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**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 biannual Bulletin, and an annual 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:

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## COMMITTEE

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### *Secretary*

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# EDITORIAL

The theme of this issue is 'change'.

This is my first issue as sole Editor of the Bulletin, and more significantly, it is the first issue which is being published solely in an electronic format. A change which means the BASR has around a thousand pounds more a year to invest in supporting our beleaguered field of study. And which means that we are creating less waste. The Internet has become an ever-present and important part of scholarship, so having links embedded in the Bulletin makes things easier for all of us. There's no reason we couldn't add videos, audio and slideshows in here, too.... but that's the next step.

The committee has changed too. Graham Harvey has finished his term as President, and Bettina Schmidt could not be convinced to stay on for another term as Honorary Secretary. Happily, however, Stephen Gregg has taken on that role, and his former position as Treasurer has been amply filled by Christopher Cotter, formerly the Social Media Officer, and my esteemed colleague at the Religious Studies Project. David Wilson has stepped down as co-editor of the Bulletin, and the committee hope to appoint a Web Officer in the near future. Dominic Corrywright and

Suzanne Owen continue as Teaching and Learning Officer and DISKUS Coordinating Editor, respectively, yet here too there are new plans developing... albeit ones I cannot mention yet.

There is a refreshed impetus in the BASR today. It is shown by our active involvement in the campaign to Save Stirling, our modernised web presence, support for innovative programmes like the Religious Studies Project, our strong connections with TRS-UK and the European, North American and International associations, and increasing support for young scholars. It is shown, too, in our healthy financial position, which will allow us to again invest in new initiatives (See *News, Etc.* for the first call for proposals). This is in no small measure the result of the work done by the outgoing Executive Committee and their commitment to the academic study of religion/s in the UK, and for the BASR to be at its heart.

Academia is changing, and so is the BASR. This is a good thing. Change is life.

David G. Robertson

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

News Items	Up to 150 words
Conference Reports	500-1500 words
Conference Announcements	Not more than a single page
Book Reviews	500-00 words
Features	Around 1000 words
Members' Recent Publications	Maximum 5 items

PLEASE SEND ALL MATERIAL FOR INCLUSION TO [d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk)  
DEADLINE FOR THE MAY 2016 ISSUE IS **31 APRIL 2016**



# NEWS, ETC

## NOTICE TO CO-OPT A MEMBER TO THE POSITION OF WEB OFFICER ON THE BASR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

At the Executive Committee Meeting held at Lancaster University on 21st October 2015, it was decided that a new position of Web Officer should be established to support the increasing digital presence of the BASR. New developments concerning the digitisation of our bulletin, the new online platform for our journal, the increased importance of social media and future plans for the development of the website necessitate a member of the committee with the relevant skills to support these initiatives.

The Executive Committee therefore warmly invites anyone interested in undertaking this role to contact the Hon. Secretary Dr. Stephen E. Gregg on [s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk). Informal questions regarding the technical or practical aspects of the role may be directed to Dr. David Robertson on [d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:d.g.robertson@ed.ac.uk).

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## FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT:

Due to several successful conferences in recent years, the BASR finds itself with a surplus of funds, which as a charity, we have a mandate to reinvest. Following our AGM in Kent on September 8 and an extraordinary meeting in Lancaster on October 21, the executive committee asks members for suggestions for small funded project(s) supporting the aims of the BASR up to a total of c.£5,000.

Informal proposals should be sent to the Honorary Secretary, Stephen Gregg ([s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk)), by January 15, 2016, for discussion by the executive committee at our February meeting. Proposals should be for collaborative projects, to be designed and implemented in co-operation with the committee. Fuller details will be solicited before a final decision is made.

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## STIRLING SITUATION:

Many of our members will be aware (if not directly

affected) by the threatened closure of religious studies courses at the University of Stirling. A letter of protest from the BASR was published in the Scotsman, and both the BASR and RSP have been active in circulating other letters of support. The situation as stands is that although Timothy Fitzgerald and Michael Marten have resigned, the department is to remain open at

present with Andrew Hass in charge. More details can be found at

<http://criticalreligion.org/events/august-2015-religion-at-stirling-under-threat/>

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## JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGION - 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Starting out as Religion Today: A Journal of Contemporary Religion in 1985, edited and produced by Peter Clarke, the founding editor of the journal, in the then Centre for New Religion at King's College London, the journal appeared in an A4 format until 1994. It was re-launched under its subtitle in 1995, published and produced by what was then Carfax and is now Taylor & Francis.

Peter Clarke's vision for the journal has remained. He conceived it as an international forum for interdisciplinary academic debate on contemporary trends in the world of religions, whether they occurred in world religions or new religious movements. This gives the journal a wide scope, in terms of both topics and academic approaches. Peter also wanted to provide both established and emerging scholars in the various fields of academic research into religion(s) with a forum where they can showcase their own work and engage with each other's work in debate and discussion. This, too, has not changed.

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Journal of Contemporary Religion, Taylor & Francis are making a selection of articles freely available until the end of 2015 (see Journal of Contemporary Religion Anniversary Collection at <http://tandf.msgfocus.com/c/1qEA3FISpvEbVmoc9SGzYuW6g>.)

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## ASHGATE AND GOWER PUBLISHING: CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

On 15th July 2015, Ashgate Publishing Limited was sold by its founder, Nigel Farrow, to Informa Plc, owners of Taylor



## A Letter From the President...

At our conference in Canterbury in September, I handed over the role of President to Steven Sutcliffe. He and the new committee are already developing the ongoing project that is BASR in interesting ways. I look forward to continuing my involvement with the Association and to working with colleagues at future conferences and in other ways that develop our discipline or field. I've been a member of BASR since 1993, the year in which I did administrative duties in service of that year's conference at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. If my CV is correct, I was elected (thanks!) as Secretary in 2003 and have served on the committee in different capacities (e.g. looking after the website and Diskus for a while) since then. All these roles are collaborative ones and it has been a pleasure to work more-or-less closely with excellent colleagues both within the committee and in the wider membership. Together we have added to the things that BASR does. We have seen the membership grow. We have held excellent conferences at which the pervasive mood has been friendly and inclusive (this is not always true of academic conferences so it deserves recognition and further enhancement). We have engaged with themes of rising critical importance and debated a host of issues and approaches. We have worked with others when colleagues or departments have been deemed "redundant" or are otherwise threatened. Sadly, we have missed some opportunities, and we have not always succeeded in our efforts. Nonetheless, BASR has met its ambition to promote the academic study of religion(s) in many ways. We have done it, facilitated it, enabled junior colleagues (during and after their doctoral and even MA research) to present and debate their work, financially supported colleagues' participation in our conferences as well as those of the EASR and IAHR, and secured a hearing in other arenas where the study of religions is relevant (e.g. in relation to curriculum developments from school to MA level). Among BASR's recent ventures, one of the most exciting is our support for and collaboration with the Religious Studies Project (RSP). Indeed, much of what has always been central to BASR is braided with and enhanced by our partnership with the RSP: e.g. developing new scholars and new scholarship, developing ways to communicate about the significance of religion(s) in varied domains, and insisting on debate rather than the fixing of ideas. In these and others ways, both BASR and the study of religion(s) have grown stronger and more exciting. We now have to be bold in our efforts to improve ways of understanding, analysing and debating social, cultural and ecological issues that involve religion(s) (whatever this might be) in the face of the denigration of Humanities and Social Sciences (often our scholarly locations). Positively, I am confident that BASR will continue to be a friendly community of excellent colleagues doing fascinating things. Thanks for good times past and future!

Thanks, Graham

and Francis.

Nigel began the business under the Gower Press imprint in 1967; over the last 48 years it has grown to become one of the leading publishers of academic monographs and reference works under the Ashgate imprint, and Gower continues to be a highly respected brand name in business and management books.

Taylor and Francis, through its Routledge imprint, is a long established publisher with an excellent reputation and a strong commitment to the academic and professional fields in which Ashgate and Gower publish. Together, Taylor and Francis with Ashgate and Gower are now the largest academic book publisher worldwide in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and in other professional subject areas such as Aviation; we believe that no other press is better positioned to represent your work.

With the resources and expertise that we are now able to draw upon, we are confident that this will be a positive move for all our authors. Please be assured that your contractual and other arrangements are unaffected by the change of ownership and will be honoured in full.

During this period of transition, your contacts at Ashgate and Gower remain unchanged and we will be back in touch with you to confirm future contact arrangements in due course.

Please note that the Lund Humphries imprint was not included in the purchase and continues under Nigel Farrow's ownership.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for publishing with Ashgate and Gower, and we look forward to demonstrating what our new integrated business can achieve for you and our customers.



International Academic Conference

Kraków, 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May 2016

yoga  
darśana  
yoga  
sādhana

*traditions, transmissions, transformations*

organised by

**The Jagiellonian University Institute for the Study of Religions  
and the Modern Yoga Research group**

#### BRIEF OVERVIEW

The aim of the event is to showcase and advance contemporary research on yoga. During this conference, we would like to focus on yoga in both its textual and performative aspects, drawing attention to the dialectical relationship between the two. We are also keen to discuss methodological approaches to the study of yoga. We aim to provide ground for interdisciplinary discussions involving, amongst others, indologists, scholars of religion, philosophers, philologists and linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians. We are also hoping to offer the non-academic public and yoga practitioners nuanced, research-based insights into these topics.

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Michel Angot** (EHESS, Paris) and **Philipp Maas** (University of Vienna) will discuss patterns of emergence of Sanskritic traditions with special reference to problems of authorship in relation to Patañjali's system of yoga.

**James Mallinson** (SOAS, London) and **Jason Birch** (SOAS, London) will discuss the transmission of yogic methods and theories in early and late medieval *haṭhayoga* texts, with special reference to *āsana*.

**Federico Squarcini** (Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia) will discuss topics related to modern and contemporary, global and local transformations of yoga, with comments on their ideological, historical and socio-political contexts. (*Possible other discussant: TBA*).

#### CALL FOR PAPERS OPEN UNTIL 21 DECEMBER 2015

For more details and submission guidelines please see the conference website at:

<http://www.ydys.confer.uj.edu.pl>

For questions and information please contact: [ydys.confer@gmail.com](mailto:ydys.confer@gmail.com)



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**Modern Yoga Research**

*Information and resources for better understanding*



# EASR 2016 Conference

## Relocating Religion

### Helsinki 28 June – 1 July 2016

Annual conference of the EASR  
Special conference of the IAHR

Welcome to the annual conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) that will be held from 28 June – 1 July 2016, at the University of Helsinki, Finland. The theme of the conference is Relocating religion.

Religion has always been a moving concept. Throughout history, it has changed place, shape, function and content; conceptions of religion have been dependent on theoretical or political interests and strategies.

Religion can be framed as a means of identity-work, world-building and well-being, but it can also be perceived as a consumer good or a security threat. 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. All of this requires interdisciplinary scholarly imagination and critical new approaches.

In recent scholarship, religious change has been conceptualized from a variety of theoretical perspectives. When focusing on the modern period, some scholars speak about the vitalization of religions, secularization and post-secularity, while others refer to re-sacralization and re-enchantment. Concurrently, the need for more knowledge and understanding not only of religion, but also of secularization, secular positions and non-religion has been underlined. Many of these perspectives highlight the significance of religious change as a cultural and social phenomenon. Such perspectives are, however, equally applicable to the study of religious transformations in other contexts than the modern period. The conference will offer the opportunity to explore changes and continuities in the forms, practices and implications of religion at all levels of societies and cultures, in the past as well as in the present. Language of the conference is English.

Keynote speakers:

Giovanni Filoramo, University of Turin  
Anne-Marie Korte, University of Utrecht  
James R. Lewis, University of Tromsø  
Linda Woodhead, University of Lancaster

#### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

15 November to 31 December 2015

#### **Registration:**

15 February to 1 May 2016

Organizers: The conference will be organized by the Study of Religions at the University of Helsinki in collaboration with the Finnish Society for the Study of Religion, Comparative Religion at the Åbo Akademi University and the Donner Institute, Turku.

For further information, please, contact: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/easr-2016/>

## **British Association for the Study of Religions**

Registered Charity Number 801567  
(Affiliated to the IAHR and EASR)

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

Held at 1.30 p.m. onwards on Tuesday 8 September 2015 at Kent University, Canterbury

#### **1. Welcome.**

The BASR President opened the meeting by welcoming all members (26 members plus one guest attending).

2. **Apologies received** from Denise Cush, Elizabeth Harris, Ursula King, James Cox, Helen Waterhouse, Matthew Francis, David Robertson, David Wilson, Paul Tremlett).

3. **Minutes of the AGM, 4 September 2014** (published in the BASR Bulletin 125, November 2014). Accepted and signed.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

None that are not covered by any other item on the Agenda

#### **5. Presidential address** (Graham Harvey):

The President opened his address with thanks to everyone attending the conference and expressed his gratitude to the conference participants and organisers for making his last conference as President such a success. He also expressed his thanks to the past presidents for their ongoing support and contribution. He then thanked the members of the executive committee for their work in the past year.

GH reported that the discipline and the BASR are in a good state, financially due to the success of the last conferences but also academically due to the good publications (e.g., DISKUS) and the visibility in Social Media which gained much strength in the last years. He reported that the EASR and the IAHR have both acknowledged the impact of the BASR for the discipline. He also mentioned the importance of the BASR in the wider Teaching & Learning sector.

At the end GH mentioned the next EASR conference in Helsinki and asked members to attend (28.6-1.7.2016) as well as the conference of the new Cuban association (to be held in July 2016 in Havana). Members expressed their thanks to GH as outgoing BASR President.

#### **6. Secretary's Report** (Bettina Schmidt)

The Secretary began her report with a short reflection on the outcome of REF 2014. The success of the BASR to get more members elected to the TRS panel had a positive impact on the outcome and reflects the strength of the BASR.

She then thanked the past and present members of the executive committee for their support during her two terms as secretary and expressed her gratitude to the BASR members for electing her as secretary six years ago.

The current membership list (including Honorary Life Members) lists two hundred and sixty five (265) members. Since the last meeting we gained 18 new members, two members withdrew and four members died (Leon Schlamm, Edward Bailey, Lance Cousins, Ian Harris).

An ongoing problem is that several members have not paid.

The committee has met two times since the last meeting: in February at the Open University in London and before the conference began on Monday in Canterbury. The discussion about the bursaries was conducted on-line which saved costs.

The BASR awarded two sets of bursaries this year. Five bursaries were awarded to support early career scholars attending the IAHR Congress in Erfurt (Amy Whitehead, Beth Singler, Ethan Quillen, Rebecca Lynch and Dave Eaton). All gave papers and were otherwise involved in the congress. A report will be published in the next Bulletin. In addition we awarded five bursaries for the BASR conference (Richard Saville-Smith, Aled Thomas, Krittika Bhattacharjee, Claire Wanless and Theo Wildcroft). In both cases it was a good competition.



10 applications for the BASR conference bursary were received in time (plus 2 enquiries weeks after the deadline), and 10 applications for the IAHR special bursary. All award winners accepted the bursary and attended the conference. Their report will be published in the next Bulletin.

The IAHR was well attended by BASR members and the BASR hosted a reception together with the Irish Society of the Academic Study of Religions. At the reception the BASR and the ISASR honoured Prof Brian Bocking, former President of both associations who retired end of August. He sent his sincere thanks to the executive committee and the BASR after the Congress. He was deeply touched by the occasion.

BS further reported that she attended together with the BASR President the IAHR International Committee meeting that elected a new executive committee for the IAHR. Tim Jensen became President and Afe Adogame, also a BASR member, became Secretary General of the IAHR. At the AGM of the EASR Jim Cox was made Honorary Member in recognition of his contribution to the discipline.

However, the positive outcome of the IAHR was overshadowed by the news about Stirling. Members of the executive committee that attended the IAHR discussed the situation in Erfurt and decided not to wait for the AGM but to send a support letter to Stirling University. While the official response was only a general statement sent by the Communication Office there are signs that the University might reconsider their options.

