW or DC so that it can be shared within the community. SS to liaise with TRSUK regarding hosting of DISCOURSE in entirety.

13. BASR Teaching Fellowship (Dominic Corrywright) – DC introduced Fellowship. (Paper attached). Jonathan Tuckett asked if it was for work done or to be done – DC confirmed for work done that can be demonstrated to have made a difference for Religious Studies. Details to be delivered in full in next edition of bulletin.

14. BASR Seed Funding (Steven Sutcliffe & Chris Cotter) – SS updated on history project – up to £5000 for freelance researcher to research history of BASR for peer reviewed journal article and internal pamphlet. Project would look at 1967/8 onwards and include oral interviews with senior colleagues, archive resources (including the Ninian Smart Archive at Lancaster and the BASR archive in the Bodlean). The Exec will cost the project fully to split between hours and travel expenses. SS noted that it was important to know our history to argue our case for our approach to the study of religions, so as to be strong and confident about where we come from and where we are going. SS invited comments - DC asked about time schedule. SS answered by Christmas. SG clarified that we are not employing anyone but giving an honorarium for a piece of research. AGM supported the proposal.

15. Mission Statement – Proposed Changes (Steven Sutcliffe). SG reminded attendees that only paid up members could vote on this issue, and that information on this item had previously been sent out over email as required in the constitution. SG explained that a 2/3rds vote was required to carry the motion. SS noted that the Executive Committee were fully in support of the change. SS showed slides – attached for reference. Eileen Barker asked about the inclusion of the terms anthropology and psychological – SS responded that he didn't want a long list as he felt these approaches were covered by the term Social Scientific. DC noted it best to avoid disciplinary titles. George Chryssides, suggested 'regular' bulletin rather than 'bi-annual'. Marion Bowman stated same applies to journal – 'a journal'. There was a general discussion within the meeting, which concluded with SS putting to the AGM acceptance of the motion (to include the minor changes on journal and bulletin wording suggested by Chryssides and Bowman). This was carried unanimously.

16. Logo – Proposed Changes (Claire Wanless & Stephen Gregg). Logo wanted to move away from geography for political reasons. CW engaged a designer, and CW noted that the committee had whittled down to two options – comments were invited before a final decision by the Executive. Angela Jagger noted that people with visual impairments or dyslexic people need to be considered - Marion Bowman noted the OU has very good guide. Steffi Sinclair suggested the design be checked for its distinction from the BSA.

17. BASR Conference 2017 (Suzanne Owen) – date and venue confirmed as Chester 4-6 September 2017. Theme to be decided by November and advertised in Bulletin.

18. Any Other Business – Marion Bowman reminded meeting of EASR conference locations in Belgium, Switzerland, Estonia in next three years. Peggy Morgan noted that she is drafting a piece for the Bulletin on W.S.F. Pickering who has passed away – he was the last research student of BASR's very first president, E.O.James. Eileen Barker updated the meeting on Inform's funding crisis after withdrawal of central funding and asked for ideas and support. BASR Committee agreed to write to the DCLG Minister to support Inform. SS agreed this would be done immediately.

19. Date, time and location of next AGM. Chester Tuesday 5th September 2017.

Meeting ended at 3pm.

BASR TREASURER'S REPORT YEAR ENDING 15th AUGUST 2016

By Christopher R. Cotter, BASR Honorary Treasurer
at University of Wolverhampton, 6th September 2016

General income for the year was £5,072.

Bank Interest: Negligible yet again due to historically low base rates.

Subscriptions: Slight decrease to £3,197. Excludes £120 banked after 15 August 2016. Following notice in Bulletin 128 (May 2016) the BASR no longer accepts cheques or one-off payments for subscriptions, in keeping with point 5 in the BASR Constitution. We are also rationalizing our membership list, and seeking to shift all members on to the correct subscription rates, agreed at the 2011 AGM.

General expenditure for the year: £7,266 – a decrease of £650 on 2014/15, but still higher than a ‘typical’ year due to one-off sponsorship of RSP travel to Erfurt, additional Executive Committee meetings due to committee changeover, and sorting DOI numbers for the journal. Moving to digital-only Bulletin has saved £1,000, with costs currently minimal and mainly covering postage of books for review.

Committee expenses are higher than recent years at £3,302. The increase is largely down to support for the President and Secretary to attend the EASR, representation at meetings of AHA and AHRC, an additional Executive Committee meeting at Lancaster University in October, and a Treasurer handover meeting in September.

Bank charges: bank transfer fees (in this case for paying for a reception at IAHR Erfurt) remain high per-transaction, but amount to a negligible £19. This should be eradicated in future years due to a shift this year to paying IAHR and EASR fees via TransferWise.

Insurance remains in place. Two years’ premiums appear in previous accounting period. 2016-17 premium has been paid, and will appear in next accounting period.

At last year’s conference the Executive Committee agreed to increase support for the Religious Studies Project to £500 per year. An additional £763 was paid to cover RSP travel costs to Erfurt, as agreed by the 2014-15 Executive Committee.

The University of Kent-hosted 2015 BASR Conference was a financial success, bringing in a modest profit of £170.

Bank Accounts: As of August 15th Bank Accounts totalled £26,956, a decrease of £2,193 despite decreased spending. This is largely to be explained by the atypical £2,340 Gift Aid return included in the previous accounts. We can look forward to this again in future.

Dispersal of ‘excess’ funds: The Executive Committee agree that, as a charity, it is not appropriate that we accumulate financial assets ‘for the sake of it’. As such, we propose dispersing £5,000 towards producing a history of the BASR (details to follow), £300 per year plus a free conference place for a minimum of three years for an annual teaching fellowship (details to follow). This still leaves us with ample funds in place for contingency and ongoing business.

Summary of Financial Position: Overall, the finances of the BASR are still very good with adequate reserves to ensure our successful continuation. Our healthy bank balance has allowed the Executive Committee, with the support of the membership body, to continue investment in postgraduate bursaries, collaborative research, conference-support and inter-association networking. Moves to online banking and a digital-only Bulletin, combined with proposals for the dispersal of funds, should contribute to a vibrant BASR in years going forward.

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR
THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS
ACCOUNTS as at 15 AUGUST 2016**

Notes 2015-16 2014-15

Notes 2015-16 2014-15

Balance at 16 August 2015 **29149** 28441

RECEIPTS

Inland Revenue	<i>i</i>	0	2340
Subscriptions	<i>ii</i>	3197	3460
Bulletin insert fees		50	0
RSP		0	0
Bank Interest		29	25

2016 Conference Receipts		150	N/A
2015 Conference Receipts		1646	0
2014 Conference Receipts		N/A	2839
Total		5072	8664

PAYMENTS

Audit Fee		0	0
Printing & Postage Bulletin	<i>iii</i>	-82	-1099
RSP	<i>iv</i>	-1263	-350
Committee Expenses	<i>v</i>	-3302	-2817
Society Subs		-508	-445
Bank Charges		-19	-38
Insurance	<i>vi</i>	0	-762
Journal	<i>vii</i>	-279	N/A
Reconciliation	<i>viii</i>		-5

2016 Conference Expenses		0	N/A
2015 Conference Expenses	<i>ix</i>	-1813	-1250
2014 Conference Expenses		N/A	-1190
Total		-7266	-7956

Balance at 15 August 2016 **26956** 29149

BALANCE SHEET as at 15 August 2016**Cash Funds: Bank Accounts**

Lloyds Current		1348	3847
CAF Cash		11052	10932
CAF Gold		13843	13814
PayPal Holding		688	536
Petty Cash		25	25
Reconciliation		0	-5
Total		26956	29149

FINANCIAL SUMMARY UP TO 15 AUGUST 2016

Balance as at 16th August 2015	29149	Conference 2015	
Total Receipts	5072	Total Receipts	1646
Total Payments	-7266	Total Payments	-3063
Net Receipts/Payments	-2193		
Balance as at 15th August 2016	26956	Deficit/Surplus	x -1417

NOTES TO ACCOUNTS

- i* No Gift Aid return this year. Will happen in blocks.
- ii* Excludes £120 banked post 15 August 2016.
- iii* Savings due to moving to electronic format.
- iv* Increased sponsorship to £500 for 15/16 and 16/17, plus assistance to attend IAHR.
- v* Additional Exec. meeting at Lancaster Uni (Oct 2015), AHA and AHRC meetings, EASR, and Treasurer handover.
- vi* Excludes £394 premium, paid post 15 August 2016.
- vii* Adding DOIs to J-BASR, plus back catalogue.
- viii* Rationalizing a discrepancy between 2014/15 accounts and closing balance.
- ix* Bursaries for BASR 2015, and hosting joint reception at IAHR 2015.
- x* Includes IAHR student travel bursaries and joint reception. BASR 2015 ran at a profit of £170.

Affiliated to the
International Association for the History of Religions and
the European Association for the Study of Religions

features

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT ...IN UKRAINE

Lydmyla
Phylypovych,
National Academy
of Sciences, Kiev

Religious Studies is a relatively young science for Ukraine. It dates back to 1991 when Ukraine got its independence, although the tradition of pondering over national spiritual history was never interrupted. At times it intensified, and in others, diminished, but the interest in religion (speculative or practical) has always persisted. With the radical political changes that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and formation of independent Ukrainian state in the late 1980s/early 1990s, scholars of religion had to re-evaluate the legacy of "over-ideologized" social science which was characterized by predominantly negative assessments of religion, discriminative criticism of the religious worldview, and continuous search for "compromat" (incriminating evidence) on religious citizens. Religion and church had acquired new status in the society, paving the way for the comprehensive study of religious phenomenon, driven by a number of issues.

The first question was - what is Religious Studies? A holistic science with its specific object of research, or an interdisciplinary field of humanities that collects and combines knowledge on religion from different sciences (such as philosophy, history, archaeology, ethnography, etc.)?

The idea of Religious Studies as an interdisciplinary field was encouraged by the fact that research scientists had not clearly distinguished the aspect of human existence in the world which can be qualified as religious. scientific scholars are convinced that religion in its functioning extends beyond the individual life. Religion yields to doctrinal and ritual (symbolic) interpretation; it penetrates into

various spheres of human life, sacralizing them. That's why Religious Studies in its subject is much broader than in its object. This causes the range of disciplines in Religious Studies to expand and to differentiate.

Yet the theological vision of the problem, when the character of being is reduced to the relationship of man with God who acts as something external to the human (often in anthropomorphic aspect), or the notion of human existence as of a suffering being, and that in the search for clarification of the causes for this state concludes the existence of higher determinant, continues to be part of the discourse. According to these scholars, Religious Studies has its own sui generis object of research, which distinguishes this science in the structure of human knowledge. They propose to see the object of Religious Studies as a personal human condition defined as the state of self-determination in the world, accomplishment of oneself on the basis of finding in one's self a connection between the human with the transcendent.

The discussion isn't over yet. The discussion guides the preparation of Religious Studies curricula for universities. Ukrainian Religious Studies is currently experiencing discord in naming representative disciplines, with some claiming certain exclusivity. Others include issues that do not have direct connection with Religious Studies, such as mythology, humanism, esoteric, and so on. The highest success achieved by the Ukrainian scholars of religion is in the field of history of religion in Ukraine, which was distorted during the tsarist

Russian and Soviet times by Orthodox-imperialistic or antireligious approaches. Ukrainian scholars of religion had to master modern theories and methodologies which in Soviet times were available only to a few people. As a result, many Ukrainian historical religious works have appeared, including a ten-volume "History of Religion in Ukraine" (1996-2012) describing the history of pre-Christian religions, the history of Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Greek-Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, new religious movements and churches of the Ukrainian Diaspora.

Today Religious Studies in Ukraine has institutionalized in 3 forms: scientific centers, educational institutions and NGOs. The most powerful and well-known among scientific centers is Department of Religious Studies (DRS) in the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The largest project of the Department of Religious Studies is the ten volume work "History of Religion in Ukraine" (1996-2012), and the 2000-page "Religious Studies in Ukraine. Anthology of research in second half of the twentieth century" published in Moscow in cooperation with the Russian Academy of Public Administration. The DRS also publishes the following periodicals: yearbook "Religious Freedom", quarterly "Ukrainian Religious Studies" and the monthly "Religious Panorama".

The scientists at DRS define the following as a straightforward scientific achievement of the Department: the definition of the object and the subject of Religious Studies, the use of epistemological and anthropological approach to determining the specifics of phenomenon of religion, identification of general laws of Ukrainian and global religious processes, close examination of features of a number of religious organizations' creeds and histories, the study of new religious processes in Ukraine in terms of postmodernism and globalization, the elucidation of a mechanism of religion's free existence in society, determining the correspondence of religious and ethnic factors in social life, etc.