In conclusion BS reported that her main work for the BASR remained keeping contact with members and with other organizations and individuals about the BASR.

Members expressed their thanks to BS as outgoing BASR Secretary.

#### **7. Treasurer's Report and Accounts** (Stephen Gregg)

(A table with accounts and pre-prepared report follow these minutes)

The treasurer began his report with stating that the BASR account has a solid balance despite an increase in travel expenses of the executive committee and bursaries due to the IAHR congress 2015. An ongoing problem is the non-paying members. SG suggested changing payment of subscription to Standing Order and PayPal only as it might increase payment of subscription. SG further reported that the executive committee will draw up a proposal how to spend the income from the conferences (e.g. more bursaries, essay prizes, prize for outstanding PhD thesis) in the coming months and circulate it to members.

In the discussion members suggested a three-year-subscription and online membership subscription. Members expressed their thanks to SG for his work.

#### **8. Diskus Co-ordinating Editor Report** (Suzanne Owen)

SO reported that the first issue of DISKUS 2015 was published prior to the conference with a special issue from one panel and that two more issues will follow in the next weeks. She mentioned some revisions of DISKUS to be discussed and implemented over the coming months among the executive committee.

GH expressed his thanks to SO.

#### **9. Bulletin Editors' Report** (prepared by David Wilson and David G. Robertson)

Both Bulletin editors could not attend the meeting. GH reported that David Wilson is stepping down as Bulletin Editor but that David Robertson will continue. BS reported that the executive committee supported the proposal to move to e-print of the Bulletin only. It will save money, help with workload issue and ensure that the Bulletin comes out in time. Members expressed their support and indicated the usefulness of the hyperlinks in the e-copy of the Bulletin. SG confirmed that printed copies will be produced for the archive.

#### **10. Website and Social Media** (Chris Cotter)

CC reported that the new website was set up successfully by David Robertson. He mentioned the decision of the executive committee to digitalise the Occasional Papers and to make them available free via the website. CC further reported that Social Media and in particular Facebook has become very active (e.g., about Stirling). He mentioned an idea to nominate a Web Officer to look after the technical side of the work.

#### **11. Religious Studies Project** (Chris Cotter)

CC expressed his thanks to the executive committee and the BASR for their ongoing support of RSP. There are

now over 180 podcasts online available as well as 5 transcripts. The RSP team visited Chester University in October 2014 and discussed with students and staff issues of Digital Humanities. CC further reported that the RSP counted 44000 downloads in 2014.

#### **12. Teaching & Learning group (Dominic Corrywright)**

DC reported about the Government consultation on RE Curriculum in 2014 and that he was member of expert panels about RE teaching. He mentioned that the final outcome was a bit more balanced than the first proposal. DC further reported that the T&L section of the BASR website will be redesigned soon. He also mentioned the new Teaching Excellence Framework which will replace QA visits.

#### **13. Change to Constitution**

The Executive Committee proposes to add a paragraph about the rules for proposing and electing honorary life members into the constitution (published in the last Bulletin, page 3). After a discussion following slightly revised text was approved:

#### **8. Rules for proposing and electing honorary life members:**

Honorary Membership can be awarded to members who have made a significant and sustained contribution to the BASR. Proposals can be made to the committee at any time prior to a General Meeting. These will be discussed and reviewed by the committee and put forward to members at the General Meeting for election.

#### **14. Election of Honorary Secretary**

The BASR received one nomination: Graham Harvey and George Chryssides nominated Stephen Gregg, Wolverhampton University, as Honorary Secretary. No further nomination was submitted. Approved by all members.

#### **15. Election of Honorary Treasurer**

The BASR received one nomination: Stephen Gregg and Jonathan Tuckett nominated Chris Cotter, Lancaster University, as Honorary Treasurer. No further nomination was submitted. Approved by all members.

#### **16. Nomination of Life Membership**

The committee received one proposal of Life Membership for Prof Brian Bocking. He was associated with the BASR for many years and took on many roles. He has been a robust champion of the study of religions and the need for high quality, non-confessions study of religions. He revised AUDTRS as effective forum and leading group at the time of RAE. He was a keen promoter of the EASR and on the executive committee of the IAHR for many years. Later on he became founding member of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions. Overall he was an inspirational teacher, supportive colleague and passionate about the need for students to get experience through fieldwork visits and placement.

Proposal was approved by all members.

#### **17. Proposal for collaboration with the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions**

BS reported about an approach by Dr James Kapalo, the President of ISASR to establish further informal collaboration with the BASR. He mentioned, for instance, a joint conference (perhaps in Belfast). While the idea of a joint conference met wide support no further collaboration seemed necessary due to the link between the associations via the EASR.

#### **18. BASR conference 2016**

SG informed member that the next BASR conference will be held at Wolverhampton University, 5-7 September 2016.

#### **19. Hand-Over to President Elect**

At this point the outgoing President, Graham Harvey, handed over to the incoming President, Steven Sutcliffe. SS expressed his thanks to the BASR for the trust in him and promised to continue the good work of the



previous President.

## 20. Any Other Business

Marion Bowman conveyed the thanks of the EASR to the BASR for its important work for the discipline. Jolyon Mitchell, President of TRS UK, thanked the BASR for allowing the TRS UK to arrange the General Meeting at the BASR conference.

The meeting ended with an expression of thanks to GH and BS for their work over the last years.

## 21. Date and Venue of the next meeting

At the next BASR conference in Wolverhampton

The meeting ended at 3 p.m.

## **BASR TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 15th AUGUST 2015**

By Stephen E. Gregg BASR Honorary Treasurer  
at University of Kent, Canterbury, Tuesday 8th September 2015

Treasurer's Report concerning Summary Accounts Statement for YE 15/08/15:

General income for the year was £8,664.

Bank Interest: Negligible as per recent years due to historically low base rates.

General expenditure for the year was £7951 – an increase on the average spend due to greater distribution of student bursaries and support for IAHR attendance.

Printing and postage is increased marginally to £1,099. The Committee continue to urge members to accept a digital version of the Bulletin, although hard copies are still available.

Committee expenses are higher than recent years at £2,817. The increase is largely down to support for the President, Secretary and Treasurer to attend the IAHR.

Association Membership is reduced to £445. The BASR executive made the decision to leave the REC, and IAHR and EASR figures are down slightly on last year due to a slight fall in received subscriptions.

Bank charges – bank transfer fees for paying our subscriptions to EASR and IAHR (and converting Sterling/Euros/Dollars) remain high per-transaction, but amount to a negligible £35.

Insurance remains in place, and two years' premiums appear in this accounting period.

£350 further has been spent, supporting the Religious Studies Project website.

The Open University-hosted 2014 BASR was a financial success, bringing in a profit of £1,649.

Bank Accounts: As of August 15th Bank Accounts totalled £29,154, an increase of £713 on last year despite increased spending.

**Summary of Financial Position:** Overall, the finances of the BASR are very good with adequate reserves to ensure our successful continuation. The 2014 conference has built on the profit from recent conferences, which 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.

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS  
ACCOUNTS as at 15 AUGUST 2015**

**RECEIPTS****PAYMENTS**

<b>General Fund</b>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2013-14</i>		<i>Notes</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2013-14</i>
		<i>TY</i>	<i>LY</i>				
<b>Balance at 16 August 2014</b>		<b>28441</b>	<i>19624</i>	Audit Fee		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Inland Revenue	<i>i</i>	2340	<i>0</i>	Printing & Postage Bulletin		<b>-1099</b>	<b>-1066</b>
Subscriptions		3460	<i>3840</i>	RSP		<b>-350</b>	<b>-350</b>
Bulletin insert fees		0	<i>0</i>	Committee Expenses	<i>ii</i>	<b>-2817</b>	<b>-1073</b>
RSP		0	<i>0</i>	Society Subs		<b>-445</b>	<b>-785</b>
Bank Interest		25	<i>21</i>	Bank Charges		<b>-38</b>	<b>0</b>
		<u>34266</u>	<u><i>23485</i></u>	Insurance	<i>iii</i>	<b>-762</b>	<b>0</b>
				<b>Balance in hand 15 August 2015</b>		<u><b>28754</b></u>	
						34266	
<b>Conference Fund</b>		<i>TY</i>	<i>LY</i>			<i>TY</i>	<i>LY</i>
<b>Balance at 16 August 2014</b>		<b>11618</b>	<i>3387</i>	2014 Conference Expenses	<i>iv</i>	<b>-1190</b>	
2014 Conference Receipts		2839		2015 Conference Expenses	<i>v</i>	<b>-1250</b>	
2015 Conference Receipts		0		<b>Balance in hand 15 August 2015</b>		<u><b>12017</b></u>	
		<u>14457</u>				14457	

**BALANCE SHEET as at 15 August 2015**

<b>Cash Funds: Bank Accounts</b>			<b>Represented by:</b>	
Lloyds Current	3847	<i>8778</i>	General Fund	28754
CAF Cash	10932	<i>5438</i>	Conference Fund	399
CAF Gold	13814	<i>13789</i>		
PayPal Holding	536	<i>411</i>		
Petty Cash	25	<i>25</i>		
Cheques not yet presented	0	<i>0</i>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>29154</b>	<i>28441</i>		<b>29154</b>

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY UP TO 15 AUGUST 2015**

<b>Balance as at 16th August 2014</b>	<b>28441</b>	<b>Conference 2014</b>	
Total Receipts	8664	Total Receipts	2839
Total Payments	-7951	Total Payments	<b>-1190</b>
Net Receipts/Payments	713	Deficit/Surplus	<b>1649</b>
<b>Balance as at 15th August 2015</b>	<b>29154</b>		

**NOTES TO ACCOUNTS**

- i* Gift Aid return 2011-15
- ii* Includes IAHR attendance costs
- iii* 2014/15 & 2015/16 premiums both within this accounting period
- iv* 2014 OU student bursaries
- v* 2015 IAHR student travel bursaries

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





# FEATURES

## ADVICE FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS: Surviving Your Viva

It's unhelpful to someone not to worry about their viva – it's only natural! However, the first thing to remember is that you, not the examiners, are the world's leading authority on the topic. No one else has spent four years, or possibly considerably more, focusing exclusively on your subject matter. Universities often have problems finding someone with appropriate expertise to conduct the examination, and I must confess that I have sometimes examined theses on topics about which I knew relatively little. The examiners will have knowledge of related areas, of course, and are able to assess the general quality of your discussion. The viva serves first to ensure that the work is your own, and second to determine whether you can discuss and defend your material verbally as well as in written form. If you have met regularly with your supervisor, and been allowed to submit your thesis, you are in with a very good chance: you should not be subjected to a viva if your thesis is doomed before you go in!

Practices differ across universities, but a typical arrangement is to appoint a chair, with two examiners – one internal and one external. The chair should not contribute to the discussion or ask questions. His or her role is to ensure fair play: you should not be subjected to over-aggressive questioning or an unduly lengthy grilling. The chair should

also ensure that you are as comfortable as possible – that water is available, and that you can ask for a comfort break if needed. If you do need a break, ask for one – you will not do yourself justice if you are less than comfortable. Some universities allow your supervisor to be present at the viva as an observer. While some candidates welcome this, others feel inhibited by a supervisor's presence. The choice is yours; supervisors can be useful for giving you feedback on your performance, and for clarifying any recommendations about corrections or resubmission.

You needn't worry about forgetting parts of your material. This is not like an undergraduate examination. You can't readily forget years of intensive study, and you are allowed to take a copy of your thesis into the viva. It is important to do this, since the examiners may well direct you to specific passages for discussion.


Examiners can ask about any aspect of your thesis. I remember one candidate being surprised when I asked about his statistical information, where a table column did not seem to add up to the expected 100%. He seemed to expect all the questions to be about religion, although he was able to explain what he had done. Although it is not possible to predict every question, there are some standard questions for which you should

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be ready, and which are frequently used as ice-breakers. What made you select your chosen topic? What is your thesis about? Can you summarise it in a couple of sentences? Why is it important? Why did you choose to investigate it in the way you did (e.g. book based rather than fieldwork, formal interviews, participant-observation)? Would you do the research differently if you were starting over again? (This last question, of course, should be hypothetical – but don't be afraid to be honest. If you don't want to sign your own death warrant on this one, you could try mentioning an area that could have been explored further, if time and wordage had permitted, or time spent on unproductive fieldwork or literature research.)

You may be allowed to make suggestions about who might examine your thesis. It is worth giving this some thought and perhaps taking the initiative in mentioning one or two possible names. If you end up with an examiner whom you have criticised in your thesis, this should not be a cause for alarm: he or she may well be pleased to be thought significant enough to merit discussion. I can recall my own viva many years ago, when the external examiner was someone I had quite disparagingly criticised in my thesis. When I saw his name on the examiners list, I was terrified! However, after questioning me about my remarks on one of his books, he very graciously said that he thought my comments were justified! So it is worth holding one's ground, rather than grovelling

apologetically.

Once the viva is finished, the examiners will normally ask you to wait outside before telling you the outcome. If they seem to take a long time, it probably doesn't mean that they are arguing about whether or not you should pass. There is usually a fair amount of paperwork to complete, and examiners like to finalise the exact wording of their report. If you have met regularly with your supervisor and responded  advice, the worst outcome should be referral. Most candidates are asked to make corrections – typographical errors and perhaps slight modifications.

If you are asked for corrections, these will be indicated precisely in the examiners' report. You should follow their instructions precisely. I have heard of supervisors who recommended candidates to make additional changes to their thesis at this point. This is very bad advice – don't do it! If you do what the report asks, then you must pass. If you are referred, again the examiners' reservations and the needed additional work will be indicated. It's disappointing if this is the outcome, particularly when your enthusiasm for the topic is probably waning after so many years. However, don't try to do a quick fix – a referral means that there is a reasonably substantial amount of work still to be done. More positively, though, you will end up with a better quality thesis at the end of the day, with more likelihood of publication and favourable reviewers' comments on the book that should emerge.

I have never known a candidate fail a Ph.D. solely on account of the viva. So there is really no need to be nervous. You are the world's leading authority on the topic, after all.

# FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT ...IN NEW ZEALAND

Will Sweetman,  
University of  
Otago, NZ

In idle moments online, having had my fill of cat videos, I sometimes seek distraction by checking the British press for reports tagged “New Zealand.” The resulting mix of hobbit, whale and sheep stories—leavened only by the occasional report of a particularly dramatic earthquake or violent death—suggests that Her Majesty's farthest-flung realm is seen from the UK as a place where there is little that is new. Nevertheless, from my perspective—as someone who moved here from the UK a little more than a decade ago—Religious Studies as a discipline is undergoing significant change in New Zealand. Since coming here, I've learned a great deal about earthquakes, and the seismic metaphor strikes me as not a bad way of expressing how pressures build up unobtrusively over the long term, resulting in occasional shattering events, such as the closure of programmes in Religious Studies at Canterbury University (from 2008) and more recently at Massey University. These were both programmes established during the great wave of post-war expansion in Religious Studies (at Canterbury from the 1960s and at Massey since 1970), and their closure suggests that the

conditions have since become much tougher.

These conditions have also forced change elsewhere. At Waikato University, where Religious Studies emerged in the late 1980s, has been reshaped as Studies in Religion and draws on courses from other disciplines to embed the study of religion in an interdisciplinary context. From 2016, Auckland University's undergraduate theology programme (BTheol) will be replaced by a new major in Theological and Religious Studies. It was always something of an anomaly that Religious Studies was not taught at the country's largest university, situated in its largest and most ethnically-diverse city. This owed something to the belief among some of Auckland's philosophers in the 1960s that Religious Studies would act as a Trojan horse for Theology in the university. In fact, something closer to the reverse has taken place. Theology—previously taught in theological colleges and seminaries—was formally offered through the University from 2000, but declining enrolments and loss of staff have forced a broadening of scope to include courses on religion taught in other departments within a new major.

The other programmes in Religious Studies in New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Otago, both exist within larger units. In recent years



Victoria has had between six and eight full-time staff teaching Religious Studies within the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies. Victoria's longstanding strength in student numbers has been reinforced in recent years by notable achievements in gaining external research funding from the Royal Society of New Zealand (the main source of government funding for blue-sky research) and the Templeton Foundation. Rick Weiss has examined the impact of colonialism, missionary activity and new technologies on the ways that Hindus reconceived their traditions at the beginning of the modern era. Joseph Bulbulia has created a longitudinal study in post-earthquake Christchurch on how religion affects disaster recovery. And Geoff Troughton is studying Christian missions and peace activism in early nineteenth-century New Zealand. Bulbulia has also been part of a project on religion's functional role in the emergence of complex societies using data from Pacific island societies. Results of this work have been very widely reported—even in the British press.

At Otago, currently four full-time staff teach Religious Studies papers within a Department of Theology and Religion consisting of twelve full-time and two part-time staff in all. Unlike Theology, the academic study of religion has no natural constituency of support outside the academy, and at Otago we have therefore consciously sought to create institutional and financial bulwarks to help secure the always tenuous position that results for the study of religion. We have been successful in establishing an endowment for a biannual lecture series honouring

Albert Moore, who established the discipline (as "Phenomenology of Religion") at Otago in the mid-1960s. In 2017, the third series of Moore Lectures will form part of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his first lectures in "Phenom." An open-access journal, *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* (<http://relegere.org>), established by staff in Religious Studies and Biblical Studies, is the first New Zealand journal devoted to the academic study of religion. Among other things, it has provided an opportunity for graduate students to take their first steps in publishing and editing (three recent PhDs have been co-editors). We have also been able to secure external funding for two positions (one full-time, one part-time) in Buddhist Studies, and for a range of undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships in Buddhist Studies. We have made full use of other funding opportunities by regularly nominating external scholars for fellowships offered by the University. In recent years, both James Cox (Edinburgh) and Joy Hendry (Oxford Brookes) have visited Otago for a semester as De Carle Distinguished Lecturers. (One of the earliest De Carle lecturers in the Department was Ninian Smart. His visit in 1971 helped both the fledgling Department and the emerging NZASR, whose first conference took place in August that year). Otago has also recently followed Victoria's lead in gaining the Department's first major grant from the Royal Society. Ben Schonthal will analyse the relationships between Buddhist monastic law and state law in Sri Lanka, in order to understand why the sangha has struggled to

restrain some new monastic groups that preach messages of hatred and intolerance towards religious minorities.

Religion is, of course, also studied outside of Religious Studies programmes. Most notable, perhaps, is the recent flourishing the cognitive and evolutionary study of religion. The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Survey, led from the Department of Psychology at Auckland, includes Joseph Bulbulia (Victoria) among its core leadership, as well as several other scholars with interests in religion from other universities (Mike Grimshaw, formerly in Religious Studies, now in Sociology at Canterbury University; William Hoverd, Massey; Geoff Troughton and John Shaver, Victoria). At Otago, staff in Psychology, Philosophy and Religious Studies at Otago collaborated on a major conference in 2010, which resulted in a volume edited by Greg Dawes and James Maclaurin, *A New Science of Religion* (Routledge, 2013).

And so life goes on peacefully in the shire, while we wonder what other forces are at work under our feet.

Image credits: cover from the recently open-sourced British Museum collection; pp 28, 31, David Robertson; p 24, Christopher Cotter; p 29, Anja Pogacnik.

# A-LEVEL CHANGES in England and Wales

Wendy  
Dossett,  
University of  
Chester

Starting in September 2016, A level Religious Studies in England and Wales will look very different. In England an AS qualification will no longer contribute to an overall A level grade and may be taken only as a standalone qualification. An A level will reflect two years of linear study. In Wales (where all schools must now follow the WJEC specification) the modular system will still apply.

Content has changed dramatically. All A levels will cover an additional area of study. No longer can an A level include only Philosophy of Religion and Religious Ethics (P/E), it will now include a compulsory systematic study of a religion. Similarly, no longer can an A level be obtained only through the systematic study of religions (a non-dominant but possible variant in the past); P/E must also be studied.

While some universities have responded to more than a decade's dominance of P/E at A level and adjusted their curricula to emphasise it, there has been an overall unease that the study of religions was side-lined, and students were entering the workplace or arriving at university with little genuine religious literacy. Students might be able to debate the Inconsistent Triad, but they were ill-informed about the complex and shifting relations between religion and culture; they were lacking in historical and text-critical skills, and they were comparatively unable to engage with debates about religion and

power in local and global arenas. On the release in November 2014 of the Department for Education's Subject Criteria a vigorous debate ensued with strong voices defending the P/E agenda on the basis of its valuing of the higher order critical skills, and deprecating the systematic study of religion as a multi-fact approach. Robert Jackson's defence in the Times Educational Supplement (02.04.15) of the study of religions, in response to A.C. Grayling's claim for the superiority of philosophy, was (though focused on GCSE) a helpful media intervention.

The consultation resulted in a re-balancing and disaggregating of Philosophy and Ethics, represented in the second draft of the DfE Subject Criteria (February 2015). This restructuring, however, came at the cost of some of the important sociological content which had appeared in the original draft. The original content had, amongst other benefits, functioned as a corrective to the 'World Religions approach' and its loss is unfortunate.

At the time of writing the exam boards are grappling with feedback from OfQual on draft specifications. It is notable that only one of the English Boards, Edexcel, is proposing any kind of textual option, and that is only in New Testament. In Wales, the WJEC is still trying to make the case to Welsh Government for a text option (again NT only). Some of the initial drive of the HE engagement had been to enhance

text-critical skills, but the Boards have taken the view that systematic text-based study is too hard to sell outside of a small market in Christian foundation schools.

Despite some disappointments, the overall outcome of the development at A levels is positive. The last 15 years have seen the dominance of P/E; discourses embedded in an Anglo-European Christian culture. The benefits of P/E have been retained in the new curriculum, but it has been extended to include some of the kind of study of religions that would be recognised by BASR members.

HE colleagues will be aware of the anxieties amongst RE teachers about their readiness to deliver the new specifications (which may not be approved by OfQual for several months yet) starting in September 2016. As well as subject content concerns, there is anxiety about the balance-shift in mark distribution away from knowledge and understanding towards evaluation and critical skills. Colleagues may want to consider what training and support opportunities they can offer to teachers in the coming academic year and beyond.

The website of the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education provides links to the draft specifications offered by all the Boards.

# THE CONTRADICTION OF DEMOCRACY AND SCIENCE

Jonathan Tuckett,  
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Back in November 2014 a colleague made the following announcement for a conference taking place in Britain:

Besides his role in the fields of art, philosophy and politics, Mark Rayner made an imposing contribution to the field of the (comparative) study of religion aka history of religions, covering such diverse and broad themes as Thomism, Druidry, Catholicism, Protestantism, Wicca, Millennialism, Puritanism and various other religious exoteric traditions of the East and the West, and exerting a remarkable influence on other authorities in the field. In the wake of the groundbreaking work of Edward Talcott, Evelyn Ackermann, Neil Roubach, Christopher Rosch, Alexander Matthias and other international scholars, Rayner's religious historical achievements deserve to be reassessed sine ira ac studio -- to claim their rightful place in the history of 19th century religious historiography.

The announcement was met with a swift response:

Dear all,

*The rehabilitation of a democratist is a rehabilitation of a democratist even under the guise of the history of religions. Various attempts have been undertaken in the past to transform Rayner from a democratist ideologue and celtic*

*rabble-rouser into a respectable scholar. Not only in the political realm of the so-called New Left. Even the second edition of the Encyclopedia der Religion has done so.*

*Already in 2008 I argued against that. Those who are interested in my (and Johann Robensen's) criticism of Rayner may have a look at the argument to be found in Religionswissenschaften vol.89 ("The Study of Religion under the Impact of Democracy").*

*Academic discussion lists should not be harassed by the worn out claim for a new impartiality regarding Britain's most influential postwar democratist.*

*Best regards,  
Benjamin Penulham.*

From this came a protracted discussion, involving a number of prominent academics over whether we should rehabilitate the work of Mark Rayner back into the academic corpus. The discussion revolved around one central question: can Rayner's democratic polemic and celtic sympathies be distinguished from a viable, objective, history of religions?

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While the above counter-factual version of events may seem facetious, it is done with a purpose. This piece is a response to the

recent firestorm on the DOLMEN email list regarding an Italian conference focusing on the work of Julius Evola. I will not comment as such upon Evola or his work, a topic I know little about, but rather I want to focus on the presuppositions involved in the various respondents' arguments on the place of Evola. What I want to highlight, firstly, is that the reaction against Evola is socio-culturally embedded and determined by the fact that the Allies won the Second World War. This is not to say that I condone Evola's anti-semitic views wherever they may occur. Rather, it is to say that had circumstances been different and the war ended in the favour of the Axis, Evola's scholarship may now be considered the height of academic excellence.

Lying behind the comments of the respondents who reacted negatively to the possibility of rehabilitating Evola is a universalising tendency. By this I mean, following Max Scheler, that we take a particular "natural view of the world" to be the "absolute natural view of the world" (Scheler 1980: 73-75). That is, rather than having a view of the world as it is for us, we instead get a view of the world as it is. The consequence of this "absolute natural view of the world", particularly in Europe, has been 'the peculiar positivist idea of judging the development of all human knowledge on the basis of a small curve segment that shows only the development of the



modern West' (1980: 148). I do not think it would be fair or accurate to suggest that all the respondents belong to the positivist tradition. What I will say, however, is that they have a view of the democratic society which is universal in the respect that their argument takes democracy to be "natural" in the sense of "proper" and "right". That is, there is an unwritten assumption that any form of governance which is not democratic is in some way deviant. This has a consequence for their understanding of the nature of the university and the relation of both to science.

While the respondents did not necessarily make a clear statement on what "good" social science looks like, they would not be the first. Indeed, the norms of science identified by Robert Merton (discussed below) are more often revealed by the indignation of peers toward their fellows rather than stated in "law books" of science (Merton, 1973: 269). Indeed, much of what is quoted below comes from an email conversation which cannot be treated in the same way that we might a journal article. There is much more scope for retraction and change in the participants' viewpoints. More important are the presuppositions about "science", expressed through "indignation" as Merton suggests, that framed the conversation. For instance, the following comment is illuminating for the respondent's understanding of "science":

Notwithstanding that, I strongly object your purpose to change Julius Evola from a fascist intellectual into a serious, even eminent, historian of religions. Evola himself would have protested against your laudation and wish to describe his findings in terms of an

ordinary scholarship. He concentrated his interest on political and spiritual matters and heavily rejected the bourgeois knowledge generated by the university system.

This was followed by the following comment: "My impression has grown after your last contribution that your agenda is not a purely scientific one." Underwritten in the conversation, and an assumption that was actually shared on all sides, was a conception of science endorsed by Martin and Wiebe's in "Religious Studies as a Scientific Discipline: The Persistence of a Delusion" (2012), an article that was also hinted at with approval in the exchange. As Martin and Wiebe explain, religious studies as it is done in universities now originated in the works of Max Müller (1823-1900) and Cornelius Tiele (1830-1902), who advocated a Religionswissenschaft – a "science of religion" (2012: 11-12). The project of Religionswissenschaft is a "specialisation" within the wider project of Wissenschaft (science) understood as "knowledge for the sake of knowledge." This is said to stem from around 1810 and the University of Berlin and is the defining characteristic of the "modern research university". This "ideal" of "knowledge for the sake of knowledge" was endorsed by both sides: the one suggesting that one can identify a section of Evola's corpus that can be described as "knowledge for the sake of knowledge"; the other arguing that his rehabilitation would be a perversion of this very aim.

As the above quote should make clear, the respondents believe that the fascist sentiments of Evola is a clear threat to this Wissenschaft project. This was later extended

further to suggest that in the case of Italian academia that (at the least) the History of Religions has become infiltrated by pseudoscientific, pseudohistoriographical and anti-modernist trends. This degeneration, they suggested, means that what was once unashamedly ideological rhetoric/polemic/scholarship can now be presented as respectable historiographical practice. In contradistinction to this, they propose, universities should be composed of research communities that have access to rational, epistemologically, honest, scientifically founded critical knowledge, intellectually anchored to constitutional and antifascist values. While it is never explicitly stated, it becomes clear that the only way to pursue a genuine social science is to exist in a democratic society. It is only the values of the democratic society that allow the promotion of science without any "ideologising" factors.

It should be noted that "ideology" as it is used by these respondents is inspired by Karl Mannheim's (1936) sociology of knowledge. Broadening Marx's understanding of "ideology", Mannheim claimed that no human thought was immune from ideologising factors and these could only be mitigated by a sociology of knowledge. But what becomes clear in this usage is that "ideology" contains a negative connotation and is generally something that "they" have. "Ideology" is a threat to "us". Thus, in the case of the respondents there is no consideration of the possibility of an "ideology of democracy". Something that was tacitly brought up by another respondent who (contrary to the above) suggested

that it was almost impossible to get a job in Italian academia if one is associated with the (extreme) right.

To see this “ideology of democracy” in more detail we can turn to the work of Merton who was influenced by Mannheim (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 20-21). Merton has been one of the strongest advocates of the necessity of democracy for science as extolled particularly in the essays “Science and the Social Order” (1938) and “The Normative Structure of Science” (1942). Take the following passage:

[In totalitarian structures] incompatible sentiments must be insulated from one another or integrated with each other if there is to be social stability. But such insulation becomes virtually impossible when there exists centralised control under the aegis of any one sector of social life which imposes, and attempts to reinforce, the obligation of adherence to its values and sentiments as a condition of continued existence. In liberal structures the absence of such centralisation permits the necessary degree of insulation by guaranteeing to each sphere restricted rights of autonomy and thus enables the gradual integration of temporarily inconsistent elements. (Merton 1973: 266)

Like the respondents, then, Merton shares the view that totalitarian governments inhibit the progress of science. In discussing the norms of science Merton claims scientists now ‘recognise their dependence on particular types of social structure’ (1973: 267).

In particular there are two norms that are related to democracy. Universalism demands that all truth-claims be consistent with observation and previously confirmed knowledge. As Merton explains: ‘The circumstance that scientifically verified formulations refer in that specific sense to objective sequences and correlations militates against all efforts to impose particularistic criteria of validity’ (1973: 270). By this Merton means that science does not distinguish its results on the grounds of gender, race, religion, nationality, etc. Acceptance or rejection of scientific data is dependent upon its verification either by already established knowledge or further observation.

So dependent is science upon verification by fellow scientists that they in effect police one another, generating an attitude of disinterestedness (1973: 276). This, in effect, is another way of expressing the project of *Wissenschaft*. Merton also recognised the frailty of the norm: ‘To the extent the scientist-layman relation does become paramount, there develop incentives for evading the mores of science. The abuse of expert authority and the creation of pseudo-sciences are called into play when the structure of control exercised by the qualified compeers is rendered ineffectual’ (1973: 277). Wiebe (2012) has made a similar argument.

The norm of universalism is particularly important because Merton argues that it is also to be found in democracy: ‘impersonal criteria of accomplishment and not fixation of status characterise the open democratic society’ (Merton 1973: 273). As noted by Kalleberg,

this is the closest Merton comes to ever defining the norms of democracy, which he notes is typical of contemporary sociology in failing to provide definitions of the concept (Kalleberg 2010: 195). But at the least it can, according to Kalleberg, be said that there is an “internal relationship” between the universalism of democracy and the universalism of science (2007: 155).

However, we should not ignore that Merton writes in the context of the rise of Nazism and Kalleberg admits that he is politically ‘left of the centre, being antifascist and prodemocracy’ (2010: 183). Throughout, “The Normative Structure of Science” is an attack upon the state of science under Nazi totalitarianism, concluding that science cannot function under any form of totalitarian rule. However, as Kalleberg comments indicate, aside from the norm of universalism Merton gives no clear definition of “democracy” and even less consideration to “totalitarianism”. The definition of the latter has come under particular scrutiny and many would question if Nazism can be classified as such. According to Kershaw, “Nazism” has come under the rubric of “fascism”, “totalitarianism” and “sui generis phenomenon” at various points in time (Kershaw 1985: 18-19). This is not to say that Merton was wrong in saying that science was undermined by Nazism, rather it is to highlight the logical leap where it is assumed that this analysis of Nazism can then be applied to all totalitarian States.