In addition to Department of Religious Studies, other research institutions are involved in the study of religions in Ukraine, including the Institute of Political and Ethnonational Studies of I.F. Kuras, The Institute of Strategic Research and The Institute of Religious Studies under the Lviv Museum of the History of

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s/early 1990s, scholars of religion had to re-evaluate the legacy of "over-ideologized" social science which was characterized by predominantly negative assessments of religion, discriminative criticism of the religious worldview, and continuous search for "compromat" (incriminating evidence) on religious citizens.

Religions. Important research is also carried out at the Kharkiv Inter-Institutional Research Center for New Religions, in Kyiv Center for Humanities and Religious Studies, and at the Center for Religious Studies and International Spiritual Relations under Donetsk Institute of Artificial Intelligence. Religious Studies in Ukraine exists not only as academic science but also as higher education, with the primary purpose of training Religious Studies personnel. Currently, several universities across the country are engaged in training young scholars of religion, including Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University (Philosophy Department), National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" (Humanities Department), Chernivtsi and Carpathian universities (Departments of Philosophy), and at Drahomanov National Pedagogical University (Institute of Philosophic Education and Science). Every year near one hundred young people in Ukraine receive specialists in Religious Studies diplomas. The future of Ukrainian Religious Studies depends on their knowledge, skills, and grasp. Unfortunately, the level of training of future specialists at different higher education institutions varies greatly.

While training in the specialty "Religious Studies", students gain knowledge in the following disciplines of Religious Studies: philosophy of religion, sociology of religion, psychology of religion, phenomenology of

religion, religious ethics, history of philosophy, religious philosophy, the history of freethinking, logic, problems of religion's evolution in modern world and a number of others.

At certain higher education institutions under the non-core humanities departments they used to teach Religious Studies subjects such as philosophy (philosophy of religion), history (the history of world religions), sociology (sociology of religions), cultural studies (history of religions), Asian and African Studies, and others.

An indicator of Religious Studies' development is the creation and growth of professional associations – NGO's, societies, unions. At the present time, several professional associations dealing with the study of religion operate in Ukraine, with the key organization being the Ukrainian Association of Researchers of Religion (UARR), established in 1993. It consolidates over 200 members from almost all regions of the country. Their main objectives include: to organize and to conduct research in the sphere of Religious Studies, to promote professional scholars of religion, and to provide assistance in carrying out various scientific activities. A Center for Religious Information and Freedom (CeRIF) works autonomously under the UARR from the year 2000. Active regional branches of UARR are based in the relevant departments at a number of Ukrainian universities, and since 2001 has had a productive relationship with IAHR.

Established in 2004, the Youth Association for the Study of Religion (YASR) provides consolidation of young scholars of religion in Ukraine. The organization has conducted a series of scientific conferences for

young scientists, and a number of sociological studies of religion and religiosity among youth, and regular international summer schools.

UARR has also established cooperation with many Ukrainian religious organizations, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church, Church of Evangelical Christians, the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Seventh-day Adventist Church, a number of charismatic churches and religious centers of Jehovah's Witnesses, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Neo-Pagan organizations, certain Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim communities, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and others. The Department actively cooperates with them under the framework of Ukrainian Religious Liberty Association.

The brief history and current state of the UARR testifies to the great collective effort of many scholars of different generations who are united by their desire to learn and explore religion as a cultural phenomenon, as a form of spirituality, as an organizational structure, as a system of rituals and symbols, as a style of life of millions of people. We are open to new topics, to new methodologies, to new projects with European research centers and universities.

Read more: Yu. Babinov, L. Fylypovych. 2015. "History of Scientific Study of Religion and Current State of Religious Studies in Ukraine" in Tomáš Bubík, Henryk Hoffmann (eds.), *Studying Religions with the Iron Curtain Closed and Open: The Academic Study of Religion in Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill).

BOOKS RECEIVED

The following titles have been received by the editor and are presently available for review. If interested, please email d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk

Hagiography and Religious Truth, Rico G. Monge, Kerry San Chirio and Rachel J. Smith (eds.), Bloomsbury, 2016.

Buddhism in America, Scott A. Mitchell, Bloomsbury, 2016.

The Problem with Interreligious Dialogue. Muthuraj Swami, Bloomsbury, 2016.

Religion in Hip Hop. Monica Miller, Anthony B. Pinn & Bernard "Bun B" Freeman (eds.), Bloomsbury, 2015.

Humanism: Essays on Race, Religion and Popular Culture. Anthony B. Pinn. Bloomsbury, 2015.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS: TAKING UP YOUR FIRST POSITION

George D.
Chryssides,
Honorary
Research Fellow,
York St. John
University

So you've finally reached the promised land... a few hours' teaching a week, five months' holiday in the summer, and the rest of the time in our ivory towers writing books. ..

So you've finally reached the promised land and secured a post as a lecturer! One's first post, of course, may be temporary, part-time or probationary, but not having to look at the sits. vac., at least in the immediate future, comes as a relief.

From the public's perspective it looks as if lecturers have an easy time – only a few hours' teaching a week, five months' holiday in the summer, and the rest of the time in our ivory towers writing books. Of course, we all know that nothing is further from the truth. A recent survey indicated that the average lecturer worked over 50 or even 60 hours a week, and some of us have done much more than that. Not only is there teaching and preparation, but staff training days, endless meetings, committees, personal tutoring, setting and marking assignments, exam boards, open days, and lots more. You may be asked additionally to obtain some kind of teaching qualification – it is worth one's while to become a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Time management and assertiveness are key skills: there are many unproductive chores in academia, and it is not easy to steer a course between being disobliging and over-enthusiastic. It is probably best to avoid becoming the department's fire marshal or first-aider: someone has to do it, but does it have to be you in your first year? Consider where your strengths lie, what you can best contribute to the department's teaching and research, and what will enhance your CV for the future.

If you have just finished your Ph.D., you have probably been working as an individual researcher on a very specific topic. You are now part of a team, whose aim is to obtain the best possible ratings for research, teaching excellence, and attracting funding. A portfolio of modules has to be taught, and you may be asked to teach topics that do not particularly appeal to you, or with which you are less confident. Versatility is needed, and there have certainly been occasions in my own career when I have only been a page or two ahead of the students.

If the workload seems daunting, it is helpful to find someone who can act as a mentor. Some institutions have an official mentoring system but, if not, it is a good idea to find someone more senior – either inside or outside the institution – from whom you can seek guidance when needed (and this need not be a formal arrangement). A colleague who has taught your assigned modules already may be able to provide materials such as notes or PowerPoints. Obviously, you will want to develop your own materials, but these can form a springboard, or provide usable class tasks and discussion topics.

Getting to know the local religious communities should be a priority. As the traditional "world religions paradigm" gives way to an emphasis on "lived religion", field visits and informant testimony are increasingly likely to become key components in many taught modules. Students sometimes need to learn to appreciate their importance: when I first arrived at Wolverhampton I assumed that students

would welcome a visit a local gurdwara, only to find that six out of a class of 25 turned up. After this embarrassing experience, I learned to build field work into assessments. Asking students to keep and submit a journal, or setting an assignment that entails comparing a textbook version of a religion with its lived expression, ensures attendance and active participation in visits. It also helps to avoid plagiarism, and essay mills cannot readily cope with local information.

Most students will come to the study of religion, having been brought up with the World Religions Paradigm and expect to learn about the “big six” so-called “world religions”. Finding themselves introduced to a large dose of abstract theoretical material can come as an unwelcome discovery. Persuading them that theory is indispensable is a challenge even for the experienced teacher. In this regard, I would thoroughly recommend Christopher Cotter and David G. Robertson’s (2016) anthology *After World Religions*, whose contributors offer some valuable suggestions for teaching and learning.

New staff should bring fresh ideas and innovations. However, being part of an academic community also involves implementing existing practices and procedures, and substantial pedagogical innovations need the prior approval of a validation committee. This takes time. Meanwhile, existing validation documents should always be consulted and implemented before preparing a class programme. Official policy rather than individual discretion should also be followed for submission of late work, extenuating circumstances, requests to have assignments remarked, or suspected plagiarism. Drawing on agreed practice ensures fairness and efficiency.

Students are always asked to provide feedback on their learning experience through module evaluation, and the most frequent comment in my own experience has been that they want more help with assignments. However, higher education is about independent learning, and undue help militates against this. I reluctantly allow students to show me a proposed essay outline, and a sample paragraph, but no more. I never discuss likely grades, and always point out that the onus is on them to decide whether their submission is fit for purpose. Otherwise, they may blame me for disappointing results.

When students want one-to-one tuition, should we have an open door policy, or should students book appointments? Again, it is best to follow departmental practice. In a shared office, colleagues may not welcome students tramping in and out at any time of the day. Students sometimes send us “urgent” emails at weekends, or request extra help during vacation time. Perhaps other colleagues are more obliging, but I don’t think students should expect us to be an emergency service or allow vacation time to be eroded, and I think most of us have learned to set our email to auto-response during our annual leave.

Your institution will have other student support in addition to academic staff, so it is best to refer students to counsellors when needed, or to study skills specialists if they have generic problems such as written expression. They should be encouraged to make good use of subject librarians: I have always found them an invaluable source of help to students, and I have usually asked them to do a session for first year students and those who are doing research methods modules. For students with special needs, there may well be a disability officer who can provide support. Don’t try to do it all yourself!

How long should you stay in your first post? It is often said that one should not be thinking of one’s second job on taking up one’s first. Nevertheless, it is useful to take stock of the facilities your new institution offers, the importance (or unimportance) it attaches to the study of religion, the support for conference attendance, and its reputation for teaching and research. Don’t worry, though, if you have reservations about your line manager – with continual institutional restructuring, you will almost certainly have a different one within a couple of years!

A good policy is to aim for survival in one’s year – after that one can strive towards improvement and career development. Having attained survival, one might seek opportunities for reviewing and refereeing manuscripts, research supervision, and external examining. Once you acquire a reputation in your specialist field, then more senior colleagues are likely to pass work your way – not necessarily because they are too busy, but because you have gained recognition.

Good luck!

TEACHING MATTERS: USING PODCASTS IN TUTORIALS

David G.
Robertson,
Religious
Studies Project

It is perhaps not surprising that as one of the founding editors of the Religious Studies Project that I have a great interest in using technology to improve pedagogy. As Mark Prensky asserts, "Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach' (2001, 1); our students are "digital natives" who have grown up with digital communications technologies, yet most of the teachers are "digital immigrants", and therefore, the academy has been slow to utilise these technologies to their full potential. This dialectical model is, as many have noted, an oversimplification, yet it is nevertheless the case we must attempt to use emergent technologies in our pedagogy if we are to engage our students fully. Mobile technologies, in particular, offer some very tangible pedagogical advantages, including increased accessibility, collaboration and reflexivity (Athanasopoulos 2008), although there are potential pitfalls also. This piece concerns my own experiments with one such emergent technology - podcasting.

There is no need to go into the technological detail and history of podcasting here (see Ractham and Zhang 2006; Mugwanya et al 2011). For our purposes, we can understand a podcast as "audio content available on the Internet that can be automatically delivered to your computer or MP3 player" (Geoghegan and Klass 2005, 5), although video content is becoming increasingly common. Such material may then be listened to on computers, tablets and phones, meaning it can be interacted with in a wider range of situations than written material. Podcasts can also have benefits for students with learning disabilities.

Five years ago, when Chris Cotter and I founded The Religious Studies Project (RSP), we felt there was a need for introductions to the fundamental ideas of the field that were reliable, but accessible. Most tutorial readings are either journal articles or book

chapters, but these can be over-long, often assume background knowledge of too high a level, and book chapters often suffer by lacking the theoretical context of the work as a whole. Encyclopedia entries, however, generally lack the depth to provoke meaningful discussion. The RSP set out to bridge that gap.

A number of universities have used RSP podcasts in teaching and learning in a variety of ways (see Tsonis et al 2014 for details). Here, though, I want to specifically describe using a podcast as a primary text for tutorial groups. Although RSP podcasts have been set as additional readings at Edinburgh in the past, I was one of four lecturers involved in the planning of the course "Lived Religion" in 2014-15, and was able to set an RSP podcast as the primary text. My questions were, first, How would students respond to the different format? How was the length, and level of discussion? In what ways was it more or less useful than a traditional reading? What could be improved? I asked my colleagues who were running other tutorials to feed back to me, and the results were illuminating and somewhat surprising.

The students unanimously enjoyed the format, with some expressing that they found a podcast easier to fit into their schedule than a traditional reading. Many said they found the ideas easier to understand when they heard them explained by the academic personally. It was also noted that this humanised the academic, which also helps to level out differences of perceived status. Tutors reported that the discussion was just as engaged and animated as at other times.