It is possible (ironically) to see the universalising tendency in Merton’s presentation of the norm of universalism. Universalism entails a non-racist and egalitarian State. But

if we look at the earliest known democratic state, Athens, we see this clearly isn't the case. Around the 4th century BCE when Athenian democracy was at its height, the population of Athens was around 300,000 and the number of citizens entitled to vote was somewhere between 30,000-60,000. And a significant portion of those not allowed to vote were women and slaves. In Merton's context sexism and slavery are considered to be antithetical to democracy, yet the Athenians had no such problem reconciling them.

A distinction needs to be made between universalism among scientists (pre-established impersonal criteria) and universal admittance into the scientific community. For instance, Merton claims that 'universalism finds further expression in the demand that careers be open to talents ... To restrict scientific careers on grounds other than lack of competence is to prejudice the furtherance of knowledge' (Merton 1973: 272). But he reveals this not to be the case historically when he speaks of the 'anomaly of a Charles II invoking the mores of science to reprove the Royal Society for their would-be exclusion of John Graunt, the political arithmetician, and his instructions that "if they found any more such tradesmen, they should be sure to admit them without further ado"' (emphasis added, 1973: 272). Speaking of the early days of the Royal Society, Barnes, Bloor and Henry have observed that 'Boyle and the leading figures in the formation of the Royal Society were concerned to establish and maintain a universally recognised relevant community of scientific observers and experimenters' (Barnes et al. 1996: 145). This "relevant community"

was therefore to comprise a number of people whose opinions could be taken as "trustworthy". While merchants, artists, and tradesmen were included within this community as Charles II instructed, ultimately it was 'the gentlemanly status of the majority of the witnesses in the assembly of the Royal Society which finally underwrote the Society's claims' (1996: 146). The word of a gentleman was taken as more trustworthy quite simply because he was a gentleman as opposed to a merchant who was expected to be concerned with profit. By consequence, among their peers Robert Boyle's (1627-1691) research was deemed better than Robert Hooke's (1635-1703) on the basis the former was a gentleman and the latter his servant. Barnes, Bloor and Henry conclude that under the Royal Society 'scientific facts could only be reliably formulated by certain people and the conditions of observation are specific conditions of social interaction' (1996: 149).

Significantly for Merton's claims to universal admittance, they go on to say that Boyle's 'specifications have remained the demarcation criteria of science generally' (1996: 149). They discuss a transition in the social basis of "fact production" within science from gentleman to virtuoso, to philosopher to scientist. Indeed, it is because of these changing boundaries of "acknowledged reliability" that Hooke's findings were re-evaluated and now considered better than those of Boyle's. This "acknowledged reliability" has also developed within science such that in the case of Robert Chambers (1802-1871), scholars were even denounced from commenting on specialisations other than their own

(1996: 156-162). And – though it may cause a flinch – the same again occurred in Nazi Germany when 'in accordance with the dogma of race purity, practically all persons who do not meet the politically imposed criteria of "Aryan" ancestry and of avowed sympathy with Nazi aims have been eliminated from universities and scientific universities' (Merton 1973: 255).

Neither of these cases violates the notion of universalism among scientists. All this phrase establishes is that within a selected group of persons, all are deemed equal and there are appropriate means of resolving conflicts among members. The point I wish to make is that there has never been such thing as universal admittance. Not even now. If the reader objects then they need only think of the submission process of journal articles. Although the review process may be "blind", submitting the article in the first place requires indicating institutional affiliation or writing a covering letter (a statement of relevance) to justify why the article should be considered in the first place. Anecdotally, the bias against the unaffiliated scholar is also emphasised by publishing houses who have begun to show reservations about publishing monographs by scholars who do not already have a position established at a particular university. But for the layman who may have no institutional affiliation or the ability to claim an appropriate degree, or a student getting an appropriate degree, this curtails their ability to enter the scientific community in just the same way as Hooke, regardless of how valid their insights might be. At a micro level this also occurred during the discussion on Evola



when certain contributors expressed concern that the emails were also being sent to people who were not registered with the email group and were therefore being involved in the discussion. Superficial though it may be, they had not yet met the entry requirements for the “group”.

An important point to note in relation to this is what universities deem “good” science is in a large sense determined by who gets to do science at all. Significantly, democratic societies can play a hand in determining this “who” just as much as fascist ones. To see this we need only look at the contradiction inherent in one of the respondents’ claims:

It goes without saying that the academic study of Interwar fascism/s and related ideologies is not only useful but necessary for a democratic society. However, it should always be supported by the proper epistemic warrant and conducted under a critical, non-apologetic caveat.

However, the reason learning about fascism is necessary for a democratic society is because that society must safeguard itself against fascism. But this requires an apologetic which is in favour of democracy. After all, the critical, non-apologetic study of fascism may conclude that fascism is better than democracy, thereby engendering a potential upheaval of that very democratic society. This is a point that came up in my discussion with Tim Jensen for the Religious Studies Project (Tuckett and Jensen, 2014): education is, in part, aimed at developing the “nationalist identities” of students.

Take, for instance, the recent surge in academic posts being offered

that focus on the topic of Islam. Such posts haven’t come about because universities are just now recognising a deficit in their Religious Studies departments. If we take the World Religions Paradigm as the basis that determines how RS departments are structured – an expert in each of the major religions is required – then there are other more pressing deficits (perhaps the biggest being that departments are organised according to a World Religions Paradigm!). No, the spate of posts involving Islam has more to do with the fact that Islam is an “issue” for those democratic states. The more people know about Islam, the better able they are to “handle” (re. defend against) it.

If this does not seem that convincing then it is worth recognising that this hiring policy, in Britain at least, has been inspired by the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). REF, the government instrument of a democratic society, has determined the amount of funding universities have received based on a research profile that these universities submit. Most significant about REF, in comparison to previous iterations, has been the introduction of the “impact” factor in determining the level of funding received. “Impact” states that: ‘The sub-panels will assess the “reach and significance” of impacts on the economy, society and/or culture that were underpinned by excellent research conducted in the submitted unit’ (REF 2012: 6). This is then further interpreted by the various divisions according to their intentions. In the case of Social Science, REF ‘wishes to encourage the submission of a wide range of types of impact outside academia’, within the spheres of ‘creativity,

culture and society; the economy, commerce or organisations; the environment; health and welfare; practitioners and professional services; public policy, law and services’ such that the ‘beneficiaries of impact may include (but are not restricted to) community/ies, the environment, individuals and organisations’ (emphasis added, 2012: 68). But this focus on serving people outside of academia entails a privileging of instrumental research that services various clients.

Studying previous iterations of “applied research,” Desmond King observes that as far back as 1965 such research ‘might be politically unpalatable for the prevailing government’ (King 2011: 75). This brought about the creation of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), a branch of RCUK, to oversee funding applications that in 1981-82 came under fire from the Rothchild Inquiry which questioned the “scientific” nature of the SSRC. King notes that Rothchild validated the quality of research of the SSRC and its research questions, as well as confirming its scientific status (2011: 83). But at the same time Rothchild accepted a very broad notion of “client” for applied research. King goes on further to argue that since then, “applied” has taken on narrower meanings and it is out of this restrictive understanding of “clients” that REF’s “impact” was inspired (2011: 85-86). The consequence of this is that REF approved research must also be “politically palatable.”

Phillip Moriarty indicates elements of this beginning in the Worry Report, Increasing the Economic Impact of the Research Councils (2006), which advocates that universities steer research in ways

that will produce economic growth (Moriarty 2011: 66). This has led to a contamination of the peer review process brought about by REF. As REF has made clear: 'HEIs [Higher Education Institutes] are reminded that impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within the higher education sector (whether in the UK or internationally) are excluded' (REF 2012: 68). This concern with society beyond academia is again emphasised later: 'The main panel particularly acknowledges that there may be impacts arising from research within Main Panel C disciplines which take forms such as holding public or private bodies to account or subjecting proposed changes in society, public policy, business practices, and so on to public scrutiny' (2012: 86). Moriarty warns of this subtle shift in language that occurs in the report from "peer" review to "user" review. This emphasis on "user review" is also discussed by Tittle: 'the extent to which [the clients] want sociologists' help, they want us to find evidence that supports their interests. But can this form the basis of scientific validation? I doubt it, unless scientific validity is no more than the ability to appease one's clients' (Tittle 2004: 1643). He further observes that this kind of validation 'leaves the door open to two competing analyses coming to contradictory results being equally valid to one another. Publics rarely want to find the "truth" in the sense of looking at the full array of positive and negative evidence' (2004: 1643).

Moriarty goes on to detail how the baffled responses by a number of universities over just how "impact" was to be measured/defined was summarily ignored by the research councils (Moriarty 2011: 67-68). This

was later followed by a 2009 petition, signed by 17,500 academics, to have the category removed from the assessment criteria that was ignored by HEFCE. The full demise of academic research for Moriarty is made clear by RCUK's tips for completing "impact statements" which place an emphasis on putting outcomes, users and beneficiaries of research first and designing the project around them (2011: 68).

King, Moriarty, Tittle, and others who have commented on this issue, all happen to be Mertonian sociologists. Moriarty, for example, expresses the norm of disinterestedness as research driven by "curiosity": '[scientists] carry out their work not to "engage with users" nor to "generate impact" but to address a question, or series of questions, about how nature behaves' (2011: 60). He and the others, like the respondents, are advocates of a critical, non-apologetic academia. Yet, what becomes clear from Moriarty's argument is that REF, an instrument of a democratic society, rather than protecting the norm of disinterestedness, corrupts it through the promotion of "Impact." Indeed, my point above about the spate of posts in Islam is predicated on the fact that hiring policy by universities is now determined by the "Impact" factor of the applicants. In a recent post on the way in which universities are run in Australia, Gillings and Williamson conclude that 'universities require stable government funding to ensure their pursuit of cash doesn't corrupt the reason they exist in the first place' (2015). Ironically, REF as the source of "cash" has produced this very corruption in Britain. As funding is effectively "graded" with

more going to better performing universities, many an anecdote about the 2013/2014 hiring policies indicate universities interested in gathering academics who are REF-able and likely to draw in more cash.

There is, however, an issue with Gillings and Williamson's account:

A university degree implies that a graduate is capable of performing the roles we have certified them for. Over three-quarters of the students using the MyMaster essay-writing service were enrolled in finance or economics degrees.

One-third of the final-year class of medical students at Sydney University had irregularities in an assessment designed to teach them empathy.

Management of our personal finances and health are two fields where we place absolute trust in providers. Do we really want a future filled with corruptible financiers and doctors who have no empathy? (2015)

Note here, the functionality implied of a university education. The purpose of a university education – in these two subjects – is to produce specialists in a specific role. The concern of Gillings and Williamson is that the specialists produced cannot function as such. But one may note that this "advanced training" – put bluntly – for a practical vocation is actually at odds with the vision of science recommended by the respondents and Mertonians. This was another point to come up in the conversation with Jensen: universities are becoming increasingly aware that a university education isn't practical enough for the students. Most university education currently teaches students how to be better

researchers, but “researcher” is a role useful for only a small collection of jobs, or only a small part of a single job. It is likely for this reason that Edinburgh recently hired a post specialising in Christian-Muslim relations. There is a practical benefit for the student in terms of acquiring a skill that has obvious applications in the job market.

One may call this a perversion of Montgomery Watt’s original intention to rectify ‘a gap in the teaching of the Faculty of Arts in respect of the study of religion from a scientific, factual or neutral standpoint’ at Edinburgh University (quoted in Cox and Sutcliffe 2006: 14). But my point is that the idea that universities are in the business of promoting disinterested research is just that – an idea. Take for instance, the notion of *Wissenschaft* which Martin and Wiebe trace back to 1810. In reality *Wissenschaft* as “knowledge for the sake of knowledge” didn’t take hold in universities until as late as the 1920’s after Max Weber’s “Science as a Vocation” (1919) (Gregory 2012: 358). In fact, prior to this, *Wissenschaft* was subordinated in universities to *Bildung* – education as self-cultivation (2012: 348-349).

In brute terms: democratic states and universities have never been in the business of safeguarding science as a critical, non-apologetic pursuit. Speaking of the use of the term “totalitarianism,” Kershaw has pointed out that the lack of definition means it is more often used as ‘an ideological instrument of negative political categorisation’ (Kershaw 1985: 30). The charge I wish to level against the respondents on Evola is that their use of “democracy” is “an

ideological instrument of positive political categorisation.” That is, they have an uncritical, apologetic agenda aimed at promoting the idea that democratic states are good for science. The position of the respondents, then, is no less ideological than that of Evola. That we may think of Evola’s position as bad is really only a matter of circumstance. This is not to say I endorse Evola’s work. I know nothing about the man. This is not to target them for criticising Evola. In this context, Evola was just a marker by which this ideologically positive political categorisation became apparent. It was just as present in Merton. Indeed, the vast majority of us probably take it for granted that democracy is good for science and rarely pause to think about whether it actually is. But, I suggest, if we do stop and reflect on the matter, then science – as *Wissenschaft*, as a critical, non-apologetic pursuit advocated by many of us – is no better pursued under a democratic state as it is under a fascist one. As examples like the REF indicate, both are in fact as inimical to science as the other – if for different reasons. So, as I see it, if you wish to promote science, then you cannot promote democracy or fascism at the same time.

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# CONFERENCES

**BASR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015,  
UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT  
CANTERBURY, 7-9 SEPT 2015**

*A Collage from a Conference*

“Look for the pillars”, advice from friendly airport staff at 7am on a Sunday morning on the way to BASR; in airports, shopping centres, cathedrals, pillars are the place for plugs. The provision of power. Power has come a long way since Foucault. I settle down to the four hour delay, an opportunity to tinker with PowerPoint slides. My paper is written, my drift from the BASR accepted synopsis checked; as a bursary ‘boy’ - I comply with what I said I would say.

This year’s conference is held by the University of Kent, in the quintessentially English city of Canterbury. Beyond the theme of this conference (Religion in the Local and Global: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Challenges), there is an added exciting element to the proceedings, as 2015 marks fifty years of the Study of Religions in the University of Kent.

Our field, and therefore our membership, is small but diverse. Fittingly, a glance at the range of panels and papers in our programmes suggests a celebration of the diversity of Religious Studies as a discipline. Various research interests combine to create panels ranging

from Global Christianities and the Politics of Religious Studies, to Global Positions of Yoga and Religion and Culture in Scotland. Theologians discuss amicably with anthropologists; classical and literary specialists debate happily with researchers into lived religion. There are members and non-members of the BASR; professional academics, independent researchers and early career doctoral candidates. The tone of discussion is friendly rather than cliquy; and the only real cultural separation of the event is the informal evening quiz, which divides us on generational lines, leaving those of us born after 1965 amusingly at sea.

The moment to speak is near. A reassuring final read through in a quiet place dis-settles, page 7 is absent. Shit. It must be in Edinburgh, thrown over the top by a printer with intentional discollation. There’s nothing like a missing page to bring focus to the gulf between the written words and my moving memory. Sure, I can busk it, but ripped from its context an empty page is a pothole which words can fill, but as an ugly patch on a brand new road.

And now I’m speaking (a librarian printed a new page 7, for free, on his own initiative, circumventing countless account bureaucracies). The heavy duty warnings about time have increased the tension;

how can you get a yellow card when there’s been no foul? I speak too fast, because I have too much to say. My mouth is dry, I cannot speak. Marathon runners grab water and run. But water and speaking don’t work. The silence, as I drink, is intimidating, I return to the words, glancing, but not looking, at the eyes of an audience I cannot gauge.

And then, it is over, in a flash, in a moment, in a twinkling of the eye. Polite applause, nice things said, I have to check that their sincerity is not made of empty coke cans. And I’m off, I want to do it again.