Predictably, there were issues with technology. A handful of students emailed to say that they couldn't get the link in the syllabus to work. It did, and I checked several times, but this was time consuming for myself and the students. This suggests to me that the assumption that all students are necessarily

digitally fluent is perhaps incorrect. We also need to make sure the file is available as easily as possible - for example, the URL given on the prospectus worked well when the prospectus was accessed electronically, but less so when on paper.

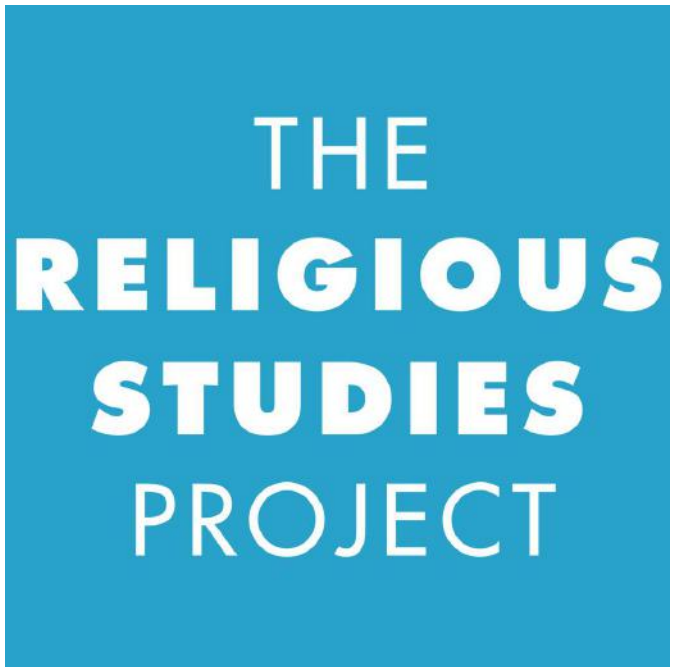
Surprising, however, was that almost all of the students spelled the names of the various scholars discussed wrongly in their tutorial reports, suggesting that few made the effort to check. This is worrying, as it suggests they were listening uncritically (though that is often the case with traditional readings also), and that they were not using the time saved to research further. More constructively, however, it underlined that we need to put all of this material with the podcast, in the form of links to the relevant people's institutional pages or publications.

My conclusion, therefore, was that there is a place for using podcasts in the classroom, but with caveats. I suggest that they are particularly useful for first and second year students, as they allow complex ideas to be explained in a clear, personable and concise way, making foundational concepts more accessible for students with a wide range of challenges. For honours level students, however, they are best given as additional material, and to speed up research whenever they come across a concept, methodology or scholar that they are otherwise unfamiliar. For the format to work best for both students and teachers, thought needs to be given to ensuring access is easy, and that additional material is provided. As T&L interfaces inexorably move online, I feel that there will increasingly be a place for podcasts alongside traditional readings.

Bibliography

Altman, Michael J. 2015. "Podcasting Religious Studies", in *Religion* 45.4, 573-584.

Athanasopoulos, Constantinos. 2008. "e-Learning Innovations and Innovative Practice" in *Discourse* 7.2, 221 - 234. At http://www.basr.ac.uk/trs_resources/pubs_and_resources/discourse/DiscourseArticles/28.htm



Geoghengan, Michael W. and Dan Klass. 2005. *Podcast Solutions: The Complete Guide to Podcasting*. Berkeley, CA: Friends of ED.

Ractham, Peter and Xuesong Zhang, "Podcasting in Academia", at http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221644207_Podcasting_in_academia_a_new_knowledge_management_paradigm_within_academic_settings

Mugwanya, Raymond, Gary Marsden and Richard Boateng. 2011. "A preliminary study of podcasting in developing higher education institutions: A South African case", in *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*, 13.3, 268-285. At <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13287261111164853>

Prensky, Marc. 2001. 'Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants', In *On the Horizon* 9.5, 1-6. At <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>

Tsonis, Jack, Christopher Cotter and David Robertson. 2014. "The Religious Studies Project in Teaching and Learning" in *The Bulletin of the British Association for the Study of Religions* 124 (May 2014), 11-12. At http://basr.a.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BULLETIN_124.pdf

conferences

BASR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016,
UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON,
5-7 SEPTEMBER 2016

Appropriately for the theme of Religion Beyond the Textbook, the BASR 2016 opened with George Chrissydes taking look at the rich and diverse mix that makes up religious Wolverhampton. Religion is an integral element of the city, and the forms and practices it takes here offer broad scope for scholars of religion. From the establishment of its first Christian church in the tenth century, to the multi-religious make-up of the 21st century the city offers a view of religious movement and change. As different religious communities have established themselves, building and converting existing buildings to their needs they have needed to relate to other communities already present. The architecture and locations of these sites is thus of interest regarding of intra- and inter-religious relations.

From this beginning the conference theme was thoroughly explored in panels challenging and critiquing traditional approaches on everything from research ethics and methodology to material religion and marriage. Graham Harvey's open roundtable on Religion and the Senses gave rise to interesting discussions about the nature of physicality and sensory experience, beyond only 'the five senses', in religion. Similar challenges to concepts of materiality were posed in the panel Material Religion: Creativity, Space, and Perspectives in the making of Religion. The specific foci of the different papers were distinct, with Amy Whitehead asking how the 'objects' involved in religious practice might be in relationship with the religious worshipper; Marion Bowman considering the material culture manifestations of a pilgrimage shrine in the context of veneration of a vernacular figure; and George



Chrissydes exploring the complex connections between Jehovah's Witnesses and the land of Israel, which is both significant and not sacred, at least in the ways such a concept is usually presented. The papers connected with place and/or artefact as important contributors to religiosity, and located religious people in relational and co-constructed worlds that are physical and actual rather than conceptual or symbolic.

A different perspective on the conference theme was offered by the Technology and Religious Change panel, which considered religious ideas in the context of contemporary technology. Vivian Asimos exploring the contemporary construction of mythology on the internet and Gurinder Singh Mann describing new ways for religious communities to encounter and connect with sacred relics. Áine Warren's consideration of the discourses surrounding contemporary pagan relationships with the Morrigan completed this panel, with reflections on how boundaries between online and offline are blurred by pagan e-communities. This panel explored the relationship between the virtual world, and the ways it serves different communities and the physical and socio-cultural worlds in which the

creators and users of such virtualities live.

Martin Stringer delivered this year's keynote, *Beyond Diversity: Mapping a Future for Religious Studies*. This paper explored and questioned the role of religious studies and how as academics we deal with 'difference' in the study of religion. At the core of Stringer's discussion was how we conceptualise and approach about our subject matter. He went on to describe the difficulties we face when essentialising religions and questioned whether a discourse of difference would be a better way to deal with the study of religions. Stringer then compared the discourse of difference to a discourse of diversity and showed how we can transition from one to another as feminist writer Sarah Green (2002) has done in her work on women in cities. Stringer outlined the conceptual differences in a discourse of difference versus a discourse of diversity and ultimately argued for a discourse of diversity, concluding that there is not one thing that we would want to call religion. Stringer argues that the world religions paradigm creates boundaries and essentialises them and as a result they become single entities which are then easily described and reducible to a variety of variables. A discourse that foregrounds diversity would promote the continual construction and reconstruction of categories in order to attend to the everyday lived reality of religion.

The panel on Health and Wellbeing hosted a diverse range of papers from considering the relationship between AA programmes and religion to non-religious ritual alternatives. Wendy Dossett from the University of Chester opened the panel with a paper on the Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) programme and the limitations of applying the label, 'spiritual but not religious', to this group. Dossett considered why the SBNR label can be problematic as it misses both theistic and atheistic elements that might be meaningful for some people. Drawing on qualitative data from a research project amongst contemporary members of AA, Dossett concludes that the identity and beliefs of AA members cannot be understood by one single classification and it would be wise to avoid the 'blanketing' effect of the SBNR category when trying to understand such phenomena.

The Religion and Activism panel featured Paul Tremlett's work which explored the Occupy Democracy movements, heritage wardens in

parliament square and the destruction of protest objects. The case study allowed Tremlett to consider the theoretical implications of protest objects as "agents" and to think about the relationships between human/non-human actors.

In the Bodily Innovations in Religious Practice panel, Alison Robertson and Theo Wildcroft gave papers accompanied by an intriguing visual backdrop, highlighting the visceral nature of their subject matter. Through imagery, poetic delivery, and startling case studies of personal trauma and BDSM practice, the researchers encouraged their audience to reconsider how pain can be experienced, endured and enjoyed. Both papers also raised interesting questions about the insider/outsider positions of researchers and the implications of researching physical, personal pain experience. Finally, the papers posed questions about boundaries of what are considered "religious" or pain experiences. By highlighting the ways pain can be enjoyed and endured the authors noted that pain can have existential and moral consequences and as such makes it a stimulating focus for religious studies scholars.

Any BASR conference held in Wolverhampton could hardly be complete without a trip to one of its living religious sites, and George Chryssides kindly arranged a visit to the local Universal Divine Temple of Ek Niwas. After arriving at the address on the busy Dudley Road and walking into the foyer area we removed our shoes, washed our hands, and adorned head coverings. The main hall was silent except for the recorded sounds of a tranquil countryside, and the noises from the artificial waterfalls that fed into the stream on the far side. We were warmly welcomed by the Temple's founder, referred to respectfully as 'Babaji', meaning 'father', and invited to look around. There were many stuffed animals and birds, and many colourful statues and symbols associated with different religious traditions, including Jesus, Guru Nanak, the Buddha, and Islam. All these come together within the Ek Niwas Temple – meaning "one dwelling" – of the tradition of Balak Nath, a medieval Indian holy man and ascetic. Believed to have defied death through meditation, it was under his guidance and communications that Babaji felt compelled to set up the Temple of the Dudley Road. Besides all the food for thought the conference and visit provided, we were shown first-hand the functional generosity of the Temple when

we sat for savoury samosas, with sweet laddoo, and barfi. Welcoming of all traditions and persons, both in its beliefs and very much its communal practices, it was easy to see how this vibrant site attracts hundreds of people coming weekly, both local and distant, from Leeds and beyond.

We would like to thank the BASR Executive

Committee, and all BASR members, for the bursaries which enabled us to attend the conference.

Katie Aston, Eleanor Course, Alison Robertson,
Nick Toseland, and Rachael Shillitoe



EASR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016/ IAHR SPECIAL CONFERENCE, HELSINKI, FINLAND, 28 JUNE – 1 JULY 2016

Relocating religion

The annual EASR conference took place in Helsinki from 28th of June to 1st of July 2016, right around the time of the Nordic yötön yö when sun barely sets. The theme of the conference was ‘relocating religion’, a broad idea that lends itself to all kinds of topics and points of view. The conference website’s elaboration on the theme points out that what the concept ‘religion’ has meant has varied throughout history, and as the conference organisers put it:

“Due to the open, fragile, and inherently negotiable nature of the category of ‘religion’, rigid definitions produce simplistic and distorted representations of the complexities involved in the formation of religious phenomena. At the same time, attempts to define and redefine religion in various contexts are themselves an important topic of research.”

The conference venue at the University of Helsinki was compact and reasonably easy to navigate. Everything was organised well and sessions usually had enough time for discussion. The spread of topics in panel discussions was impressive, covering various traditions, communities, times, spaces, and theoretical approaches. The following report is, as

usual, only a very small selection of all the interesting themes that were discussed during the conference, compiled from the experiences of three RSP reporters.

Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony was organised in the great hall of the University of Helsinki main building. A kind of relocation of religion was presented when shaman Susanna Aarnio performed a ritual song Karhun synty (the birth of the Bear). Relocation of religion here as well: elements of old (folk) tradition performed in the great hall of Academia, under the prestigious marble noses of monarchs.

The conference was opened by Professor Tuula Sakaranaho. Chancellor Thomas Wilhelmsson welcomed the conference participants on behalf of the host university. Other guest speakers were Einar Johanssen (president of the EASR), Tim Jensen (president of the IAHR), and Minister of State Elisabeth Rehn.

It was particularly interesting to hear Elisabeth Rehn speak. Rehn is renowned for her political career and work for human rights, being for example. She is e.g. the former minister of defence of Finland. Her involvement in international politics and in the UN in particular has led her to work on the resolution of conflicts in Bosnia and Liberia.

Rehn's take on religion was very pragmatic. As a politician she has dealt with religion as a factor in serious conflicts. She has seen that religious discourse can create destructive divisions but also help overcome boundaries. Rehn took up an example from the Liberia where women, Muslim and Christian alike, started a silent revolution to end the civil war. She referred to this by wishing that academics would help to find a 'peaceful location' to religion.

Why no religion is the new religion

The opening ceremony was followed by the first keynote lecture by Linda Woodhead. She talked about the 'Rise of the nones', a very striking relocation of religion in the religious landscape in the UK. There those who have no religious affiliation have become the new majority. In other words, no religion is the new normal. Woodhead described the nones and discussed some reasons to why this development has taken place in the UK while it has been different in other contexts. Woodhead contrasted the situation with the US, where having no religious affiliation is strongly associated with Democratic political views. In the UK however, the 'nones' come from across the political range. Further contrasting the UK with Denmark, Woodhead argued that while being a church member still is part of 'Danishness' in Denmark, it has ceased to be a part of national identity in the UK.

Nones do not want a label at all, and they often reject the term secular as well. They are young, educated, white British. They hold liberal values when it comes to individual morals, but do not favour the terms secular or atheist when it comes to belief in god. They do seem to avoid religious institutions though, and religiosity is expressed in individual terms. What is interesting is that class, education, gender, geographical location and political views do not have an effect. The data was interesting, but many of the points Woodhead raised were not exactly new. The data presented gives rise to many questions, and it will be interesting to see, what comes next from this research on British religious demographics.

Imageries and Rituals of Modern Deaths (I)

"There are no Atheists in foxholes". This rather worn-out (and questionable) euphemism springs to mind when I think of the theme of the session. The

underlying idea of the saying is that fear of death will turn anyone religious or at least make them wish for some higher power. On a more general level, death has often been associated with religion – religious thinking, ideas of what comes after death, and religious ritual.

This session brought up some interesting examples of how people in contemporary settings deal with death. It became clear that traditional institutional religion does not necessarily enter the lives of those terminally ill, for example. The ways of making sense of death and greaving are also taking on different forms. Maija Butters presented a paper titled 'Aesthetic imageries and metaphysical meaning-making'. The paper was based on her fieldwork in Finland, in one hospice and one cancer ward, where she had interviewed many terminally ill patients. Butters paid special attention to how they used aesthetic imagery and metaphysical thinking in making sense of the approaching death. According to Butters, traditional religious concepts often didn't enter the language people used. Rather, they would draw from music, poetry, and nature. Butters suggested that aesthetic imagery and experience can help people orientate themselves and in that way function 'much as religion and ritual'.

Professor Jens Schlieter discussed Buddhist hospices and the way the Tibetan Book of the Dead interacts with Western palliative care practises. He noted that while what he calls "death awareness discourse" has spread in the West, actual Buddhist hospices have not been established. According to Schlieter, this is due to the contradiction with the institutional framework regarding dying in Western healthcare. It is also because the Buddhist converts in the West are still reasonably young, and they are often quite loosely associated with Buddhist institutional framework.

In her paper 'Relocating the dead: Ritualising continuing bonds in the Netherlands' Brenda Mathijssen discussed the way Dutch people manage the bonds between the living and the dead. This was an interesting exploration of how old thoughts of afterlife have become vague and various. Mathijssen described how people organised bonds with their loved ones passed away through special objects that can be very concretely relocated in different spaces: a memento pendant could give comfort while being worn, but it could also be placed on a bookshelf to

create a certain amount of distance from the person who has passed away.

The fourth paper in the session was presented by Suvi Saarelainen, who has studied young adults suffering from cancer using autobiographical interviews. Saarelainen's research showed that being diagnosed with cancer affected the respondents' views on death in different ways. Some started seeing death as a natural part of life, while others found the courage to change the course of their life. Others were too frightened by the experience to discuss future at all.

The panel was in good balance and the four papers were a good combination. They offered an interesting view on the many ways to approach death as a lived reality in contemporary societies.

Shia Muslim communities in Europe (I): Local and transnational dimensions and Shia Muslim communities in Europe (II): Being a minority within a minority

A double panel session was organised on Shia Muslim communities in Europe. Both parts offered a lively discussion. In the first part, Liyakat Takim discussed legal issues and jurisprudence (Fiqh) presented a really interesting paper on Shi'ism in the diaspora, with specific reference to legal matters and jurisprudence (Fiqh). He argued the need for a 'new theology' emerging from the diaspora. Robert Langer and Benjamin Weineck presented on Shia in the German context, using the models drawing on notions of 'community of practice' and 'situated learning'. Finally Iman Lechkar's closing paper presented her work on Shia focused communities in Brussels, where she argued; where that there is a foregrounding of human rights and discourses, and ideas of citizenship issues are of primary importance (a particular concern for Shia communities). These papers all worked fitted very well together, and but the discussion afterwards discussion that followed was especially rich and enjoyable (which had plenty of time) was fantastic.

The latter part of the session with the subtopic "Being a minority within a minority" took place the next morning with papers by Chris Heinold and Sufyan Abid, with Zahra Ali's paper was presented in absentia by Yafa Shanneik. The session was very

much a continuation from of the previous evening's session. Heinold's presented a paper on the creation of novel ethnogeographies in the global city context, drew on the papers from the previous session. and The session was very much a continuation from the previous evening. Sufyan Abid presented work used on the South Asian Shia communities in the UK (especially in London), to drawing out examine ideas of an alternative modernity and the complexities of class and religiosity in the context of a modern city like London. Again, the discussion which followed this session was informative, and continued into the coffee area despite there being adequate session time! The discussion was again lively, even continuing into the coffee break which followed.

Interreligious Dialogue: Topics, Places, People

'Interfaith' or 'interreligious' groups are often accorded little attention by social scientists of religion, in spite of their increasing influence on public discourse on 'religion' and their developing ties with governments. This is a topic too important to be left to theologians and the panel on 'interreligious' dialogue was certainly a step in the right direction. Nelly Caroline Schubert discussed the tensions that often exist between the local ('micro') and regional or national ('macro') interfaith groups. Interestingly for scholars concerned with the rhetorical use of categories, tensions between these groups even led one local group re-defining themselves as 'inter-ethnic' to continue to secure funding under national guidelines.

Mehmet Kalander, drawing on Erving Goffman's frame approach discussed the ways in which spaces were utilised and impacted interfaith relations in Hamburg. The increasing use of 'secular' rather than 'religious' public spaces is also good indication of their increasing established status in civil society. However, these spaces have their own established status, the 'neutral' and 'impartial' cultural space of the art gallery and the politically managed and civic space of Hamburg Town Hall, where politicians still act as its custodians.

Marius Van Hoogstraten took a more philosophical approach, drawing on Jacques Derrida and Homi K. Bhabha to problematise the often taken for granted 'inter' of 'interfaith', which risks not only reifying religions but also postulating some kind of 'no-man's

land' between. Von Hoogstraten argued that while there was in many ways no 'inter', in another sense there is only 'inter'. Returning to more empirical ground, Gritt Klinkhammer and Anna Numaier used data from their study of interfaith participants in Germany to question the notion that interfaith relations can be assumed to form some kind of natural outgrowth of living in a religiously plural society, especially for the majority. They point out that for some Christian participants, regular contact with members of other religions often began with interfaith relations rather than preceding it. Some of their Muslim informants showed a particular tendency to anticipate questions and responses when interviewed about contentious issues such as the Hijab, revealing the power imbalance between minority and majority participants.

Professor Giovanni Filoramo: Relocating religion as a historiographical task. Aims and perspectives

The keynote on Thursday was provided by Professor Giovanni Filoramo and discussed the importance of historiography for the study of religion.

Unfortunately, Professor Filoramo was unable to attend in person. This was a shame as it allowed no real space for discussion. Judging from the high quality of the paper discussion would have been illuminating. Thankfully Marco Pasi was able to read the paper on Filoramo's behalf.

Filoramo acknowledged that while historiography itself has often been dominated by Christian narratives and later incorporated into national and imperial projects, it is also in a good position to unpick and trace these threads. Its archaeological approach can highlight lapses in memory, as well reveal the long shadows cast by culturally specific conceptions. For example, the influence of Patristic diatribes against Roman Paganism on Europeans' accounts of Native American practices or Medieval classifications of heresies influence on the scholarly construction of 'Gnosticism'. Two questions were raised which a study of the historiography of Religious Studies could address; are we simply constructing 'religion', through our studies, or is religion an 'object as such'? Interesting questions, and solid proposed method for exploration.

Reconsidering the Durkheimian notion of the 'sacred'

The first section of this panel had papers by Kim

Knott and Matthew Francis, the second by Jere Kyyrö and Tuomas Äystö. Francis began the session with a detailed and engaging discussion of items (flags) and non-negotiable beliefs/idea/values which could be considered as sacred. Is religion, as Tony Blair would describe it, inherently good? Matthew Francis discussed the ways in which the category 'sacred' – things held inviolable and non-negotiable can be used to categorise both 'religious' and 'non-religious' extremist and violent groups. Francis demonstrated how both Islamist and white supremacist groups could be analysed through categories of: sacred group i.e. Muslims, white Britons, sacred places i.e. Mecca, the Cenotaph and sacred systems i.e. Shari'a and democracy. He noted that the difference between 'extremist' and other groups appears to be in their use of language, though I would maintain that care must be taken to circumscribe such a politically loaded (and all too useful) category of 'extremism'.

Knott continued the session by giving a complex but compelling paper on the use of cognitive linguistics and spatial metaphors in looking beyond 'direct references to the sacred'. She highlighted the use of spatial language by three documents written in the aftermath of September the 11th, including a letter by 60 American intellectuals defending the US foreign policy in the Middle East, a response piece by 156 Saudi scholars critiquing US foreign policy and a response from representatives of Al Qaeda. All three documents project a sense of bounded identity which they maintain a right to defend, though the first two were interested in linkages, 'bridging' divides and opening up 'channels' of communication. Knott argued that by simply listening to what people say, how they describe their world, we can better understand their ideas of the sacred.

In the second part of the session, Jere Kyyrö discussed the ways in which a historical personage, Marshall G. Mannerheim for some a Finnish national sacred icon, could reveal the tension between sacralised value systems according to media discussions of representations of his life. Mannerheim is considered a WW2 hero but remains controversial because of atrocities committed against the 'Reds' during the Finnish civil-war. Critical depictions of Mannerheim particularly provoked the nationalistic tabloid-press but for those whose sacred value system is multiculturalism and pluralism, the figure of Mannerheim was used

rather differently, another film project involving a Kenyan cast was used to link this value system with a figure of national collective memory.

Tuomas Äystö discussed how the Finnish courts negotiate sacred value systems found among different sections of the population, with the introduction of legislation introduced in 1999 outlawing religious hate speech. This led to the arrest of True Finn MEP Jussi Hala'aho in 2012 after he declared the Prophet Muhammad to be a paedophile on his blog, which demonstrated the clash of sacral value systems in a plural society: between the sacred figure of the Prophet and the sacred value of free speech. However, for the court the paramount sacred would appear to be the maintenance of public order.

The closing words of the conference were delivered by Morny Joy. Joy delivered an insightful discussion looking back over the week's papers. She pointed to the interdisciplinary richness of the field of Study of Religions and pointed out that at her first EASR in Rome in 1990 there was a single panel on women in religion (the second ever such panel), today things are very different. Joy pointed to the number of young scholars present as a reason to be hopeful for the development of this field, and reminded us all present to bear our ethical responsibilities as researchers in mind.

Hanna Lehtinen, Liam Sutherland and Chris Heinhold

title which allowed ample scope for contributors. Presentations spanned esotericism, the "old new" religions, new expressions of Christianity, and new organisations in Japan, Taiwan, China, Vietnam, and Korea. Perhaps surprisingly, there was only one presentation relating to Islam and, predictably, new Korean movements were well represented.

It is not possible to summarise over 60 presentations in a short report, but the cyber-proceedings are accessible online at www.cesnur.org/2016/daejin-cyberpro.htm. Of particular interest was the presence of leaders of the Vietnamese Cao Dai religion, which is highly visible in Vietnam, but receives relatively little coverage in conferences. Also noteworthy was a presentation on Falun Gong, which argued that the movement had received unduly sympathetic media treatment and stood in opposition to the Chinese government.

CESNUR's annual conference is usually followed by field visits, which are equally informative for understanding NRMs. On the first day after the conference proceedings, we visited Sun Myung Moon's Cheonpyung Headquarters of the Family Federation for Modern Peace and Unification (better known as the Unification Church). I had heard rumours that there was a small exhibition which included some of Moon's discarded Snickers and biscuit wrappers as well as a disused Coca-Cola can – I can now confirm that this rumour is indeed true! Day Two brought us to the Yeosu Headquarters of the Daesoonjinrihoe – Korea's largest NRM. Access to the

CENTER FOR STUDIES ON NEW RELIGIONS (CESNUR) – ANNUAL CONFERENCE, DAEJIN, SOUTH KOREA, 5-7 JULY 2016.

Some 150 attendees gathered at Daejin University, South Korea, for this year's Annual conference. CESNUR is distinctive in providing a meeting ground for academics, who formed the greater part of the gathering, and exponents of new religious movements (NRMs).