If, as Graham Harvey recently wrote, religion is the negotiation of ‘food, sex and strangers’, I wonder how this applies to a gathering of researchers into religion? Our accommodations are certainly more monastic than hedonistic: functional, clean if tiny cells lit by fluorescent light. And outside of sharing papers, our main shared task is the development of our community of practice : making and affirming amicable connections in loose knots and networks. Social time at the bar leads to discussions between seasoned academics and early career scholars on their current research, prompting inspiration for future areas of research and collaborative work.

As a group we physically form and reform around buffet lunches,

coffee breaks and evening drinks. And like most conferences, this one runs not just on the nutrition, but the mental stimulation of food and drink. Offerings may be carefully labelled according to dietary preferences and intolerances, but everyone fuels both thought and speech with caffeine and sugar. No break is complete without them. As someone who works with, and researches, bodily practices, the effect is as

fascinating as it is unsustainable. I struggle to find space and stillness in the schedule to recharge, until a group of us break free for an hour's walk to breathe clear and warm our bodies again. I know that some schools and centres have started to include short shared practices of movement and stillness into curricula that aim to

nurture the whole body, and not the disembodied mind. I am reminded strongly of Richard Carp's critique of the disembodied academic body. If next year's conference takes the performativity of religion as its theme, I wonder, is there not an opportunity here to explore a more animate, embodied expression of academic life?

We settle into the rhythm of plenary and panel, food and networking. Two AGMs are held. For the BASR, Graham Harvey and Bettina Schmidt are honoured for their service and shuffle committee seats to make way for a new President in Steven Sutcliffe

and new Secretary in Stephen Gregg, and Christopher Cotter joins the arena as the association's new Treasurer. The second evening sees a drinks reception hosted by the University of Kent, and the booklets distributed amongst delegates note the research and contribution made to Religious Studies by our Canterbury hosts.

But amidst the brightness of talk



Graham Harvey and Bettina Schmidt preside over their final AGM

and tea, there is concern about the current climate of Religious Studies – and the uncertainty surrounding the Religion department at Stirling. This becomes particularly prominent when the conference comes together in a panel to think about the future of the field. Central to this discussion is the Research Excellence Framework and its underlying impact imperative. Do we see it as Smaug sitting on our pot of gold, as an obligation on us to appear perfect like the Elves, or as a Hero journey with us collectively playing the part of Frodo Baggins?

Unease is expressed about

increasing duress on the idea of the intrinsic worth of what we do. In an external environment in which the idea value is dominated by medical science and its instrumentalized notions of impact, we are acutely aware that our worth will not be demonstrated by invention of the next drug, gadget or profit opportunity. The issue is exacerbated by an increasingly managerialistic attitude to

academia on the part of policymakers and institutions, and a fetishization of what can be measured. Further dangers lie in the ongoing potential for being squeezed between Theology and Philosophy, in dilution of our thought processes, and then specifically in the threat of closure of individual departments.

Appropriately given the theme of the conference, we feel our way forward by thinking about our past - back to our beginnings, and Ninian Smart's powerful articulation of the necessity of the interdisciplinary space for the study of religion. And not just backwards but outwards, to see our present and potential links right across the humanities and social sciences.

Practical steps are suggested, from engagement with schools to strategic thinking about our participation in the REF. Underlying these is an awareness that our strength lies in our diversity, our flexibility, and our ability to critically bring together a

wide range of approaches, and of the need for a defence of the human empathic approach that looks at vulnerability with gentleness. Perhaps the future is about those who are prepared to take risks and think differently, rather than those who territorialize.

The session closes with a positive air bordering on defiance. The instrumentalist approach will fade. And when it does, we will still be here.

What do we hope Religious Studies will look like in fifty years? Buoyed by curiosity, I decide to ask other people.

I hope it's still around, says someone. And then another, and another. Perhaps the panel has made people more reflective (wary?) about the health of their chosen discipline, perhaps this would have been their answer regardless. There are other replies: more women in the field, more engagement with new media, more inter-disciplinary work. Balancing out the shouts of 'more' and 'more' are some murmurs for 'less': less defensive scholarly engagement with the public, less wrangling with 'pet' questions ('if I never have to hear about theology vs. religious studies again, that'll do me'). Fifty years is too far into the future for some to venture a guess, and yet we are the improbable gathering in someone's head, fifty years ago. And the forlorn paragraphs on the print-out of my presentation –'went-through-too-quickly', 'didn't-have-time-to-go-into'– whisper that whether its fifteen minutes or fifty years, perhaps the problem with time is that there's simply not enough.

I ask another question, an easier one this time: what has been enjoyable or provocative about the conference so far? It meets with raised eyebrows, polite smiles and sometimes, gentle groans. The BASR is my first conference as a delegate; for some of the people I speak with, this is conference number four this summer. But the answers come in. Hearing about other work in the field, hearing work similar to their own, being able to present to their peers. Newcomers comment that it seems more like a friendly gathering of familiars than a stiff meeting of clacking shoes and straight collars. The leisureliness of mealtime chats is mentioned ('these little lemony cakes are outstanding!'). Every answer, I realise, acknowledges the value of other people in some way. Co-panelists, audience members, moderators, tea-time companions: 'It's nice to be reminded, someone says, that there are other bodies in the field.'

Claire Wanless, Richard Saville-Smith, Aled Thomas, Krittika Bhattacharjee and Theo Wildcroft

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**SENSING RELIGION, 33rd INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION (ISSR) CONFERENCE, UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DE LOUVAIN, LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE, BELGIUM, 2-5 JULY 2015.**

The sizeable bilingual conference of the Société Internationale de Sociologie des Religions/ International Society for the Sociology of Religion is held every two years. The 2015 gathering took place in the new town of Louvain-la-Neuve, which was

purpose-built to house the Francophone Université Catholique de Louvain after it split from the Flemish-language University of Leuven in 1971. The theme, "Sensing Religion", drew attention to both the human means of expressing and experiencing religion (emotions, the body, the five senses, identity construction and so on) and the technology-mediated communication of religion to people (art, dance, music, film, television, websites, and online environments, among others). Additionally, the ways that academics reflexively engaged the religion, 'sensing' it as a research area and also 'sensing' currents in scholarship, was a theme of importance. There were about 470 delegates at the conference (only paid-up members may present papers at ISSR conferences). An immersive museum exhibit, "Sense It!", curated by the Laboratory of Prospective Anthropology (LAAP), at the Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve, offered conference participants 'not a room that one visits, but a place where one acts'.

The conference chair was Anne-Marie Vuilleminot, and the ISSR President, Peter Beyer (University of Ottawa) delivered a Presidential Address on Saturday 4 July, titled "Sensing Religion, Observing Religion, Reconstructing Religion: From Identity to Instrument in Post-Westphalian Context". Appropriate to a sociology conference, there were dominant topics, methodologies, and geopolitical foci including: global Pentecostalism, analysis of 'big data' sources including the European Values Survey, religious change in Eastern Europe, migration and religious diversity in



previously non-diverse countries, Islamophobia and racism more generally, and the role(s) of religion in government, education, hospitals, and charities. A series of sessions called Author Meets Critics saw: Veronique Altglas present on “From Yoga to Kabbalah: Religious Exoticism and the Logics of Bricolage” with responses from Yannick Fer and Alix Philippon; a session on Grace Davie’s Religion in Britain: A Persistent Paradox (2015) chaired by Robert Dixon, with responses from John Eade, Elfriede Wedam, Yannick Fer, and Mia Lovheim; Victor Roudometof spoke on “Globalization and Orthodox Christianity: The Transformation of a Religious Tradition” with responses from Kathy Rousselet, Lionel Obadia, and Peter Beyer; and Yvette Taylor speaking on “Queering Religion, Religious Queers” with responses from Dorota Hall, Kristin Aune, and Sarah-Jane Page (among other sessions).

My own paper, “Neolithic Monuments in Britain as Numinous Sites of Spiritual Tourism” was in the Religion, Tourism and Pilgrimage thematic strand, organised by John Eade (University of Roehampton) and Giuseppe Giordan (University of Padua). This strand hosted two excellent sessions: the one in which my paper was scheduled included papers on Raelian Pilgrimage by Francois-Xavier Bauduin (Centre d’Etudes en Sciences Sociales du Religieux, France) and on British Haj pilgrims by Sean McLoughlin (University of Leeds); and the other had two marvellous papers about Japan, Tinka Delakorda (JSPS, Japan) on “The Sacred Excluded” and Zuzana Mala (University of

Tsukuba, Japan and Masaryk University, Czech Republic) on “Sensory interactions With Nature in Japanese Sacred Mountains”. I attended a related session, “Sacred Sites as Shared and Contested Places”, which included Kathryn Rountree (Massey University, NZ) presenting on “Holy For Whom? Modern Pagans and the Contestation of Sacred Sites” and a fascinating paper by Nimrod Luz (Western Galilee College, Israel) which described an emergent pilgrimage site devoted to the Discalced Carmelite nun, Marian Baouardy (1846-1878). Another thought-provoking strand, The Marketization of Religion, organised by Francois Gauthier (University of Fribourg) and Tuomas Martikainen (University of Helsinki) included papers by Marcus Moberg (Abo Akademi University, Finland) on “Management Discourse and Church Organization: The Case of Finland” and Tuomas Martikainen on “The Marketization of Religion: Beyond Secularisation”.

The 34th ISSR Conference will be hosted by the Australian Catholic University with Robert Dixon as conference chair, and will meet in Melbourne, Australia in early July 2017.

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**CESNUR (CENTRE FOR STUDIES ON NEW RELIGIONS, TORINO) ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015, TALLINN UNIVERSITY, ESTONIA, 17-20 JUNE**

The 2015 CESNUR conference was held at University of Tallin, Estonia, and was organized by Dr Ringo Ringvee (The Estonian Ministry of

Interior). The theme was ‘Religious Innovation and Religious Change in the 21st Century’. There were no plenary lectures, although the interesting address by Massimo Introvigne (President of CESNUR) at the conference dinner at the Von Krahl Theatre, on Friday 19 June, ‘The Sociology of Religious Movements and the Sociology of Time in Conversation’ performed something of that function. As CESNUR is an organization that welcomes members of new religions, there were ‘insider’ papers and responses from members of the Twelve Tribes, the Plymouth Brethren, and the Church of Scientology, among others.

Academic presentations included: Liselotte Frisk and Sanja Nilsson (Dalarna University), ‘Upbringing and Schooling of the Children of the Exclusive Brethren: The Swedish Perspective’; Bernard Doherty (Macquarie University), ‘Spooks and Scientologists: Secrecy, Surveillance, and Subversion in Cold War Australia, 1954-1983’; Tommy Ramstedt (Abo Akademi University), ‘Credibility, Authority, and the Paranormal: The Relation Between Science and Paranormal Claims Within the Finnish Alternative Spiritual Milieu’; Timothy Miller (University of Kansas), ‘Will the Hutterites Survive the 21st Century?’; Carole M. Cusack (University of Sydney), ‘Gurdjieff and Sufism: A Contested Relationship’; and Christopher Hartney (University of Sydney), ‘Kenja: Unique Australian NRM or Auditing Without an E-Meter?’

The International Society for the Study of New Religions (ISSNR) held its third two-yearly meeting since it began in 2009 during the conference. This was a successful

gathering that acknowledged the quality of the first five years of the International Journal for the Study of New Religion (Volumes 1-4 under the editorship of Carole M. Cusack and Liselotte Frisk, and Volume 5 under the current editorial team of Alex Norman and Asbjørn Dyrendal) and developed plans for the future, as the new President, Milda Ališauskienė (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania) was elected. The meeting thanked the outgoing President, Jean François Mayer (Religioscope Institute, Switzerland). The ISSNR sponsored sessions at CESNUR and will do so at the EASR in Budapest in September 2011.

The conference was well-attended, though the absence of long-time CESNUR stalwart J. Gordon Melton (Baylor University and the Institute for the Study of American Religion) due to extreme weather conditions that presented him travelling was noted by all. At the conference's close after lunch on Saturday 20 June, members were taken by bus to the first of a series of sacred sites in Tallin, the Song Festival Grounds (Lauluväljak): <http://lauluväljak.ee/en/>. The bus then dropped the group off in Toompea, the upper town, and Ringo Ringvee guided through sites including: the Alexander Nevsky Russian Orthodox Cathedral (from the outside); St Mary's Cathedral (Dome Church or Toomkirik), the oldest church in Tallinn, formerly Catholic and now Lutheran; and the fascinating Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which is a unobtrusively nested within the town walls, with a crypt filled with folk art, and a church with a distinctive iconostasis. The dedication is to the Virgin With

Three Hands, and the complex also houses a crafts business, a small monastery, and the Ukrainian Cultural Centre: <http://www.ukk.ee/en/ora>. CESNUR 2016 will be in Seoul, Korea, from 28-30 June.

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### XXI IAHR WORLD CONGRESS 2015, AUGUST 23-29, ERFURT

For the XXIst Quinquennial Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions, the British Association for the Study of Religion graciously offered five bursaries with the condition that those chosen present a short description of their experiences. This is the result. Likewise, because the Congress itself embodied a unique congregation, a gathering of scholars whose research interests, though interrelated via a shared focus on "religion", were just as culturally diverse as their subjects, we thought this report might equally reflect that diversity. As such, the following will present five viewpoints, from more specific descriptions of particular panels, to an outline of the Congress as a whole, designed in an effort to capture the essence of the theoretical and methodological variety for which the IAHR is so well known.

Amy Whitehead, *Theology and Religious Studies*, University of Winchester

In my contribution I am reporting on a particularly fascinating panel, chaired by Sarah Pike: "When Rocks and Plants are Persons:

Ritual Innovation and a Reassessment of 'Animism.'" In this panel, the speakers, David L. Haberman, Donna Seamone, Graham Harvey, and Sarah Pike surveyed a variety of uses of "animism" as a discourse for understanding the boundaries between the "human" and "non-human" worlds, as well as "religious" rituals, performances and "things," as found in samples from their culturally wide ranging ethnographic accounts. While Haberman discussed animism in terms of the tendency to anthropomorphize non-human natural "objects" and places in India, Pike addressed animism and "Biophilia" in relation to radical environmentalism/tree melding where "the blurring of boundaries between human and tree bodies and the projection of human emotions onto forests." Seamone furthered the discussion, engaging the "new animism" as a "performance approach to ritual." She did through an "eco"-ethnographic account whereby the festivities that take place at a corn maze celebration on a family farm and market in Nova Scotia, Canada are addressed and framed as "active, agentic subjects" which provide a platform for particular ritualized performances which involve human as well as other-than-human persons. Then, through an examination of his fieldwork at the Riddu Riddu Festival (organized by the Sami community) of Norway, Harvey brought indigenous knowledges, performances, and "entertainment" into conversation to look for the "signs of animism". Harvey's presentation considered how these events "might be labeled 'environmental' or 'shamanic', but may be better understood as relational

interactions between human and other-than-human persons." The panel provoked a series of questions. Conclusively, critical recovery of "animism" leads to "the new animism," the "signs" of which are to be found in embodied eco-action, anthropomorphized objects, seasonal relationships with vegetation (the corn maiz/maze), and performances (among other things). The ideas presented in the panel successfully challenged taken for granted dichotomies about what it means to be "human" and "non-human", and further, how to re-engage with the world in ways that lead to paying attention in more respectful ways.

*Dave Eaton, Centre for Death and Life Studies, Durham University*

The conference was a great week to share new ideas and insights into the cognitive science of religion, and to be unabashedly excited about crematoria, funerary obelisks, and all things thanatological.

One of many notable CSR panels was entitled "Predictions, Experience and Behaviour in Religion" hosted by Aarhus University's "Religion, Cognition and Culture" research unit, which set the tone for a week of wide ranging and stimulating discussion. Their panellists presented findings from experiments ranging from the comparative effects of religious primes on prosocial behaviour in different cultural settings, to the consequences of source credibility on cognitive resource allocation.