The overarching theme was "Religious Movements in a Globalised World: Korea, Asia, and Beyond" – a very broad



temple is only allowed to visitors who wear traditional Korean costume, which the organisers had enterprising the organised on our behalf. On the final day the Iksan Headquarters of Won Buddhism was the venue – unusually, a non-iconic form of Buddhism, which incorporates elements of Christianity and other Korean traditions.

Massimo Introvigne, CESNUR's Director, has written a fuller account of the event at www.cesnur.org/2016/daejin_overview.htm, and for those who would like to attend next year's conference, it takes place in Jerusalem, and the provisional dates are 3-5 July 2017.

George D. Chryssides
York St John University

"YOGA DARŚANA, YOGA SĀDHANA"
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE,
KRAKÓW, 19TH-21ST MAY 2016
WWW.YDYS.CONFER.UJ.EDU.PL

Every few years the international academic community gathers for a conference specifically about the study of yoga. This one was organised by Jagiellonian University (Krakow) and the UK-based Modern Yoga Research group. As these events are relatively rare, and the scholarly community they serve small and truly international in flavour, the conference started with a great deal of excitement, and felt very friendly and supportive. The UK was well-represented, with many papers from SOAS and members of the Modern Yoga Research group in particular, but also James Madaio from the University of Manchester and Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, Suzanne Newcombe from Inform and LSE, and indeed myself. Most of the sessions were filmed, and will hopefully be shared widely, not least allowing attendees to catch papers they regret missing in person.

The organisers had chosen to divide the three days according to their three sub-themes: traditions, transmissions and transformations, grouping the historic and contemporary papers to either end of the schedule. Whilst this was thematically useful, it did leave those of us with specific interests with a number of timetabling clashes, as most of the

contemporary research was presented on the same day, in parallel sessions. However, the field of yoga studies is so very diverse in both subject and approach, creating a coherent structure in itself must be an appreciably difficult task that was admirably handled.

And so on day one, we were treated to new perspectives on major and more obscure yoga texts, including the Patanjali Sutras, the Mahabharata, the Kirataparvan, the Sivadharmottara and the Matangapramesvaratantra. There were examinations of historical influences on modern practice, such as Jainism, East Asian Buddhism and old Javanese texts. Papers were delivered on the development of devata yoga, Samkhya yoga, Burmese mindfulness, the development of kundalini, and guru-induced Samadhi. Among those offerings at the conference from the Hatha Yoga Project, was Daniela Bevilacqua's ethnographic paper on modern sadhus. And a lively keynote confronted issues of authorship and dating (and even naming) of the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, by Michel Angot and Philipp Maas – so lively in fact, that extra time was dedicated on the last day for a rematch, although of course, no final conclusions were reached.

Even given the recent turn to research that moves beyond the textual discussion of yoga, on the second day there were an impressive number of papers and research projects under discussion into more visual representations of yoga, including sculpted reliefs of non-seated asanas at Hampi, paintings of asanas from Rajasthan, and early Hungarian images of yoga. The keynote session was a much-anticipated update from the ERC funded Hatha Yoga Project, in which Jim Mallinson shared pre-15th Century images and Jason Birch post-15th Century images specifically of inverted asanas, as they develop from simple methods to stay upside down as a method of practicing austerities, to detailed and diverse medieval mudras for the reversal of energy flows, and increasing cultivation rather than mortification of the body. Further papers discussed philosophical and metaphysical aspects of yoga, from Vedanta and gnosis, to death portents, the Baul tradition's embrace of material existence, Tantric metaphysics, European esotericism, and the evolving meaning of the term 'yoga' itself.

There were two interesting case studies tracing modern translations of older practices: one by

Raphael Voix on the recent and deliberate invention of Loknath Yoga within the diaspora in South America, and its self-mythologisation via association with a 19th Century guru. In the second, Sravana Borkatakya-Varma compared the vastly different kundalini yoga practices and communities in India and the US respectively, with particular reference to levels of secrecy and modes of transmission, but with also very different aims and outcomes. There was an entire panel on the live and ongoing politicisation of yoga in Turkey, which gained in importance with the worrying knowledge that the scholars presenting are themselves under significant governmental surveillance.

Elsewhere, some of the diversity of European engagements with yoga was in evidence, from the USSR, Germany and Finland, and there were two papers on Iyengar yoga: one from Matylda Ciołkosz who was also conducting the vital and slightly herculean task of administering the conference proceedings. In the evening there was a performance art piece on encounters with Tantra, in spoken word and soundscape, which delighted some but not others. It was at the end of a long and stimulating day, and the city of Krakow itself was in many ways spectacular enough; green and welcoming on a warm Spring evening.

Day three was shorter, beginning with a particularly useful review of recent yoga research by Elizabeth de Michelis, who synthesised the field into the following trends: psychomatic and medical studies; practice-based research and pedagogy; and more traditional humanities and social science research. Some work is being done to combine contemplative studies of disciplines with studies through disciplines – bringing contemplative awareness into the academy itself. This is taking place especially at the three MAs dedicated to Yoga Studies: in London, Venice and Los Angeles, who combine a variety of pedagogical approaches, content, and more personalised dissertations. We also have two recent successes in major ERC grants: for the aforementioned Hatha Yoga Project and the AyurYoga Project, led by Dagmar Wujastyk, on which Suzanne Newcombe also presented at the conference.

All three leaders of the MAs (Christopher Chapple, Ulrich Pagel and Federico Squarcini) were included with Dagmar Wujastyk and Michel Angot on the final keynote, which continued the sharing of approaches

and issues into yoga in the academy. Major grants are rare, and all three MAs are self-funding. Interestingly, the three leaders reported that many enrolments are coming from within the modern yoga community itself, suggesting an increasing and hopefully productive symbiosis between the evolving research and the field of study. Not all conversations between the academy and the world of yoga are as benign, however, as Borayin Larios pointed out with a paper on scholars and authority in modern yoga. Accusations of cultural appropriation and even academic imperialism and Hinduphobia confront more high-profile scholarship, as the question ‘how do we define yoga?’ becomes tangled with both Protestant extremism centred in the US, and Hindu sectarianism transnationally. Confidentially, scholars shared particulars of harassment on social media, concerns about the ethics of accepting funding from certain bodies, and generally there is a feeling that any research into the smallest and most obscure aspects of yoga practice, culture and philosophy could be targeted for political gain. Moving forward, our increasing engagement and impact on and with the diversity of modern yoga culture is seemingly easy to evidence, but possibly harder to endure.

The day ended with a smaller number of papers on contemporary yoga ‘transformations’, including a panel on the complex relations between scientific discourses both about and in yoga. Elsewhere, it was time to present my own paper on post-lineage yoga in Britain, which was well-received and fitted well in a panel including a paper applying somaesthetic theory to yoga, and another on ‘Yoga as synthesis. Yoga as revival’.

Outside of the formal business of the conference, stimulating conversations and exchanges were held on more recent research, overlaps and comparisons in ongoing projects, and the sharing of references, resources and contacts. Many of my own conversations included speculative comparisons between historic and recently emergent practices – such as more modern examples of inversion asanas, from Iyengar suspensions to the recent popularity of aerial yoga. I was also interested to note a common dual identity of scholar and practitioner in unspoken evidence – indeed, when asked if they considered themselves practitioners, the vast majority of the attendees agreed, even if few had previously volunteered the information. Factors such as funding, and pay-for courses further muddy the

waters of positionality, but on another level, I wondered if and how people were keeping up their practices whilst here. There's a fascinating potential paper in the varied yoga practices and allegiances of scholars who research yoga, and how it impacts our research and even daily working life. My suspicion is that most scholars here are practicing in the more mainstream schools and lineages. This would go some way to explain a widespread lack of awareness here of the diversity of modern yoga outside of North America, perhaps because yoga scholarship in the US is much more dominated by modern subjects, whilst in Europe arguably more

don't assess the content and experience and research of yoga academics through reference to the MA marketing materials their institutions put out, and every one of the MA cohorts discussed here are filled with yoga teachers and practitioners seeking further depth to their knowledge.

Finally, the two ERC funded projects: Ayuryoga and the Hatha Yoga Project were anomalously generous grants supporting projects that are being closely watched and championed by scholars internationally. Meanwhile, small Sanskrit and similar historical departments are having to prove



weight is given to historical and textual analysis still. As a whole, US and transnational yoga marketing materials were commonly used as shorthand for a generic, representative modern yoga practice, with the assumption that modern yoga culture is accordingly material and commercial. There is much less recognition of the widespread role of counter-cultural movements in the development and present evolution of transnational yoga, even in the US, and evidence of a number of papers presented suggests that yoga is markedly less commercial and more counter-cultural in Europe. My own work presented evidence of easy-to-find and well-established counter-cultural yoga in the South-West UK that was a surprise to almost everyone there. There is a perceivable gulf between marketing and actuality; between generally accessible classes and more specialised events for dedicated practitioners; between what teachers teach to the mainstream and the practice they share themselves. After all, we

their relevance to the 'public' in ever more rigorous ways. It is not easy justifying one's existence in the humanities in Europe today, as we know.

As the conference wound up, a whole host of us adjourned to the rather lovely Hamsa restaurant, serving us 'hummus and happiness', and even yoga scholar-practitioners know how to share at least one beer with companionship, reminiscences and gossip. I had the delightful company of first Jacqueline Hargreaves and then Mark Singleton, among others who may not have offered papers, but were key presences at the conference. Overall, the city was beautiful, the weather pleasant, and the conference a great success. Often one returns from such events with a head full of ideas and a stack of new contacts. More rarely does one return with a handful of new friends.

Theo Wildcroft, Open University

reviews

AFE ADOGAME (ED.) THE PUBLIC FACE OF AFRICAN NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN DIASPORA: IMAGINING THE RELIGIOUS "OTHER". ASHGATE, 2014.

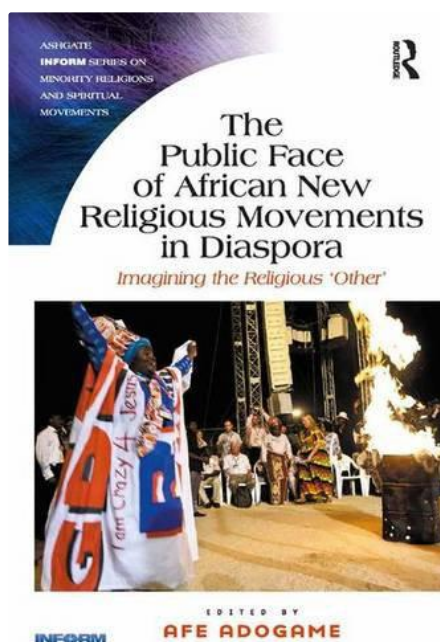
This edited volume explores the expressions and representations of African new religious movements (ANRMs) and Africa-derived religions within Africa and diaspora communities. In the introduction Afe Adogame notes the scantiness of scholarly research on ANRMs and problematizes the fact that their public representation in host societies has been dominated by journalistic accounts which have tended to be sensationalist and stereotyped. He envisions the volume as a counterbalancing act that can reveal the more nuanced implications of these movements for their members and diaspora societies, as well as shed light on the processes behind their emergence and expansion in the transnational context.

A reference point for the current volume is that ANRMs have substantively proliferated in recent years and have resulted in a religious plurality that creates room for the contestation of established norms and the reinvention of both subjective and collective identities. In light of this plurality, it is important to note the rationale for grouping them all together. According to Adogame, ANRMs can be defined as non-mainstream religions which have

emerged within the local African context and the African diaspora, particularly since the dawn of the twentieth century. These need not be defined by "the novelty of their ideologies, originality of beliefs, practices, polity and ethos" (p.5) but deserve a

separate categorisation as they emerged at the fringe of Africa's more mainstream religious traditions and have acquired wider social relevance. These new forms include African Initiated Churches (AICs), African Pentecostal charismatic movements, forms of Sufi and Wahhabi Islam, and Islam-influenced spirit belief systems. This conceptual framework is outlined in the introduction, which incorporates a historiographical overview and a note on the genealogy of academic thought around ANRMs.

The rest of the volume is comprised of thirteen studies by different contributors. I cannot possibly do justice to their heterogeneity and depth, but it may be useful to highlight their geographical, methodological and thematic diversity. The studies cover a wide gamut of African and diaspora societies, including Nigeria, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Britain, the United States, Canada, Sweden, Germany, France, and China. Among cases analysed are Pentecostal Churches, Black Jewish communities, Africa-derived charismatic churches, and African forms of Sufi Islam. Ethnography, historiography, and discourse analysis comprise the



dominant methodological approaches. A number of studies analyse the emergence, media representations and self-portrayals of ANRMs, and how they or their members position themselves in relation to home/diaspora societies (Bettina Schmidt, Abel Ugba, Laura Premack). Asebe Regassa and Meron Zekele's study of the Irrecha ritual among the Oromo in the global diaspora uniquely interfaces the ritual's emergence and representation with political struggles for self-determination. Other authors focus more on how new religious centres interact with mainline traditions in host societies and how they navigate often hostile social, cultural and legal environments to cater both to their African and non-African believers (Heidi Haugen, Anne Kubai, Garnet Parris). Yet another study type explores the implications of these religions' unresolved status in host countries for the personal and professional advancement and social integration/exclusion of their individual members (Aurélien Mokoko Gampiot and Cécile Coquet-Mokoko, Janice McLean-Farrell, Géraldine Mossière).

More unusual contributions include Henrietta Nyamnjoh's study of the role of Sufi spirituality and religious personnel (marabouts) in the boat migration from Senegal, and Babatunde Adedibu's examination of witchcraft accusations in Black Majority Churches in Britain within the wider framework of Pentecostal healing and deliverance theology. Israel Olofinjana's historical discussion of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in Britain also interestingly outlines how one church's prosperity theology intersects with behavioural norms encouraged by a consumerist, capitalist society. I would observe that theology is approached in most studies from the perspective of discursive deployment or individual experience, but analyses like Adedibu's allow some insight also into more of the theological underpinnings. The studies cumulatively provide rich descriptive and analytical material to meet the aims outlined in the introduction: to reveal ANRMs' provenance and patterns of emergence, belief systems and ritual practices, public/civil roles, group definitions, public perception and responses, patterns of segregation/exclusion, organisational and hierarchical structures, gender dimensions, and implications of intersection between diaspora and host society groups (p.18). However, the lack of a concluding chapter means that the volume ends somehow abruptly, and it is left to the reader to extrapolate more theoretical implications for the

ANRMs category.

The omission of the individual contributors' own identities and background in relation to the communities of research is a striking limitation in my view. As one exception, Israel Olofinjana takes his religious identity into consideration and relates it to his research, most likely because he aims the study to be "a critical evaluation of my church background" (p.233). I believe that readers would achieve a better contextualisation of the information presented if all authors clarified their relationship to their respective research communities and offered more insight into their previous exposure to the faith they researched. I would also have found it helpful to hear more about how contributors who employed ethnographic methodologies navigated inevitable power hierarchies within their research communities and especially between researcher and participants. These observations do not aim to question the value of the contributions, but to emphasise that study findings should be best read with knowledge of the epistemological and power positionality of the researcher.

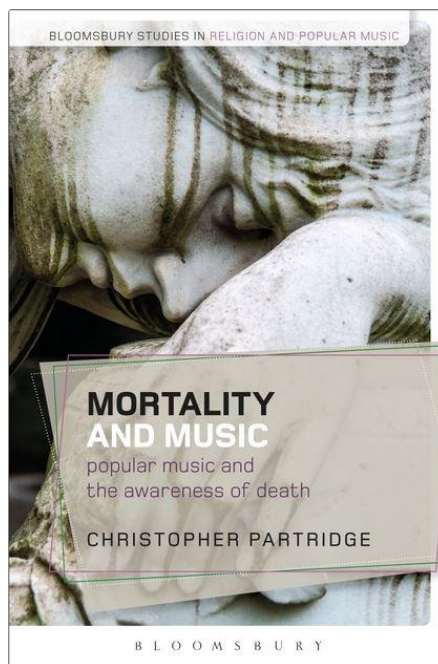
Another aspect that I found problematic relates to terminology and typology. In the introduction Adogame states that the term ANRMs is preferable from the historically loaded characterisations 'sect' or 'cult.' What I am not clear about is whether this alternative name avoids the imperial habit of classifying the 'other' that Adogame aims to reverse: does grouping non-mainstream religious expressions under an umbrella term facilitate understanding them in their own terms? In addition, it is not explained to what extent this 'naming' agrees with believers' own self-identifications. To cite one example, would the Oromo who perpetuate the Irrecha ritual in the diaspora conceive and describe themselves as members of a 'religious movement'? In many of their testimonies emphasis was put on the practice's cultural value and symbolic power, embedded in wider concerns of nationalist struggle. I do not doubt that Irrecha is an indigenous religio-cultural practice, but should it be subsumed in the conceptual category of a 'religious movement'?

A similar, more typological, question can be raised for other case-studies in the volume. The Amharic-speaking church that Anne Kubai researched in Sweden seemed to be innovative in both doctrinal and liturgical aspects, despite the female founder's

close links to the mainline Ethiopian Orthodox tradition. On the other hand, the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo ministries that Garnet Parris studied in Germany seemed to continue under the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church at home, retaining traditional doctrine, theology and liturgy. Parris considered them relevant to this study because “they are churches rooted in the continent of Africa” (p. 276) and the product of migration, but are these sufficient reasons to consider missions of long-established religious systems in the same conceptual category with more idiosyncratic expressions such as Kubaï’s Salem Church? As a non-expert, I would have found it helpful to hear more on how the ‘new’ and the ‘mainstream’ religions are imagined to intersect within the ANRMs umbrella term.

Besides such conceptual subtleties that could have been elaborated further in the introduction and synthesised in a conclusion, I would venture that the individual studies’ unique insights on the sociological implications of religious communities in diverse environments make the volume especially resourceful for students and researchers who are keen on more social scientific (as opposed to phenomenological or theological) interpretations of religious experience.

Romina Istratii, University of London (SOAS)



CHRISTOPHER PARTRIDGE. MORTALITY AND MUSIC: POPULAR MUSIC AND THE AWARENESS OF DEATH. BLOOMSBURY, 2015.

Mortality and Music: Popular Music and the Awareness of Death by Christopher Partridge is probably best described as either a sociologically inflected philosophical text or a philosophically inflected sociological text that uses popular music as its vehicle of discussion. The book is wide-ranging, exploring topics such as bereavement,

depression, suicide, violence, gore and fans’ responses to the deaths of musicians; it is a meditation on our individual and societal awareness of death. Ultimately, it argues that popular music’s treatment of death and dying is socially and culturally significant.

Partridge’s discussion begins with the observation that ours is a death-denying society that, on the one hand, avoids reflecting on personal extinction but, on the other hand, is obsessed with its inevitability. How this simultaneous repulsion and attraction manifests in the attitudes, rituals, institutions, and industries related to death is deeply embedded in the modern project of the individual, secular self. Partridge identifies religion’s ‘theologies of a future state’ (e.g. heaven and hell) as denials of death, wherein the prospect of personal extinction is the

material from which the prospect of an afterlife or reincarnation is created. The common denominator underlying ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ ways of dealing with death is that we cannot imagine not existing, because it requires imagining the absence of experience.

For Partridge, the myriad strategies by which we try to comprehend the absurdity of death are apparent in the rich variety of ways that musicians and listeners approach mortality through popular music. The book builds on two ideas, affective space and transgression, that he has developed in previous work

such as *The Lyre of Orpheus: Popular Music, the Sacred and the Profane* (2014). Anyone for whom music has provided a moment of escape, a bit of nostalgia or an opportunity to live a ‘new’ identity will instinctively understand what affective space is; through music, we experience times, places and emotions far removed from our corporeal reality. For example, song lyrics can function as symbolic reminders – Partridge likens them to *momento mori* – of our mortality that become meaningful within the affective spaces that music creates. In other words, songs about death can provide spaces within which

we experience the unknowable reality of non-existence from a safe remove.

Partridge develops his second theme, transgression, by focussing on the dialectic between culture and (sub)culture. All cultures (sub- or otherwise) are organized around and defined by ideas of pure and impure, sacred and profane. For example, Partridge observes that, while the (fake) blood-splattered displays and gory lyrics of musicians like Alice Cooper are often considered 'shocking', the imagery deployed is very similar to, and often directly inspired by, Christian injunctions such as the call to be 'washed in the blood of Christ' or 'bathed in the blood of the Lamb'. Thus, the articulation of death and decay in both Western popular music and Fundamentalist religious cultures is rooted in Christian theological constructions of the sacred and profane. While popular music may be understood as 'transgressive' of the 'mainstream,' it must also be considered in relation to power, partially over the ability to define oneself. According to Partridge, through transgression, many popular music subcultures offer 'liminal' youths opportunities to form identities over and against mainstream society (41). Popular music is a threat to the sacred centre – so it is no wonder that conservative religion is concerned about it. Yet subcultures also have a 'sacred centre' that must be vigorously protected from the mainstream. If liminal cultures are those that exist on the periphery of the mainstream, but derive their identities in relation to the 'mainstream', then the 'death chic' of many music subcultures can be seen as a way to establish a sacred centre and police the walls between them and the ever-present threat of being absorbed into the mainstream (think punk and hip hop).

Musicologically minded readers will immediately ask: 'What are we defining as "popular music"?' Partridge draws from an impressive array of songs, artists, and genres (his discography is five pages long), including The Kingston Trio, Johnny Cash, 50 Cent and Cannibal Corpse, but confines the discussion to music generally thought of as 'Western'. This is important in that it gives him ample evidence to show the how Western Christian ideas have influenced the articulation of death and dying. It also means that, while most readers will recognize only a fraction of the bands and songs he uses as examples, they will be able to relate his argument to something familiar. (An added bonus to reading this book is that it

introduced me to several bands and music subcultures I'd never heard of. While I can't say I particularly enjoy the music of the Chilean doom folk metal band Uaral, for example, the fact that I can now refer to their 2005 album 'Sounds of Depression' in conversation has done wonders for my own (sub)cultural capital).

Mortality and Music is a book that is not easily categorised. It doesn't sit comfortably within Sociology, Religious Studies or Popular Music Studies, but would certainly be of interest to scholars of any or all these fields. It is original, engagingly written and full of ideas to consider carefully; it is a book that should be read twice, but you won't mind doing so.

Tom Wagner,
University of Edinburgh

BERG-SØRENSEN, ANDERS. *CONTESTING SECULARISM: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES*. ASHGATE, 2013.

There is a growing body of literature exploring ideas that are variously referred to as: "post-secularism," "the post-secular," and "multiple secularisms." For scholars interested in religion, secularism, and secularization, it can be challenging to find a good summary of these ideas, particularly a summary that is concise and intelligible. *Contesting Secularism* offers such a summary, though as is often the case with edited volumes, the quality of the chapters is varied. Some of the chapters are great; others less so.

The book is made up of nine chapters, plus an introduction. The introduction and the first four chapters examine what is meant by "post-secular" and "multiple secularities." The remaining five chapters offer specific examples of the different ways that secularism can be manifest, covering well-trodden territory when it comes to secularism like the US, the UK, and French *laïcité*, but also areas of the world where secularism is less commonly discussed like Iran, Turkey, and India. This structure for the book is actually quite helpful as the first four chapters argue somewhat compellingly that secularism can manifest itself in multiple ways and the remaining five chapters provide specific data to support this claim.

For readers unfamiliar with the basic ideas behind the “post-secular” or “multiple secularisms,” the argument may best be illustrated using a comparison. Democracy, or government by the people through some form of elective system, is not manifest the same way in every country around the world or even the same in different parts of a single country. In the US, the majority takes all model has led to a two-party system, whereas in the UK and India, seats in parliament are based on the proportion of the vote received by each party, allowing for multi-partied systems. The party that receives the most votes takes the lead in choosing the Prime Minister, often through a coalition of parties. All three countries are democratic, but how democracy is manifested in each of these countries is slightly different (e.g., the UK has Lords Spiritual, but those positions don't exist in India's governing bodies, the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha).

Rather than follow this approach and simply recognize that countries that generally model their governments on the principles of democracy are all democratic countries (or, I guess, “democracies”) scholars interested in the many ways that secularism manifests itself around the world have introduced new and confusing terms like: “post-secular” or “multiple secularisms.” All that is really meant by “multiple secularisms” is that the relationship between religion and the state is different in different countries. The phrase “post-secular” means that, rather than assuming religion will die out, which is reflective of secularization theory circa 1900 or maybe even 1950, some scholars want to make it clear that religion is still around and is continuing to influence politics. Religion, of course, has long influenced government and the law in many nations and cultures, and while some scholars did suggest that it's influence would disappear, just like they said religion would disappear, it turns out that religion is still influential. I'm not sure this fact is worthy of new terminology, but someone thought so.