As per the request of the State President of Thuringia at the conference's opening ceremony, they also considered the insight



Brian Bocking receives his Honorary Lifetime Membership at the BASR/IAHR reception

their research could provide into contemporary manifestations of violent religious extremism. The conference was also a fantastic opportunity for three internationally renowned centres for Death studies: Durham's Centre for Death and Life Studies, Tokyo's Centre of Life Studies and Practical Ethics and Radboud's Centre for Thanatology, to share ideas and discuss possible cross-cultural collaborations.

I presented my paper on a cognitive approach to experiences of the presence of the deceased on Facebook as part of a joint panel between Durham and Tokyo. The panel also featured Prof. Ikezawa's stimulating discussion of the relative influence of religious ideas on Chinese and Japanese bioethical discourses;

Prof. Tomizawa's presentation of her fascinating post-colonial insights into 18th century Indian funerary cultures; and Prof. Bowman's application of Douglas Davies' concept of "Death-styles" on the changing memorialisation practices found at Loch Lomond. The panel was well attended, and featured an interesting (and prolonged!) closing discussion in which attendees from four continents discussed possible future focuses for Death studies research. The degree of interest expressed in multi-disciplinary approaches to Death studies portends well for this still emerging field.

*Rebecca Lynch, Social/Medical Anthropology, University College London*

The panel I contributed to focused on work that crossed the categories of religion and medicine and featured papers by both medical anthropologists and those within religious studies. This provided space for an interesting dialogue between disciplinary positions and while we did not agree on whether it was valuable to retain such classifications, nor whether these categories matched emic understandings, the variation of different ethnographic settings and objects of analysis gave us an excellent range of examples to think through in our debates. The broad range of papers being presented meant that there was so much of interest to attend. I was particularly drawn to papers that sought to include material objects into their analysis through various means—those papers that examined the non-human as well



as the human. This was approached in different ways on different panels, including papers on re-examining animism, the impact of technology on pilgrimage and religious materiality. These papers positioned the non-human as subjects, as affecters of change, and as mediators of dualisms, and are interesting approaches to think through in pushing forward work in this area.

The friendly and welcoming nature of the conference made it easy to follow up discussions outside the formal panels and I was able to hear something of the many different projects that other delegates were working on. In addition I received ideas about where to publish, key journals that might be of interest, and even possible PhD examiners. With so much to think about and avenues to chase up, I have rarely attended a conference where I felt I gained so much out of attending.

*Beth Singler, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge*

At this year's IAHR World Congress I was involved in two panels: "Conspiracy theories in Contemporary Religious Discourse," and the second of two panels on "Revisionisms and Diversifications in New Religious Movements." Therefore I got a front row seat to papers from luminaries such as Eileen Barker, Graham Harvey, and J. Gordon Melton. Finding time to fit in the other panels I wanted to attend in such a packed programme was difficult, and many I spoke to

found themselves torn between many excellent choices. I would have liked to have attended the panel on "Current Perspectives on Atheism" as I particularly wanted to see a paper by Ingela Visuri on atheism and autism which overlaps with my own work. The host town, Erfurt, provided some lovely locations for chats over coffee and sightseeing, so I managed to catch Ingela at another time and pick her brain!

Ann Taves' panel on "After Deconstruction: Reassembling the Study of "Religion/s" and Other Dubious Categories" presented her work on the building block approach (BBA), which I had first seen her present on at AAR 2014 in



Kim Knott and Eileen Barker at the recording of the RSP Christmas Special

San Diego, and which I wanted to give another try. This panel proved to inspire some lively debate both during the Q&A session, and later, over a few lunches and dinners. While still not convinced about the move towards a typology drawing on research from the field of cognitive science, I saw the value of the conversation. Likewise, there were interesting discussions around the panel inspired by the forthcoming edited volume *After World Religions: Reconstructing*

*Religious Studies* (Routledge, 2016), by David Robertson and Chris Cotter of the Religious Studies Project (RSP).

The highlight of the conference for me, ignoring the rather lovely informal tour of Erfurt's bakeries I went on with some colleagues, and my part in the RSP's recording of their Christmas Quiz, was Wouter Hanegraaff's keynote on "Fantastic Religion: Esoteric Fictionality and the Invention of Tradition," which had one of the best powerpoints of the conference.

*Ethan Quillen, Religious Studies, The University of Edinburgh*

I had the esteemed pleasure to present twice at the IAHR, within a single panel: "Current Perspectives on Atheism." While this all-access, one-stop shop to my research regrettably portrayed the panel as the "Ethan show" (especially since our third presenter was unable to attend), it also generated a very useful discussion on what I have termed "the pragmatism of polyvocality". That is, between my usual argument for the utility of using discourse analysis when studying atheism, and a discussion of three discursive representations of Atheism within the context of aesthetic media (novel, art, and film), Ingela Visuri (Gävle University, Sweden) provided an intriguing, and well-designed, introduction to her research on the correlation between "theistic belief and unbelief", via a critical review of publications that have

established autism as a "case of Atheism". The discussion that then followed is perhaps where my notion of the value in the study of Atheism's heterogeneity appeared the strongest, particularly due to the excellent chairing by Johannes Quack (Goethe University Frankfurt). As is often perceived by neophytes first encountering the academic study of Atheism, the discourse that we have engendered is quite diverse, particularly concerning our terminology, which ranges from "Atheism", to "un-belief", and "non-religion". If fact, it can at times seem like we focus a bit too much on the words we use, rather than on our subject. However, as we experienced in our panel discussion, and as I hope continues, especially for the benefit of our subjects, this can also produce a rather useful polyvocality. That is, given the diversity of approaches represented within our panel and its discussion, and with the theoretical and methodological variations displayed by each of us, we equally created a complex and exhaustive discourse. Thus, just like the diversity of the IAHR, our panel quite nicely mirrored the celebrated differences within the study of religion, albeit writ small.

*Each of the contributors wishes to express their sincere gratitude for the travel bursary from the BASR.*

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**THE MORALITY OF  
MILLENARIANISM, QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY, BELFAST, 28TH  
AUGUST 2015**

The day-conference 'The Morality of Millenarianism', held at the elegant Lanyon building of

Queen's University, Belfast and hosted by the school of History and Anthropology, aimed to open up new directions in the study of millennialism and apocalypticism through discussion among scholars from different disciplines, including anthropology, religious studies, geography, history and sociology. It was intended as the first in a series of conferences, and publication avenues are being discussed at present.

Eight papers were presented by invited scholars through the day, in four themed sessions. The first session focused on the American right. Zoe Hyman (QUB, History) talked about "White Supremacists and the Battle against Integration in the US". Though not appealing to date-specific prophecy, racist rhetoric nevertheless had a broad millenarian trajectory which looked to the past and the future for support, and in which desegregation's ultimate endpoint was the destruction of the United States. Although the KKK claimed that segregation was scriptural, most pro-segregationists appealed to science rather than the Bible. Hyman argued that there was nevertheless a religious imperative underlying these arguments.

"Theonomy and Libertarianism" from Crawford Gribben (also QUB History) moved the discussion to the present day. He started with the novels of James Wesley, Rawles, also the founder of survivalblog.com. Their narrative is a familiar one to students of millenarianism: financial then military unrest, followed by the invasion of the Other, although Gribben stressed these ideas are not as marginal as sometimes thought. He went on to describe such works as exemplifying

Theonomy - "that divine law will produce a free society" - a narrative popularised in the US through Christian reconstructionism and the work of R. J. Rushdoony. Rawles and others are attempting to create what they call the "American redoubt", and have been involved in the formation of settlements including The Citadel in St. Maries, ID. The potential is there, of course, for violence, Gribben noted.

The second session was more theoretical. My paper described a common vocabulary of Othering in conspiratorial, millennial and propagandist literature, and showed how this vocabulary encoded moral concerns above all, by showing the Other as bestial, unfeeling and deliberately inverting norms through ritual. I argued that conspiratorial language was increasingly prominent in millennial discourse as a result of globalisation, with the Other becoming less a mysterious group at the cultural margins, and more a hidden group within the global culture.

Steve Knowles similarly focused on the Unexpected results of modernity, drawing on Ulrich Beck's notion of a world risk society. Technology and potential catastrophe are intertwined, he argued, with "communities of resistance" (quoting Sivanandan) being produced. The mediapolis as construing the popular morality; for example, the recent fascination with robotic military vehicles, particularly in dispensationalist communities where they are being interpreted as the 'wild beasts' of Revelation.

The third session was something



of a defence of millenarianism. Stefan Skrimshire discussed a Tradition of Marxist scholarship which sees millenarianism as a precursor to social change. Therefore, he argued, the millennial subaltern will always be presented as an irrational other. Apocalypse does not legitimise current political order, he argued, but millenarianism does. It should be seen not as the end of the world, but the eruption of a new world. Citing Latour's recent Gifford Lectures, he noted that climate deniers have clearly realised that it is "indeed an end of their world. And, quite reasonably, they resist it." Millenarianism is not therefore the enemy of neoliberal modernity, but something which is embedded in it, in the possibility of radical change.

Tristan Sturm's paper concerned how Israeli archaeology is used to support and promote Christian Zionism. The millenarian perspective comes through in the understanding that ownership of the ground in the present extends that ownership into the past, and the future. Proving a Jewish continuity from the past justifies present day territorial claims: at the same time, the territory is apocalyptically mapped for the arrival of the Third Temple and the return of Christ.

The final session considered "Fieldwork at home and abroad". Jacob Hickman offered an argument against the social deprivation thesis. Rather than argue that millenarian and revivalist movements are an

attempt to avoid being governed, Hickman invoked Laidlaw's Foucaultian position that power structures operate at all levels simultaneously. Millenarian narratives explicitly attempt to shape power relations and moral framework by changing the terms used. The example given was Hmongism, which uses terminology designed to position a reformulation of traditional



Joseph Webster opens the Morality of Millenarianism conference in Queens University, Belfast

Hmong ritual practise as the 5th column of the world religions. Restructuring Hmong culture to be more sustainable to change the way they think about themselves and their relationship to the rest of the world.

Organiser Joseph Webster discussed how what Christians do in the world and what they read in the bible interrelate. Again citing Laidlaw, he described the tension in the Aberdeenshire fishing village of Gamrie between divine agency and human agency, and the paradox that millennial prophecy simultaneously expands and contracts agency. Human agency, such as fishing quotas, restricts action and agency, yet the belief that they are doing

divine work expands the villagers' agency out. Nevertheless, they take responsibility in some ways for the world, or at least their unconverted friends. Although the Hmong see themselves as agents of change, Gamrieans see themselves as subject to theological, historical changes.

Respondent David Livingstone brought the panel to a close by picking out some common themes and directions. The suggestion that eschatological narratives are essentially social philosophies led him to ask, is eschatology driven by theologies, or driving theologies? He asked if the several connections between these papers - including ethnicity, evolution, eschatology and environment - necessary or contingent features?

Similarly, while I was introduced to new ideas, methodologies and data, and made a number of connections who I will continue to be in contact with, the most fruitful aspect was to note the commonalities, rather than the differences, in the different theoretical approaches. The overriding impression was that the study of millennialism - like that of NRMs and conspiracy theories - is finally moving away from seeing an exotic Other, towards a more fruitful analysis of particular patterns in all human culture. This project promises to contribute meaningfully to this field going forward.

David Robertson  
University of Edinburgh



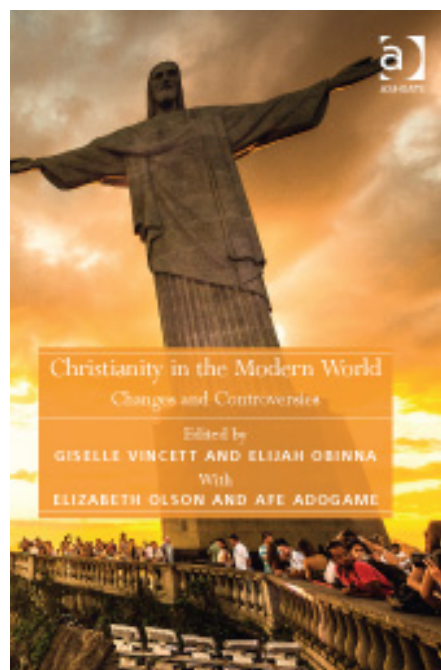
# REVIEWS

CHRISTIANITY IN THE MODERN WORLD: CHANGES AND CONTROVERSIES. GISELLE VINCETT AND ELIJAH OBINNA WITH ELIZABETH OLSEN AND AFE ADOGAME (EDS.), FARNHAM: ASHGATE, 2014, ISBN: 978-1-4094-7025-0 (HB), PP. 196 + XII.

The four editors bring together a very wide ranging selection of essays in this volume, which explore some prominent themes across the development of Christianity in today's world. Most of the contributors are from a sociological background which makes this an interesting collection as many world Christianity texts often have a theological focus.

There are nine chapters in total which cover a range of different continents and varieties of Christianity, including online manifestations of religion. One unifying point, which the editors note in their introduction, is that the focus of the authors is on everyday religion, and the ordinary experiences of people which provides a difference again from some elite studies of theology. I could not adequately discuss all the chapters here so I will briefly outline the contents, before commenting on a couple of chapters. The first chapter focuses on what it termed "Golden Rule" Catholicism amongst Filipino youth, and the second on online churches. The third deals with refugees' religiosity, while the fourth looks at African reverse evangelism in Scotland. The fifth

studies attitudes to sexuality in the UK, and the sixth new forms of Italian monasticism. The seventh explicates "Religious Beat" music in Hungary, the eighth changing religious patterns in Southern Norway, and the last gender and changing ritual meanings in African indigenous religious encounters with Christianity. As with any edited collection there are naturally stronger and weaker pieces, while the readers own interest will also determine what they find of interest or to have greater weight. For myself, I was particularly struck by the excellent chapter by Jayel Serrano Cornelio on the Philippines which seemed to offer both



substance in the discussion and analysis, and picked out a theme that could be explored further in other contexts, making it applicable beyond its own area of geographical study. Elijah Obinna's study on

reverse mission, which challenged the paradigm of what this means and how it is conducted, was also notable for taking up a significant theme in the current global flows of Christianity and religion.

As a reviewer and reader I do, though, have a number of gripes with the text. One of these is the proof reading with different styles of referencing, or errors of style, occurring throughout the volume. Perhaps I am a pedant, but I found it an irritant that in quite a few of the chapters the Harvard style/ bracketed references in the text occurred after the sentence to which it belonged, which contrasted with the Introduction where they were all before, and some chapters mixed both. More substantially, however, I got little sense of connectedness of the volume as a whole. This is, of course, always a facet of edited volumes that they can seem disjointed. But it occurred especially here, there was no clear sense of why these issues had been chosen, nor why certain things were discussed in the context they were rather than any other. The Introduction by the editors told us simply that each one was a significant and vexed issue – and I am not suggesting that any chapter is not significant – but we had no sense of why these chapters and these contexts were here. As such, the whole book seems a random assortment of essays strung together which tell us nothing as a whole. Third, despite its claimed focus on world Christianity the

papers remained very Eurocentric. Only two chapters were focused entirely in non-European contexts (Asia and Africa), while of the others four (nearly half) were focused on the UK – admittedly two of which looked at either immigrant’s religion or reverse Evangelism which gave a sense of global flows, but still left the book unbalanced – the other three were on Italy, Hungary, and Norway. Finally, each chapter was fairly short, with each chapter being twenty pages of generously spaced text meaning that in many cases once the outline of the particular case study was laid out I got a sense that very little substantial discussion or analysis was possible for many of the essays.

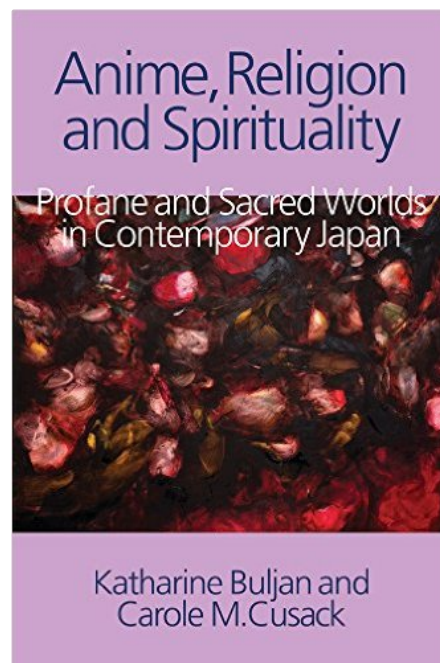
To conclude, although containing some individually good essays, the collection as a whole leaves me rather dissatisfied. For anyone looking for a coherent study or text to understand world Christianity and its current changes this will not be the book. While each essay picks up what can be a useful theme, no sense of how this relates more widely is gained, while it is marked by a Eurocentric focus. Given its collection of sociological essays it may be a useful resource for those running courses on global Christianity to supplement other texts and individual case studies, but cannot be claimed to be a go to book on the subject.

Paul Hedges  
Nanyang Technological University,  
Singapore

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KATHARINE BULJAN AND CAROLE M. CUSACK, ANIME, RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY: PROFANE AND SACRED WORLDS IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN (SHEFFIELD: EQUINOX, 2015)

Very little has been produced by religion scholars on the subject of religion or spiritual understandings to the anime art form. Its popularity, beginning in the 1960s, has grown to become a globally experienced art form, especially in relation to Hayao Miyazaki’s works My Neighbor Totoro and Princess Mononoke. Despite this, very little has been produced by scholars of religion regarding the connections of spirituality and religion to anime, in either narrative or aesthetics. Anime, Religion and Spirituality provides a much needed opening for conversations on religion and anime which can be extended by others in anthropological or sociological



focuses in the field of religion and popular culture in relation to anime. These approaches are much needed, allowing for Anime, Religion and Spirituality to be used as an introductory handbook on the many divergent paths that research can be taken for religion and anime.

The development of various studies begins to be shaped in the second chapter, which focuses primarily on the relationship between religion, spirituality, and anime. Buljan and

Cusack give special attention to Shinto and Buddhism, with greater attention given to Shinto. The authors give a brief historical account of the importance of both Shinto and Buddhism, before presenting a series of issues between spiritual and religious categories in how they relate to anime. For instance, the western view of animism and anthropomorphism as used for anime analytical tools is problematized by anime’s primary inspiration being drawn from Buddhist teachings and Japanese animal scrolls. The last section in this chapter discusses several supernatural themes and motifs (spirit beings, animal transformations, death, afterlife, etc.) in various animes and traces them to Shinto, Buddhism, or to other religions in Japan. Each section in this chapter presents an opportunity for further analysis and scholarly study, including a more in depth study on the traces of supernatural belief or representations in anime. The authors rely on a handful of anime examples which they continually drawn on throughout the book for added consistency, allowing future scholars to apply their understanding to other animes.

Anime, Religion, and Spirituality continues to provide a variety of research possibilities as the third chapter begins to focus more on a sociological aspect of the field. The third chapter brings attention to gender and female characters in anime, particularly those given supernatural power. This chapter also studies the effect of anime in both tragedy and supernatural subgenres, arguing they function as a “celebration of the human spirit despite calamities” (117). A combined mythic and



anthropomorphic approach is in the final section, in which the authors analyze the role of child protagonists, a common theme in supernatural animes. Connections are drawn between these animes and ideas of the “divine child”. These sections are short, allowing for *Anime, Religion and Spirituality* to be used as a form of handbook for the research that can be applied more largely by scholars of religion and popular culture.

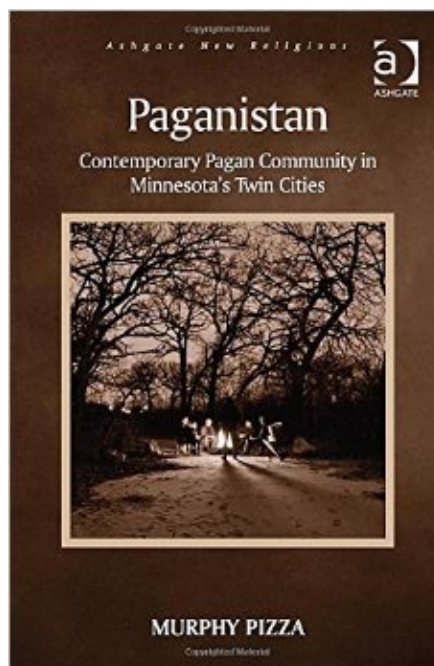
The final chapter shifts the focus from the content of animes themselves to the experience of the fan base. This chapter would be most beneficial to those entering fields of religion and fandom, as the authors draw connections to the fan embrace of other media that is not anime, such as *Star Trek*. Elements of fandom, such as conventions and cosplay is considered, as well as how locations in Japan that are associated with particular anime have become target destinations for tourists in what can be described as a fan “pilgrimage” (195).

Buljan and Cusack’s *Anime, Religion, and Spirituality* is needed in order to provide a strong contribution for the field of religion and popular culture in relation to anime, which has before now been largely ignored. Each chapter discusses multiple studies which can be lengthened. *Anime, Religion and Spirituality* opens the door for scholars interested in the connections between religion and anime, and helps to define the field of religion and popular culture to consider elements of popular culture once dismissed.

Vivian Asimos  
University of Durham

PAGANISTAN: CONTEMPORARY PAGAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA’S TWIN CITIES. MURPHY PIZZA, 2014. FARNHAM AND BURLINGTON, VT: ASHGATE.

Murphy Pizza’s *Paganistan* is a well-written, insider-but-objective, introductory volume to the Pagan community of Minnesota’s Twin Cities (ie, Minneapolis and St Paul) in the United States. *Paganistan* is the informal emic term that members use to describe this larger community, despite countless smaller groups and sub-groups within the geographical area. The style of the book is appropriately and predictably narrative and



descriptive, but its implications are highly relevant and vast for the study of contemporary religion.

Pagans in the Midwest tend to be generally invisible to the public, yet *Paganistan* seems to have an open and observable presence in the Twin Cities—which is what piqued Pizza’s interest in this ethnographic study. She sets off her research with the following questions: What is it about the Twin Cities that made a thriving, public Pagan

community possible in that location as compared to other Midwestern cities?

Is there anything about *Paganistan* that could be uniquely Midwestern or Minnesotan?

What Pizza found, however, was that it was not so much the actual history of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, or the Midwest that formed the identity of *Paganistan* (her original hypothesis), but its cultural mythology:

it was less the history of the Twin Cities and Minnesota that was influential on *Paganistan* and actually more the cultural mythology of what it meant to be a Minnesotan—the region’s folk and pop-cultural lore—that proved to be a factor in *Paganistan*’s identity formation. (p 13)

Ultimately, what made *Paganistan* unique was its very countercultural nature:

When a religious community is ambivalent about institutionalisation and opposed to homogeneity of identity, expression and belief, as Paganism is, mechanisms emerge by “doing culture” that, rather than being a hindrance to the formation of community, actually become the most important values a community embraces. Paradoxically, a culture embracing diversity and a critical approach to institutionalisation is what is created and passed on. (p 108)

As mentioned at the beginning, this volume serves as a good, introductory description of a notable Pagan community of the Twin Cities, thus relevant for those interested in contemporary American religion and movements and other constellating fields. Perhaps it is my personal interest in religious change, but what was most



interesting about this volume was not so much Paganistan itself, but Pizza's open-ended observations of Paganistan some years after her initial research, recounted in the Afterword.

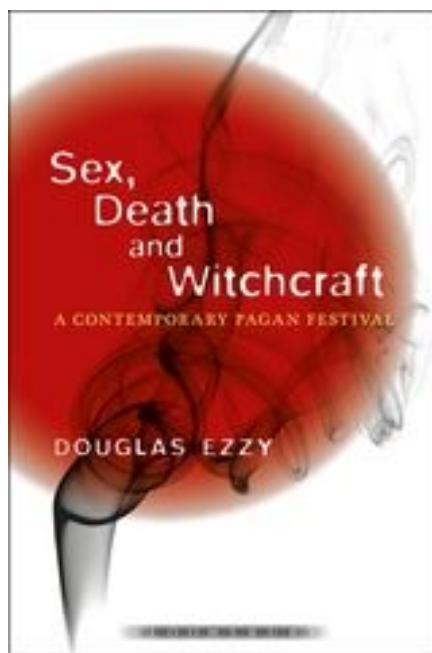
First and foremost, Pizza mentions a major decline in participation—on various levels—throughout Paganistan as a whole. This decline parallels those of many major religious traditions—from a loss of interest in more long-term or established social groupings, to a dying generation of religious specialists—which points at a wider change occurring in society. Furthermore, she says, In truth, the seekers are neither uninvolved nor apathetic: they are self-educated on Paganism and related efforts to build community and have come looking for a church, community, and Pagan minister to guide them... and the coven-trained, initiated-by-lineage leadership is unequipped for and untrained in how to manoeuvre this dramatic cultural change. (p 123)

The difference in attitudes between the older and newer generations are vast, and the way to bridge them seems to not yet be in sight.

Second, there appears to be a significant relationship between the use of online social networking and this 'decline' in participation. Pizza consistently reveals her bias against the use of social networking, leaving out a potential wealth of knowledge this study could provide. That being said, a study on internet religion and Paganistan could reveal a highly significant element to the current changes this community is experiencing.

Lastly, among many other things, Pizza points out that amidst the

'decline', there is an unquestionable stability in the consumption of Pagan material culture. The Pagan bookshops and gift shops of Paganistan continue to thrive. Pizza states that the consumption of material culture is a common characteristic in Paganism, but also mentions that the clientele in these shops come from a wide range of interests, not solely Pagan. Again, this observation within Paganistan points at some wider implications for contemporary society.



In conclusion, Pizza has published an important piece of literature that highlights a significant religious community in Minnesota's Twin Cities. Based on her more recent observations of Paganistan, however, further research on this seemingly niche subject could shed light on wider changes occurring within religion in contemporary society.

S Francesca Po  
University of Oxford

DOUGLAS EZZY, SEX, DEATH AND WITCHCRAFT: A CONTEMPORARY PAGAN FESTIVAL, LONDON AND

NEW YORK, BLOOMSBURY, 2014; IX AND 204 PAGES; PAPERBACK; ISBN 978-1-47252-758-5; RRP: 17.99 POUNDS STERLING.

This is an ethnographic study of a Pagan festival that Ezzy pseudonymously terms 'Faunalia'. This five-day event involves several major rituals, but the most important for the study is the 'Baphomet rite', which occurs on the third night. Ezzy describes Baphomet as 'a hybrid animal/human, male/female, goat-headed deity who developed from the medieval depictions of the Witches' sabbat' who is 'reinvented as a contemporary Pagan deity who represents the animalistic and sexual side of being human' (p. 2). Ezzy begins with Phoebe and Harrison, two 40-something Pagans who devised the Baphomet rite for the Pagan Mardi Gras in 1999 and who have run Faunalia since 2000. They devised the Baphomet rite in order to challenge participants and to create opportunities for experiencing transcendence and transformation. The book is in seven chapters, each named for a theme that Ezzy sees as central to Paganism, and that he also understands as challenge to the definition of 'religion' that scholars typically work with.

Chapter One, 'Soul', is about living soulfully, and involves biographical sketches of some of the principal people from Faunalia, including Phoebe, Therion, Lewis and Sauvage, who emphasis the soulful aspects of participating in ritual. This forms the basis for the author's argument that emphasis on belief is a distortion of what religion actually is. Pagans, he contends, do not reject belief but they view the world much more in terms of 'performative relationality' (pp. 33-

36). The theme of Chapter Two is 'Ritual' and the emphasis is on liminality in all its varied forms, temporal, material, and geographical, which are connected to the rituals of Faunalia, which are liminal, but not, according to Ezzy, rites of passage. Chapter Three, 'Death', raises the intensity of the prose, as the participants are briefed on the underworld rite that takes place on Friday night. Two members take the roles of Hades and Persephone, and the experiences of many others are reported, as they undertake the 'ordeals' of Earth, Water, Air and Fire, and enter the palace of Hades and Persephone. The underworld rite functions to bring 'participants into performative relationships with half-conscious fears and anxieties associated with death and major life transitions' (p. 80).

Chapter Four, 'Shadow', turns the focus to the confrontational aspects of Faunalia. Ezzy uses the Jungian notion of 'shadow work' to explore how Pagans use symbol and mythology to engage with the dark aspects of life. The testimonies threaded through the chapter stress the dangers of Faunalia's facilitation of 'energy on a grand scale' (p. 103). Chapter Five, 'Baphomet', is focused on the centerpiece of Faunalia. Ezzy takes pains to explain the careful and detailed preparation that the participants undergo, and those things that make the rite liminal, including nudity, trance states, and erotic experiences. Ezzy notes that 'deep sensitivity to other people's boundaries is something that is reinforced in the ritual briefings' (p. 119). Chapter Six is titled 'Ethics'; themes so far explored including liminality, ritual, and the reinvention of Baphomet from a figure in the writings of medieval inquisitors to a deity to be worshipped by modern

Pagans, are reiterated. Ezzy discusses the sexual acts that may take place within Faunalia, and argues that 'the liminal inversion an alterity of the Baphomet rite involves the removal, or deconstruction, of the domination and fear characteristic of many erotic relationships' (p. 139). Chapter Seven, 'Religion', reviews notions of religion as Apollonian versus religion as Dionysian, and the differing aesthetics and rituals that emerge from these polar opposites. Ezzy asserts that the 'Baphomet rite is an aesthetic moment of apprehension of the totality of nature and its inherently contradictory character' (p. 164).

Ezzy's 'Methodological Appendix' indicates that Faunalia ran from 2000-2009. His own fieldwork was conducted in 2005, by which time about half the people involved were acquainted with each other. He explains his own research process, interviewing before and after the festival, but consciously being part of the Baphomet rite in 2005 as a participant, not a researcher. Ezzy is aware that he has stressed the positive in his assessment of Faunalia, and there is a sense that this book is slightly on the defensive as regards the 'fringe' or 'exotic' nature of modern Paganism, and that Ezzy is carefully framing controversial work in the language and methodology of classic religious studies in order to mute some of the possible negative reactions. For this reader, *Sex, Death and Witchcraft* is an important publication, and I found the extensive interview testimonies from the participants to be especially valuable. Ezzy has produced a clear and interesting text, with illustrations that assist the reader to imagine Faunalia. His book will be welcomed by all scholars of Paganism, ritual studies, and new

religions.

Carole M. Cusack  
University of Sydney

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TRINE STAUNING WILLERT. *NEW VOICES IN GREEK ORTHODOX THOUGHT: UNTYING THE BOND BETWEEN NATION AND RELIGION*. SURREY: ASHGATE PUBLISHING LIMITED, 2014. ISBN 9781472418944

In contemporary popular discourse, Greek identity has been conceptualised in relation to the ancient Greek legacy. However, as Michael Herzfeld argues, modern Greek historical memory and national identity as part of the wider Balkan context has instrumentally invoked Eastern Orthodoxy as both a socio-political and historico-religious identity (in *The Postnational Self: Belonging and Identity*, 2002, 201). As part of this debate, Trine Willert's book *New Voices in Greek Orthodox Thought: Untying the Bond between Nation and Religion* is a welcomed addition by proposing "to analyse a case study of religiously grounded intellectual responses among younger Greek Orthodox theologians to the recent social, cultural and political conditions of Greece" (13). Willert's methodological approach is a two-fold historical analysis of the formative ideologies and historical memories present during the establishment of the modern Greek nation-state, with emphasis on the religious factors that contributed to this process. Her data derives from textual inquiry and a series of interviews with Greek theologians and religious teachers forming the basis for her argumentation analysis to identify the rhetorical and theological position of Greek Orthodox theologians seeking

reform.