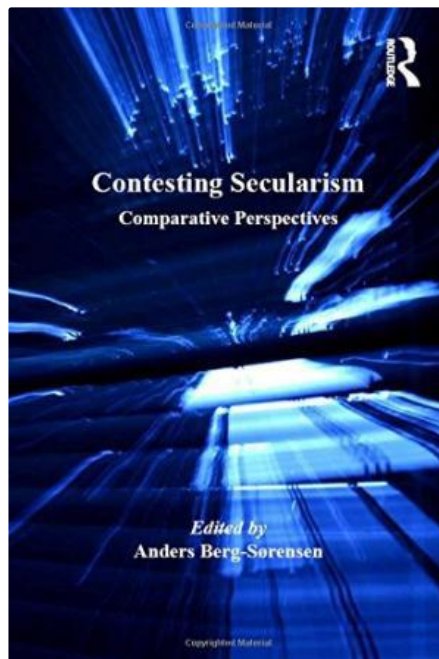
The introduction, by Anders Berg-Sørensen, does a

decent job laying out the aims of the volume and explaining what is meant by “post-secular” and “multiple secularisms,” and details why there is debate over these issues. Rajeev Bhargava's chapter tackles the idea that there are multiple secularisms. Unfortunately, the chapter begins with some rather fallacious claims about the non-existence of secularization around the world, but then provides a very clear, cogent explanation of what is meant by “multiple secularisms” and does a good job explaining why thinking about secularism as a “plural” is important.

Veit Bader's chapter contrasts liberal democracy with secularism. The argument is that there are ideals that any liberal democracy should strive for, and those ideals aren't necessarily the ideals of secularism or secular states. In some ways the chapter is a critique of secularism, but it also seemed to be more of a critique of immoral states, since secularism is not implicitly moral or immoral. Additionally, Bader seems to argue that the ideal should be liberal democracy, not a secular state, but doesn't ever note that secularism is much more likely to work with liberal democracy than is, for instance, a Catholic, Buddhist, or Muslim theocracy. Finally, Bader's chapter has a subtle undertone to it – one that I think is driving much of the interest in the idea of the “post secular” – that religious people should have a voice in

important discussions, from politics to ethics to science. This position is a bit ironic, considering religion has long dominated such discussions. But it also seems to be a position coming from the perspective of those who have been the hegemony feeling like they are losing their hegemony, and are now crying out about their impending equality. I have little sympathy for the cries of falling hegemony. If what they have to offer for these discussions is increasingly irrelevant and anachronistic, why should they be part of these discussions?

Tariq Modood's chapter on Islam and secularism is



very clear and makes compelling arguments about how Muslims are and should be treated (i.e., similar to other minority groups). Some of the arguments in the chapter seemed to extend a bit too far. For instance, Modood argues that being Muslim is no different from being female or black, which equates an ideology with (mostly) biological features. Certainly there is malleability and fluidity with both gender and race, just like there is fluidity with religion, but there are differences of both degree and kind. Changing one's race is virtually impossible since it is largely determined by others. Changing one's gender is difficult, though not impossible, while changing one's biological sex is extremely challenging. Changing one's religion ranges from insignificant (e.g., raised a nominal Anglican) to difficult (e.g., raised a devout Mormon), unless that person lives in a non-secular state, where such changes aren't permitted (a point Modood conveniently ignores). Thus, to equate religion – a voluntary identification in secular democracies – with gender or race seems to minimize the challenges racial and gender minorities face. Modood concludes that the answer to Islam in the modern secular state is integration, not isolation. That idea is good in theory, but in practice, who else gets a seat at the table? How are seats allotted? Do Scientologists get one? Mormons? Jehovah's Witnesses? What about other new religious movements? Or is Modood's argument tied to size, making it inherently discriminatory? Modood's arguments and critics of secularism are insightful, but some of the suggested paths forward are less so.

Rosi Braidotti's chapter was, for me at least, very difficult to understand. The aim was to bring feminism into discussion with secularism, but I think I missed much of the nuance given the quite opaque writing style. From what I could gather, Braidotti takes a post-modern, deconstructivist approach to all truth claims and uses this to argue that science and secularism are not superior to religion and theocracy. Is it new school or old school for me to suggest that there may, in fact, be some ways of knowing and some ways of organizing society that appear to be objectively superior to others based on demonstrable benefits? Of course, whatever measures are used to determine what is "superior" will be subjective, which means demonstrable benefits (e.g., fewer kids dying from measles, mumps, and rubella; people getting to choose their political leaders) are not actually demonstrable or

beneficial. In which case, I guess we should just let the dictators stay in power and let the kids die...

The remaining chapters illustrate variations of secularism in the US (Rogers M. Smith; a very good chapter arguing against the "post-secular" idea), Britain (Linda Woodhead), France (John R. Bowen; a superbly written and well-argued chapter), Turkey and Iran (Elizabeth Shakman Hurd), and India (Thomas Blom Hansen). For the most part, I found these chapters lucid and compelling. After reading them, I felt this volume contained sufficient information to convincingly argue that secularism is manifest in many ways around the world.

However, I'm still not convinced after reading this book that there is any utility to the terms "post-secular" or "multiple secularisms." Conceptually, both ideas are correct: religion continues to influence politics as it long has (i.e., the manifest meaning of post-secular; the latent one is the cry of the deposed hegemony) and there are many ways in which secularism manifests itself around the world (i.e., multiple secularisms). But I don't see how introducing new, confusing terms helps the scholarly community move forward in thinking about these ideas. Rather, in the case of the post-secular, this seems like a pretentious flourish; as though adding "post" onto something makes that person sound hip, cool, or meta. This may have worked the first time it was done, but now it's a red herring. In the case of multiple secularisms, I think this is already implicit in the idea of secularism. Despite the many citations in the various chapters, I don't believe any of the authors can point to Scholar X who said, "There is only one form of secularism; anything not identical to that form is not secularism." In a sense, then, arguing that there are "multiple secularisms" is arguing against a strawman that there is only a single form of secularism.

Overall, *Contesting Secularism* is a fine volume. As is often the case with edited volumes, some chapters are stronger than others, but the goal of the volume – to illustrate the many ways in which secularism manifests itself around the world – is achieved. Recommended to scholars interested in this new perspective.

Ryan T. Cragun
The University of Tampa

MODERNITIES, MEMORY AND MUTATIONS: GRACE DAVIE AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION, EDITED BY ABBY DAY AND MIA LÖVHEIM, 2015, ASHGATE, FARNHAM AND BURLINGTON, VT, ISBN:978-1-4724-3617-7

Grace Davie has not only made a highly significant contribution to the sociology of religion, but has also consistently supported the work of others and the building up of the field. Often much of what she has said and written has resonated not just with those within academia but also within the churches and the 'generally interested'; she is an academic who is not only knowledgeable but also accessible to a wider audience. This is a welcome opportunity to review a book whose contributors engage with different aspects of her work.

The three concepts listed in the title summarise some of the key themes which have preoccupied Davie through her career.

'Modernities' (see chapters by Martin and Possamai for example) captures her engagement with the complexities of the relationship between modernity and religion. Context is key to understanding how we have come to live in a world of not one but multiple modernities, she argues.

'Memory' captures her attention to the social and cultural role of religion in European societies, important here being her insistence on paying proper attention to the place of religion in a country's history and collective memory. This theme is well represented by Danièle Hervieu-Léger in a chapter which compares English toleration and even benign indifference to religion with French *laïcité* as different manifestations of the same dechristianisation of (western) Europe and how these came about. 'Mutations', reflected across all the chapters, encompasses the complexities of change in contemporary religion, a process that is far from predictable, given that modernity is an ever evolving social and cultural process.

Seventeen academics have contributed to this three-part volume. What follows can only be a sample, therefore, rather than an exhaustive list of

contents. In the foreword Linda Woodhead sees Davie straddling the boundary between the old theory-driven approach to the sociology of religion and the newer, which is more problem-orientated.

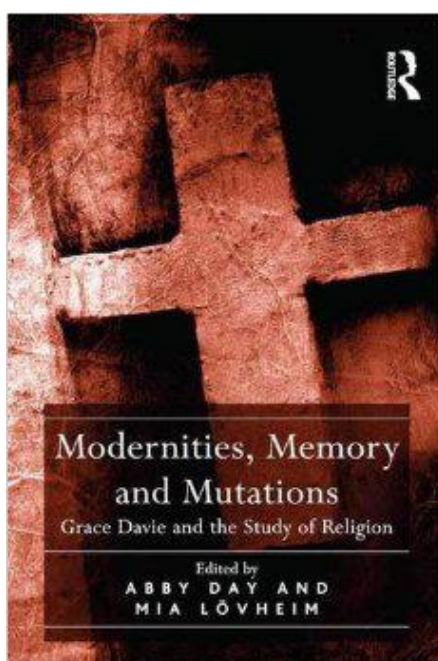
'Themes', the first part, introduced by James Beckford, draws attention to various useful tools which Davie has offered us to think about religion. One is the comparative approach, as instanced in Hervieu-Léger's chapter. Another is the need for religious literacy among the ordinary public and even lacking among some liberal intellectual elites, argues Davie. This is taken up by Adam Dinham who also aims to educate those in public and private

institutions about the pressing need for religious issues to be taken into account when policies are being formulated. An equally important, if less discussed, aspect of Davie's influence, claims Matt Francis in his chapter on some of her former students, is her encouragement of younger and/or newer researchers to the discipline.

'Theories', the second part, asks about both their provenance and influence on how scholars approach the contemporary scene.

'Understanding this thing we call religion requires conversations across generations of scholars,

something Davie has modelled in extraordinarily fruitful ways' (75), according to Nancy Ammerman who writes the foreword to this section. Davie has also collaborated with colleagues across different disciplines and cultures, hence is well placed to offer new perspectives on the origin of theories and their usefulness in particular contexts. Douglas Davies who has worked with Davie on European projects concerning aspects of welfare, religion and values, has chosen to reflect both sociologically and anthropologically, on the Utøya Island massacre in Norway in 2011. Drawing out connections between ideas, language, religious beliefs, emotion, identity and values and their embodiment in forms of public ritual and judicial process as response to tragedy, he concludes that our lives are subject to both the rational and the mystical, the latter in the sense of



that which promotes our flourishing.

'Trends', the third section, introduced by Rebecca Catto, reflects Davie's interest in the new roles religion is increasingly being called upon to play in the changing welfare structure of contemporary Europe and the law, particularly that on human rights. Bäckström wonders how we will apply her well rehearsed concepts of 'believing' and 'belonging' in the increasingly multi-ethnic, multi-religious communities which characterise much of contemporary Europe and particularly with regard to welfare. He calls for a research programme that includes the construction of a future sustainable (glocal) welfare society comprising differing religious beliefs. All the more pertinent, we might argue, given the thousands of newly arrived refugees and migrants from the Middle East and elsewhere still entering western Europe.

Fokas examines the differences between the US Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights in dealing with religious questions, through two particular case studies, bearing in mind what Davie and others have referred to as the messiness of lived religion where boundaries between the religious and secular may be fluid. Fokas concludes from her case studies that if societies, whether American or European, cannot be defined absolutely as secular or religious neither can their courts.

The usefulness of the 'believing' and 'belonging' concepts (regardless of the preposition between them) is demonstrated in several other chapters along with Bäckström; see those by Sakaranaho in 'Themes', Day in 'Theories' and Pessi in 'Trends' for example. In a 2007 publication Davie preferred the term 'vicarious religion', although has more recently (2015) also revisited her earlier concept of 'believing without belonging'. Collins-Mayo asks to what extent vicarious religion resonates with the younger generations and opens up a newer avenue of research on what exactly the cultural memory implied in vicarious religion might mean to younger people.

Finally, it's worth mentioning a suggestion Davie makes in her own afterword. 'It is increasingly difficult to maintain the levels of activity required of an academic both to launch a career and to acquire promotion, and at the same time to sustain the care of children or elderly parents in the way many of us

would like to' (219), she writes. There may be variable solutions to this dilemma but 'is it' she asks, 'unthinkable for a department to keep a job open for five years during what might be termed "extended maternity leave"?' Explaining one possible way this might work in practice, she posits the idea that the 'carer/academic' produce one significant contributory piece of work a year to the department; this would demonstrate seriousness about remaining within the field but also add to the department's research profile as a whole. Davie herself was enabled to do something along these lines while caring for her three children. We might well ask how many good researchers have had to give up when forced to choose between the demands of care and a full blown career, through lack of suitable arrangements.

Whether one agrees or not with the various conclusions Davie has come to over a distinguished career, it can hardly be doubted that her contribution to the discipline is extensive and has proved a fruitful source of ideas for scholars (including this reviewer) with which to think about the nature of contemporary religion(s). The possibilities are by no means exhausted in this volume, as the editors acknowledge, but it is to be recommended for its timely examination of a wide variety of contemporary issues raised by Davie's work.

Janet Eccles,
Lancaster University

Image credits: cover - Thoth deux fois grand, [le second Hermès, en rapport avec la Lune.] by L. L. J. Dubois, c.1823, with permission from New York Public Library Online Collection; pp 19 & 21, David Robertson; p 25, George Chryssides; p 28, Jacqueline Hargreaves from The Luminescent.