Willert argues that promoting reformed religious worldviews provides “a solid sense of belonging... as an alternative to the increasingly permeable and deconstructed national identities and fluid late modern identities” (25). She identifies two movements that have traditionally espoused this reform – a nationalistic one referred to as the ‘Neo-Orthodox’ movement drawing on the historical memory of Eastern Orthodoxy and Byzantium, and current attempts welcoming modernisation and multicultural dialogue within the Church. Referring to Olivier Roy (Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways, 2010), Willert presents a third alternative voiced by progressive theology in Greece advocating ‘purism’, ‘adaptive innovation’, and ‘anti-nationalism’, turning to the existential and ethical dimensions of cultural life and religious belonging. Willert describes this third alternative theological movement as “having a pure essence, independent of any historical or cultural context, [yet this] does not mean that the religious practice is not embodied in a given culture at a given time, but that it always refers to a transcendent order of truth and of the absolute (36).

Willert identifies the theologian and director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Pantelis Kalaitzidis, as prime figure of these reforms, arguing that the Church has become too secularised through its attachments to nineteenth-century nationalism. Kalaitzidis contends that only by detaching itself from the boundaries of the Greek national identity and national ecclesiastical history can the Church fulfil its transcendental mission.

Furthermore, his proposal for modernisation of the Church relates to transformations of cultural and religious pluralism in modern Europe. Theologically speaking, Willert exhibits how his project is conceived as drawing from what is perceived as the authentic pre-national spirit of early Christianity.

Investigating how these reforms utilise religious education in schools as their theological and cultural battlefield, Willert refers to a thematic typology to distinguish between traditionalist camps advocating Orthodoxy as the essence of Greek culture, and ‘modernisers’ promoting Orthodoxy as compatible with modern European awareness and multiculturalism, with religious classes providing pupils with time for reflection, thus incorporating a humanistic dimension to education. To locate how these religious agendas are played out, Willert presents ethnographic data from a series of interviews with theologians and religious teachers. In reference to those espousing Kalaitzidis vision, their multicultural and anti-nationalistic approach is seen as in harmony with their Christian principle of separation of Church and State, with the Church undertaking its catechist work and the State its educational mission. However, as Willert argues, these reformers still believe that religion should be taught from a non-confessional an ‘Open Orthodox theology’ perspective by theologically trained teachers. Form this Willert concludes that their motives are not actually ‘modern’ in a secular sense, as they advocate public education and the intercultural message of modernisation as embodying the Christian principles of equality in God (128).

Willert’s study is a theoretically consistent presentation of innovative attitudes within Orthodox Christianity promoting a theology of multiculturalism that can be found, as they claim, throughout the Bible, and in opposition to the populist and nationalistic representations of Greek Orthodoxy. Despite their claims, Willert’s analysis aptly demonstrates how these reforms are “prone to a certain degree of essentialism and exclusion because it presupposes belonging to a specific religious community, namely Christianity” (64).

Willert interprets Kalaitzidis’ belief that religious identity is not cultural but rather an existential choice as a Protestant feature in his theology. However, she fails to examine possible connections that Kalaitzidis may have with Protestant theology apart from brief references to the pre-national message of Christianity. Had she done so, she could have possibly initiated further dialogue regarding the effect of cross-global Protestantism on contemporary Greek Orthodox, how this relates to ‘Westernisation’ in Greece. Furthermore, although Willert clarifies that the Orthodox reforms she addresses are directed towards the national character of the Orthodox Church in Greek culture and have not received much attention in the public and scholarly sphere, she does not present a conclusive argument regarding the future and possible effects these reforms could have on the modern Greek religio-cultural landscape.

Damon Lycourinos,  
University of Edinburgh



# Members' Recent Publications

## **Elisabeth Arweck**

- 2016 (ed.) *Attitudes to Religious Diversity: Young People's Perspectives* (Ashgate), forthcoming
- 2015 (ed. with Anna Halafoff and Donald Boisvert) "Education about Religions and Beliefs: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies", special issue of *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 36 (3 June).
- 2015 (with Gemma Penny) "Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity: Socialising Agents and Factors Emerging from Qualitative and Quantitative Data of a Nation-Wide Project in the UK", special issue of *Journal of Intercultural Studies* on "Education about Religions and Worldviews: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies" 36 (3): 255–273, edited by Anna Halafoff, Elisabeth Arweck, Donald Boisvert.
- 2016 "Religion Materialized in the Everyday: Young People's Attitudes towards Material Expressions of Religion", in *Religion and Material Culture*, edited by Tim Hutchings and Joanne McKenzie (Ashgate).
- 2015 (with Anna Halafoff and Donald L. Boisvert) "Introduction: Education about Religions and Worldviews: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies", *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 36 (3), 249–254, edited by Anna Halafoff, Elisabeth Arweck, Donald Boisvert.
- 2015 (Contributor) "International Bibliography of Sociology of Religions 2014." *Social Compass* 62 (3): 434–515.

## **Eileen Barker**

- 2013 (ed.) *Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- 2014 "New Religious Movements". In: James D. Wright (editor-in-chief), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edition, Vol 16. Oxford: Elsevier. pp. 805–808.
- 2014 "The Not-So-New Religious Movements: Changes in 'the Cult Scene' over the Past Forty Years." *Temenos* Vol. 50 No. 2 (2014), 235–56. <http://ojs.tsv.fi/index.php/temenos>
- 2014 "The Cult Awareness Movement in North America: Past, Present, Future" Interview with Michael Langone. WRSP (World Religion and Spirituality Project) FORUM INTERVIEWS Post Date: 8/10/2014. <http://www.wrs.vcu.edu/FORUM/Interview%20with%20Michael%20Langone.pdf>
- 2014 "But is it a Genuine Religion?" in Carole Cusack, Danielle Kirby (eds.) *Sects, Cults and New Religions*, Volume III, London: Routledge, Chapter 39. Originally published in A. L. Griel and T. Robbins (eds.) *Between Sacred and Secular: Research and Theory on Quasi-Religion* (JAI Press, 1994), pp. 97–111.

## **George D. Chryssides**

- 2015 'Power, Empowerment and Disempowerment in Religion'. IAFOR Keynote Series; ECERP2015 The Second European Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy Brighton, UK. Accessible online at: <http://iafor.org/george-d-chryssides-power-empowerment-and-disempowerment-in-religion>
- 2015 "Conflicting expectations? Insider and outsider methods of studying Jehovah's Witnesses." *DISKUS* 17(1): 14-22. Accessible online at [www.religiousstudiesproject.com/DISKUS/index.php/DISKUS/issue/view/10](http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/DISKUS/index.php/DISKUS/issue/view/10)
- 2015 'A Scottish Vegetarian's View of Jehovah's Witnesses'. CESNUR Library Texts and Documents Cyber-proceedings of International Conference organized by CESNUR, Tallin University, Estonia, 17-29 June 2015. URL: [http://www.cesnur.org/2015/chryssides\\_tallinn\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cesnur.org/2015/chryssides_tallinn_2015.pdf)
- 2015 *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter. Entries on 'Hate, Hatred', 'Head', 'Healing Miracles', 'Hearing/Listening', 'Heaven's Gate', 'Hell', 'Heresy', 'Hislop, Alexander' Vol.11

## **Simon Coleman**

- 2015 (ed. with Rosalind Hackett) *The Anthropology of Global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism*. New York: New York University Press.
- 2015 '(Re-)Placing Pentecostalism: Swedish Mission and the Idea of the Baltic', *Approaching Religion* 5(1): 4-15
- 2015 'Anthropological Tropes and Historical Tricksters: Pilgrimage as an "Example" of Persuasion', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21: 144-161

2015 'On Mauss, Masks and Gifts: Christianities, (In-)dividualities, Modernities' *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5(1): 295-315

2014 'Pilgrimage as Trope for an Anthropology of Christianity' *Current Anthropology* 55 (10): 281-291

### **Carole Cusack**

2015 "Two Scottish Romanesque Parish Churches: St Athernase, Leuchars and St Cuthbert, Dalmeny," *Sydney Society For Scottish History Journal*, Vol. 15, pp. 97-122.

2015 (with Katharine Buljan) *Anime, Religion, and Spirituality: Profane and Sacred Worlds in Contemporary Japan*, Equinox.

2015 "Making Familiar the Unfamiliar: Teaching RLST 2626 Witchcraft, Paganism and the New Age at the University of Sydney," *Spotlight on Teaching: Religious Studies News*, January 2015, pp. 30- 34, at <http://rsn.aarweb.org/spotlight-on/teaching/new-alternative-religions/www.youtube.com/embed/mBNIS8Zg1WA>.

2015 "Apocalypse in Early UFO and Alien-Based Religions: Christian and Theosophical Themes," in Erik Tønning, Matthew Feldman and David Addyman (eds.), *Modernism, Christianity, and Apocalypse*. Leiden: Brill, 340-354.

2015 "Lab Rats and Tissue Samples: The Human in a Contemporary Invented Religion," in Kennet Granholm, Marcus Moberg, and Sofia Sjøo (eds.), *Religion, Media and Social Change*, Routledge, pp. 175-188.

### **Denise Cush**

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2014 'Combatting Sexism, Homophobia, Religionism and Subjectism: equality and diversity in religious studies and religious education'. Keynote lecture International Seminar for Religious Education and Values, July 2014, York St. John University.

### **Wendy Dossett**

2015 Bacon, H., Dossett, W., & Knowles, S. (eds.). (2015). *Alternative Salvations: Engaging the Sacred and the Secular*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

2015 "Reflections on the Language of Salvation in Twelve Step Recovery". In H. Bacon, W. Dossett, & S. Knowles (eds.), *Alternative Salvations: Engaging the Sacred and the Secular*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

### **Ting Guo**

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### **Robert Jackson**

2014 'Signposts': Policy and Practice for Teaching about Religions and Non-Religious Worldviews in Intercultural Education, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing

2014 Rothgangel M., Jackson R. and Jäggle M. (eds.), *Religious Education at Schools in Europe. Volume 2: Western Europe* (Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, Band 10.2), Göttingen: Vienna University Press/V&R unipress.

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2015 "Oral History and the Study of Religions: Reflections on Professor Kiyotako Sato's Memory and Narrative Series", Discussion Paper no. 6, Tokyo: Research Centre for the History of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Meiji University.

### **Michael Pye**

2015 *Japanese Buddhist Pilgrimage* (hardback and paperback): <http://www.equinoxpub.com/home/japanese-buddhist-pilgrimage/>

2013 *Strategies in the Study of Religions*, Vols 1-2. <http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/184080and.../184339>

### **Donovan O. Schaefer**

2015 *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*. (Duke). <https://www.dukeupress.edu/religious-affects?viewby=subject&categoryid=15&sort=newest>

### **Steven Sutcliffe**

2014 'Hard Work: Locating Gurdjieff in the Study of Religion/s', *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion* Vol 27 No 3. pp. 262-284.

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2013 Co-Editor (with Carole M. Cusack), 'Invented Religions: Creating New Religions through Fiction, Parody and Play', Guest Edited Issue of *Culture and Religion* Vol. 14 No. 4.

2013 "Rosicrucians at large": Radical versus qualified invention in the cultic milieu', pp. 424-444 in guest-edited *Culture and Religion* Vol. 14 No. 4.

2011 'From "Comparative Mysticism" to "new age spirituality": teaching new age as raw materials of religion', Chapter 14 (pp. 249-267) in W. Parsons (editor), *Teaching Mysticism*, New York: Oxford University Press (AAR Teaching Religious Studies series)

### **Christina Welch**

2015 'Death and the Erotic Woman: the European Gendering of Mortality in time of Religious Change'. *Journal of Gender Studies* 24(4): 399-418.

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2014 *Religion and Culture: Religious Artifacts as T-shirts, Toys and Museum Exhibits*. In, Hedges P, (ed.), *Controversies in Contemporary Religion: Volume 2: Debates in the Public Square and Ethical Issues*. Oxford: Praeger: 177-212

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### **Michael York**

2015 *Pagan Ethics: Paganism as a World Religion* (Springer).





# OBITUARIES

## **Dr Leon Paul Schlamm (1948-2015)**

The death, on August 3rd of this year, of my friend and colleague Leon Schlamm, only two days after the sudden onset of a severe illness and despite all medical efforts to save him, came as a great shock to family and friends, and to former colleagues and students. He had recently celebrated his 67th birthday. As teacher, writer, speaker, advisor or simply friend, Leon touched, and indeed changed, the lives of many people.

Leon spent the earliest years of his working life in Chartered Accountancy, but in 1969, after working as a volunteer at an archaeological dig at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, he decided to change track and embark upon the study of religions. He read Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster, graduating in 1975 with a first-class honours degree. Like many of us, his thinking and later his teaching bore the influence of Ninian Smart and his colleagues from those early, golden years of Religious Studies at Lancaster. I first became acquainted with Leon in 1976, when he came to the University of Kent to work on a thesis on Rudolf Otto (see his two articles on the numinous in Religious Studies, vols 27 and 28). It was not long before he managed to secure a teaching post at Kent, and here he remained until his (slightly early) retirement in 2011.

During his time at Kent, Leon developed teaching and research interests in Hinduism, mysticism, transpersonal psychology and, above all, in his greatest passion, the work of C.G. Jung. He and I together founded and co-convened a

taught MA programme in the Study of Mysticism and Religious Experience, which ran from 1994 until 2010, attracting a variety of interesting home and overseas students. He also taught on the MA in Cosmology and Divination that emerged from the Mysticism MA (predecessor of the programme now available at Canterbury Christ Church University). He supervised a succession of research students at Kent, and was external examiner for postgraduate theses submitted at other universities. Between 1989 and 1996 he contributed courses and supervision expertise to Kent's MA in Psychoanalytic Studies in the Humanities. From 2010 to 2013 he was external examiner for the MSc in Consciousness Studies and Transpersonal Psychology at Liverpool John Moores University. Over the years he attended many conferences and gave many papers. The bulk of his published work is connected in one way or another with Jungian studies. Sadly, his magnum opus on C.G. Jung, Numinous Experience and the Study of Mysticism (accepted for publication by Brunner-Routledge) was never completed; illness of one sort or another dogged his later years.

For Leon, the main purpose of academic life was a quest not for promotion but for wisdom and understanding. This spirit was evident in his enthusiasm and dedication as a teacher – as one of his postgraduate students observed to me, he never checked his watch during supervision sessions. Beyond the confines of university life, Leon contributed to sundry committees and task groups connected with what might loosely be described as 'spiritual education'. His main form of relaxation

lay in listening to the music of the Baroque, about which he developed considerable expertise. He also loved to travel. Over the years, often on his own, he had visited many of the countries of North Africa, the Middle East and Far East, as well as some of the former Soviet states along the old Silk Route. In Europe, his favourite city was, not surprisingly, Venice, to which he had returned with his family this summer.

Leon's funeral service – a celebration of his life – took place on August 18th at Barham Crematorium, just outside Canterbury. This event, beautifully organized by his wife Joan and his son Michael, proved an uplifting rather than a sombre one, with poetry and music perfectly representing Leon's humane and wide-ranging outlook on life. Few of the other services held at Barham, one imagines, have included music as sublime as the pieces the congregation heard that day from Handel, Purcell and Mozart. In one of the addresses given, the congregation also heard how Leon, not many hours before he died, had responded from his hospital bed when asked by a doctor what his religion was. His reply, delivered with the nonchalant gravity that was typical of Leon, was: 'all religions and no religion'.

Dr Leon Schlamm will be remembered for his work in establishing and shaping the discipline of Religious Studies at the University of Kent and for his many contributions within the Jungian community. His warm friendship, genial presence and sharp insights into all aspects of life will be missed by many people for many years to come.

Peter Moore



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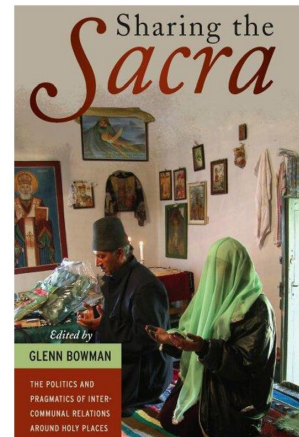
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**Glenn Bowman** is Director of Research at School of Anthropology and Conservation the University of Kent where he is also Programme Convenor for BA Liberal Arts.



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