Members' Recent Publications

Elisabeth Arweck

2017 (ed. with Anna Halafoff and Donald Boisvert) *Education about Religions and Worldviews: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies*. London: Routledge.

2016 (ed.) *Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity*. London: Routledge.

2016 "The Matter of Context: The Case of Two Community Schools in Wales" in Elisabeth Arweck (ed.) *Attitudes to Religious Diversity: Young People's Perspectives*. Farnham: Ashgate, 97–124.

2016 "Religious Diversity in the UK: Do 13–16-Year-Old Pupils Perceive it as a Site of Multiple Intersections?" in Leslie J. Francis & Jeff Astley (eds.) *At Multiple Intersections: Religious Education and Gender, Class, 'Race', Ethnicity and Disability*. Bern: Peter Lang.

2016 "Religion Materialized in the Everyday: Young People's Attitudes towards Material Expressions of Religion" in Tim Hutchings & Joanne McKenzie (eds.) *Religion and Material Culture*. London: Routledge, pp 185–202.

Fiona Bowie

2016 'Negotiating Blurred Boundaries: Ethnographic and Methodological Considerations' in George Chrystides and Stephen Gregg (eds.) *The Insider/Outsider Debate in the Study of Religion*. Sheffield: Equinox.

2016 'How to Study Religious Experience: Methodological Reflections on the Study of the Paranormal' in Bettina Schmidt (ed.) *The Study of Religious Experience*. Sheffield: Equinox, pp.13-32.

2015 'Miracles' (pp.161-166), 'Reincarnation' (pp.254-256), 'Survival After Death' (pp.312-318) in Matt Cardin (ed.) *Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies*. Santa Barbara: ABC Clío.

2014 "Believing Impossible Things: Scepticism and Scientific Enquiry" in Jack Hunter and David Luke (eds.) *Talking with the Spirits: Ethnographies from between the Worlds*. Brisbane, Australia: Daily Grail Publishing, pp.19-56.

Simon Brodbeck

2016 "Mapping Masculinities in the Sanskrit Mahabharata and Ramayana" in Ilona Zsolnay (ed.) *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*. London: Routledge, pp. 125-49.

2016 "Upakhyanas and the Harivamsha" in Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee (eds.) *Argument and Design: the Unity of the Mahabharata*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 388-427.

2014 "On the Lineal Significance of the Rajasuya in the Mahabharata" in *Indologica Taurinensia* 38, pp. 27-63.

George D. Chryssides

- 2016 *Jehovah's Witnesses: Continuity and Change*. Farnham: Ashgate/Routledge.
- 2016 "From Deviance to Devotion: The Evolution of NRM Studies" in Eugene V. Gallagher (ed.) *'Cult Wars' in Historical Perspective*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.43-54.
- 2016 "Conversion" in James R. Lewis and Inga B. Tøllesfsen (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements, Volume II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.25-25.
- 2016 "Jehovah's Witnesses: Anticipating Armageddon" in Stephen Hunt (ed.) *Handbook of Global Contemporary Christianity: Movements, Institutions, and Allegiance*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 422-440.
- 2016 "The Truth is Out There – And How Jehovah's Witnesses Find It" in *Acta Comparanda Subsidia III*: pp.11-22.

Carole M. Cusack

- 2016 "Invention in 'New New' Religions," in James R. Lewis and Inga Bårdsen Tøllesfsen (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements, 2nd edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 237-247.
- 2016 "Sport" in Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 472-481.
- 2016 "Scientology and Sex: The Second Dynamic, Prenatal Engrams and the Sea Org," *Nova Religio*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 5-33.
- 2016 "Fiction Into Religion: Imagination, Other Worlds, and Play in the Formation of Community," *Religion*, Vol. 46, No. 4, pp. 573-590.
- 2015 Carole M. Cusack and Jason H. Prior, "Public Theologies of Love in the Civitas Dei and the Civitas Terrena: Sexuality and the Transformation of Sydney, Australia 1960-2010," *Theology & Sexuality*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 85-104.

Denise Cush

- 2015 (ed. plus introductory and concluding chapters) *Celebrating Planet Earth, a Pagan/Christian Conversation: First Steps in Interfaith Dialogue*. Winchester UK and Washington USA: Moon Books.
- 2016 (with Robinson, C.) 'Brian Bocking and the Defence of Study of Religions as an Academic Discipline in Universities and Schools' *Journal of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions Vol.3. (Festschrift in honour of Professor Brian Bocking)*, pp.27-41. <https://jisasr.org/volume-3-2016/>
- 2016 'Without fear or favour: equality and diversity in the treatment of religions and beliefs in religious education in England' in Dawn Llewellyn and Sonya Sharma (eds.) *Religion, Equalities and Inequalities*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, pp. 102-112.
- 2016 'What have we learned from four decades of non-confessional multi-faith religious education in England: policy, curriculum and practice in English religious education 1969-2013?' in J. Berglund, Y. Shanneik, and Brian Bocking (eds.) *Religious Education in a Global-Local World*. Switzerland: Springer, pp.53-70.

2016 'Paganism', RE:ONLINE (a 12,000 word article mainly for teachers), on-line at <http://www.reonline.org.uk/knowning/what-re/paganism/>

Douglas Davies

2015 *Mors Britannica: Lifestyle and Death-Style in Britain Today*. Oxford University Press.

2015 'Emotions, Grief, and Reality-Unreality in Human Mortality' in Outi Hakola, Sara Heinämaa and Sami Pihlström (eds.) *Death and Mortality: From Individual to Communal Perspectives*. Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, pp.10-31

2015 'Salvation, Death and Nature as Grace' in Hannah Bacon, Wendy Dossett and Steve Knowles (eds.) *Alternative Salvations: Engaging the Sacred and the Secular*. London: Bloomsbury, pp.85-96.

2015 'Valuing Emotion in Tragedy' in Abby Day and Mia Loveheim (eds.) *Modernities, Memory and Mutations: Grace Davie and the Study of Religion*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp.113-130.

2015 (ed. with Adam Powell) *Sacred Selves, Sacred Settings: Reflecting Hans Mol*. Farnham: Ashgate.

David G. Robertson

2016 "SubGenius vs. the Conspiracy" in Carole M. Cusack and Pavol Kosnac (eds.) *Fiction, Invention, and Hyper-reality: From Popular Culture to Religion*. London: INFORM/Ashgate.

2016 "Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Scientology and Conspiracism" in James R. Lewis and Kjersti Hellesøy (eds.) *Handbook of Scientology*. Leiden: Brill.

2017 "'Tuning Ourselves': Fripp, Bennett, Gurdjieff." *Religion and the Arts*, 21:1-2.

2017 "Am I a Religious Studies Scholar?" in Russell McCutcheon (ed.) *Fabricating Identities*. Sheffield: Equinox.

Bettina E. Schmidt

2016 *Spirits and Trance in Brazil: Anthropology of Religious Experiences*. London: Bloomsbury.

2016 (ed.) *The Study of Religious Experience: Approaches and Methodologies*. Sheffield: Equinox.

2016 'Contemporary Religions in Brazil' in Mark Juergensmeyer (Ed.-in-Chief) *Oxford Handbooks Online*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2016 'Provincializing Religious Experience: Methodological Challenges to the Study of Religious Experiences; A Brazilian Case Study' in Bettina E. Schmidt (ed.) *The Study of Religious Experience: Approaches and Methodologies*. Sheffield: Equinox, pp. 88-101.

2016 (co-ed. with Stephen Engler) *Handbook of Contemporary Brazilian Religions* (Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, vol. 13) DenHague: Brill.

obituary

Revd. Dr W.S.F. (Bill) Pickering

29th January 1922 – 23rd May 2016

Reverend Dr William Stuart Frederick (Bill) Pickering was a living link for BASR members as the last research student of our first President, Professor E.O. James who presided from 1954 till he died in 1972. In BASR Bulletin 31 June-July 1980 pp. 7-11 (reprinted in Bulletin 98 March 2003 pp. 13-15), Bill wrote a piece entitled Edwin Oliver James, Some Personal Reminiscences and Reflections. The 1980 piece follows contributions by D.W. Gundry (Leicester) and E.G. Parrinder (London) on the beginnings of what is now BASR. In Bill's piece he records that it was James, then at King's College, London, who set him on the path of the sociology of religion which was 'virtually unheard of' but 'the subject that was going to be developed in the future'. Bill also wrote more fully on E.O. James for the New National Oxford Dictionary of Biography. After leaving Grammar School and serving as a radio mechanic with the RAF in India during the Second World War, in 1951 Bill completed ordination as a priest in the Church of England, serving as Cleave-Cockerill Fellow and Tutor in Theology at King's College, London from 1953-1956 where he went on to complete a doctorate on lay church-goers in 1958 under E.O. James. He later taught sociology at St John's College, Winnipeg, Canada where he worked on the Hutterite communities and in the Department of Sociology at Newcastle on Tyne from which he retired in 1987.

Bill became an association member in 1956, two years after the Association, which was then the British Section of IAHR, was founded and has often contributed to its activities. He came to our 40th anniversary conference in Bristol in 1994, and gave

the final paper, which is printed as BASR Occasional Paper 12 Locating The Sacred: Durkheim, Otto and Some Contemporary Ideas. In 2002 he gave a paper at the annual conference in Roehampton and Paul Tremlett has written below more fully of his meeting with him on that occasion and his contribution to Durkheimian Studies. It is for his work on Durkheim that he has become best known. It was his initiative in 1991 that the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies was set up and he was its secretary and organised and hosted many conferences on themes related to its focus at the Maison Française in Oxford where the Centre was located in what is now the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography. I often saw him when he was visiting Oxford from his home in Coton, Nr. Cambridge, where his academic base was Wolfson College and will miss those informal encounters. He was usually wheeling or riding a very old bicycle and wearing a very French beret. He was always cheerful and sociable with a warm friendliness and interest in people and what was happening in the academic world. His contribution to Durkheimian Studies and the furthering of Anglo-French academic co-operation was marked in 2007 when he was invested as an Officier in l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, awarded by the French Government and marked at a ceremony at the Maison Française in Oxford.

Peggy Morgan
Mansfield College, Oxford
Honorary President BASR 2000-2003

Durkheim Studies and W. S. F. ('Bill') Pickering

I met William Pickering, or 'Bill' as he preferred to be called, only once, appropriately enough at a BASR conference at Roehampton in 2002. He was delivering a paper on Durkheim. I had not done my conference homework and so I had no idea that he had been General Secretary of the British Centre of Durkheimian Studies at Oxford since 1991 (which he had established with Philippe Besnard, the pioneer of Durkheim studies in France). Nor had I any idea as to his international standing in the field of Durkheimian studies or cultural sociology more broadly. The fact is that I missed the chance to debate theory with a man right at the heart of the Durkheimian canon. I did at least bring his work to the attention of my students. With a particular interest in Durkheim's approach to religion, Pickering was central to bringing new translations of Durkheim's work on religion to an English-speaking audience (e.g. Pickering 1994), as well as to the interpretation of Durkheim's theory of religion (see Pickering 1984), among other points stressing the importance of Durkheim's reading of Robertson Smith as well as the potentially transgressive qualities of the Durkheimian sacred (see also Pickering 1994). He also played a key role in establishing the field of Durkheim studies (Pickering and Martins 1994) setting up the journal *Durkheimian Studies* (*Études Durkheimiennes*) as well as publishing numerous books and articles. Today, the field of Durkheimian studies encompasses the cultural sociology of the likes of Jeffrey Alexander and attends to the re-interpretation of Durkheim's own work but also those of his students such as Robert Hertz and Maurice Halbwachs. It is just as concerned with the radical Durkheim that can be found in the work of Georges Bataille and Roger Caillois of the *Collège de Sociologie*, as the more conservative Durkheimian tradition whose traces can be found in the work of British anthropologists such as A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Mary Douglas. These deliberations have been formative to a range of more contemporary scholarship by, among others, Gordon Lynch, Kim Knott, Paul Connerton and David Graeber. W. S. F. Pickering's lasting intellectual and personal contribution to this rich field of scholarly production is impressive and will be greatly missed.

1984. *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion: Themes and Theories*. London: Routledge.

1994. *Locating the Sacred: Durkheim, Otto and Some Contemporary Ideas*. BASR Occasional Papers, No. 12.

1994. *Durkheim on Religion*. trans. J. Redding. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press.

1994. (Ed. with Martins, H) *Debating Durkheim*. London: Routledge.

Paul-François Tremlett
Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies and Director of research Degrees (Arts)
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
The Open University

"The one place that Gods unarguably exist is in our minds where they are real beyond refute, in all their grandure and monstrosity."

(Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, *From Hell*, 1999: 4:18.)

